

## A Win-Win: Unified Access Increases User Experience Benefits And Operational Efficiency

*April 2012*

### Introduction

---

Today's businesses are driven to increase their competitiveness by reaching their own employees in different ways and embedding their services and products into customers' lives. Because of this, their employees are becoming increasingly dispersed, empowered, and mobile to support their customers' needs. The workplace no longer embodies a desk, chair, cubicle, and a business phone. While traveling or at home, more and more employees are choosing to go beyond the office and complete their work by smartphone, tablet, or notebook at home, at a restaurant, or on a plane. This trend will continue to rise over the next several years. Yet as employees require more options, infrastructure and operations (I&O) teams are still under the consolidation and efficiency mantra that has driven them over the last five years. What does this mean? I&O teams are pressured to standardize methods and processes for users on wired, remote (cellular, home, etc.), or Wi-Fi connections to:

- Support an empowered, mobile, and increasing dispersed workforce.
- Deliver a seamless user experience.
- Maintain operational efficiency as the underlining infrastructure increasingly becomes more flexible and dynamic.
- Deploy an intelligent infrastructure that automatically orchestrates services for each user based on his or her location, needs, policies, and device.

In February 2012, Cisco Systems commissioned Forrester Consulting to take a closer look at the future of accessing the network remotely and unifying wired and wireless as well as examine the importance bringing together security, mobility, management, and intelligent network infrastructure to support I&O's goals under one umbrella.

### Empowerment Forces Infrastructures To Be Open And Flexible

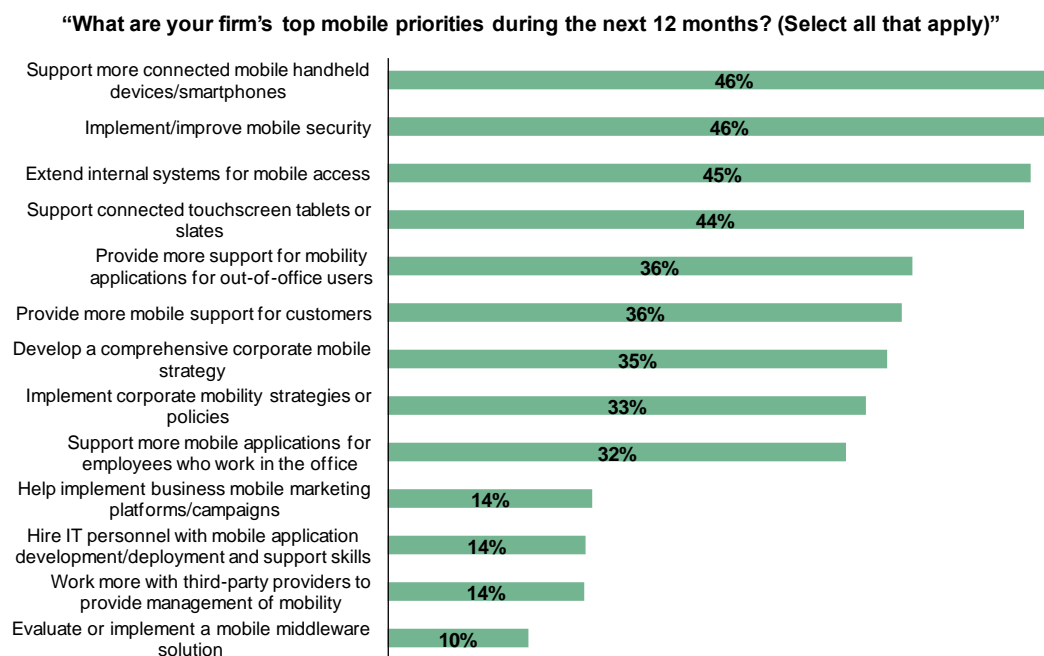
---

During the years of consolidation and rapid virtualization growth, the consumer world went through a revolution with the introduction of consumer phones and new mobile workspaces like tablets and smartphones. The days of IT-controlled smartphone deployments crumbled away. With the introduction of business email on consumer devices in 2008, employees have been finding ways to get what they need to be productive on their personal smartphones. Consequently, a deluge of operating systems have spilled onto the infrastructures that were once reserved for the traditional business ones.

