# Utelize Mobile Best Practice Guide

## 5 Steps to effective management of mobile usage

Prepared by
Utelize Communications Limited
**Managed Mobile for Business**

**www.utelize.co.uk**

# Introduction

Mobile networks, devices and budgets have always been challenging for businesses to control. Mobile devices are with their users at all times, supporting both business and personal usage and applications; they typically sit outside of secure, "ring-fenced" corporate IT networks, and they're more prone to loss and damage than all other forms of IT hardware.

Unlike most IT expenditure, mobile costs are also highly sensitive to end user behaviour, and controlling that behaviour is complex and resource intensive. The way we use our mobiles varies dramatically from user to user, and with the advent of smartphones it's extremely difficult to draw clear boundaries between personal and business consumption. The arrival of 5G services in 2019/20 will only serve to increase this challenge, forcing businesses to find the right balance between user productivity and usage controls.

Smartphones also bring more technical complexity, and with this, new security and rapidly increasing support challenges – none of which are going to disappear anytime soon.

At Utelize, we are seeing a convergence of four significant mobile challenges that are already having a growing impact on mid-market and enterprise businesses. Challenges that are set to dramatically increase mobile administration and costs for businesses that fail to implement a proactive and strategic approach to mobile network and device management:

1) **Increasing mobile device costs** - that can no longer be subsidised by mobile network "tech funds"

2) **Increasing mobile data consumption** - driving greater management challenges and increased airtime costs with more frequent "bill shock" both domestically and abroad

3) **BYOD programs failing to deliver expected savings** – driven by higher IT support costs coupled with lower BYOD adoption rates and device purchase savings than expected

4) **Increasing mobile security, data leakage, GDPR and compliance risks** - leading to increased pressure to provide and support corporate devices, as well as increased security and support costs, especially in regulated markets

Utelize has produced a range of best practice guides that offer a detailed look at the causes and impact of these converging challenges on mobile IT administration and budgets; as well as providing clear insights and best practice approaches that your business can implement to regain control. **In this guide we look at the challenges faced by businesses when managing and controlling mobile usage, specifically focusing on mobile data consumption, which is one of the main drivers behind increasing mobile costs.**

**We hope that you find our guide of interest and value with your own business mobile management and planning. Follow us on LinkedIn or Twitter or visit our website for more best practice guides and resources on managing mobile services, security and devices.**

**Mobile networks and technologies can transform your business.
Utelize can help.**

Page | 1

# Mobile data usage is set to grow significantly – further increasing already stretched mobile budgets

Where inappropriate mobile contracts and mobile "tech funds" create "baked-in" hidden costs over the long term, it is user behaviour that drives overspending on a day to day basis. Cisco estimates that mobile data usage is likely to increase seven-fold by 2021, and if not already, this increase in data is going to have a dramatic impact on your mobile phone budget, unless you put in place a suitable strategy and contract capable of addressing it.

**Global Mobile Data Traffic Growth / Top-Line**
**Global Mobile Data Traffic will increase 7-fold between 2016-2021**
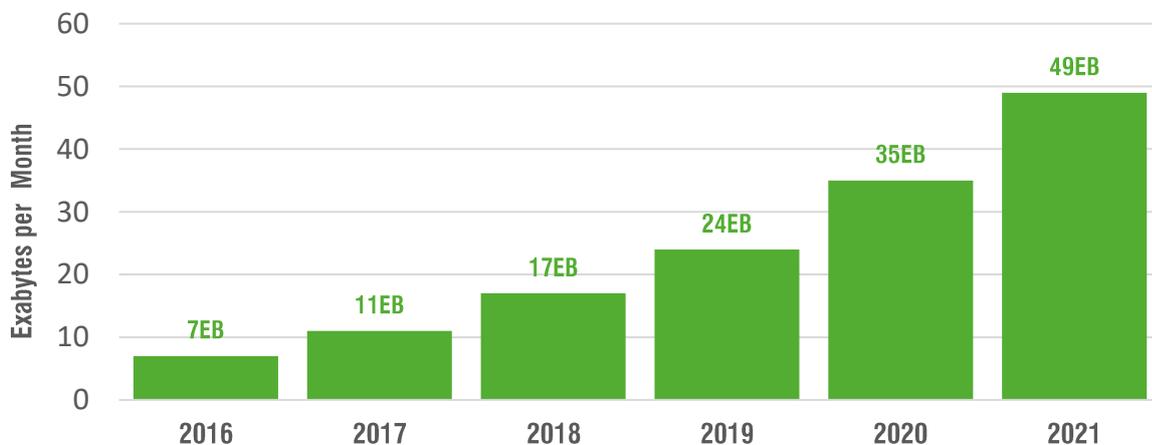


