Enterprise Case Study: Mast Mobile

How Mast Mobile’s implementation of Oracle BRM addresses the question of who pays for BYOD
Summary

Catalyst

More than 69% of all employees regularly use their personal devices for corporate purposes and the majority of smartphone and tablet owners use their devices for work at least occasionally. Although employees are using personal devices for work, globally only approximately 30% of employers either reimburse their employees for these expenses or provide corporate SIM cards to be used in those devices. In addition, many enterprises have struggled to set clear payment guidelines for employees participating in bring your own device (BYOD) programs and reimbursements can be an administrative burden. For the employee there is also an inconvenience associated with carrying multiple devices for work and personal use. As a result, there is a gap in the market for an option that will satisfy both enterprise and employee requirements for BYOD participation.

Mast Mobile has provided a unique solution to this issue. Leveraging Oracle Communications Billing and Revenue Management to support its software platform, it is able to offer an innovative service to enterprises and enterprise end users. Its solution allows employees to participate in BYOD while ensuring that enterprises and end users are accurately charged and billed for usage. It also allows companies to consolidate onto a single mobile communications platform.

Ovum view

Mast Mobile’s use of Oracle Communications Billing and Revenue Management is unique in that it employs a proven billing solution to offer an innovative mobile experience to enterprise end users. It uses the billing platform to put enterprises and end users in control of what devices are used in the workplace and how they are used, allowing enterprises to subsidize usage based on parameters that they set. By maintaining an agile business model and focusing on solving an issue that has not yet been addressed in the enterprise mobility domain, Mast Mobile is able to leverage its billing platform to become a potential disrupter of the enterprise telco market.

Key messages

- Mast Mobile has invested in a billing solution that can support its dual-number network control layer technology, which allows enterprise end users to have just one device for work and personal use.
- It offers a single solution that allows individuals to use the device of their choice, separating out business-related usage to be billed to the enterprise.
- Mast Mobile works closely with enterprises and allows them to define what usage they consider to be business-related and what usage they will cover for employee BYOD participants.
- Oracle Communications Billing and Revenue Management is providing Mast Mobile with a market-proven billing solution that is capable of handling split billing for enterprises and employees.
Lessons learned

Key lessons from this case study

Telcos that intend to embark on billing transformation projects should consider the importance of learning from similar implementations, taking into consideration the fact that individual requirements and circumstances will vary.

**Establish key business objectives before selecting a vendor**

It is important that before undertaking a project a telco has a clear understanding of what it is seeking to accomplish. Objectives should be transparent and represent the needs of each department. Telcos have traditionally operated in silos and as a result additional revenues and resources have been wasted on acquiring new solutions that meet only the specific needs of a department or business issue. By establishing a clear and high-level view of the overall business objectives, telcos can develop their criteria for selecting a billing solution. Telcos should ask themselves various questions:

- What are we attempting to accomplish?
- What are our end goals?
- Do we need more flexibility to launch new services and offerings?
- Are we looking to tailor our marketing efforts based on customer usage?
- How fast are the market expectations and enabling technologies changing?

Only once the business objectives have been established and clearly outlined throughout the organization can a telco begin the process of identifying the best vendors.

**Keep an open mind in the vendor selection process**

Telcos may be surprised to find that a disciplined review of criteria for selecting vendors may lead to unexpected partners. Established business objectives and solution criteria will help telcos begin to evaluate the capabilities of potential vendors. Brand awareness can be a big driver for many looking to select a vendor, but it is even more important to weigh a variety of vendors, ranging from the large, well-known vendors to the smaller, niche players. Tier-2 and tier-3 telcos may be surprised to find that a larger vendor may meet their billing needs and tier-1 telcos may find that a small, more niche vendor best meets their needs.

**Get the most out of your billing solution by keeping business models agile**

To truly reap the benefits of their billing solutions telcos must change their business models and begin to think like OTT players. What makes OTT players disruptive is their ability to listen to the market and adjust their priorities to address current issues that have not yet been solved. Telcos are in a transitional phase where pressure is being placed on them to adapt immediately or lose out on customers and revenues. Mast Mobile’s business model is agile, keeping the customer experience at the forefront of business operations. Doing so allows it to work quickly to make the necessary adjustments and rely on its billing systems to support new product and service launches to monetize its efforts.
Mast Mobile’s journey to change the BYOD landscape

Company overview

Mast Mobile is a start-up software company founded in New York that offers mobile communication platforms and related services to enterprises.

