REALISING THE GIFT OF TIME
ENTERPRISE AND GOVERNMENT TABLET SOLUTIONS
In today’s increasingly service driven economy, an organisation’s greatest asset – and cost – is in its workforce and their time. Optimising this time is at the heart of an organisation’s operational strategy.

The value of these mobile solutions is in their gift of time – both from a workforce productivity and multiplier perspective and also in their ability to provide workers the time to drive more engaging customer interactions. Although the variety of mobile form factors is only expanding and there is no single form factor that will meet every field worker’s needs, it is clear that the tablet form factor and its elegant balance of portability and productivity is evolving into a highly capable and impactful field mobile solution.

Enterprise and government organisations are validating tablet solutions with over 80% of FORTUNE 500 organisations currently deploying or testing tablets for their mobile workers. However, in today’s consumer influenced mobile IT landscape, what defines a strong enterprise tablet? How might enterprise needs vary by mobile worker function, especially when considering the unique requirements among frontline mobile workers such as field service?

From exposure to inclement environmental conditions, to specialised IT requirements and strict security support, how are these needs being met? Which mobile OS is most suitable for enterprise mobile applications where reliability, application sustainability and security are paramount?

The fact is there is not a “one size fits all” tablet solution and decisions should focus on identifying the solution that provides seamless time to value while balancing upfront costs with ongoing cost of ownership and support.

VDC Research was commissioned by Panasonic to conduct research among enterprise mobile IT decision makers and software developers to support the research VDC Research fielded a survey that was completed by 186 qualified respondents. The respondents consisted of individuals with direct experience and responsibilities for enterprise mobile solution design and application development either for their organisation or their organisation’s clients.

### TABLETS: THE EVOLVING PC FORM FACTOR

Over the next three years, we are expected to experience an explosion in tablet adoption, with shipments reaching almost 480 million tablets by 2016. Of these tablets, approximately 39% is either going to be directly issued by enterprise organisations or supported through a BYOD program.

Among enterprise IT decision makers evaluating solutions for frontline mobile workers, of the organisations that either deployed or planned to deploy tablets to their workforce, 31% were looking at these mobile devices as a notebook replacement and 30% as a handheld replacement.

Equally important is the fact that for organisations with mobile frontline workers, the tablet is being evaluated to support and mobilise entirely new workflows that had previously been supported with manual processes. For many organisations, deploying tablets is the catalyst for a broader initiative to review and adjust existing workflows to identify opportunities to streamline and improve processes - improving not only productivity but also the quality of service provided by these mobile workers.

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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The cost reduction and revenue growth benefits of tablets in today’s enterprise are far reaching and cannot be understated. At the same time, the complexities and challenges of a rapidly evolving enterprise market for tablets are just beginning to emerge. Key recommendations include:

LET THE APPLICATION AND ENVIRONMENT DRIVE TABLET SELECTION.
Understanding the conditions within which tablets are used is imperative to select the best fitting solution. Issues are far reaching as exposure to sunlight, water, vibration and dust can directly influence the success of the solution.

DON’T MAKE TABLET ACCESSORIES AN AFTER-THOUGHT.
Many enterprise tablet solutions are supported by third party accessories such as payment sleds, bar code scanners and others. These add-on devices can represent substantial upfront investments and often can be a key source of failure. Not properly anticipating accessory lifecycles and replacement/upgrade can adversely impact the success and ROI of a solution.

PREPARE FOR THE ‘HIDDEN COSTS’.
Understanding what the support requirements will be for tablets – from helpdesk calls to replacement and upgrades of mobile devices – is critical. Establish and track key support metrics. Poorly designed tablet solutions can result in a post deployment cost – including support and downtime – in excess of 80% of total solution TCO. The cost of supporting and managing a device post deployment is just as, if not more important than the upfront device investment.

PLAN FOR MORE TRAINING THAN YOU EXPECT.
Especially when migrating from alternative mobile solutions or more manual processes, the change(s) experienced using a tablet can be significant for employees.

FOCUS ON SUSTAINABLE TABLET APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT.
Lifecycle management for not only the mobile device, but also the application and any associated peripherals needs to be part of a broader mobile strategy. For more sophisticated enterprise mobility applications, the need for stability and reliability is critical.

TABLET BATTERY MANAGEMENT IS A KEY REQUIREMENT.
According to VDC’s research, approximately 60% of enterprises supporting tablets indicated their batteries were not lasting the entire shift “Frequently” or “Occasionally”. Better management of batteries, including the ability to replace them in the field, as well as services available to enterprises to better manage and monitor battery performance are all valuable features.