

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD): Hot or Not?

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BYOD is the hottest acronym in IT since ITIL. Whether professionals are a part of a “bring your own device” (BYOD) program, on a team that supports such a program, thinking about adding a BYOD program, or have no association with BYOD outside of their own curiosity, they want to know what is going on with BYOD. The response to the online Research Corner survey on this topic, conducted in January and February 2012, is proof of that: The survey received 844 responses from support professionals in more than thirty-five industries (more than any past Research Corner survey—and this resulting report was the only incentive).

The results presented in this report speak to the current level of popularity and current practices of the BYOD programs across the IT service and technical support community. This report also identifies the drivers that motivate the implementation of these programs, as well as employee satisfaction associated with BYOD for each type of device.

Survey Results

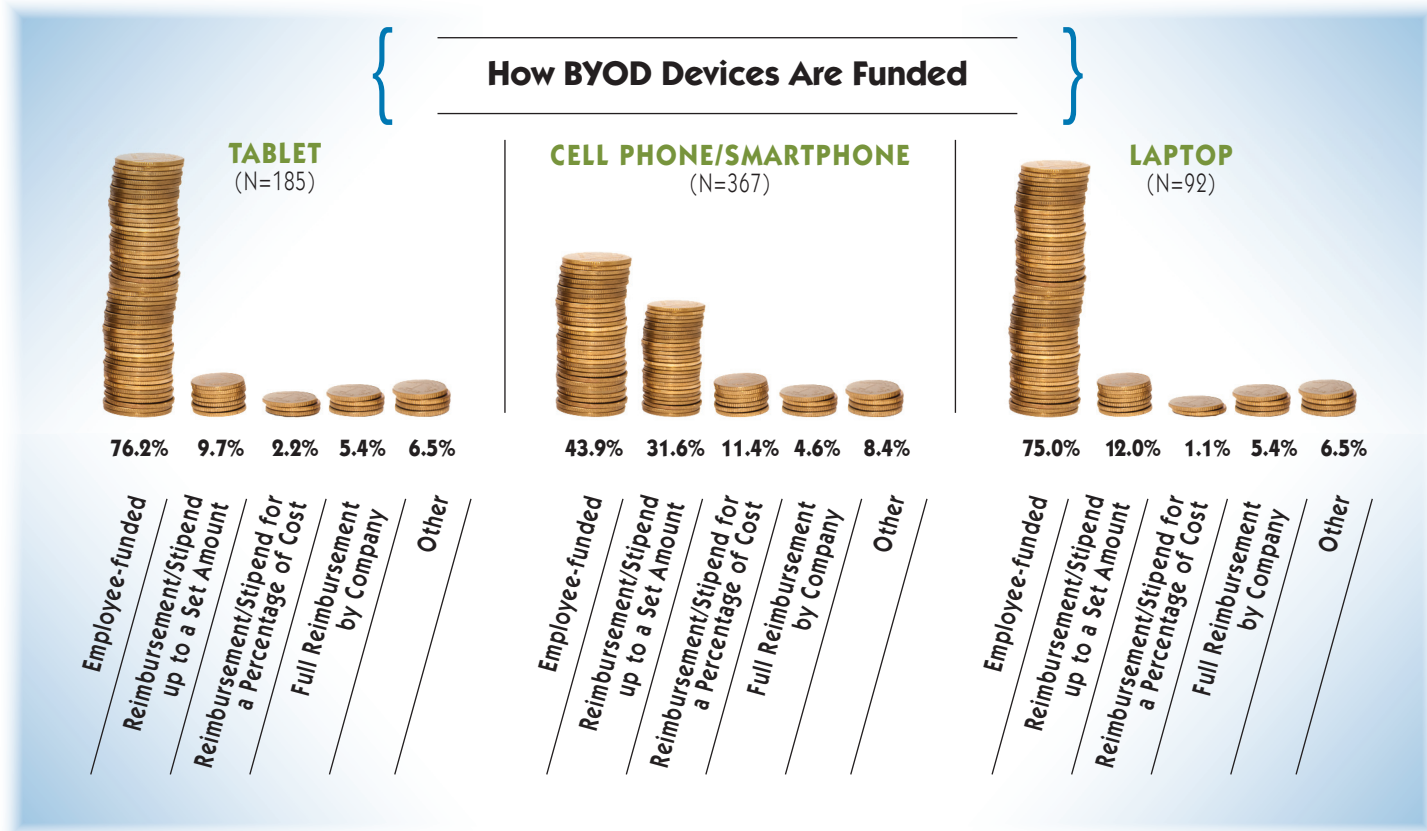
Many companies have adopted BYOD programs through which either some or all employees supply their own device(s) to perform their work duties. In fact almost half (47%) of the companies have BYOD programs for tablets, cell phones/smartphones, and/or laptops. The results, broken down by type of device, are presented in the chart below.