Source: Cisco VNI Global Mobile Data Traffic Forecast, 2016 2021

To start effectively addressing user behaviour and associated excess costs, businesses need to understand the most common forms of mobile overspending and implement a plan to address this. At Utelize, we see several key elements to managing mobile usage, behaviour and costs, many of which can be addressed even if your business is in contract.

## Step 1: Negotiate more flexible and fit for purpose mobile contracts

Flexibility means the ability to adapt your contract and tariffs during the term of the agreement, or to terminate individual connections without incurring excess charges or termination penalties. Without this flexibility it's easy to inadvertently lock yourself into commercial terms and commitments that will create ever greater levels of overspending as data usage increases. This problem is only set to increase - driven by faster networks, adoption of cloud services, greater use of tethering, along with exponential increases in video and social media.

Removing "tech funds" from your mobile agreements will enable you to negotiate much greater flexibility into your mobile contracts. Please see our mobile best practice guides on "**Breaking the habit of mobile tech funds**" and "**Negotiating the right fit mobile contract for your business**" for more detailed advice.

## Step 2: Implement an effective mobile data usage policy and reporting

Educating users on what is and is not acceptable usage will become more and more important as mobile data usage continues to increase. Mobile networks are often less than proactive in helping businesses to control mobile usage, and even though they can easily see in real time when users are consuming vast amounts of data, they rarely step in to alert businesses to this, unless specific bars have been set, or there is a credit risk with the customer.

Ideally to help control and manage data usage you'll want to ensure that your mobile provider is able to offer "in-month" usage reporting, and that they are able to provide alerts for exceptional usage, both in the UK and abroad. With ever faster data speeds enabling high bandwidth tethering, video and streaming, usage can quickly exceed allowances in month, especially where users have individual allowances. This leads to substantial excess charges, which are normally charged at between £10 and £20 per GB for domestic data, and with high volume users now regularly exceeding 10GB per month, these costs can quickly add up.

Importantly, where your business has a shared data allowance, the consumption of a relatively small number of users can quickly lead to the shared data pool being exceeded. This creates a range of knock on cost and administration challenges, as suddenly all users, including those who have not used their allowances start to receive excess data charges from the point that the shared data pool is exceeded. In businesses where mobile charges are rebilled to cost centres, this can create unwanted internal recharge challenges.

Whilst it may be possible to increase your data pool or allowances mid-month, most mobile networks apply these increases on a pro rata basis. This means that if you are half way through the month, and you need to upgrade by 100GB to cover the expected excess data, you'll only actually receive the pro rata 50GB if the upgrade takes effect from the middle of the month. So, you'll either need to upgrade by 200GB to cover the predicted 100GB over-usage or pay excess data charges anyway.

Some mobile networks allow upgrades, but they only become effective from the start of the next billing cycle, which means there is little that can be done to react to in month excess usage. Once you've upgraded however, the networks often won't let you reduce the allowance again – locking in that new data cost for the remaining term of the agreement.

**To effectively control mobile data consumption, we recommend driving improved, continuous user and business awareness of both usage and policy by implementing the following activities and services:**

- **Mobile User Statements** – Most businesses don't provide users with visibility of their usage and costs, and so even unintentional usage can go unresolved for months or even years, as users simply don't realise they are generating excessive costs. Providing users with monthly visibility of their usage and costs can help to reinforce your mobile usage policy. If possible, show the user how they compare to the "average user" or the "fair usage policy" each month.

