The app evolution

Never has bespoke application development, hosting and delivery been more important. Historically, it has not been possible to get the flexibility, speed to market and cost reduction on app development that we enjoy today.

FirmBee via pixabay

We know that applications started with the dawn of computing - because an application is simply a software program that's designed to perform a function for either a user or another software application. With 'app' increasingly becoming a buzzword, many people labour under the assumption that apps exist on mobile only. This misconception is borne from the fact that while applications are as old as computing, the ability to access these apps on the move really only gained traction with smartphone technology.

It's also true that more and more businesses rely on their applications being remotely accessible to staff and customers. It's an obvious preference: with the advent of mobile computing, businesses need to be accessible 24/7 and allow customers and staff to engage remotely. Mobile-first briefly became the rallying call - but it's out of date already. The world's best application building software allows applications to be instantly available across all device types.

The truth of the customised application

However, the majority of businesses who rely on applications could be forgiven for assuming that customised applications also have to be more complicated, more costly and more time consuming.

There are currently, beyond mobile apps, various app types including web apps, hybrid apps and native apps - to name a few. These apps are being utilised across all platforms to do virtually everything, from transacting to checking the weather. And with apps becoming increasingly popular, it's interesting to dissect certain application trends that have started to emerge from the binary ether.

For example, many businesses are developing apps specific to their needs, which is a clever way to go, as most businesses have app requirements that are entirely unique and dependant on both their service and their process. Where they tend to fall by the wayside, however, is labouring under an assumption from bygone years: accepting that an application built for web, will have to be re-built for the myriad of mobile (or other platforms) and then may not be able to integrate with existing systems. This leads many to believe that while the process is necessary it's also slow, expensive, inflexible and tedious.

The path of least resistance

Other businesses choose what they perceive to be the path of least resistance, by purchasing Software as a Service (SaaS) solutions for their business needs as they crop up. While this might be a part-solution for very small businesses that need instant solutions to market quickly, it's a slippery slope. Not only will those business owners eventually realise that off-the-shelf solutions can never do everything you need, the cold truth is that none of these solutions are truly customisable, and most will not deliver competitive advantage despite what it says on the box.

Pretty soon these businesses will become burdened by applications that don't always integrate with other systems or play well together, which leads to a silo-based scenario that is ultimately more expensive to address than developing from the start.

Increasingly businesses are realising the value of employing experts to provide them with the development platforms that they need to design truly bespoke solutions, quickly and once across all platforms. This market-shaping trend is interesting to follow, as it flies in the face of common conventions regarding speed to market, development times, resource needs, and cost. The best modern development platforms are able to generate multi-device apps instantly that can integrate with enterprise systems, cloud services and databases at eye-watering speed.

What businesses need

Businesses are becoming strategic in their effort to ensure enterprise mobility and differentiation. They are realising that what they need is flexibility, lower risk and cost, increased speed to market, the ability to deploy into Africa, and speed of development and value creation.

The future will be to partner with specialists like OutSystems, who will enable you to do all of that. This means that as your business changes, your system changes, or as your customer needs change your software has to change too - quickly and reliably without massive cost and risk.