Mast Mobile was started with the goal of integrating the enterprise functionality usually found only in in-office communications services into a mobile platform and improving the overall customer experience for enterprise end users. Today employees have little, if any, say in which devices and business applications they use in the workplace. As a result, many turn to using their personal devices for work. This poses a problem to the enterprise for several reasons. In addition to concerns around ensuring that employees retain and use their corporate phone numbers, security is a worry for enterprises. Solutions to address this trend have included BYOD programs, in which the employee gets to use the device of their choice and in turn the enterprise provides them with either a SIM card or a monthly voucher to cover the charges. This is a favorable option for employees, but enterprises have viewed BYOD with suspicion, fearing paying for employees’ personal usage of these devices.

Mast Mobile was founded in 2013 in response to the fact that no options on the market offered a unified solution to all of these challenges. It aims to fill this void by offering two numbers on one mobile device, split billing for enterprises, easy device provisioning and policy management, and core desk phone functionality on mobile devices.

Transforming the end-user mobile experience is at the core of Mast Mobile’s strategy

Smart devices and ubiquitous connectivity are changing not just personal consumption habits but work habits as well. Consumers’ need for constant connectivity has blurred the lines between work life and personal life. In a survey conducted by Ovum, 69.2% of all employees reported using their personal devices for corporate reasons. Moreover, only 36.3% of employees who reported using their own smartphone for work have signed up to a corporate BYOD program. Enterprises’ apprehension toward adopting BYOD programs is the result of concerns around sorting out who pays for what; enterprises fear that they will end up paying for their employees’ personal usage of these devices.

As a solution to this, Mast Mobile offers enterprise end users a dual-number mobile communication platform that works with standard devices and SIM cards. Mast Mobile is not the first company to offer a dual-number solution; what makes its business model unique is the go-to-market approach. Many companies with similar technology choose to work directly with telcos to get through to enterprises. Mast Mobile, on the other hand, decided against this route in order to maintain full control over the end-user experience.

Although Mast Mobile defines itself as a software company that offers mobile services to enterprises, it is an MVNO in the technical sense of the word. By thinking like a software company but operating as an MVNO, Mast Mobile can offer mobile services to its customers but keep the focus on developing new technology to improve the end-user experience. The dual-number network control layer technology makes it easy for Mast Mobile to differentiate what usage should be charged to the enterprise and what should be charged to the end-user on their personal bill.
Within the Mast Mobile portal the enterprise defines a range of parameters as to what they consider to be business and personal usage for different groups of employees. An enterprise may choose to have certain webpages, such as social media sites, charged as personal usage. Conversely, they may choose to consider only certain webpages business usage and regard all others as personal usage. To simplify the process, Mast Mobile also works with the enterprise to sync its company directory and client database and automatically code all the directory’s contacts to business use. By working closely with enterprises, Mast Mobile makes billing even more straightforward.

**Mast Mobile selected a billing solution that would allow it to manage split billing for enterprises**

**Billing solution criteria and selection**

Before Mast Mobile set out to find a billing solution that met its needs, it first had to establish clear business objectives that would guide its business strategy. The company set out to find a billing solution that would allow it both to offer a unified mobile experience for enterprise end users and to meet the billing needs of the enterprise (while still offering the quality of service and autonomy that end users would expect from their personal mobile service providers). With these objectives in mind, Mast Mobile was able to outline five key criteria of a vendor billing solution, as shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Billing solution selection criteria**

![Billing solution selection criteria diagram](source: Ovum, Mast Mobile)

**Robust product catalog**

Billing for telcos can be quite complex and advances in technology and service deployments can introduce layers of complexity into the billing chain. For Mast Mobile, which offers unique billing for its customers, having a solution that offered a robust product catalog was important, particularly in the early days of the business. The ability to customize the solution was another important factor for the company as it sought to create billing hierarchy systems for enterprises and end users who may link
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to shared plans. Its selected solution provided it with these billing building blocks in the form of pre-integrated products that specified charging events such as recurring fees and usage events, as well as offering the ability to automatically associate each event with the appropriate rate plan.