  Ideally, these reports should be "pushed" to users in a clear to read, one-page summary report, with the option for the user to log in to a portal to see more detail. Monthly reporting is also an excellent way to remind users of best practices to reduce mobile data usage and costs; as well as reminding them of support numbers and other mobile updates.

**Mobile networks and technologies can transform your business.
Utelize can help.**

Page | 3

**Cost Centre and Manager Reports** – managers who know the individuals in their department or cost centre are often best placed to reinforce messages and to sense check why excess usage is occurring. We therefore recommend providing managers with a summary level view of usage and costs across their users. This information needs to be detailed enough to present a clear picture of usage, however it should not contain detailed usage records or other "personal" data.

This allows exceptional usage to be identified and addressed on an ongoing basis. For legitimate usage, tariffs or services can be tailored to meet the user's needs, whilst inappropriate usage can be stopped at source. Where excess usage needs to be explored in more detail, then we recommend providing managers with the facility to request an "itemised" report, subject to an associated approval process, in conjunction with HR.

**In Month Alerting** – with the potential for significant "bill shock" arising from both UK and roaming data usage, it is essential that costs and usage are tracked during the month wherever possible. Where available, agree suitable policy rules on data usage with your mobile provider and use SMS or email alerting when these are exceeded. In month alerting to both the user and the IT service desk can prevent a relatively small problem turning into major bill shock. At Utelize, we are seeing growing instances of users generating 100GB or more of data per month – the equivalent to about 50 movies worth of downloads; most of which could be addressed through in month usage monitoring and alerting.

**Real Time Management** – for businesses that are uncomfortable with putting in place automatic barring or data caps, or for those that are regularly experiencing "bill shock" and excess data charges then we recommend considering real time mobile data management. At Utelize, we work with specialist service providers like **Wandera**, to achieve this real-time control and protection for our customers.

## Step 3: Implement ongoing call usage management and monitoring

Whilst data usage continues to drive the highest levels of overspending for businesses, more traditional voice and SMS services are still creating significant costs. With voice traffic, businesses have until recently had limited options outside of barring calls or negotiating discounts. With the advent of Unified Communications (UC) services and Mobile VoIP (Voice over IP), that has now changed.

VoIP and UC services allow business users to use their mobile devices as an extension of the business telephone system using a Wi-Fi connection (both when roaming or at home). Unlike mobile network "Wi-Fi calling", where calls are still charged at the tariff set by the mobile network, UC calls are chargeable as if they originated from the fixed line telephone system, and as a result they can offer significant costs savings.

The most common mobile voice charges that can be addressed by policy and new technologies like mobile VoIP include:

**Roaming Voice** – as mobile networks are forced to provide EU roaming as part of their domestic tariffs, they are unsurprisingly seeking to maximise revenues in less regulated areas. As a result, the costs for calls made outside of the EU and inclusive "day pass" roaming countries, should be closely monitored.

**UK to International Calling** – international calls from mobiles can often be extremely expensive, whereas the equivalent cost from a UC service can be a tiny fraction of this cost.

## Mobile networks and technologies can transform your business.
## Utelize can help.

**Calls to Non-Geographic Service Numbers** – mobile networks have taken advantage of recent changes introduced by Ofcom to regulate pricing for calls to Service Numbers. Whilst the regulator achieved greater clarity on calls to numbers starting 084 and 087, they failed to anticipate that the mobile networks would simply apply large "access charges" to these calls. The impact is that calls to these types of numbers which used to cost a few pence per minute, now commonly cost up to 50p/minute.

**Other areas that can be controlled through more traditional mobile usage management include**:

**Premium SMS** – (Charity Giving & Content Purchases) – these types of short dial SMS services allow third parties to charge your mobile account for their services. What many users do not realise however is that by texting these numbers they are often inadvertently entering into a contract for that service provider to send the user content on a regular basis (each time at a charge). These services can only be stopped by sending "STOP" to the number or by contacting the third party directly.