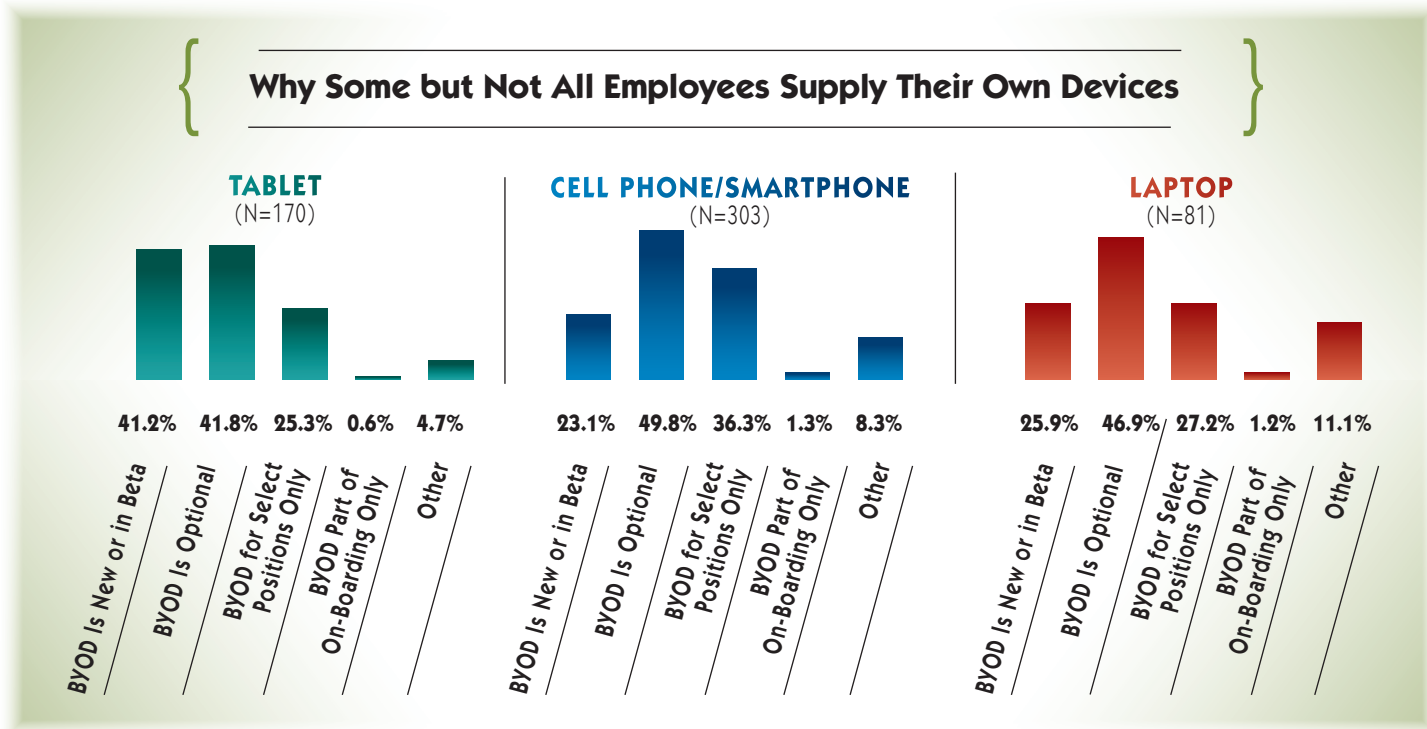
Funding

How companies are choosing to fund these devices varies. While budget is not the most pressing driver for BYOD implementation (we will discuss that in the section on motivating factors), it does appear that organizations are taking the opportunity to move to more cost-effective solutions, such as employee funding for devices. Most BYOD tablets and laptops are funded by the employee, with no assistance from the company. This also is the most popular way to fund cell phones/smartphones, though many companies do provide a stipend for phone devices. The most common “Other” response for tablets is usually some other combination of self-

funding and corporate funding. As for cell phones/smartphones, the most common “Other” response is that the phone is purchased by the employee and the company pays for the usage. Finally, some companies’ funding policies depend on the employee’s position in the company.



