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## Key Considerations in Developing Mobile Applications



**KATHLEEN GOOLSBY,  
EDITOR  
SANDHILL.COM**

Imagine you're a software products company delivering innovative technology to your clients in a niche industry. Then about a year ago when the market's appetite for iPads and mobile services shot through the roof, there was overwhelming demand from your client base for mobile versions of your product. Clients tell you "it's a must-have" and they want it "right now." You must deliver the new product at a trade show in six months. Your client base has unique security requirements for the technology, and you know there will be some learning on the fly during the development process. You can't simply deliver a mobile version of your existing application; your product needs to be a differentiator, as your company is known for its cutting-edge, innovative products. And you need to be first to market.

That's the situation that Sample Digital faced. "We didn't want to just take our existing application and put it on an iPhone," says Patrick Macdonald-King, CEO of Sample Digital. "The demand was coming from a different audience of executives in our client base, and we needed to create a different experience for them." Executives were commenting, "Computers are hard to use. I need something easy like my iPad where I just have to point my finger."



Sample Digital is a software products company focusing on production workflow acceleration and media management tools. Its dax|D3 core system was already used at almost all Hollywood studios and television networks. It was a Web-based application that entertainment clients used to manage their content workflow from raw film to visual effects, marketing and publicity, distribution, sales and home video, management of scripts, reports, etc. The system facilitated end-to-end business process management.

The new iPad application (dax|MOBILE with iDailies) allows studio executives to go mobile while doing those tasks. They can review and edit today's film shoots wherever they may be. They're not tethered to a desktop computer, Internet connection or waiting for DVDs in the mail. The mobile application dramatically reduces the time cycle and cumbersome processes for the directors and filmmakers, greatly improving the time to decision.

### **Time to market issues**

In any big development project, especially with a short time line, the challenge is developing it "right" and bug free. With speed to market the primary driver and knowledge of Apple's iOS and the entertainment industry as secondary criteria, Sample Digital turned to GlobalLogic to help them develop the new iPad product for the film studio execs.

"We needed to bring a bunch of innovation in terms of user interface design as well as some security technology we had to build for dynamic watermarking of digital assets. You can imagine how much people want to get hold of pre-release cuts of movies and TV shows," recalls Mike DeVries, CMO at GlobalLogic.



They also needed to develop some new controls and did some significant engineering as a course correction from the standard out-of-the-box UI capabilities that come with the toolkit for the iPad. The collaborative Agile development methodology enabled them to course correct throughout the

process and adjust the project to meet the customer needs at launch instead of later.

“We really needed to work with somebody we could count on to get us there as quickly as possible,” states Macdonald-King. “If we didn’t meet the deadline to launch the product at the trade show, it would have cost us an enormous amount of money.” People in the film industry tend to begin their production season in May and June and don’t introduce new technology products during the season. So it was critical that Sample Digital launch the product ahead of the production season.

Dax|MOBILE was released on time in the iTunes store and at the trade show. Both companies were surprised at the client uptake. It was used first by one TV show, then scaled up quickly to five shows, then zoomed to more than 100 shows using the product. The iPad application created an entirely new category of product users among the client base.

### **The empathy and collaboration factors**

The project kicked off onshore in Los Angeles for several weeks. DeVries says, “You can’t succeed at innovation and differentiation unless you have real empathy for who the customer is and what problem they’re trying to solve. That’s at the center of design thinking and innovation. Spending time face to face with the Sample Digital team over an extended period played a major part in gaining that empathy.”

The iPad is a new device, creating a new audience, which results in new needs and opportunities. Empathy to their needs and expectations is crucial to product design in this nascent market.

After the initial weeks in Los Angeles, the development work then moved to GlobalLogic’s Buenos Aires, Argentina, office, known for its expertise in user interface technology and user experience design. They also leveraged the provider’s iOS center of excellence.

GlobalLogic provides R&D services; its clients are primarily technology companies looking to deliver innovation to their customers. “Tech companies today are facing an amazing cross-section of challenges between cloud, mobile, social, the Internet of things, new business models, new consumption experiences and new audiences. We help them connect the dots and find their next innovation,” says DeVries.

GlobalLogic has invested in deep collaboration technologies to ensure diverse perspectives from its global teams to connect the dots. The company believes innovation is a designed outcome resulting from marrying together multiple disciplines and encouraging collaboration. As was with the case with Sample Digital, the collaborative factor also depends on the clients GlobalLogic chooses to work with. They establish partnering relationships where both parties take a deeply vested interest in each other’s success.

“When we are successful delivering innovation for them, their business grows and our business grows. We share in the outcomes of partnering,” says DeVries.

### **Enterprise mobility minimizes business risks**

“I think the whole world is going to be moving into dashboards and Facebook types of approaches to how they manage business,” says Macdonald-King. “Anybody who currently doesn’t see mobile on the forefront of the development and the success of their business – no matter what they’re doing – should get on it ASAP.”

At its “Innovate” conference this year, GlobalLogic surveyed 120 technology executives, asking what had been their biggest surprise in the last 18 months. Across the board, the answer was the iPad, says DeVries. They also asked the execs what is driving the biggest change in their R&D budget over the next 18 months. Again it was the iPad.

“Mobility is the top issue. Whether it’s smartphones or iPads or the Internet of things, mobility is a very, very hot area for an incredible range of companies,” says DeVries. Automobile companies are looking at the in-car console now being an Internet device. Medical companies are looking at telemedicine and e-health as a way to exploit emerging markets and drive down healthcare costs in established markets. Mobile is changing businesses around the world in all industries.”

Sample Digital’s new mobile services through the iPad application minimize the creative and financial risks for directors and filmmakers who invest millions of dollars in their projects.

There are a number of different players in the entertainment production process who need to be on a common platform; this is critical for communicating and sharing assets among each other. For example, NBC produces "House" even though it's broadcast on Fox. Or Universal might have domestic distribution rights for a movie while Warner Brothers has international rights. And production companies aren't necessarily employees of the studios; 90 percent of production is outsourced.

The mobile technology gives directors and filmmakers access to content anytime anywhere so they can make creative and business decisions on the fly and on demand without having to wait for couriers or DVDs or making sure they have the right viewing equipment in place. Now they just click on a link in their iPads.

The Sample Digital mobile product allows them to see things faster, thus minimizing their risks of ending up with film that isn't on target. As an example, a typical production shoot might cost \$100,000- \$150,000 a day. The mobile product enables a cinematographer to actually see right away if the lighting on film is on target with the creative vision. Another example: the studio can cut to the chase and see if the production is on script with its marketing strategy and whether it will test well with audiences. In addition, Macdonald-King points out that many filmmakers are working on two or three projects at once, so they quickly need to know what's on film.

### **Software development relationships**

In addition to choosing a partner that will be flexible and responsive throughout the development process, Macdonald-King has advice for companies taking on a massive software development project.

"Spend as much time on nailing down your requirements as you would spend on developing the product," he advises. "Everybody tends to rush when there is great demand and customers are yelling for something. But you need to make sure you take the time to nail down the requirements and then put those requirements in front of your customers to get their feedback. This is key in order to have a successful product launch."

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