**Calls to Audio Conference** – many businesses make significant volumes of calls to their own business audio conferencing services, however selecting the right access number when calling these services can make a significant difference to the overall cost. Whilst calling a toll-free (0800) from a UK mobile is free of charge from the mobile, the audio conference bridge charge will often be significantly higher than the standard bridge charge. Businesses therefore need to analyse the optimum access and bridge costs to establish the right access number for mobile users, which may be a different number than the optimum one when calling from a fixed line.

**Calls to Own Landlines** – several mobile networks offer discounts on frequently dialled landline numbers; however, businesses don't regularly take advantage of these discounts, or fail to review changes to frequently dialled numbers over time. When combined with optimising calls to Audio Conferencing, it may be possible to include the audio bridge number in the discounted numbers, to further reduce costs.

## Step 4: Clean up your inventory & remove inactive services

Building and maintaining an accurate mobile connection and device inventory is an essential aspect of long term mobile management, providing clarity on both devices and user details. This task has been made more manageable with the wider adoption of Mobile Device Management software, which can remotely report on device details.

By combining this inventory information with usage information, it's possible to quickly identify inactive services, where businesses pay for connections and bolt on services that are no longer required. The use of mobile broadband connections is one of the most common areas of overspending, as the use of the connections is declining as the use of tethering increases, along with connections that remain after users leave the business.

## Step 5: Simplify bolt-on management

Managing roaming and international user bolt-on's can be resource intensive and challenging activity. The biggest challenge is that bolt-on's typically require businesses to try and predict in advance what levels of usage will be incurred. This commonly leads to two forms of overspending, either from advanced purchasing of too much data or conversely from excess charges from underestimating data usage. Often businesses simply opt to permanently apply expensive bolt-on's for regular travellers, however it's common to find that these bolt-on's are not cancelled when they are no longer needed.

Wherever possible try to negotiate bolt-on's that are automatically applied when there is usage, but are not charged in months where there is no usage. This approach will create an optimised cost, without the need for IT teams to constantly manage bolt-on's and associated billing administration.

**Mobile networks and technologies can transform your business.
Utelize can help.**

Page | 5

## The savings are just waiting to be uncovered

Whilst most businesses look externally to their mobile suppliers to achieve cost reduction in the form of reduced tariffs, the reality is that most businesses already have significant hidden overspending on mobile usage. It's not uncommon to find between 5 and 15% of business mobile connections that are inactive, and for businesses to reduce costs by up to 20% by implementing an effective mobile usage management program.

For more information and guidance on the many ways you can reduce you mobile costs and free up budget and IT resource for more strategic work, then download our range of Mobile Best Practice Guides, or get in touch to arrange a discovery meeting, and see if Utelize can help.

## Other Mobile Best Practice Guides from Utelize

- Negotiating the right fit" mobile contract for your business
- Breaking the mobile "tech fund" habit
- Rethinking mobile device purchasing and financing
- Implementing a "lifecycle" approach to managing mobile devices
- Planning BYOD programs beyond device security
- An introduction to Mobile Device Management (MDM) & security

**Mobile networks and technologies can transform your business.
Utelize can help.**

Page | 6

# Utelize – Managed Mobile for Business

At Utelize we specialise in providing managed mobile services that enable our customers to gain control of their mobile airtime, devices and security, helping them to:

- Streamline the administration of mobile airtime and devices
- Reduce mobile network and device charges
- Free up IT resources for more strategic projects
- Cost effectively finance mobile devices
- Secure mobile devices and data
- Manage in-life device repairs as well as end of life trade-in and device recycling
- Control mobile data usage and roaming charges
- Evaluate which mobile telecoms technologies and services can best support their business needs

To arrange a no obligation meeting and health check, get in touch …

E: hello@utelize.co.uk

T: 03300 240 444

W: www.utelize.co.uk