

The Importance of a BYOD Policy in Retail

→ Why to Adopt a BYOD Policy in your
Retail Operations



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Introduction

With advances in emerging technology and a new generation of tech-savvy employees entering today's workforce; new challenges, opportunities, and risks are appearing in today's retail world.

When employee demographics began shifting towards millennials in 2013¹, the Bring Your Own Device ("BYOD") movement started to gain momentum in enterprise-level companies. Synonymous policies like 'Bring Your Own Technology' ("BYOT"), 'Bring Your Own Phone' ("BYOP"), and 'Bring Your Own Personal Computer' ("BYOPC") were implemented across different industries. In retail, however, the movement wasn't immediately adopted. Concerns over labor regulations and security prevailed, and many retailers remained silent on the issue with little effort made on providing their store associates with additional tools.

For greater clarity, a BYOD policy is not intended to require employees to use personal devices to do their job. Instead, it should govern acceptable use, and spell out a company's policies and expectations regarding the use of personal devices.

As with any technology wave, the mobile device floodgates have proven difficult to close. The realities of today's retail demand a more informed and connected store associate in order to drive outstanding customer experiences. In response, retailers have implemented various systems, including Learning Management ("LMS"), Employee Self Service ("ESS"), and Sales Performance tools, all of which are either mobile native or mobile friendly. However, the majority of retailers surveyed had not so far implemented a formal BYOD policy for their store staff.

Why BYOD is Important to Retailers?

Dramatic changes are happening in today's retail workforce. The "Tech Natives" (Gen Zers) have reached 32% of the total population, outnumbering the "Tech Savvies" (Millennials) by 0.5%.² And while Millennials still surpass Gen Zers in those of working age, both generations are today retailer's main workforce, with Millennials often occupying senior-level positions and Gen Zers taking their first retail jobs.

StoreForce recently conducted a survey of its clients regarding retail BYOD policies. The survey found that only 50% of retailers either have a BYOD policy in place, or plan to implement one in the next 12 months. Further, of those retailers who do have a BYOD policy in place, only 35% of those policies (or 17% of the total population surveyed) specifically addressed the use of mobile devices by store associates, 82% address the use of mobile devices by store managers, and 100% by corporate or field staff.

50% 
of retailers either have a BYOD policy, or plan to implement one

Who Uses BYOD?



Why BYOD is Important to Retailers?

One might conclude that retailers who don't have a BYOD policy in place for store associates (83% of total polled) don't allow them to access mobile devices. In fact, the opposite is true. When the survey results came in, we conducted a follow-on questionnaire and found that virtually all of our clients used either our Employee Self Service app ("ESS") or a similar app published by their Human Capital Management ("HCM"). Therefore, in reality, the majority of retail associates are accessing apps or web-based applications on personal devices without the governance of a BYOD policy.

But, what does all mean for retailers? This new generation of digitally savvy or native employees is disrupting the way retailers are doing business. The ability to access information and insights on a mobile device is fast becoming an expectation among today's retail store workforce. Retailers, however, are reluctant to fund a sufficient quantity of in-store mobile devices to deliver on this expectation, relying instead on a policy-less grey understanding of how employees should use personal devices.



Why Retailers Can't Avoid the Mobile Issue?

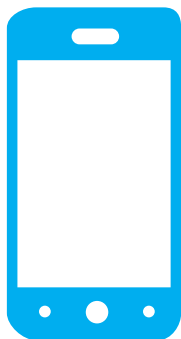
Mobile applications (and to a lesser extent web-based apps) have a significant advantage over traditional software – the user interface on apps is defined by the platform, and the methods of interacting with the app is therefore standardized. User training, as a result, is very minimal.

Apps present a retailer with the opportunity for widespread adoption with comparatively little change management or training.

Mobile applications are also comparatively inexpensive to develop, and can often be done in a fraction of the time of a traditional software.

The net result is that apps are here to stay. The use cases are constantly expanding to solve problems retail staff have. The user base is also growing with specific apps for each role within retail operations.

Mobile Apps & Web-Based Apps



- ✓ Minimal user training
- ✓ Easy widespread adoption
- ✓ Affordable to develop
- ✓ Specific to users' needs



1. Applications for your Field Leaders

The practice of using phone calls – with a “how’s business?” - to discuss the current day’s status is long gone. New mobile applications allow your field leaders to keep a pulse on their business at any moment. They are able to check results against targets for all stores within their scope of responsibility, whether they are in the field or at a store.

With real-time dashboards, field leaders are able to gain retail performance insights within moments, and develop coaching strategies to address opportunities.

Mobile communication tools allow them to congratulate and motivate their store managers and associates by posting a message directly from their device.



Pros

- ★ **Manage a Single Device**
- ★ **Better Work / Life Balance**
- ★ **Stay Informed**
- ★ **Increase Productivity**

2. Applications for your Store Managers

Understanding performance to target and taking action in real time to lead their sales floors allows store managers to drive results. The knowledge that their field manager may call or message at any moment to discuss today's results drives them with heightened focus to know everything they can about their business. They want access to their store's information, even when they are not at work.

