Learn Best Practices for Mobile Device Lifecycle Management

10-Minute Enterprise Mobility Masterclass #2

With Ross Homans, Vice President, Operational Programs at Stratix

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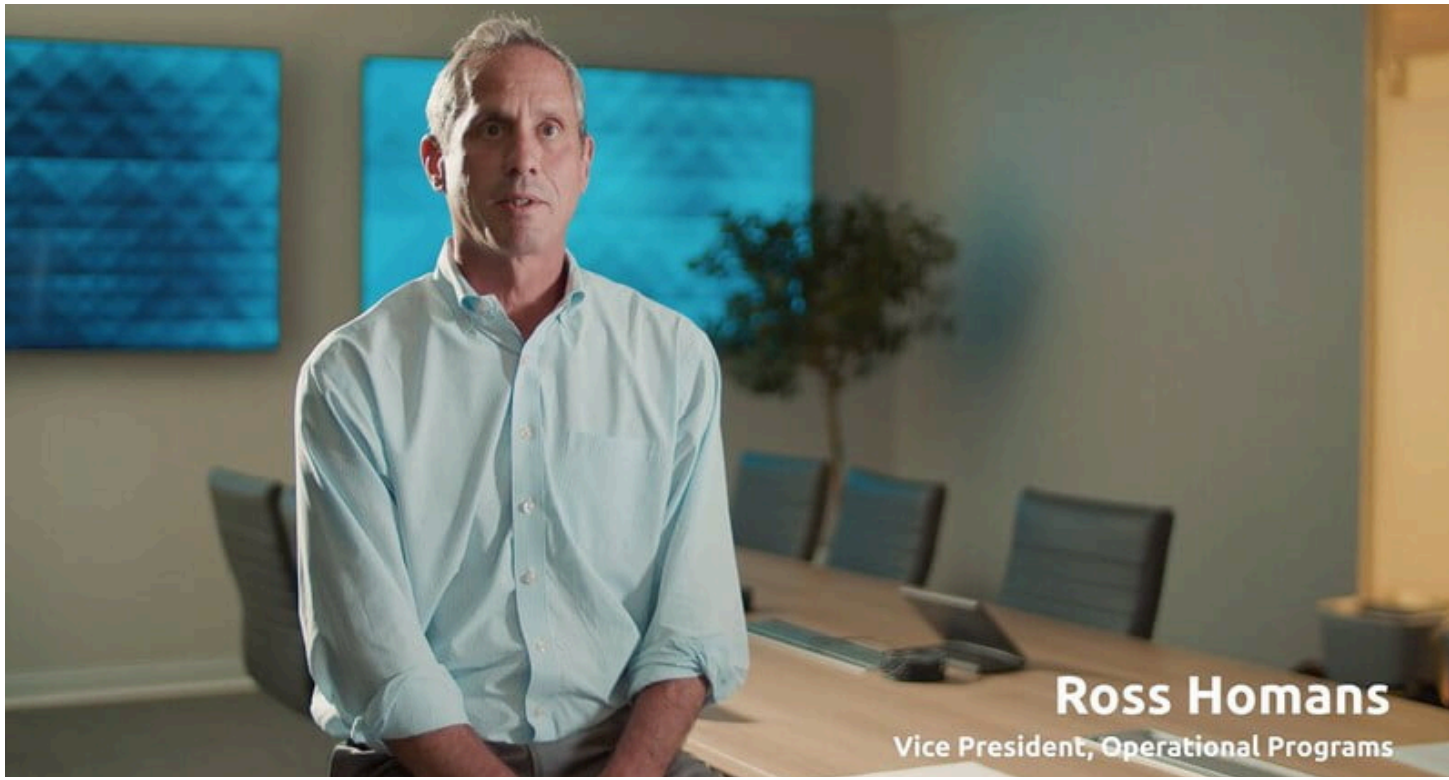
Why Comprehensive Mobile Device Lifecycle Management is so Important

Meet Your Instructor

Take Care of Your Devices, and They Will Take Care of You

No matter how well your mobility plan is designed, it will still fall short if you don't have a comprehensive and well-run mobile device lifecycle management program. Not getting it right can drastically affect productivity, downtime, and end-user experiences.

You must be able to efficiently obtain devices, get them set up, distribute them, always know where they are, and repair and replace them if they fail. When they reach end-of-life, you need to recover devices and securely dispose of—or repurpose them—in a secure and environmentally responsible way.



