The Power of Adopting an Enterprise Mobile Strategy
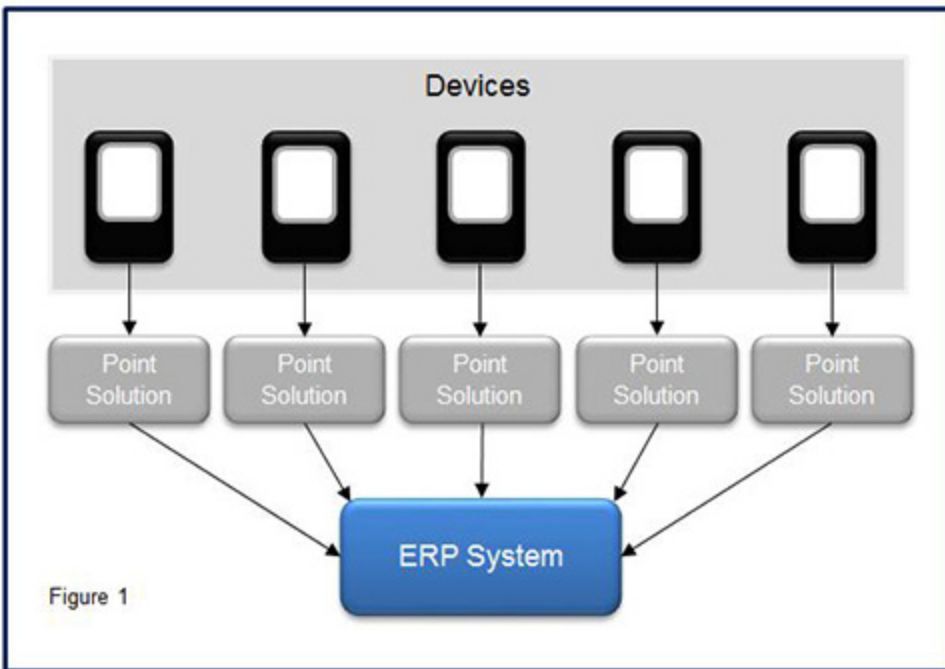
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Introduction

Many IT organizations today are struggling to keep pace with their corporate mobile initiatives. Even if an organization has adopted a "single-vendor" strategy for its enterprise applications, IT executives and managers still find themselves with various "black box" point solutions. These applications might be sufficient if little or no change is needed for the business process being mobilized, but due to the small amount of ERP expertise of most end-users, mobile applications require them to be tailored much more than a traditional desktop application. These enterprise mobile users are not ERP experts they are experts in their role they are performing for the organization. The inevitability of this mobile tailoring coupled with the hodge-podge of technology leaves IT managers and executives with costly customization projects, expensive development staff and leaves their various mobile applications vulnerable when upgrading.

Adopting an enterprise mobile strategy for developing and managing mobile applications allows IT to meet these various and changing requirements in a cost-effective and rapid manner. To reach this goal, many RFgen customers are actively implementing a strategic vision of a standardized mobile infrastructure that lets developers meet business requirements more rapidly by providing a common mobile platform. RFgen's mobile suite with its various deployment options provide the benefit of a single platform without losing the flexibility needed across the entire enterprise. The increasing need for mobility, and the flexibility and power of RFgen's platform make it an optimal time for organizations to develop plans for a unified enterprise mobile strategy.

Enterprise Mobile Patchwork

As the need for mobility has increased, ERP software companies have responded by mobilizing various pieces of the system in different ways and at different levels of functionality. This piecemeal approach has left the ERP customer to deal with a variety of mobile assets, despite the fact that they have adopted a single-vendor enterprise approach. Some examples of mobile applications provided by these mega-vendors include Telnet-based shop floor solutions or products that have been acquired by other smaller vendors such as sales force automation applications. The result is a proliferation of architectures, applications and technologies as portrayed in Figure 1.

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Figure 1

If the IT organization finds the ERP vendor hasn't yet mobilized in the areas they need, they must either build a completely custom solution or purchase a "bolt-on" best of breed application. Either of these options is likely to introduce yet another technology stack to this already very heterogeneous environment.

Many IT departments today are looking for ways to rationalize these mobile environments. Without a unified platform, IT too often finds itself unable to keep up with evolving business demands. IT is always re-building to meet new requirements which is time consuming and only exacerbates the problem. Many IT departments lack the additional manpower and budgets to roll out new mobile initiatives to meet business needs because so much time and money go to maintenance of the existing architectures. This makes IT too slow to respond to the business—its number one priority.

Mobile Modifications

Traditional bundled ERP mobile solutions are developed as simple applications that must be customized or tailored to the needs of each customer. The ERP provides the technology and some starting-point applications. The customer must either configure the system to disable or enable prompts or use the application as a starting point and develop a custom screen. This approach works if you have an expert in each mobile technology you are customizing and you have the tools and scripts to develop new applications. Oftentimes, the ERP vendors do not even provide the code with the system; requiring the software customer to request the code.

Without a unified platform, IT too often finds itself unable to keep up with evolving business demands.

