



Business challenge

To better serve its line-of-business customers and reduce overhead costs, a global pharmaceuticals company needed to securely and efficiently manage nonstandard mobile devices across the organization.

Transformation

A Fortune 100 global pharmaceuticals company sought to streamline IT support for Internet of Things (IoT), wearables and other nonstandard devices deployed by its business units. The IT team used the IBM® MaaS360® with Watson™ unified endpoint management (UEM) tool to help drive productivity and innovation across the enterprise and minimize overhead costs.

Results

5–15 minutes to complete user enrollment

on nonstandard devices, helping increase employee satisfaction and productivity

Speeds IoT and other strategic business initiatives

without jeopardizing data security or privacy

~82,000 standard and nonstandard devices

supported by a cloud-based UEM solution that cuts overhead costs

Global pharmaceuticals company

Strategic endpoint and mobile initiatives receive security-rich IT support

Headquartered in the US, this research-based biomedical and pharmaceuticals company operates worldwide. It conducts drug research and develops medical treatments in several business areas, including primary care, specialty care, established products and emerging markets, oncology, animal health, nutrition, and consumer healthcare.

“People just expect technology to be there and work. MaaS360 has helped us make that a reality at the lowest operational cost.”

—Director of Mobile Operations & Support, global pharmaceuticals company

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Mobile outliers challenge enterprise IT

In an enterprise IT environment, an unmanaged device is essentially an unsecured device—and one that puts company data and assets at risk. IT departments need the ability to securely onboard and monitor every company and personal device employees use on the job. However, the list of devices individuals need to perform their jobs effectively just keeps getting longer—especially as companies start to develop business use cases for IoT and other smart technologies.

The IT specialists at a large, US-based pharmaceuticals company with research and production facilities around the world felt the pressures of this change. “I’m sure other large companies started out just like us, where mobile devices were used by a single person for a single purpose—to access email, contacts, calendar and other primary apps,” says the company’s Director of Mobile Operations & Support. Initially working under this “one person, one device” premise, his team sanctioned use of devices running only Apple iOS and Google Android operating systems.

The team also deployed the MaaS360 with Watson solution—delivered using a software as a service (SaaS) model on IBM Cloud™ infrastructure—as its

enterprise UEM platform. The solution provided clear visibility into and control over the company’s global device footprint, which grew to include more than 80,000 corporate-and employee-owned devices and approximately 800 apps. It also helped the team save time and reduce costs by automating key configuration and support processes.

Over time, the team expanded support for a wider variety of mobile devices, including regularly issuing Apple iPad tablets to sales teams for field work. However, outside the scope of standard device types such as smartphones and tablets, multiple business units began demanding a means to integrate new, shared devices into their business processes. This presented a challenge, as many of these devices didn’t meet corporate standards for approved use. Some manufacturing facilities, for example, wanted to use Zebra barcode scanners and Google Glass devices to boost productivity. Others wanted to employ Microsoft Surface Hub interactive whiteboards to facilitate collaboration.

In each case, the Mobile Operations & Support team, comprising just three individuals, had to grant a special exception for nonstandard device use and manually configure its existing MaaS360 with Watson environment to support a wider range of devices. Across the board, the team adhered to the company’s core requirements for device security, such as full encryption to safeguard

data security and privacy. Beyond that, the configurations varied by business unit and device type, depending on industry and government regulations and specific business controls.

Fielding more support requests for devices that deviated from corporate standards, the team’s response times slowed while overhead costs increased. The concerns didn’t stop there, as the team wanted to help keep employees satisfied in their work. “As part of IT, we’re looking to improve productivity but also the user experience. We want to make it a cool, fun place to work,” explains the director. The team turned to IBM to help scale its UEM capabilities to include nonstandard devices.

A unified platform streamlines IT support

After IBM helped rapidly develop a new, security-rich environment for managing nonstandard devices and integrated it with the company’s existing cloud-based MaaS360 with Watson platform. Having worked with the Mobile Operations & Support team for many years, IBM specialists applied their in-depth knowledge of the company’s endpoint management requirements to create distinct, automated workflows for nonstandard devices. IBM also facilitated discussions with different manufacturing vendors to validate APIs for their specific devices and platforms.

“Another MaaS360 instance was the perfect answer for us. It was quick to stand up; literally within the same day we had a new environment stood up. And we already understood the product, which is very easy and intuitive to use,” says the director.

Now, the team can fully manage both standard and nonstandard devices through a single UEM portal that automates end user registration, app provisions and updates, VPN and WiFi network connections, policy enforcements, and other functions. The team can also quickly onboard nonstandard devices according to policies and configurations specific to each business unit and device.

In addition to the solution’s ease of use, the IBM Cloud infrastructure can rapidly scale to accommodate the company’s growing mobile footprint, regardless of user and device numbers. “Given that we’re a global organization with 80,000-plus devices, we could have hundreds of device registrations on any given day for any given reason, but we’re not worried about load performance,” says the director. “The IBM system can handle it, and we trust it to continue working with our new nonstandard environment.”

Delivered through a SaaS model, the solution also minimizes infrastructure management tasks. The team can confidently focus on helping the business deploy new mobile technologies in innovative ways.

“MaaS360 offers the flexibility of supporting many different platforms through a single management console, limiting operational resource requirements without impacting our ability to serve our business needs.”

—Director of Mobile Operations & Support, global pharmaceuticals company

IT costs decrease as innovations increase

The Mobile Operations & Support team anticipates working with individual business units to onboard approximately 2,000 IoT and other new, nonstandard devices in the upcoming months. Employees can expect an excellent experience,

says the director. End users can complete the entire self-service enrollment process, from registration to app downloads, within 5–15 minutes. If users encounter problems, the IT team can provide remote support.

With unified endpoint management, the team of three can efficiently meet the needs of tens of thousands of users. “People just expect technology to be there and work. MaaS360 has helped us make that a reality at the lowest operational cost on our side,” says the director.

His team can give business units more freedom to innovate without jeopardizing security. “If we didn’t have the capability to support various platforms and device types, we couldn’t offer the business lines the flexibility to decide what is best for their business,” he explains. “We’re trying to give them every option possible to make our company successful, whether it’s research, manufacturing or sales.”

The team’s long-term relationship with IBM was also key to the solution’s success. “We’ve had a great partnership from the beginning with IBM and the MaaS360 product, and that continues day in and day out,” comments the Director. “They are experts with whom we continue to work hand-in-hand to build a roadmap for the future and solve our business problems.”

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Solution components

- IBM® MaaS360® with Watson™
- IBM Cloud™

Take the next step

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