

Mobile Device Support and BYOD: Where Are We Now?

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Three years ago, in response to upheaval in the technical service and support industry, HDI set out to investigate the current practices and opinions surrounding support for end-user mobile devices. At the time, BlackBerry was the device of choice across the board, and the term “BYOD” had only recently been coined. In the year that followed, the influx of mobile devices into the workplace threw support teams off balance: customers were requesting help with a wider selection of devices, and customer expectations, particularly with regard to working on the go, were increasing rapidly.

The consumerization of IT was well underway. By early 2012, many organizations had become more accepting of the use of personal devices for professional purposes, and BYOD was dominating discussions within the technical service and support community.

At the beginning of 2013, the dust appeared to be settling. However, recent research, particularly *The Technical Support Center of the Future* (June 2013), has revealed that our industry’s leaders continue to be preoccupied with managing mobile device support, though there appears to have been a shift from reactive, frantic support to proactive, innovative support. The latest survey results, reported in this research brief, explain some of the reasons for this shift in attitude and approach.


SURVEY RESULTS

This research brief, based on 549 responses to an online survey released in October and November 2013, compares current data regarding industry practices and maturity to data from previous reports, including “Supporting Mobile Devices” (November 2010), “Supporting Mobile Devices in 2011” (January 2012), and “Bring Your Own Device

(BYOD): Hot or Not?” (March 2012). The results speak to current practices and trends surrounding support for specific mobile devices, the impact of supporting mobile devices, and the industry’s position on BYOD policies and programs.

15%

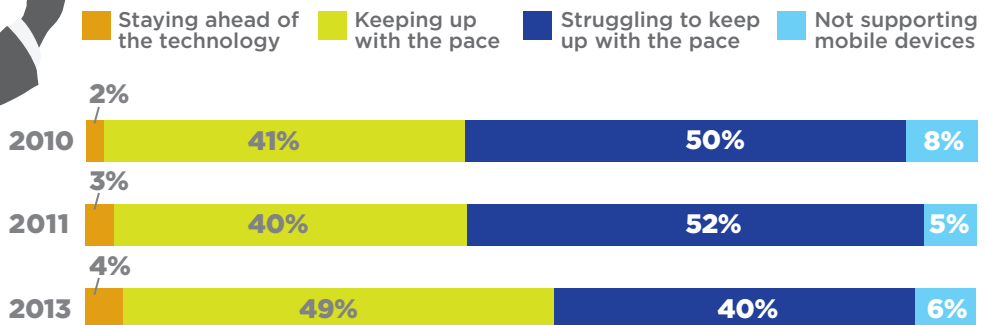
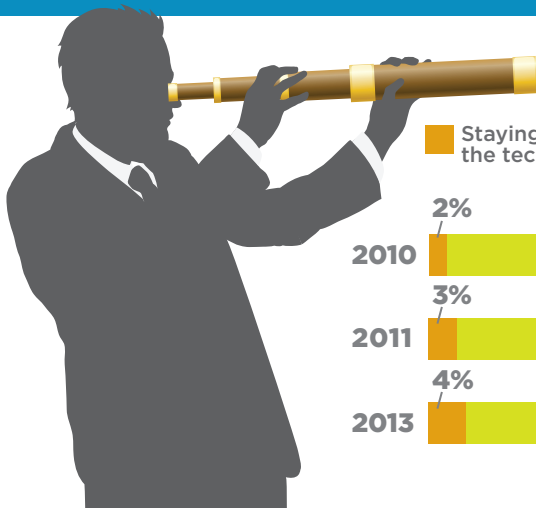
of tickets are related to supporting mobile devices, on average.



Impact of mobile device support on support centers

In addition to the demands of the business and the expectations of customers, the importance of successfully managing mobile device support is evident when we look at its impact on the queue. On average, about 15 percent of the tickets cycled through support queues are related to mobile device support needs. This is a substantial portion of total tickets received.