About the Class With Ross Homans, Vice President, Operational Programs

About Your Instructor

Since joining Stratix over 20 years ago, Ross has served in various field and Operations management roles. He was the enterprise mobile innovator who designed the company's initial Mobile Provisioning & Deployment Center in 1999. Today, Ross supports and continues to enhance Stratix' comprehensive suite of Mobile Managed Services (MMS). Connect with Ross on LinkedIn.

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Start Your Lifecycle with Strategic Procurement

Buy Smart

Procuring devices isn't as easy as it sounds. Technology is constantly evolving and changing. Keeping up with the latest hardware and software developments is a challenge. If you have relationships with the relevant OEMs or vendors, now is the time to leverage them. Not only does that give you negotiating power, but you also have access to information that can be pertinent, like how long the manufacturer plans to sell the device you've chosen for your solution. The last thing you need is for it to no longer be available right in the middle of your planned lifecycle.

Along with devices, your procurement plan must include gathering all the needed peripherals and software licenses so they're available for your kitting and configuration team at the right time.

Juggling Multiple Vendors

Juggling all the needed suppliers is often complicated and onerous for IT administrators. One of the advantages of partnering with a Mobile Managed Services Provider (MMSP) is that you get a single point of contact who develops and manages relationships with OEMs, software providers, and accessory distributors for you.

Environment

A key consideration when selecting your devices is to think about the environment where device will be used. Different working environments can ultimately dictate the types of devices you may need to choose, including hardware characteristics and specs such as the following:

- Device form factors, sizes, and weights
- Connectivity and networking requirements
- Hardware durability requirements
- Resistance to extreme or unique environmental factors
- Safety certifications
- Security requirements

Mobile solutions typically need to fit into your environment in a number of these different ways, so make sure you're evaluating the right technologies for the job while balancing them against other end user needs.

Learn more about selecting devices for your solution in our first masterclass, How to Design Enterprise Mobile Solutions the Right Way.

Learn More Opportunity:

How Managed Mobile Services Help Keep a Lid on Costs

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of mobile devices for a range of industries. Given the urgency with which companies had to adapt, many were unable to carefully evaluate the range of deployment options and the associated costs. This article walks through these considerations and how enterprises can best set themselves up for success. Read the Blog >

Is In-House Mobile Lifecycle Management Better?

Mobile devices are a ubiquitous part of modern life, bringing a familiar comfort with setting up, operating and managing them for our personal lives. That comfort, however, fosters a myth that it's just as simple for enterprises to do the same for their employees. Let's see how the myth of "In-house Managed Device Lifecycle Management is Better" stands up to some modern business realities. Read the Blog >

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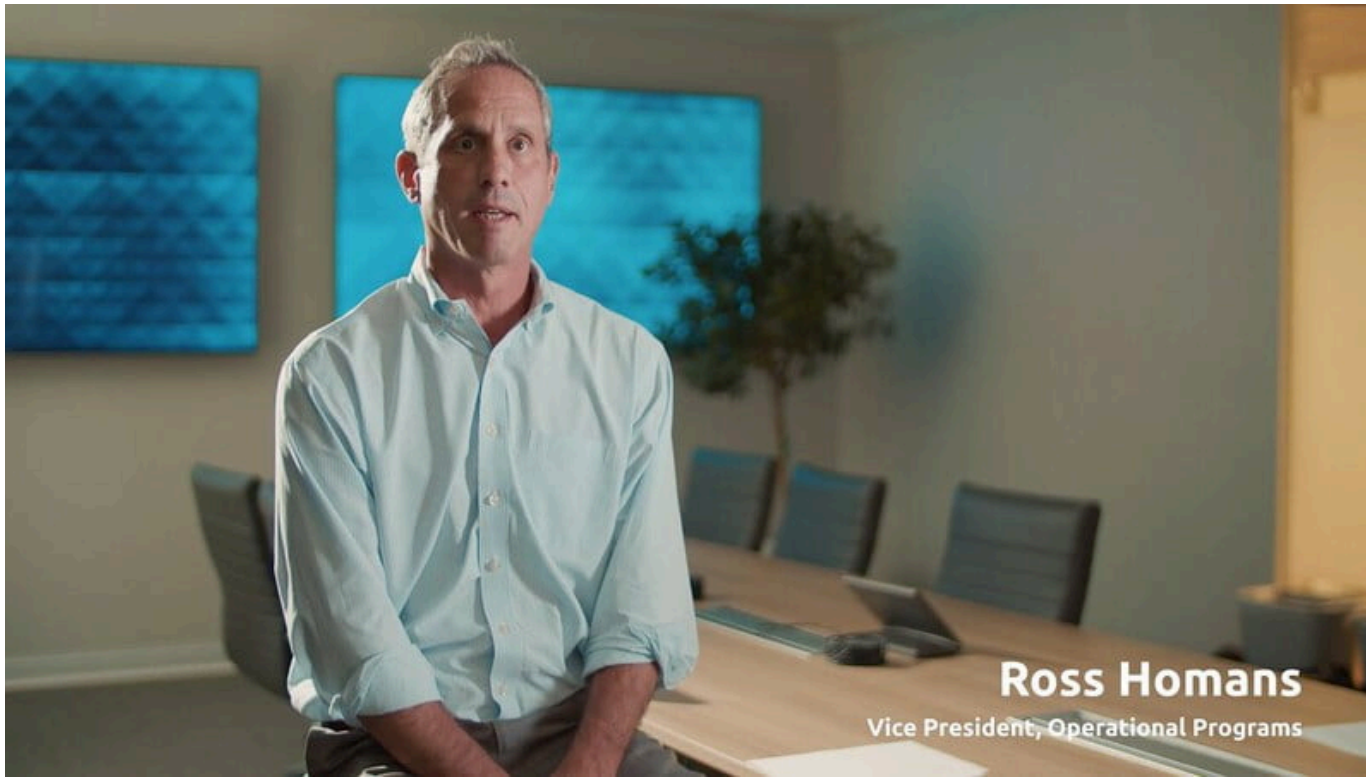
A Strong Rollout Equals Momentum