As such, infrastructure and operations are scrambling to meet user requests and have shifted their priorities; 46% of respondents seek to support more connected handheld devices/smartphones (see Figure 1). The handheld devices come with new operating systems, which means 45% are figuring out to extend internal systems — email, SharePoint, or employee portals — to mobile devices. Some systems can't extend internal systems, so I&O will have to consider new suppliers to master the app Internet architecture beloved by cloud suppliers, and 46% reconsider their security strategy.

**Figure 1**

Consumer Devices Force I&O To Prioritize The Fundamentals At The Top Of Their Priorities



Base: 1,051 IT decision-makers

(numbers may not = 100% because “don’t know” responses were removed)

Source: Forrsights Networks And Telecommunications Survey, Q1 2011

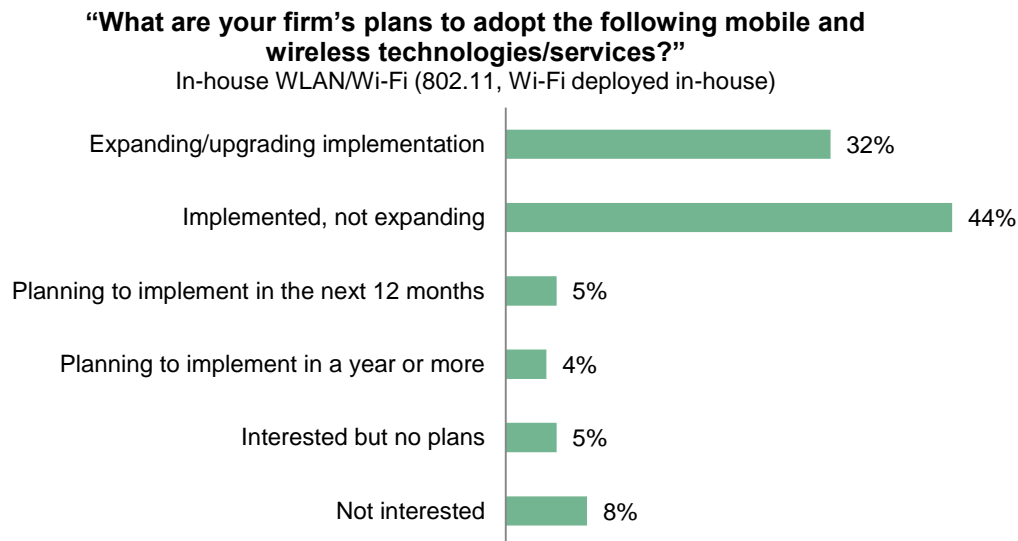
## Wi-Fi Becomes A Key Component To Support Mobility

The way users connect inside company walls are changing too. Besides employees bringing their own devices to work, fewer employees are working in stationary environments like a desk; more are working in ways that demand mobility. The healthcare industry has taken mobility to heart and has, effectively, moved in essence to a wireless environment. To support this highly mobile set of resources, 76% of firms have implemented and/or are looking to expand/upgrade their implementation of in-house WLAN/Wi-Fi (see Figure 2).

Enterprises aren't the only ones investing in Wi-Fi. The carriers have been spending a significant amount of resources to build out their Wi-Fi to support a better mobile experience in a dense area and capture the revenue generated by the emerging mobile workforce. Seventy-nine percent of organizations indicated that the number of employees who access the network through Wi-Fi on campus, from a branch office, or remotely is going to increase (see Figure 3). Employee mobility extends beyond the enterprise walls to everywhere.