Keeping Up with Emerging Mobile Devices



Percentage of support teams

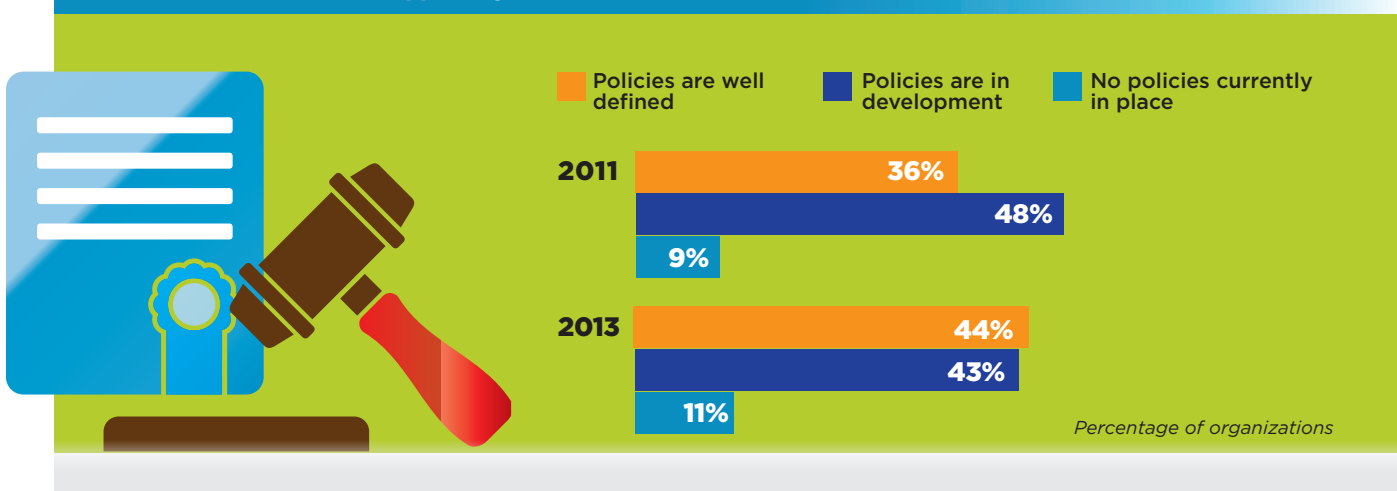
There is evidence, however, that customers and support centers seem to be acclimating to mobile device support. According to data from the *2013 HDI Support Center Practices & Salary Report*, the impact of BYOD and mobility on the queue was not as significant in 2013 as it was in 2012. This data also revealed that organizations are enabling customers to find their own solutions through improved knowledge management and self-help, which have proven to be key factors in controlling ticket volume.

When organizations can't keep up with the pace of devices rolling out to the mobile workforce, it's difficult

to be going back to the drawing board to develop more-enduring policies that will fit their customers' needs and that fall within the support center's capabilities." Organizations are still trying to find that balance, which is why their policies continue to be under review.

Deeper analysis of the survey data validates and reinforces the importance of having well-defined policies. Organizations with well-defined policies are more likely to report that they're keeping up with the pace of emerging technologies. In 2013, 62 percent of support organizations with well-defined policies

Formal Policies Around Supporting Mobile Devices



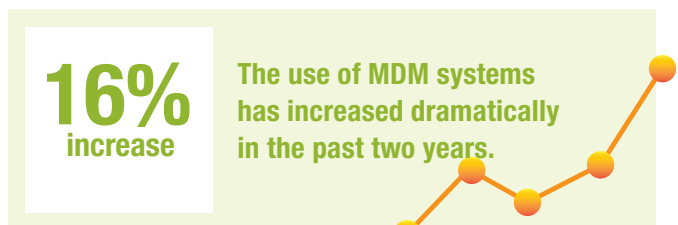
to proactively support them. In 2010 and 2011, more than half of the technical service and support industry was either struggling to keep up with the pace of emerging devices or simply choosing not to support the devices at all. However, in 2013, 49 percent of organizations reported feeling like they're keeping up with the pace, and some even feel like they're ahead of the game, at least as far as supporting new technology is concerned.

Supporting mobile devices

As expected, more organizations (44%) report having well-defined policies around supporting mobile devices this year than they did just two years ago (36%). Forty-three percent report that their policies are in development, while 11 percent have no policies in place.

The 2011 mobile device survey revealed an interesting finding related to the consistently large percentage of organizations with policies in development: "Survey results actually show that more support centers felt they had well-defined policies in place in 2010 than in 2011. It appears that, as the technology race continues, organizations are finding that they were not as prepared as they may have thought they were, and they may

reported being able to keep up with or stay ahead of the pace of emerging mobile device technologies, compared to 48 percent of those without well-defined policies.



So, what are the current policies relating to specific types of devices? And are support practices different for company-owned versus personal devices? The charts on the following page compare current support practices for each device against the practices reported in the 2010 and 2011 surveys. Company-owned devices (left side), as a whole, are more likely to be fully supported by technical support teams. Personal devices (right side) are for the most part supported, but most organizations support them only partially.

These charts also reveal trends around supporting specific devices. For example, support for company-owned iPads has increased 35 percent from 2010 to 2013, taking its place as the most supported mobile device this year (a spot formally held by BlackBerry).

Technical support centers are providing support for more devices, both personal and company-owned. In order to successfully adapt to customers' needs and expectations, 22 percent of support organizations have made changes to their staffing structures, such as dedicating staff to supporting mobile devices or adding outsourced staff. Also, 22 percent have implemented virtualized applications or infrastructures.