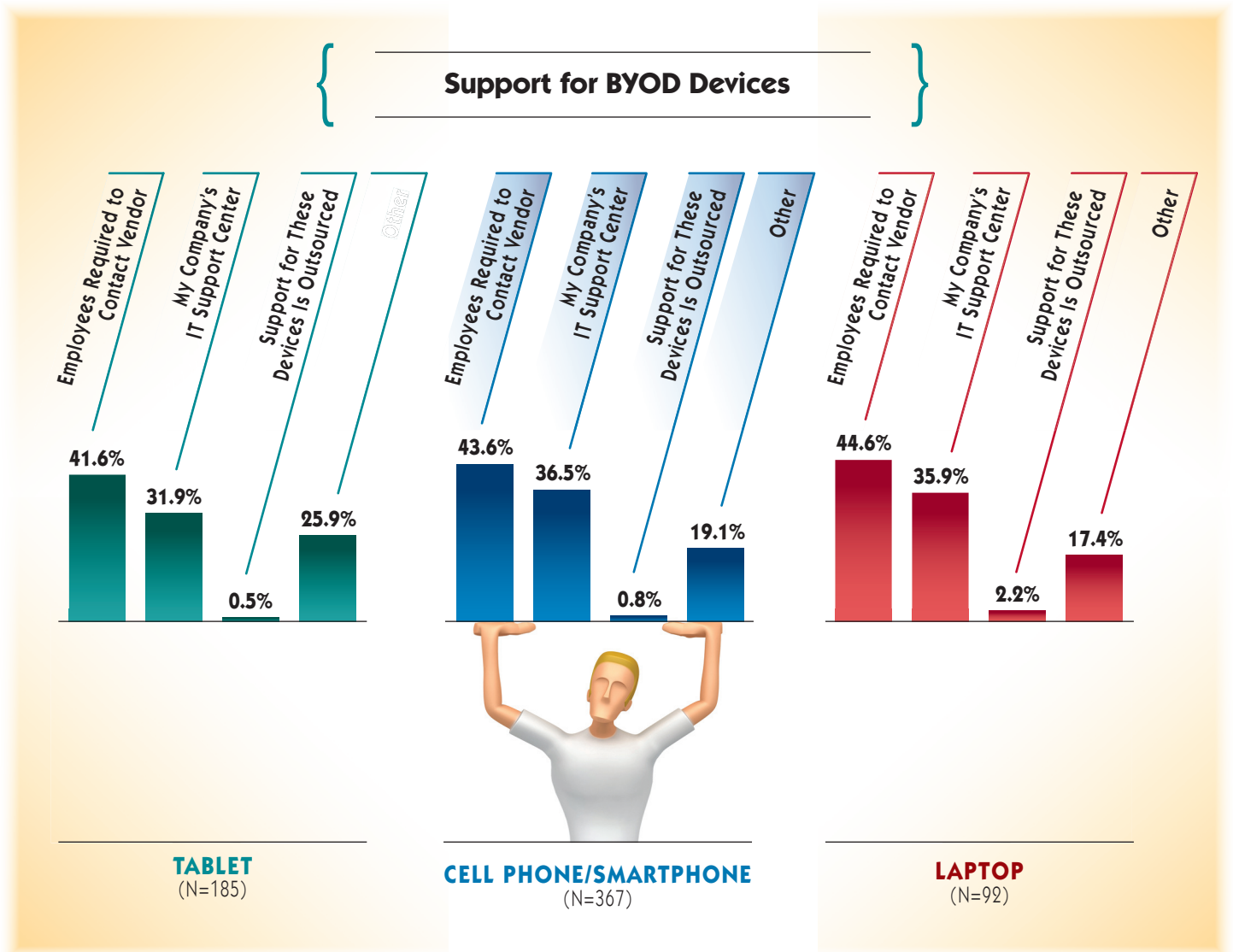
Some vs. All



As seen in the first chart, it is more common for companies to have *some* employees supply their own device rather than *all* employees. The most common reason for limited BYOD programs (i.e., the program does not apply to all employees) is that it is optional and voluntary: employees are allowed to choose to participate. Another reason is the BYOD program's maturity. For example, a new program (or one still in beta) is the second most common explanation for why only some employees supply their own tablets. Furthermore, for cell phones/smartphones and laptops, employee position is the second most common determining factor in whether or not they supply their own devices.

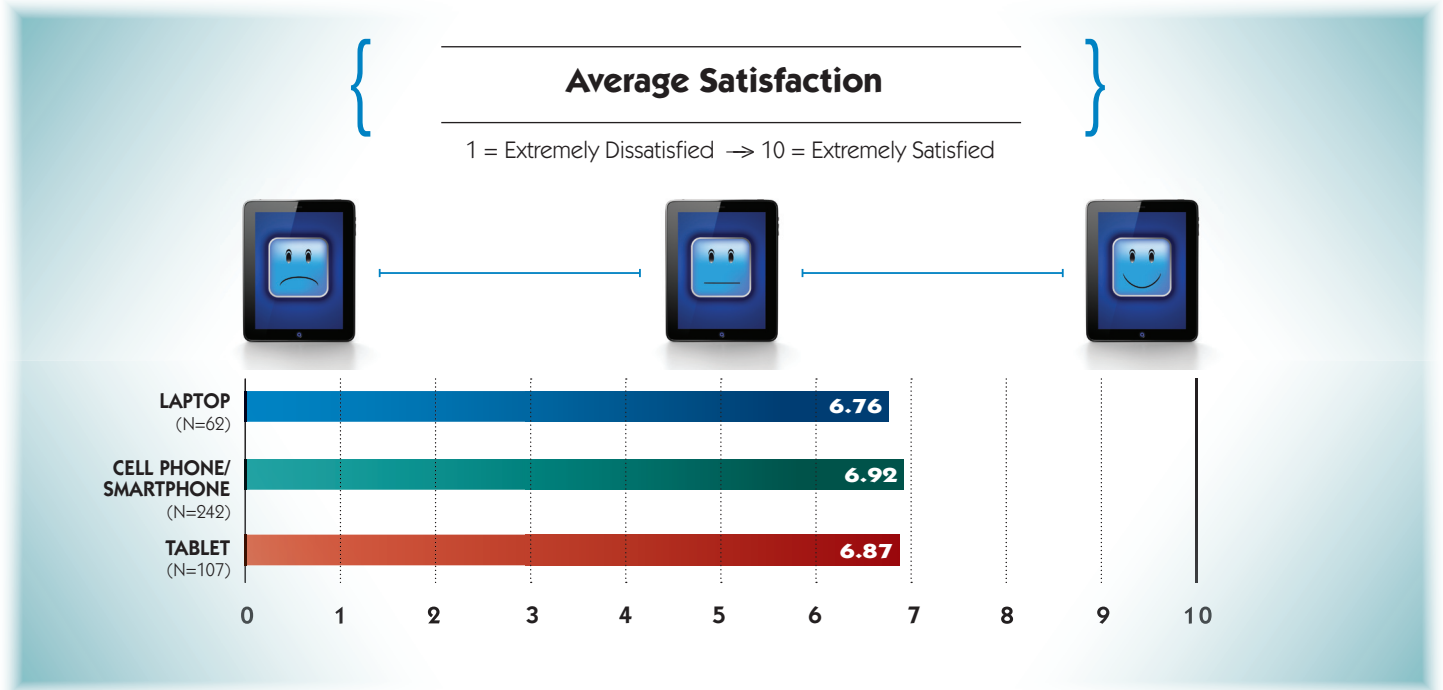
BYOD Support

When employees bring their own devices to work as part of company policy, who supports the devices? The most common response for all types of devices is the vendor. For each type of device, over 40 percent of companies that allow employees to supply their own devices require the employees to contact the vendor directly. About one-third of organizations have the IT support center support the BYOD devices, and minimal support of these devices is being outsourced. Almost all "Other" responses report that they have a combination of support center and vendor support. They either provide "best effort" support at the support center before sending the employee to the vendor, or the support center is limited to connectivity and/or application support, leaving other issues, such as hardware support, to the vendor.