Set the State for Success

Before distributing your devices, you want to stage them to be out-of-the-box ready for your end users. Failing to do so can seriously impact solution adoption rates. Kitting is where the device and all the needed peripherals are gathered into one package. Configuration is the actual setup of the device. Kitting and configuration are areas where many organizations struggle because of their inability to achieve the needed scale to roll out hundreds or thousands of devices quickly, efficiently, and accurately.



Rolling Out Mobile at Scale Can be Hard

Configuration

The configuration process begins with receiving all your devices from the manufacturer and effectively tracking them in an asset tracking platform. You need a way to always know where a device is throughout its entire lifecycle with your organization. At Stratix, we use our proprietary itrac360 platform for a cradle-to-grave view in one place—from procurement, provisioning, and activation to repair, technical support, and decommissioning. Knowing which location or which employee has been assigned which device from the start is critical. If asset tracking is not done well from day one, then an organization will be chasing false or partial data for years.

Your device configuration will depend on how much you intend to do manually before the device is distributed to the end user and how much will be automated. A typical configuration will often include functional testing, enrolling the device with the carrier network along with a Mobile Device Management (MDM), Enterprise Mobility Management (EMM), or Unified Endpoint Management (UEM) platform. Depending on the selected management system, configuration, security, applications, content, and identity management can be continuously updated even after the device is deployed. We'll talk more about continuous device-level support in our third masterclass.

Best practices for configuration include automating the step-by-step loading and a comprehensive checklist for the technician doing the work to ensure no steps are missed.

Kitting

After the configuration process, you will need to effectively package all the devices for the best end-user experience. Think about all the components to be packaged together and

Hidden Costs of Mobile Lifecycle Management

delivered, such as cords, headphones, cases, and instructions. Details such as the box type and labeling of the boxes for efficient deployment need to be thought of, so devices are ready to go at this stage.

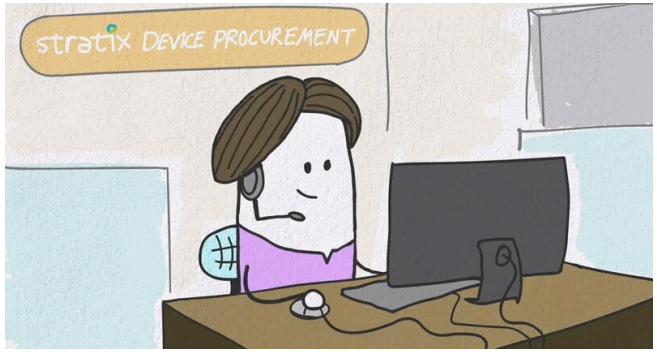
Effective kitting includes having a dedicated space and the needed staffing with an organized process for gathering the devices and peripherals together into packages. Quality assurance checks should be done to make sure the devices are functioning as they should, and there are no defects in the peripherals.

