

A PERSPECTIVE PIECE
FROM SOFTCAT

DELIVERING SIMPLE, INTUITIVE DEVICE DEPLOYMENT

Enable today's remote and agile
workforce with Apple Business Manager



Authorised
Reseller

EXPERIENCE IS EVERYTHING

Whenever we experience periods of considerable change in the world, organisations are often presented with an opportunity to embrace new technology – which can bring about multiple benefits.

What we see in these changing times is that digital transformation strategies are accelerated and even the most change-averse organisations suddenly begin to realise the many advantages of digitised processes, updated practices and more agile ways of working. Consequently, several years' worth of change can happen over the course of several months.

One of the major shifts we've seen previously is a dramatic increase in remote working. While some organisations may have traditionally resisted remote ways of working, when placed in a situation where they have no option but to adopt this approach, they've quickly realised the benefits of providing employees with the flexibility to work on their terms.

As a result of this, IT departments also have to adjust the way they operate. New processes and working practices are adopted at speed, often increasing workloads, and it's vital that this doesn't impact employee experience. Indeed, employee experience is perhaps more crucial today than it's ever been. In order to maintain productivity, improve operational efficiencies and retain skilled staff, every experience should be a positive one – particularly when on-boarding is carried out remotely.

That's why Softcat is sharing its perspective on the priority that should be placed on positive user experiences within digital transformation; why the deployment of devices plays a major role in this; and how Apple technology is uniquely positioned to provide the support that's required.



KEEPING BUSINESS MOVING

With Apple technology, every aspect of the employee experience is considered from the moment they open the box. Crucially, however, the Apple experience is not just about the device and the user, but also about the deployment of devices through Apple Business Manager – ensuring that the IT administrator's experience is as intuitive as the Apple technology itself.

Within this short guide, we'll be exploring some of the opportunities available to organisations today and how Apple Business Manager can help to realise them. When coupled together with Softcat's expert consultation and tailored services, we'll explain how it provides customers with everything they need to keep their business moving forward in an evolving landscape.



Examples of the modern workplace, or digital workplace, could already be seen pre-pandemic. What has changed considerably, however, is that the supply of equipment is now almost exclusively remote – meaning that traditional deployment processes have had to change.

Mark Greening,
Digital Workspace Sales Manager,
Softcat



OPTIMISING DEVICE DEPLOYMENT

The devices and solutions chosen by an organisation today must support remote and agile ways of working. They must contribute towards improved efficiencies and employee experiences, no matter where those employees are based. And they must help to simplify operational processes for everyone in the business.

Deployment of these devices must also suit the environment in which we currently find ourselves. Previously, when an employee received a new work device, the IT team would have had to image it, bind it to an active directory, and then guide users through the login process in person. And even when the majority of workers were office based, this manual process was time consuming and often frustrating for both the user and IT professional.

Today, however, in a world where many employees are working remotely more frequently, there's a need for deployment that's zero-touch, reliable and scalable. That's why Softcat is dedicated to ensuring device deployment is as easy as possible.

By harnessing the power of Apple Business Manager and combining it with Softcat's expert support services and guidance, we can help organisations adapt to a modern environment where the IT team has to be accountable for employees within several hundred home offices – as opposed to just one main office.

CASE IN POINT

Have you ever encountered this situation? A user leaves an organisation, their devices are handed back, and their user account is disabled. Come the next morning, the IT department begins the process of re-provisioning those devices – however, it turns out that the user had been signed in with a personal Apple ID and the 'Find my' feature is enabled.

Thankfully, there's an easy way to overcome this scenario from the outset by using Apple Business Manager alongside a Mobile Device Management (MDM) solution, such as Jamf or Workspace One – making the process of re-provisioning the devices simple. Of course, there is much more to Apple Business Manager than is demonstrated in this particular use case, but it is certainly a situation that organisations face on a regular basis.



ENABLING SIMPLE AND CONSISTENT DEVICE DEPLOYMENT

IT professionals who manage an estate of Apple devices of any size must find the balance of delivering a great experience for users without overcomplicating their own management processes.

Apple Business Manager enables administrators to enable rapid, consistent, and simple deployment of Apple products. It combines the previously successful Device Enrolment Program (DEP) and Volume Purchase Program (VPP) and then layers some great features on top. It's quick to set up and easy to learn, making it an essential add-on to any Apple estate.

Once the service has been signed up at <https://business.apple.com> an administrator then just needs an MDM to get started. Apple Business Manager is supported by most MDMs on the market, but it should still be on an organisation's checklist when evaluating either a new or existing environment.

