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Module 7

Mobile computing & teleworking

With mobile technology, the traditional workplace is fast disappearing, and people are able to work from anywhere they can access a data signal.

In this module, you'll learn about the benefits of going mobile, such as flexible work hours and the ability to be connected to colleagues and clients.



Part 1: Why go mobile?

Going mobile makes business flexible.

When businesses go mobile, employees have easy and instant access from anywhere to email, appointments, and documents, allowing for greater flexibility with working hours.

Mobile devices can also give you a competitive advantage. Having instant access to information can be the difference between making money, and losing it. For example, the ability to exchange information with colleagues, clients, and business partners in real time, and to respond to queries quickly, could help avoid potential problems by addressing issues promptly.

As more Australians access the Internet on their smartphones and tablets, you might want to consider a mobile strategy within your larger digital strategy. (See Module 1)

Choosing your device



The type of device you use will be driven by the needs of your staff and demands of the work. Whatever you choose, consider:

Do you have enough storage space?

How and when do you back-up your information?

What happens if disaster strikes and you need to recover lost data? (See Module 8 about storage options).



Part 2: Working Remotely

Working remotely is where employees have the flexibility to work away from the office for set or varying amounts of time.

There's a growing trend to work from co-working or 'smart work centres' – workstations in shared offices closer to where people live..

Benefits to Employers

- Greater employee engagement, job satisfaction and output, leading to increased productivity.
- Greater retention of valued staff.
- Ability to recruit staff with desirable skills and experience independently of where they live.
- Reduced office costs.
- Business continuity in the face of major weather events and other disruptions.
- The potential for interaction with customers any time of the day or night with international employees covering 24 hours x 7 days a week.

Benefits to Employees

- Better work-life balance as they save the time, stress and cost of daily long commutes to work.
- Greater ability to combine two-income working parents with family and carer responsibilities.
- Improved health and productivity.
- Greater ability to contribute to local community and cultural activities.

(Reference: 2012-2013 survey of 1527 Melbourne organisations.)

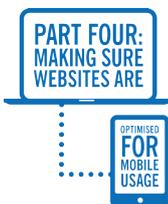


Part 3: Mobile commerce

Mobile commerce is a quick and easy way for people to buy your goods or services anywhere, at any time.

According to PayPal Australia...

- 71% of consumers use mobile devices for payments
- 49% of businesses are mobile optimised
- 36% make mobile payments weekly
- 11% of consumers purchase via social media platforms & 75% of these do so via Facebook
- 7% of businesses accept payments via social platforms.



Part 4: Making your website mobile-friendly

Mobile is becoming the most common way people access the internet, so it's critical that your website is functional on smart-phone and tablet screens.

Mobile-optimised sites have added-value features, like the ability to use a smartphone's maps function to locate your business, or a button to dial your business phone number. Website and CRM systems such as WordPress often have the facility to optimise websites for mobile. Check with your website provider or work with a website designer to optimise your site.

It's also worth frequently checking that your website is optimised for mobile as both iPhone and Android update operating systems and apps regularly.



Part 5: Mobile communication apps and videoconferencing for staff

Having communication services that quickly help staff to problem solve, innovate, find answers and connect quickly are invaluable in business.

Some of the newer apps and videoconferencing tools:

Facebook Messenger

Facebook Messenger is quick and easy to use and allows Facebook users to chat with friends and colleagues both through a mobile app and on the main website.

WhatsApp

WhatsApp is a mobile messaging app that allows you to exchange messages without having to pay for SMS. WhatsApp Messenger is available for iPhone, BlackBerry, Android, Windows Phone and Nokia.

Skype

Via Skype you can have both audio and video conversation with someone over the Internet using the software application. There is a paid version of Skype for group videoconferences.

Google Hangouts and On Air

Google Hangouts are a useful way to videoconference and to 'screenshare' documents to people or to a group. Google Hangouts are free with a free Google account, free to have many people in a videoconference and can require less data on your smartphone than Skype. Setting up Google hangout may require downloading the Google Hangout app on your computer and having a staff member take people through the basics.

Google On Air allows you to broadcast in real-time to many people.

Further resources

If you're planning on using mobile devices to try and increase your business productivity, these resources may help. All information was current at the time of writing.

Distilled.net/training/mobile-seo-guide - Best practice for building your mobile-friendly site.

Hubaustralia.com - Co-working venues.

Business Communication Apps and Videoconferencing User guides:

Whatsapp.com - WhatsApp basics and download.

[Facebook.com/help/151024075021791](https://www.facebook.com/help/151024075021791) - Facebook Messenger basics.

Support.skype.com/en/skype - Skype basics and download.

Plus.google.com/hangouts - Google Hangouts basics.

[Support.google.com/plus/answer/2553119?hl=en](https://support.google.com/plus/answer/2553119?hl=en) - Get started with Google Hangouts On Air