Store managers also frequently interact with their peers to discuss and resolve issues or seek solutions to problems they cannot solve. Mobile tools allow store managers to interact with their peers through district-level bulletin board tools. These bulletin boards connect and strengthen your store management team.

One of the most prevalent mobile tools for store managers comes in the form of Employee Self Service (ESS). These tools allow managers to interact with staff to send messages, approve time off request, accept shift changes or post available shifts. This significantly reduces the administration of these processes, and creates a streamlined user experience for associates.



Pros

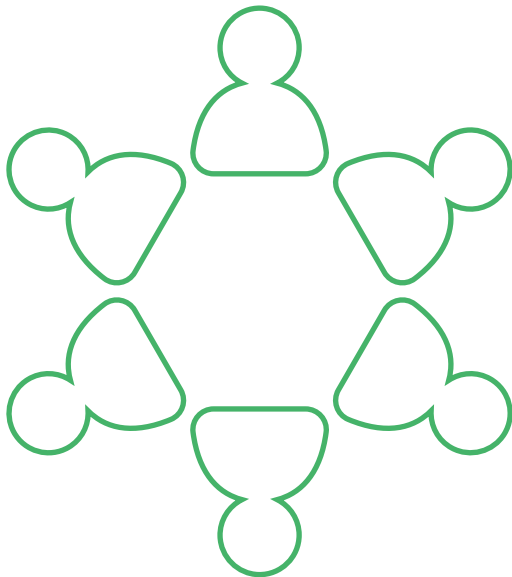
- ★ **Stay Informed**
- ★ **Increase Satisfaction**
- ★ **Increase Flexibility**
- ★ **Improve Performance**
- ★ **Increase Engagement with Associates**

3. Applications for your Store Associates

ESS is the primary mobile app available to associates. In addition to accessing the app to adjust their schedules, ESS allows associates to see leave balances or interact with timekeeping functions.

Advanced ESS also allows the viewing of their own personal performance to gamify their work experience. Other associate-level apps include LMS, clienteling, or magic mirror applications.

Pros



- ★ **Increase Satisfaction**
- ★ **Increase Engagement**
- ★ **Increase Productivity**
- ★ **Elevate Customer Experience**
- ★ **Improve Speed and Access to Information**

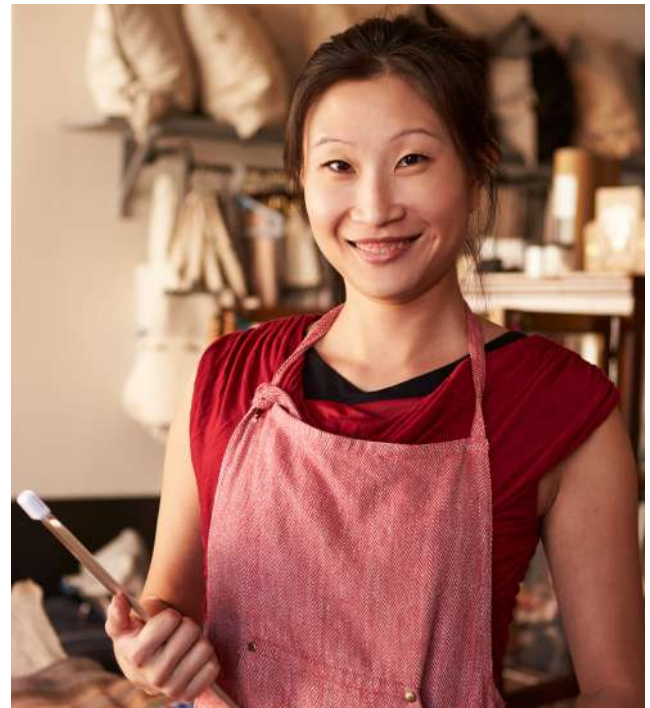
Things to Consider in your BYOD Policy

A retailer's BYOD policy could vary based on what jurisdictions their stores are in, or which applications are sanctioned for use by their staff. Some states, regions or even cities have laws that regulate the employer-employee relationship, and adhering to these regulations may be costly or put the retailer at risk. One important factor to consider here is the ability to turn access on or off to specific employees based on where they work. Further, applications that have access to sensitive company information (particularly for retailers who are publicly listed) will require a more stringent security policy than an ESS application.

It is important to remember that this is a convenience to your employees, not a requirement of employment. Therefore, with any specific use case, retailers should ensure that there are alternate avenues available to address it outside of just the mobile application. For example, while associates' schedules may be a feature of an ESS app, that schedule should also be posted on the back wall of the store. Employees should also have the ability to call the store and inquire their own schedule. The convenience of the

app will naturally drive the employee to use it instead of calling the store or looking on the back wall, but the option needs to remain.

While the risk at an associate level is generally low, performing some rudimentary security training, including what they may or may not do while connected to the store wifi. For store or field managers, the security training and related policies should be more in-depth, and include confidentiality clauses.