Agile

Agility was one of the most crucial factors for Mast Mobile in selecting the right billing solution. Mast Mobile’s agile business model and focus on constant adaptation to current market conditions requires a billing system that is equally agile. One of the driving factors behind employees using personal devices in lieu of enterprise-issued equipment is the lack of options in equipment and applications on these devices. As a result, it is important that Mast Mobile be free to launch and remove new applications and services that speak to current customer needs without the constraints of a rigid billing system that requires months to deploy a new service.

Scalable

Though it is still in its early stages as a company, Mast Mobile sees its business strategy as both innovative and a potential disruptor among telcos selling into enterprises. As such, it was important for it to have a billing solution that was scalable and as capable of handling a small number of transactions as of handling a large number of transactions. Mast Mobile’s plans to expand its services internationally also required a solution that would scale to encompass global users.

Market tested

Though scalability, agility, and a robust product catalog were all important qualities for Mast Mobile, it was equally important that its selected billing solution had successfully and credibly demonstrated these qualities in the market. Mast Mobile required an array of use cases for how the vendor’s solution had helped other telcos accomplish similar objectives in the market.

Capital efficient

As with any start-up company, affordability played a big part in the solution selection process. Mast Mobile was looking for a vendor that was able and willing to be flexible and that could offer a contract and pricing structure that would support financial growth, especially in its early years. The billing solution that Mast Mobile selected not only met its top solution criteria but also allowed it to secure a deal that promoted financial success in the early years so that it would have the opportunity to grow and expand in the later years of the contract.

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<th>Table 1: Oracle Communications Billing and Revenue Management</th>
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Source: Oracle
Bringing the strategy to life

Implementation and rollout

Mast Mobile decided to use Oracle Communications Billing and Revenue Management. The implementation and rollout phase of the solution was completed within a year of the billing solution criteria being established. Once Mast Mobile had set the objectives for what it wanted to accomplish with its billing platform and established a criteria list for selecting a vendor to work with, it was able to sign an agreement with Oracle in 2014. As a part of a multiyear agreement, Mast Mobile opted to use Oracle Communications Billing and Revenue Management in partnership with Minacs to manage and operate the billing platform. Oracle and Minacs worked together to complete the implementation and rollout of the billing platform less than a year after Mast Mobile established the solution criteria and just six months after the agreement was signed with Oracle.

![Figure 2: Implementation timeline](Source: Ovum, Mast Mobile)

Outcome assessment

Mast Mobile officially launched its services in the US as of May 2015, having signed its first enterprise client, a digital marketing company based in New York, in April 2015. The company has had more than 20 companies participating the beta period since January 2015 and is now beginning to move these companies onto commercial agreements.

Mast Mobile’s billing platform has so far given it both the support and the confidence it needs to offer an innovative enterprise mobile experience. The company has launched its enterprise portal, which makes the sign-up process for new end-user subscribers quick and easy – a “two click” process. Enterprises will have the option to preorder a number of devices and SIM cards to keep in stock locally. When a company wants to add a new end user, it simply uses the portal to enter details such as personal contact and billing information, department, and job title to activate the business service.
Once the user has completed the sign-up process for the personal service via the portal, the service is activated and they can start using Mast Mobile’s service.

Using the Oracle Communications Billing and Revenue Management solution has given Mast Mobile confidence that all revenues will be captured. This means that it can spend less time on activating customers and focus more on monetizing services.

In addition to the nationwide rollout in the US in May 2015, Mast Mobile is looking forward to the launch of a new family plan option for end users. This is the logical next step toward the company’s objective of being a single solution for mobile users. It will use Oracle Communications Billing and Revenue Management to launch additional software services that integrate data from the mobile network into other enterprise applications, starting with CRM systems.

In Ovum’s view, Mast Mobile’s use of Oracle Communications Billing and Revenue Management is an example of a telco using a billing solution to offer an innovative, over-the-top, quality mobile service.

Appendix

Methodology

This independent research report was prepared with the support and approval of Mast Mobile. It is based on interviews with Mast Mobile executives and information provided by the service provider.

Further reading

Oracle’s Industry Connect highlights the role of revenue management for next-gen telcos, IT0012-000105 (April 2015)

Telcos must look beyond current business models for sustainable profits, IT0012-000094 (February 2015)

Employee Mobility Survey 2014 Results: BYOD and Enterprise Approaches to Mobility Management, IT0021-000020 (September 2014)

Multi-market BYOD Survey Results: Who Pays for BYOD?TE007-000681 (June 2013)

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