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Wireless and mobility - five-step wireless implementation plan

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It started with laptops and cell phones. Now it seems, everyone is going wireless, and changing how business is conducted.

Wireless technology has a lot of traditional benefits to offer businesses. Simply stated, wireless and mobility solutions improve your business processes, allowing you to do things better, faster and cheaper than before. In addition, mobility solutions empower your company to do some things that were previously impossible. You can use this in the marketplace to create a competitive advantage. Wireless is another tool an adaptive enterprise can use to benefit from change.

How do you get in on the wireless trend? Carefully. Methodically. Here's a 5-Step Primer to get you started with the best chance of success.

1. Envision your wireless future

First of all, resist the temptation to "throw money at the problem" and go on a gadget-buying binge. Instead, start your wireless integration process with a long, hard look at how your business operates today. Identify processes, approval points, responsibilities, workflow and cash flow. Do an overall analysis for the entire business and also for each department. Identify employees that benefit most from wireless. In most cases, email access is the first mobile application for companies. Mobile professionals need to be able to access precious company data via email and use industry-specific applications to manage the business. Sales reps may need to be able to collaborate with each other. Management may need a tighter process to provide real time sales data while evaluating sales opportunities, or real time access to inventory levels and available resources to commit to implementation schedules. Learn more about [HP's wireless sales force automation](#) solutions.

Next, identify inefficient practices such as paper trails. It might also be a good idea to gather input from your clients and your customers, to see if they have suggestions on how your business can improve. Then, envision what your

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company could look like in the future. With this exercise, you'll begin to see how wireless integration can have a dramatic effect on your business.

2. Ensure that your concepts are viable

Investigate available solutions to ensure they can be integrated into your existing infrastructure and process disciplines. Access which of the myriad of applications and wireless devices make best use of the technology available. Laptops (with networking cards or with built-in wireless capability) are obvious. But there are also [many other wireless devices](#) such as tablet PCs, barcode readers and handheld devices that can empower employees, create new services and help your business run more efficiently. From this appealing menu of choices, create your custom list of wireless initiatives. Make sure that every item on this list is secure. [Securing data](#) on the device and data that is being accessed while away from the desk is an absolute necessity in any mobile strategy.

Then, separate fantasy from feasible strategies. If you don't feel you can be objective, or lack the technical savvy to make decisions, bring in an IT consultant who can help you turn ideas into action or contact [HP](#) for help.

3. Run A controlled test

Start small. Keep your first initiatives manageable and measure for effect at regular intervals. Perhaps apply a wireless solution to one test application, such as automating a single sales or authorization process. Or limit your test to one part of your organization, such as a regional sales force or inventory. Test it for a month or two and then see how well it integrates with your wired network and all your existing business processes. Have concrete, well-defined, metrics for your test, such as improved customer satisfaction, time savings, cost savings or improvements in availability and uptime. One important point: make sure data and network security is maintained whenever you "go live" with a new wireless function.

4. Continue limited deployment

As you meet with success and work the kinks out of your initial wireless projects, perhaps add new wireless initiatives to the mix. Link a few wireless features and processes together and ensure that things continue to run smoothly as your business begins to benefit from wireless technology.

5. Implement company wide

Now that you know that wireless works, is secure, and is having a positive bottom-line effect on your business processes, it's time to initiate a full rollout. As before, plan ahead and set up assessment checkpoints down the road

to make sure you're reaping the maximum benefit, and to identify areas that still need some tweaking or improvement. Finally, resist the temptation to make everything wireless; it's a business tool and not a fashion statement. Make sure each new wireless implementation has some real ROI potential before you give it the green light.

Integrating wireless technology to your business may not be the easiest thing you ever do, but, if you do it properly, it may be one of the smartest and most rewarding.

If you'd like HP to assist you in evaluating the feasibility of a wireless pilot program, visit [HP's mobility solutions site for small and medium businesses](#) and complete a [questionnaire](#) and a representative will contact you.

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