Another sign of maturity is that organizations are adopting the sophisticated technologies needed to manage the mobile devices they're supporting. In 2011, 35 percent of support centers had implemented mobile device management (MDM) systems; two years later, 51 percent of support organizations have implemented MDM systems to address their mobile device support needs.

BYOD

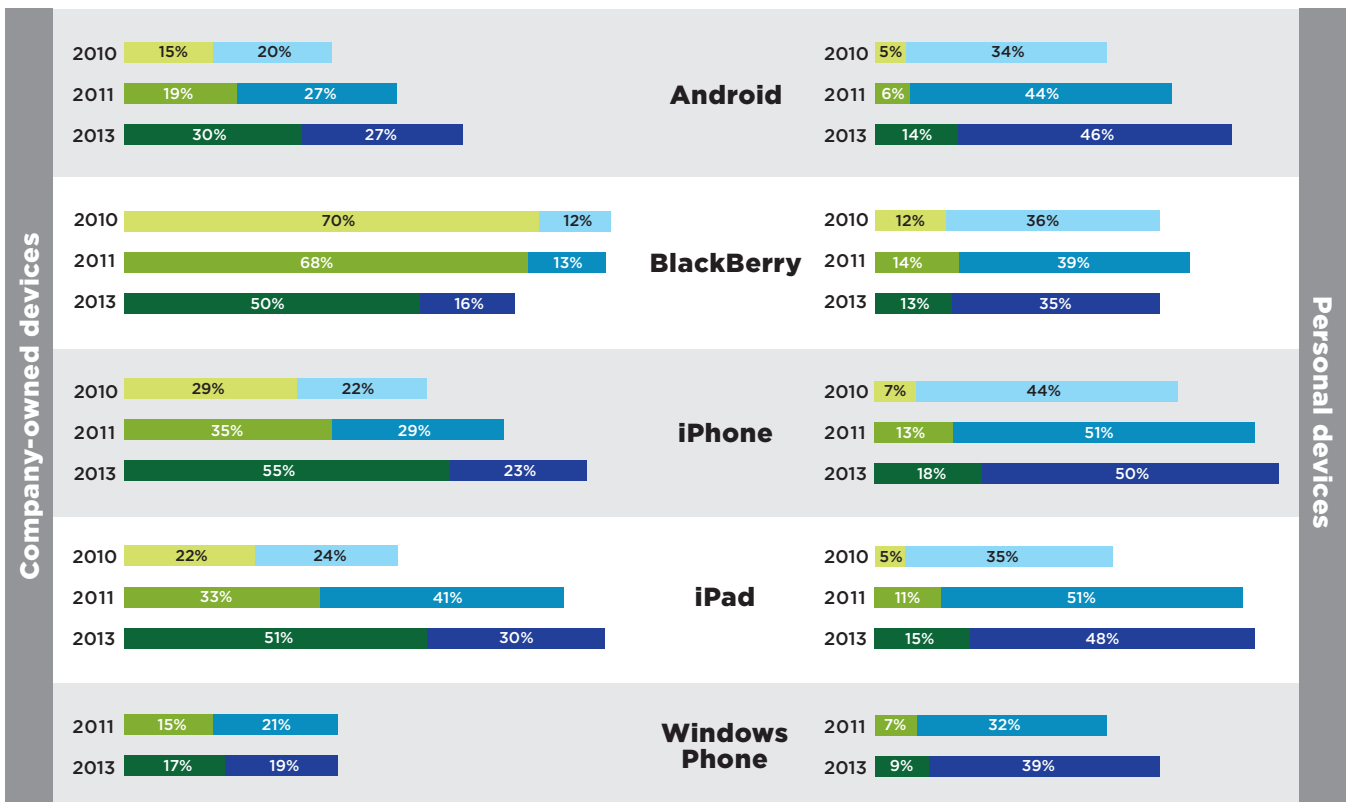
We know many organizations support personal devices at least partially, but how many have implemented official BYOD programs? It will be interesting to track this trend over the next few years. Will we come full circle, to a point where personal devices are no longer allowed for professional purposes? Or will we no longer need official BYOD programs because using personal devices for professional purposes has simply become the norm?

As of November 2013, about one in three support organizations reported having an official BYOD program for tablets, in which at least some employees participate; this was an eight-percent increase from March 2012. BYOD policies for mobile phones are more common (45%), but the adoption of such policies has not increased substantially since the March 2012 survey.