Deployment

Effective deployment includes efficient

distribution and asset tracking that gets devices where they need to go when they need to get there. Large deployments are usually quite complex. For example, deploying to one location is easy but deploying to multiple locations requires a lot of coordination and organization, especially if it is deployment to individual employees at their home addresses. Deployment portals where employees can arrange the specifics of deliveries help.

Don't forget change management. You don't want to just hand off devices and expect end users to get on with it. Your mobile solution blueprint should have included how you communicate and offer training and support to make the transition go as smoothly as possible.



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Mobile Deployment: You're Going to Need a Bigger Boat
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Real-time Asset Tracking Can Improve Mobile Device Lifecycle Management
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Podcast

The True Cost of Mobile Technology: How Fully Understanding Your Total Cost of Ownership Can Improve ROI
Listen to Ross explain how when you have full visibility of your total costs, you can make better strategic decisions that'll bring you a higher return on your mobile technology investment.

Listen to Episode >

Case Study

Railroad Transforms Train Management with Mobile Devices
One of the nation's largest railroad systems wanted to leverage mobile technology in the field for its conductors to assemble trains and manage pickups and drop-offs along the route.

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Good Lifecycle Management Isn't 'Fire and Forget'

Be Ready When Things Go Wrong

Procurement and distribution are just the beginning of mobile device lifecycle management. It also includes your procedures for when a device fails, or there are other problems. If these "Day 2" issues are not planned and mapped, there is a significant risk that the adoption of the solution in the field may suffer, which impacts productivity and, ultimately, ROI.

Spare Pool/Advanced Exchange

The most efficient way to minimize downtime is to keep a spare pool of devices that can be quickly swapped out for ones that aren't working properly. Few organizations have "pencil and paper" backup plans, so when a device does fail, it is imperative to have a process in place to quickly replace that device with one fully provisioned and ready to use. You can significantly reduce costs if you have a remote support system in place with a help desk technician who can determine if the device really needs to be swapped out. We'll delve more into support best practices in the third masterclass, but an effective troubleshooting and remote support process can mitigate unnecessary replacements. Stratix data shows that when a user calls into our mobile help desk for support, 85 times out of 100, it is not the device. This greatly reduces replacement

Why It's Important to Have an End-To-End Mobile Device Lifecycle Management Plan

shipping costs, spare pool investments, and boosts employee productivity.

Depending on the geographic distribution of your organization, you may want your spare pool on-site or in centralized locations where devices can be quickly shipped overnight to where they need to go. Your system should include getting broken devices back for repair and tracking, so you always know where everything is and its status.

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Beyond Deployment, How Comprehensive Mobile Device Lifecycle Management Drives Higher ROI
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Data Sheet: Depot Repair & Spare Pool Management
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Repair

The first part of an efficient repair program is active management. You don't want potentially valuable devices gathering dust somewhere, especially those activated on a network. Part of your organization must be designated to handle repairs with set turnaround time expectations.

Depending on the nature of the needed repairs, you'll either need the necessary in-house expertise or an agreement with the vendor/ manufacturer for service. Unexpected out-of-warranty charges can impact your costs, so have an understanding of what's covered and for how long at the device level, not the overall contract level.

This is another area where a partnership with an MMSP can lower costs and reduce headaches. An MMSP will handle repair logistics to get the device to the OEM or do the work themselves. They also offer vendor consolidation, so someone else is managing the relationships, contracts, and tracking warranty periods, etc.

End-of-Life is Important Too

All good things come to an end, and it's the same with mobile technology. Lifecycles are typically shorter for mobile devices. PCs typically last 3-5 years in the business world, but mobile devices average about two. At some point, devices need to be retired, and your mobile device lifecycle management system should include IT Asset Disposition (ITAD) that's set up to do it efficiently and responsibly while recovering as much value as possible. Not having a plan can result in penalties if leased equipment isn't returned on time.

Security

Retired devices can potentially be the source of costly data breaches if they fall into the wrong hands. That means they need to be kept secure and tracked all the way back to where they'll be wiped of any information they contain. Reputable ITAD providers use military-grade wiping and/or shredding procedures with a documented chain of custody.