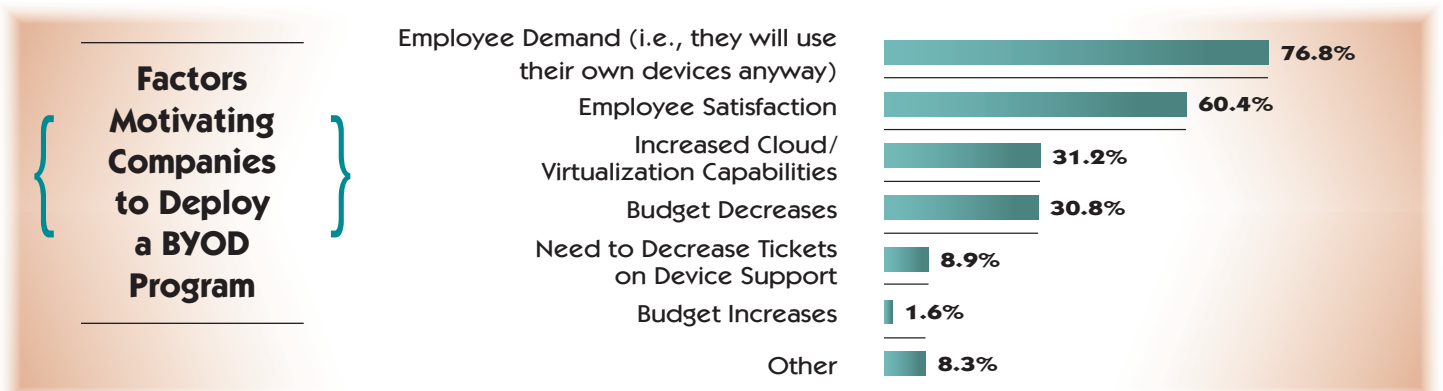
Employee Satisfaction

On a 1–10 scale, in which 1 is extremely dissatisfied and 10 is extremely satisfied, respondents were asked to rate employee satisfaction with the BYOD programs at their companies. There wasn't much variance in the average scores across the types of device: tablets = 6.87; cell phones/smartphones = 6.92; and laptops = 6.76. Deeper analysis revealed that, not surprisingly, when employees fully fund their own devices, their satisfaction with the program is a bit lower compared to the overall averages: tablets = 6.77; cell phones/smartphones = 6.60; and laptops = 6.39. Lastly, companies at which the IT support center supports the devices, as opposed to having the employee contact the vendor, have employees who are slightly more satisfied with the program: tablets = 7.08; cell phones/smartphones = 7.00; and laptops = limited data.



