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ITB11820

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This chapter appears in the book, *Unwired Business: Cases in Mobile Business*  
edited by Stuart Barnes and Eusebio Scornavacca © 2006, Idea Group Inc.

## Chapter IX

# How Mobile Technologies Enable Best Business Practice: A Case in the Fine-Paper Industry

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## Abstract

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*Within the last 10 years, a number of sophisticated mobile devices have become available to assist not only in managing appointments and contacts but also to provide a tool for enhancing user experience and introducing new collaborative ways of doing business. However, little conceptual thought and empirical illustration has been given to how industrial organisations are using the potential offered by mobile technology. This chapter is based on putting into practice the main conceptual ideas of the Freedom Economy in the domain of mobile business applications through action research methodology. We present an in-depth case study on implementing mobile solutions in the fine-paper industry and aim to investigate to what extent mobile technologies pose a challenge to contemporary industrial life and how they will eventually enable firms to achieve the best business practice.*

## Introduction

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With the increasing interest in mobile business applications, companies across industries are promised huge productivity benefits, faster business reporting for decision making, reduced operational costs, and increased customer satisfaction. As business always seeks ways to enhance productivity and profits, mobile technology seems to be the next logical step forward when considering IT investment decisions. Intelligent firms are considering the possible implications of m-commerce to boost productivity across many areas of their business by deploying both internal (m-workforce) and external (m-CRM, m-supply chain management) applications for enterprise systems. However, most predictions about the impact of mobile commerce in business look either uncertain or are overhyped by consulting bodies and most companies are holding back on investing in mobile technology until it is stable and the benefits are obvious. A clear expectation that the technology will be of great importance in the coming years is not enough. The inadequate knowledge of managers who do not have a clear idea of how to use the opportunities presented by mobile technology is one major factor inhibiting mobile business (Lehmann, Kuhn, & Lehner, 2004). Designing mobile enterprise solutions is a complex undertaking and requires maintaining a balance between a variety of existing corporate standards in industry and the innovativeness offered by modern technology. The ability to successfully implement modern technologies in organisations also needs a continuous upgrade of software and the adoption of new hardware where required skills and knowledge are not easily available (Bendeck, Kötting, Schaaf, Maurer, Valenti, & Robert, 2001). It is difficult to minimise the uncertainty and manage the risks involved in implementing mobile business solutions because the technology is immature and developing rapidly and the user base is inexperienced. The research reported in this paper was designed in help industrial organisations realise the locked up value of mobile technology. To facilitate an understanding of the potential of mobile technology for industry, the main conceptual ideas were adapted from the Freedom Economy developed by Keen and Mackintosh (2001) and were used to study and evaluate the business impact of the implementation of mobile technologies in three organisations.

After positioning our work with respect to mobile commerce, we outline our research framework powered by three essential rules of the Freedom Economy and describe the idea of business value with respect to mobile technology for industrial users. This will be followed by an in-depth analysis of the industrial case study, which involved three organisations where actual implementations of mobile technologies were designed to enhance customer service and raise the industry to another business level, before we draw conclusions.

## Three Freedoms in Mobile Business

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New mobility-related opportunities are open for business transformation, as a result of technology convergence in several areas including IP (Internet Protocol) networks and

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