**Figure 2**

Wireless Connection Evolve From Secondary To Primary Connection Method



Base: 1,051 IT decision-makers

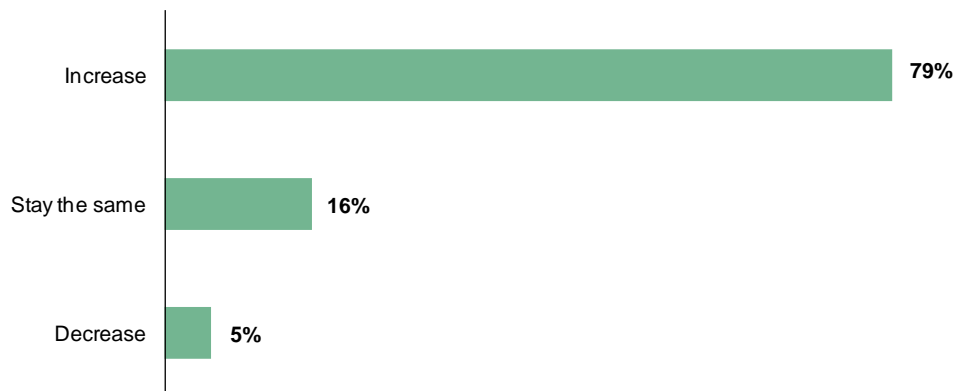
(numbers may not = 100% because “don’t know” responses were removed)

Source: Forrsights Networks And Telecommunications Survey, Q1 2011

**Figure 3**

Mobility To Be Supported By Wi-Fi Infrastructures

**“In the future, will the number of employees who access the network through Wi-Fi (on campus or in a branch office), remotely (home, retail shops, hotels, etc.), or from your branch offices:”**



Base: 62 senior-level decision-makers in the US and UK

Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Cisco Systems, February 2012

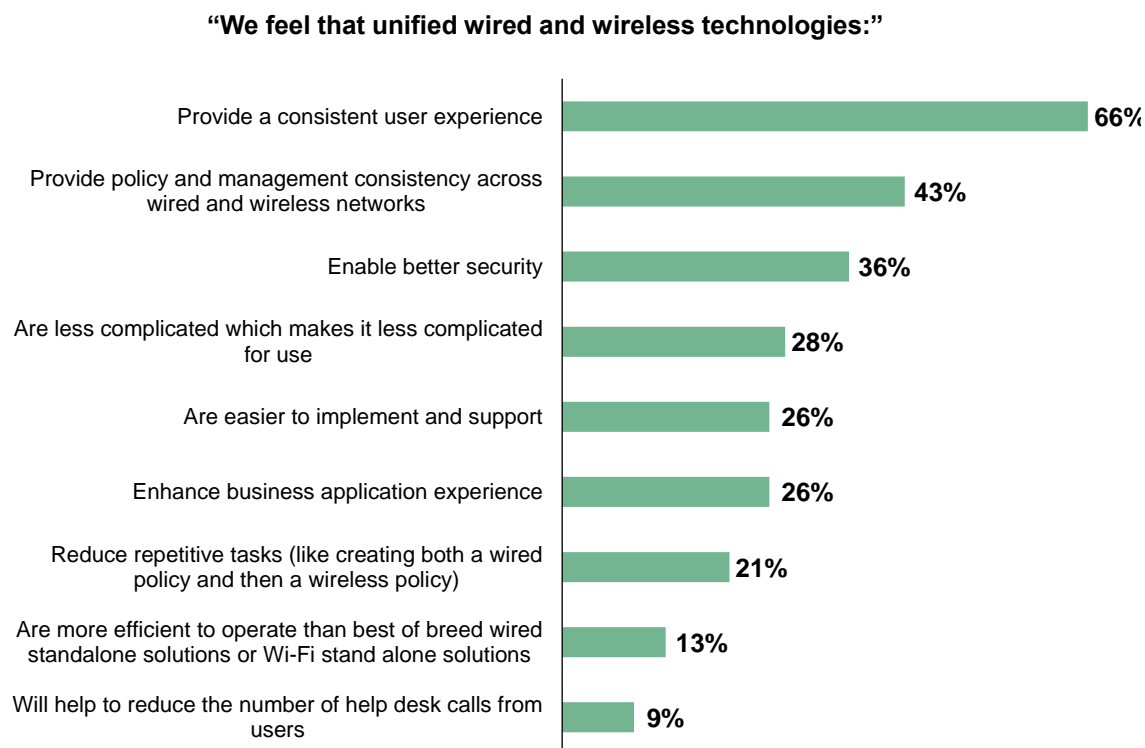
## Only Through Consistency Can Business Reap The Rewards Of Mobility

As more workers become mobile and remote, they have fewer resources like help desk personnel at their fingertips. This means ease of use, seamless access, resiliency, and limited disruptions increase in importance as distance increases from those resources. Fundamentally, the easier and simpler a process can be completed the less errors will result, which means less help desk calls. Consequently, 66% of firms feel that unified wired and wireless technologies need to provide a consistent experience (see Figure 4). By creating a consistent access method, users make less mistakes logging on and achieve higher worker efficiency.