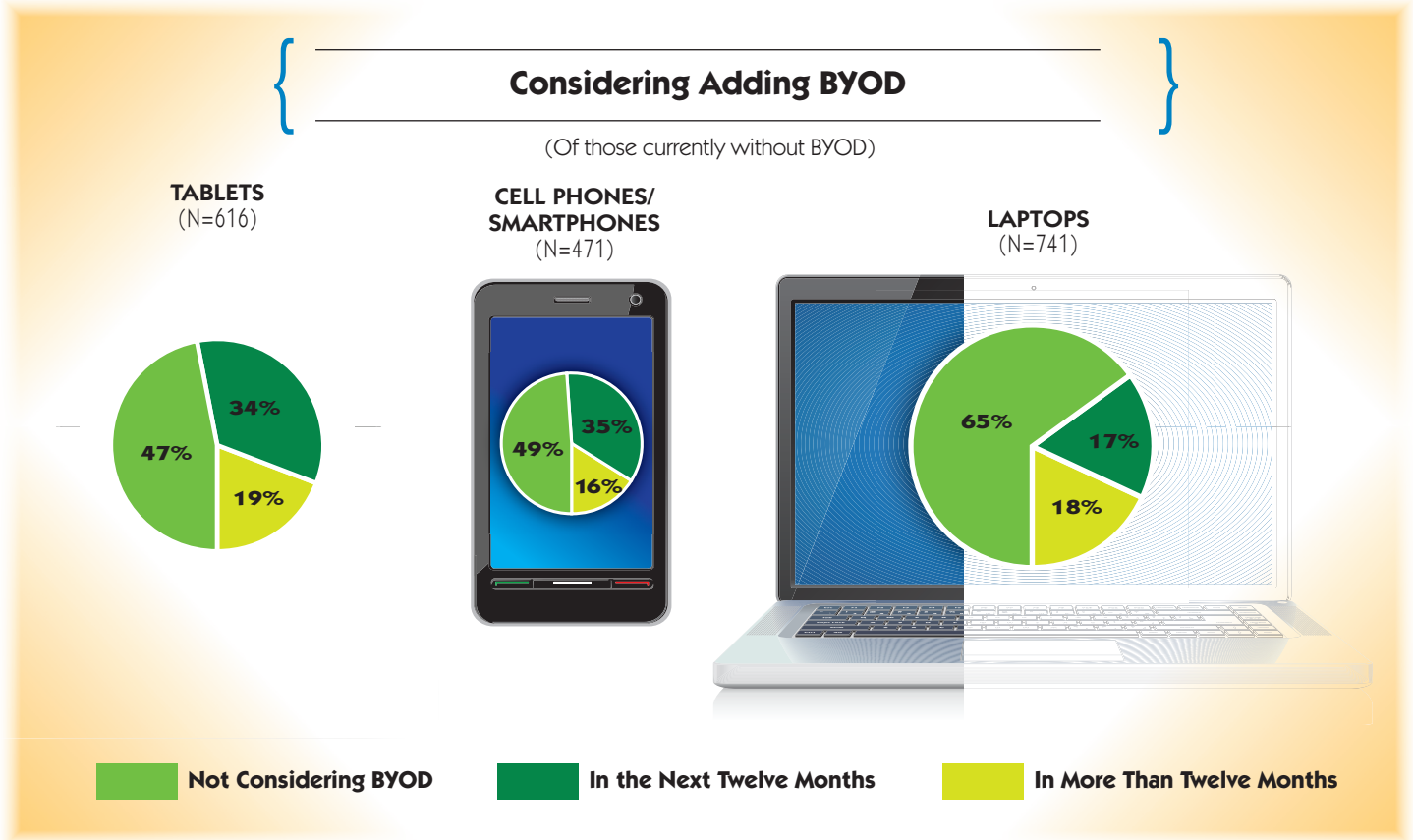
Driving BYOD

While it appears from the data and discussion thus far that cost and decreasing tickets might be the factors motivating a BYOD implementation, they are not at the top of the list. Employee demand—meaning employees will use their own devices with or without a BYOD program—is the number-one motivating factor (77%), followed by employee satisfaction (60%) and advances in cloud/virtualization capabilities (31%), all of which come in before budget and ticket volume. Increased flexibility, mobility, and productivity stood out from the list of “Other” responses, along with a few mentions of cost benefits outside of budget changes, as well as several remarks about tax changes.



Future of BYOD

As this is the first HDI Research survey to focus exclusively on BYOD, we cannot report on any changes in adoption over the past year. However, through our involvement in the IT and technical support community, we can say with some confidence that these types of programs have been accepted and implemented by many organizations in the past couple of years. What are the expectations for the next year or more?



About one-third of organizations that do not currently have a BYOD program for tablets plan to implement this in the next twelve months, with an additional 19 percent planning to implement after twelve months. Of those without a current BYOD program for cell phones/smartphones, 35 percent plan to implement the program in the next twelve months, with an additional 16 percent planning to add the program after twelve months. Only 17 percent plan to add BYOD programs for laptops in the next year, with 18 percent planning to add it in more than twelve months.

A few survey respondents mentioned the word “fad” in their survey responses. As mentioned previously, the data is not available to draw any firm conclusions about the change in BYOD adoption from past years; however, we do see that the industry is at least planning on continued implementation. Future analysis will be needed to determine whether BYOD is/was a trendy acronym or an enduring IT practice.

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