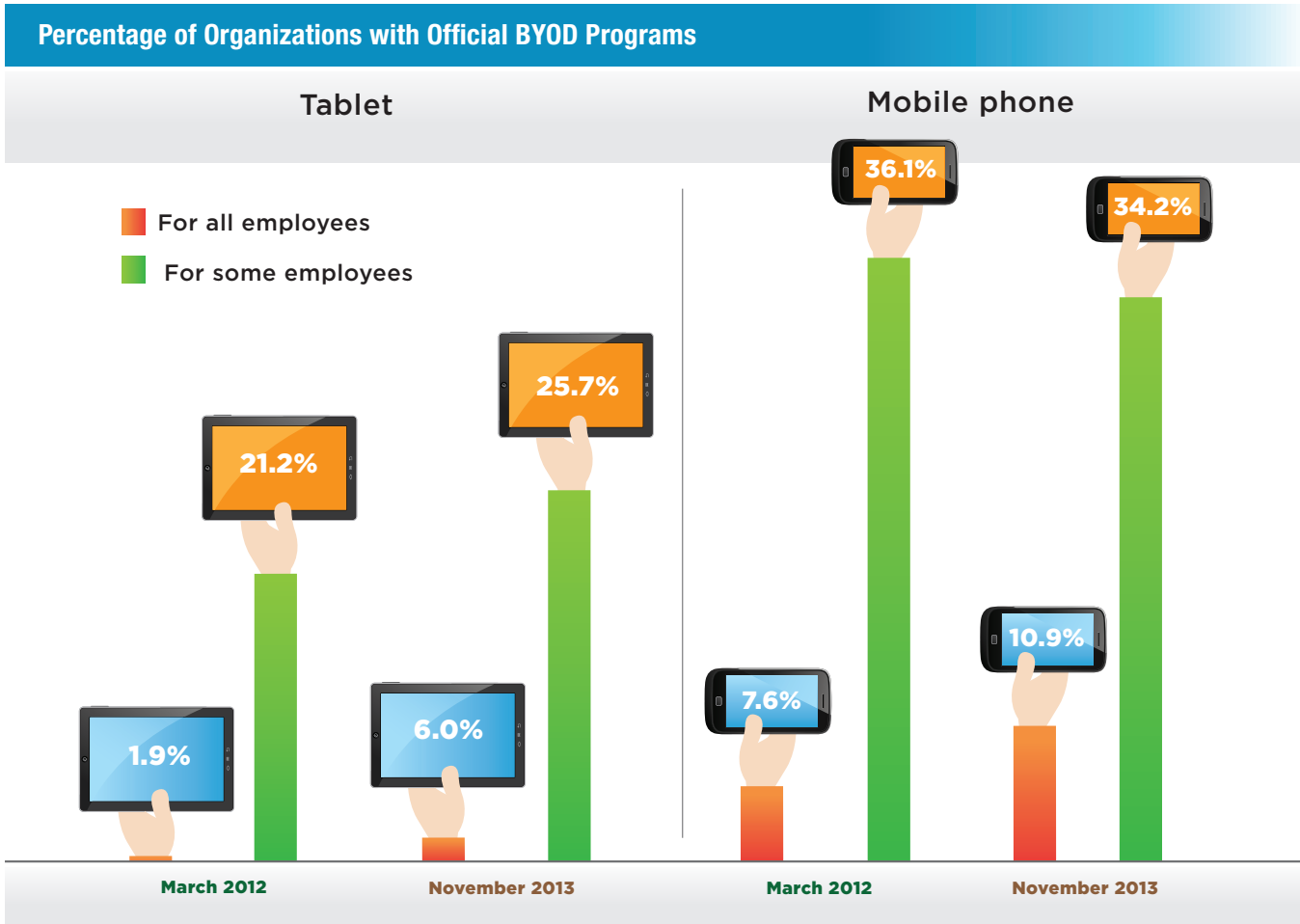
Few organizations require all employees to participate in their BYOD programs; for most (52%), the BYOD program is optional. The reasons why some but not all employees participate in these programs vary: in

Supporting Mobile Devices

■ ■ ■ FULLY SUPPORTED ■ ■ ■ PARTIALLY SUPPORTED



Percentage of support teams



many organizations (38%), the BYOD program is only available for select positions; in others, the program is implemented for new hires only (1%). Nine percent of organizations have BYOD programs that are still in beta.

Conclusion

Today, supporting mobility is a critical factor in supporting the business and promoting its success. As support centers feel the pressure to not only support the business but also prove the support center’s value, they must adapt to the business’s mobile device support needs. More organizations feel they’re able to keep up with the pace of mobile device technology than they did two years ago, and there has been an increase in well-defined policies and mobile device management system implementations,

all of which point to industry maturity in supporting mobile devices.

While managing the support of end-user mobile devices continues to challenge support organizations, the industry appears to have a better handle on the management of these devices. The results of this research validate what was merely anecdotal evidence to this point. Supporting the devices responsible for increasing mobility, productivity, and business success continues to be at the forefront of the support manager’s world, but game plans are maturing. Organizations are shifting away from hasty support for specific devices to strategies that proactively address the needs and expectations brought about by the mobile device boom and the consumerization of IT. ■

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