Security levels can increase on two fronts: users and operations. Users will have lower tendency to write down information that can compromise access methods. For example, users will write their passwords on sticky notes if they have too many or they are difficult in nature. At the same time, 43% of respondents believe unified wired and wireless technologies provide policy and management consistency across the networks. This ensures that errors are not made applying them since it's done once, while efficiency is gained through eliminating repetitious activities.

**Figure 4**

Consistency Across The Experience And The Network Top The Reasons For Unified Access



Base: 62 senior-level decision-makers in the US and UK

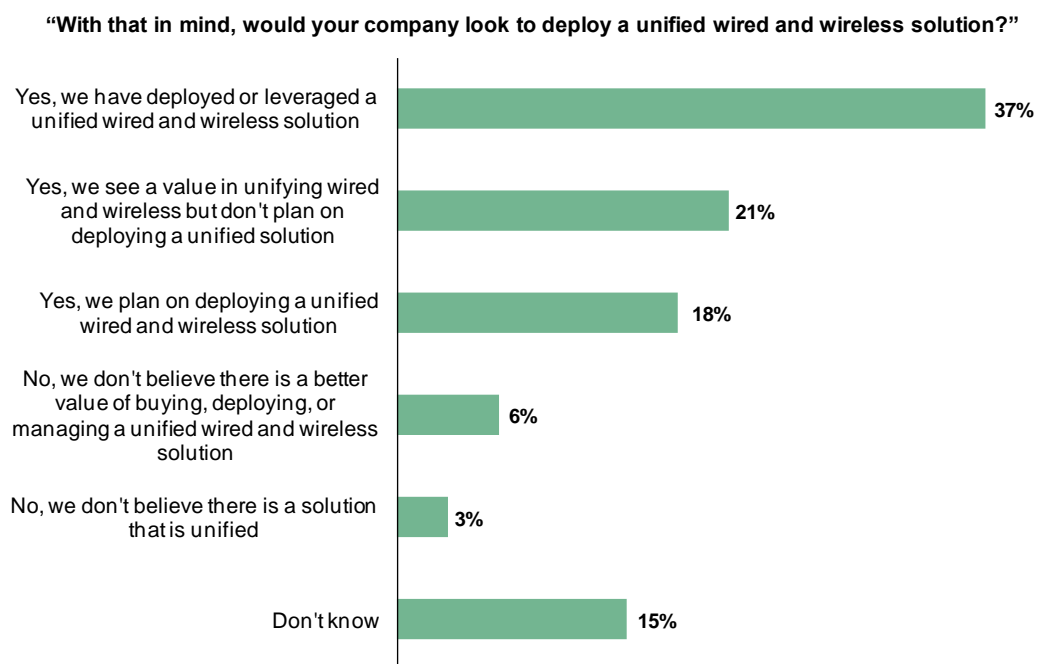
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Cisco Systems, February 2012

When asked if administrators can set up the single security policy that gets pushed out a wired or wireless connection, more than half of firms are looking to deploy a unified solution. Further, assuming users connect with the same device and the wireless automatically creates a secure and encrypted connection, users will have the same experience in accessing a set of capabilities or services in a similar manner — like single login — whether

connecting on wired or through Wi-Fi, on a mobile or handheld device, from a remote office, coffee shop, or hotel. The experience will be the same. Thirty-seven percent have deployed or leveraged a solution already, and another 18% plan to deploy a unified solution (see Figure 5). Although the remaining organizations may not have plans to deploy, only 9% do not believe there is value in doing so or a solution out there that can. The remaining 21% of firms, which are not planning to deploy a unified solution, still see value.