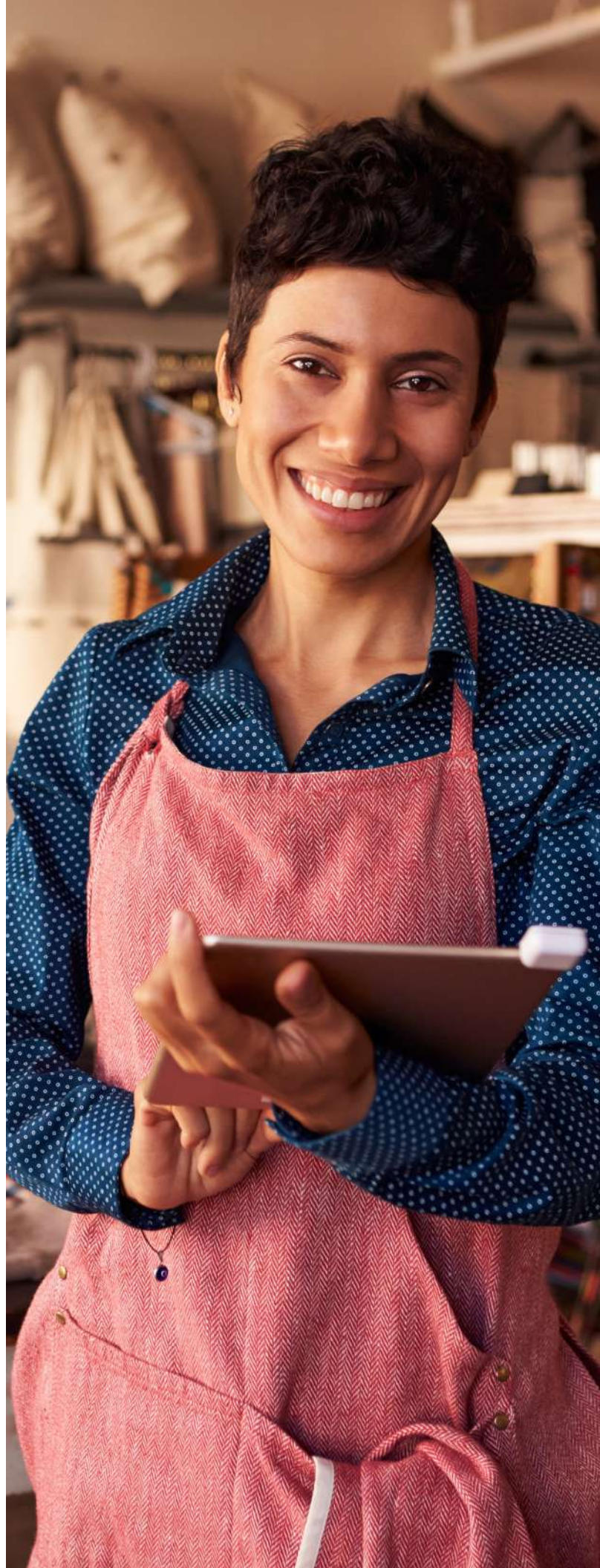


The Key Take Away

Even though retailers may resist the use of front-line employees adopting business applications on their personal devices, this is going to happen anyway. Every day, associates are demanding the option for more convenience and access. If you look closely, you may find that the use of personal devices in your organization is already happening. The best course is to get ahead of it by implementing a BYOD policy to ensure that these activities are properly governed.

References

1. Financial Post. (2013). *Like it or not, Millennials will change the workplace*. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/2mkCt1v>
2. Miller, L. and Lu, W. (2018). *Gen Z Is Set to Outnumber Millennials Within a Year*. Retrieved from <https://bloom.bg/2m32xy0>



About Author



Melissa Caçador is a Client Engagement Manager at StoreForce. She brings 15+ years of experience, working for large specialty retailers in several roles including Human Resources and Store Operations. Melissa is a subject matter expert in store facing technologies such as POS, Traffic Counters, Labor Scheduling and WFM systems. Melissa helps clients utilize the StoreForce solution to support their operational initiatives, as well as delivering it through involvement with functional design, support, client training, and project management.

About StoreForce



StoreForce has been helping specialty retailers around the world exceed sales performance goals and deliver exceptional customer experiences since 2010. StoreForce is a sales performance platform, underpinned by a specialty retail workforce management system. It is called “wfm+”, where the “+” represents a focus on positive sales growth and consistent delivery of the brand in your brick and mortar stores. This approach is entirely unique to StoreForce, and it is why the “+” also represents a foundational shift from the way traditional wfms approach labor planning in Specialty Retail.

For more information, visit: www.storeforcesolutions.com

For more insights and discussions about **wfm+** visit the **StoreForce Resources**

BLOG POSTS



Engaged Store Associates
Equal Happy
Customers



SMK PODCAST: StoreForce,
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Stores as 'Markets'
in the World of Unified
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WHITE PAPERS AND CASE STUDIES



White Paper: Retaining Top
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Case Study: StoreForce,
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