Repurposing

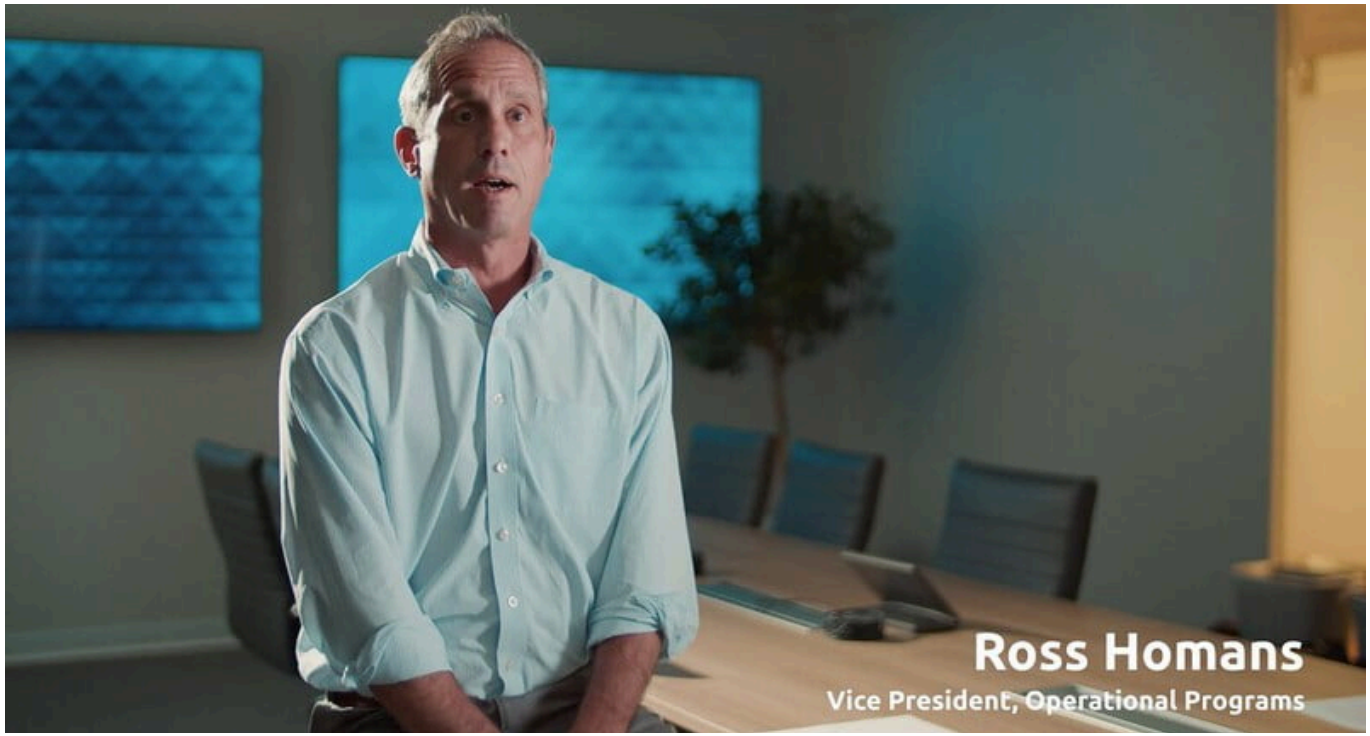
Even if devices have reached end-of-life for your organization's purposes, they may still have value elsewhere. Once sanitized of your organization's data, many can be resold. The money can offset the cost of replacement technology, and reselling reduces the amount of e-waste going into landfills.

Recycling

Devices that have no value need to be recycled responsibly. Electronic waste is full of hazardous materials like heavy metals. Not only is recycling the right thing to do, but your organization also doesn't want to end up on the news because of irresponsible behavior. Reputable ITAD providers have an international R2 certification that shows they're following best practices.

Get a Good Return on Your Investment

A mobility solution represents a significant amount of capital and organizational resources, so it’s important to get it right to maximize ROI. After design, comprehensive lifecycle management helps ensure that each device is deployed where it needs to go and is ready to go out of the box. It then helps keep devices running and always available to minimize downtime and deliver good end-user experiences. When devices reach end of life, they're disposed of responsibly and in a way to recover as much value as possible.



IT Asset Disposal

In our next class, we'll look at best practices for mobile support services, from help desk to how Mobile Device Management solutions are essential for security, efficiency, and reducing costs.

Congratulations on completing *Learn Best Practices for Mobile Device Lifecycle Management*

Got more questions, ideas, or challenges to solve? We're here to help. Sign up for office hours with our subject matter experts to get your questions answered.