APPLE BUSINESS MANAGER KEY FEATURES

ORGANISATION

- Activity overview at a glance, with easy-to-use filter and functionality
- Locations, which allows a business to break up its App and Book licensing in a logical way, such as by business function, department, or location; each location is issued a 'Server Token' enabling accurate licensing assignment across the business and are a key part of Role Based Access

PEOPLE

- An organisation can manage and create all accounts with Managed Apple IDs, which can support:
 - BYOD enrolment
 - Shared devices
 - Access to Apple Business Manager
 - Links to Azure AD
- Managed Apple IDs offer reassurances that users can't:
 - Setup Apple Pay
 - Access certain iCloud features, such as Mail or Keychain
 - Be used to download paid for or free apps from the App Store

ROLES

Every account has one or more roles assigned to it:

- Administrators are in overarching control, able to access all the features available in Apple Business Manager
- People Managers are able to edit the user details, roles and locations of users within Apple Business Manager
- Device Enrolment Managers are able to administer devices assigned to the business and perform actions such as adding MDM servers, or moving a device from one MDM to another
- Content Managers are able to access all that Apps and Books has to offer and perform actions such as assigning licenses to specific locations
- Staff is used for the user role; it allows access to shared iPad and other services

DEVICES

- Administrators can update, assign and release devices either individually, or in bulk, to or from an MDM with ease
- Offers full assignment history at a glance
- Corporately Owned Personally Enabled (COPE) devices can support the use of a user's own Apple ID to access music etc., which is known to increase employee productivity
- Apple Business Manager works with existing devices with Apple Configurator 2, which the sales team can support with

CONTENT

App and Books (formerly Volume Purchase Program or VPP) enables administrators to simply search out the application or book they are looking for; they can then choose the number of licenses they require, select the required location and click "Get"

WHY CHOOSE APPLE BUSINESS MANAGER?

Apple Business Manager offers a number of key business benefits. It enables the secure, simplified deployment of devices across an organisation, while improving the experiences of both employees and IT administrators.

Fundamentally, Apple Business Manager could save employees and IT administrators huge amounts of time by reducing the effort required for device setup.

Its simple, intuitive tools alleviate the strain on IT resources and increase the number of supports possible per administrator.

With MDM taking away the heavy lifting in regard to scripting and its associated technicalities, the overall deployment process becomes simple. And with a ticketing authorisation system in place, Apple Business Manager enables a seamless experience across all platforms.

DISCOVER THE BENEFITS OF SIMPLIFIED DEVICE DEPLOYMENT, WITH APPLE BUSINESS MANAGER

- Automated Device Enrolment provides a fast, streamlined way for administrators to deploy Apple devices directly to the user, without the need to configure it first
- Zero-touch deployment means a new device can be sent directly to an employee (in the original, unopened shrink wrap) and automatically provision itself with an unremovable configuration profile without the need for any involvement from IT
- Remote configuration and the ability to monitor device information allows IT teams to manage policies and address security requirements for users; this includes deploying applications remotely, updating the operating system and even the ability to wipe or lock devices if they are reported lost or stolen
- Device unlocking helps to overcome the common issues that occur when employees leave an organisation, or when a device needs to be re-provisioned; together, Apple Business Manager and an appropriate MDM solution can be used to free up devices that are locked to an individual employee's personal Apple ID
- Microsoft Exchange Server access is made possible by linking an organisation's devices with its company directory; and by setting up Exchange ActiveSync



Apple Business Manager enables IT administrators to easily and intuitively manage people, Apple devices and content. Along with improved device and role management, it includes Apps and Books – giving IT administrators everything they need, all in one place.

Dan Collett,
EUC Technical Consultant,
Softcat



HOW CAN SOFTCAT HELP?

As an Apple Authorised Reseller, we want to help organisations enable an agile and remote workforce – harnessing the power of Apple’s simplified, intuitive device deployment solution, Apple Business Manager.

At Softcat, we have the in-depth knowledge and expertise to introduce customers to the true value of Apple Business Manager and show them how to get the most out of the solution. We can offer the support and guidance required to keep customers up to date with all the latest changes and developments – and ultimately help them progress with their digital transformation journeys.

We take a fresh approach to the modern challenges of today. And because we spend time understanding the customer’s unique business requirements, we’re able to define new ways to improve the experience for both users and IT departments.

Additionally, because our focus is on long-term partnership and collaboration as opposed to short-term sales targets, we’re able to help customers strive towards meeting their overarching business objectives. Our expert consultation and tailored support services compliment Apple’s technology and enable us to provide a comprehensive offering.

If you’d like to learn more about the ways in which we can support your business specifically, then don’t hesitate to get in touch – and let us show you how simplified, intuitive device deployment will help you meet the demands of today’s rapidly evolving work environment. We look forward to starting the conversation.



IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE WAYS IN WHICH WE CAN SUPPORT YOUR BUSINESS WITH SIMPLIFIED, INTUITIVE DEVICE DEPLOYMENT VIA APPLE TECHNOLOGY, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR SOFTCAT ACCOUNT MANAGER.