**Figure 5**

The Value Of Deploying Unified Access Is Undeniable



Base: 62 senior-level decision-makers in the US and UK

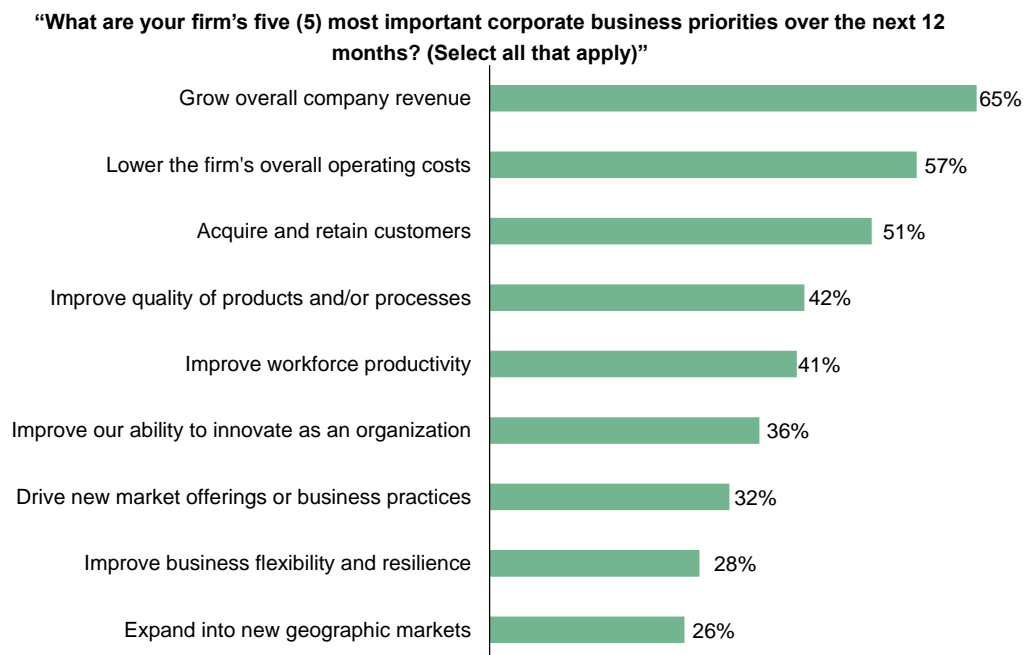
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Cisco Systems, February 2012

## Unified Access Benefits Extend From The User To I&O

As infrastructures become more open and flexible to support the empowered employee and deliver a consistent experience as they move from wired port to a wireless one and back, operations have to continue to work within the same budget as if nothing changed. Forrester's Forrsights Budgets And Priorities Tracker Survey conducted in Q2 2011, says 57% of global enterprises indicate lowering overall operating costs remains one of the top priorities (see Figure 6). I&O teams are working to standardize methods to eliminate waste — repetitious policy management and configurations errors that lead to help desk calls. Unifying management, policy, and control enables or organizations to create workflow processes and streamline problem resolutions, which helps to increase uptime for the business and users. By consolidating infrastructure management, administrators become more efficient and focus on supporting an empowered, mobile, and dispersed business.

**Figure 6**

Lowering Operating Costs Remains IT Top Priority



Base: 2,475 IT decision-makers at global enterprises  
(multiple responses accepted)

Source: Forrsights Budgets And Priorities Tracker Survey, Q2 2011

## Methodology

This Technology Adoption Profile was commissioned by Cisco Systems. To create this profile, Forrester leveraged its Forrsights Budgets And Priorities Tracker Survey, Q2 2011, and Forrsights Networks And Telecommunications Survey, Q1 2011. Forrester Consulting supplemented this data with custom survey questions asked of 62 business and IT decision-makers in the US and UK at organizations with more than 500 employees. Survey questions related to Wi-Fi adoption plans and reasons for this across all industries. The auxiliary survey was conducted in January 2012. For more information on Forrester’s data panel and Tech Industry Consulting services, visit [www.forrester.com](http://www.forrester.com).

### About Forrester Consulting

Forrester Consulting provides independent and objective research-based consulting to help leaders succeed in their organizations. Ranging in scope from a short strategy session to custom projects, Forrester’s Consulting services connect you directly with research analysts who apply expert insight to your specific business challenges. For more information, visit [www.forrester.com/consulting](http://www.forrester.com/consulting).