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Business Transformation Through Technology

| JOHN MACY

Business transformation through technology is the theme for the Australian Human Resource Institute's HR Technology conference in October 2011. In 2010 the HR technology conference exhibition space and sponsorship packages sold out days after going on sale. Delegate registration reached the close off point three weeks before the conference started and everything about the conference lived up to expectations with praise coming from all sources. So it is the right forum to hear from industry professionals give their views and hear about their experience in transforming the business. But the thing I think most attendees would like to hear is how mobile devices have helped transform the business, or at least have the potential to.

Australians are usually early adopters for any new technology and mobile computing is no exception. When iPhones, BlackBerries and iPads first burst onto the scene several years ago Australians were very quick on the uptake. Now it is time to hear some case studies on whether they have achieved the expected benefits. But, the expected honest answer would probably be no: The reason is the preoccupation with social media rather than business apps and companies are still struggling to link social media with measurable business benefit. The status now is Australian companies are finding it difficult to establish the right policies and guidelines to focus the usage on business need rather than social communication. What is needed is outstanding case studies that can point to specific quantifiable benefits. The most likely success stories will probably involve collaboration and employee participation in information collection. That is, where employee self service helped companies collect information about employees, by making it easier to input data, now it goes to a new level of ease with mobile devices.

Unfortunately there are not a lot of business apps available for HR workforce analytics or to support general HR process functions. When checking the available apps for iPads you will find

there are recruitment apps, time recording apps, and even some payroll apps but little else. A recent LinkedIn group discussion surveyed what people were using their mobile devices for and responses indicated that most were using their mobile device as a substitute for their laptop. For example, use for emails, Skype, Go To Meeting, Dropbox, Webex, taking notes, and so on. Only one person indicated they use their iPad for SAP's Business ByDemand and no one mentioned Kronos or Workday iPad apps. That is a step forward but hardly enough to transform the business to a new level of efficiency.

It is hoped that the HR Technology conference in October 2011 will produce some success stories of how business transformation has come about through some existing technology or at least inspire some developers to build solutions.

About the Author: John Macy is a Senior Global Advisor and Vice President of Asia Pacific for Jeitosa Group International. He is an advocate of Services Oriented Architecture (SOA), Web services, component-based applications and business-driven standards. In 2002 he published the HR component software application standard and set up the first component software brokerage. He can be reached at john.macy@jeitosa.com.

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