The RFgen Enterprise Mobile Platform

RFgen's comprehensive approach to developing mobile applications can extend your ERP investment. It is composed of three key components. First, the RFgen Mobile Development Studio, a world-class design, development and testing integrated development environment (IDE) can dramatically reduce the cost of modifying existing applications or developing new applications from scratch. Next, the RFgen Application Server, a robust windows-based application server can be installed in minutes and provides enterprise-class performance. And lastly, the RFgen Mobile Administration Console, is a real-time "mobile dashboard" that gives IT managers the ability to mnitor all aspects of their mobile landscape.
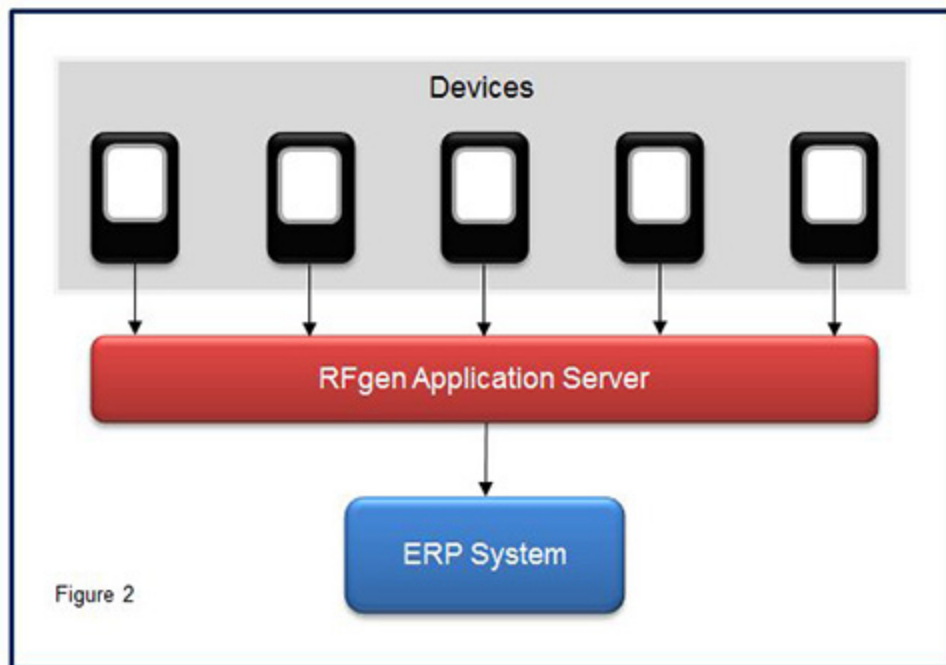
- **Mobile Development Studio**

    The ability to not only change and build new mobile applications, but to be able to do it in a rapid and standard way, is a critical component of an enterprise mobile strategy. The RFgen Mobile Development Studio has been developed to be the most rapid mobile framework available on the market today. The studio itself provides a visual drag-and-drop screen designer, code generation tools to easily access server-side business functions and stored procedures, a built-in testing and debugging console, a connection configuration utility and a device profile builder for true mobile applications.

- **Application Server**

    The need for a multifunctional application server is another key component of an enterprise mobile strategy. Maintaining multiple application servers to support multiple mobile protocols and deployment options increases cost and complexity to your mobile landscape. RFgen's Mobile Application Server supports a wide range of deployment options including traditional Telnet, real-time rich graphical user interface (GUI), and true casually disconnected or completely disconnected mobile. In addition, the RFgen Mobile Application Server has an extremely small footprint and provides the ability to cluster multiple servers to support a large number of mobile users as portrayed in Figure 2.

RFgen's comprehensive approach to developing mobile applications can extend your ERP investment.

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Devices

RFgen Application Server

ERP System

Figure 2

- **Mobile Administration Console**

  Rapidly building and deploying applications is important, but once a system is live, the ongoing cost of monitoring and maintaining your mobile assets is where most traditional bundled mobile solutions fall short. RFgen's Mobile Administration Console, provides a 360 degree view of the entire enterprise landscape. The console provides visibility and statistical monitoring of all user and system connections. The IT manager can drill into any currently running real-time session to look "over the shoulder" of any mobile user and view and interact with the session. This powerful feature dramatically reduces the cost of production support for the IT organization.

Conclusion

There is no doubt enterprise mobilization is going to continue to bring benefit and value to the modern ERP landscape. Embracing this mobile trend by adopting an enterprise mobile strategy will help reduce complexity and cost while increasing the agility and flexibility of the IT organization.

RFgen provides the most advanced mobile platform that makes it possible for an IT organization to adopt and build a complete enterprise mobile strategy. The Mobile Framework, composed of the tightly integrated Mobile Development Studio, Mobile Application Server and Mobile Administration Console offers unparalleled tools and technologies for a true, complete enterprise mobile strategy.

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About RFgen Software

Incorporated in 1995, California-based RFgen Software provides flexible and reliable mobile supply chain solutions that solve real-world business challenges. As a certified Oracle, SAP, Microsoft, Deltek and Vocollect partner, RFgen actively seeks companies facing challenges managing their internal supply chain operations and solves them using real-world experience, industry best practices, and state-of-the-art technology. RFgen's Mobile Framework division specializes in development tools for mobile, wireless and voice environments and provides open standards based connectivity to a multitude of systems (database, SOA, legacy, etc.). RFgen's ERP Integration division focuses on providing certified, open-source transactions and integration expertise for Oracle E-Business Suite, Oracle JD Edwards, SAP, Deltek Costpoint and Microsoft Dynamics solutions.

RFgen's Mobile Framework is an open systems development platform that speeds the path from idea, to proof-of-concept, to solution deployment. RFgen provides built-in, native functionality for extending real-time and on-demand access to enterprise data to almost any mobile device available today. RFgen's Mobile Solutions are currently installed in more than 35 countries, in over 2,600 locations, and are supported by a certified group of over 125 solution partners.