

What is Wireless Expense Management (WEM)?

Moving Past WEM to the Next Generation of Mobility Management

In an industry crammed with acronyms, “WEM” stands out only as more jargon.

But understanding WEM – or its successor, Managed Mobility Services (MMS) – is important for small and mid-sized enterprises. Taking the time to sift through the noise will prove worthwhile.

What is WEM?

“WEM” stands for Wireless Expense Management. Like its older sibling TEM, or Telecom Expense Management, WEM focuses on streamlining and correcting costs, albeit for mobile, rather than landline services.

WEM burst onto the scene in the mid-2010s as smartphones filtered into the enterprise and started disrupting the workplace. Many organizations struggled to rein in wireless carrier costs because of complicated plan structures that, in some cases, telecommunications and IT management groups did not even review.

TEM vendors saw an opportunity. They understood that managing wireless devices was largely analogous to managing telecommunications. Thus, they stepped in – some using software, some using people, and some relying on a mix. “WEM” entered the lexicon as TEM providers offered resources for capitalizing on pooling plans, trimming international coverage, cutting down on voice minutes and implementing other recommendations.

WEM grew complex, quickly, and TEM did not necessarily keep pace. Some vendors spotted the unique ways in which wireless differed from telecom. Others fell short. This would cause unexpected problems for clients down the road.



Apple Unleashed a Monster

Take, for example, the annual arrival of “Apple season.” Organizations that funded staff iPhones often found expenses spiraling out of control every time a new device entered the market. Usable but older phones would break or disappear, and the sole option would be to give employees the latest, expensive, upgrade.

TEM programs that concentrated on managing expenses failed to predict and prevent these upheavals. They focused only on recouping overages and pinpointing optimal service plans. That left customers to undergo repeat refresh cycles with little governance in place.

Consider, too, that even as applications grew ubiquitous, not everyone grasped the security implications – including some WEM vendors. For a long time employees could download corporate applications with few safeguards to protect company data. Third-party apps could harbor viruses and other threats, yet not enough enterprises took the appropriate precautions. (To be fair, such precautions were not always yet available.) Users could lose their smartphones – say, in a taxi or a hotel conference room – and the devices lacked measures to bar unauthorized users from accessing data. All this opened organizations to threats that WEM on its own could not handle.

Even Progressive WEM Had Pitfalls

Forward-thinking TEM/WEM vendors recognized and identified these weak areas and worked to improve them.

Like administering telecom expense management from a holistic Communications Lifecycle Management approach, these vendors evolved WEM to also account for device procurement, moves/adds/changes, upgrades, security, decommissioning, and more.

Yet, the onus still tended to fall on the enterprise. IT staff had to dedicate staff to specific tasks in order to make mobility manageable. Sure, vendors might step in to act as consultants but for the most part, customers had to guide their own initiatives, assigning staff to time-intensive activities that took away from their core skills and duties.



These challenges continue to increase as mobility dominates the workforce. Research firm Strategy Analytics predicts the worldwide mobile workforce will grow from 1.52 billion devices in 2017 to 1.88 billion in 2023.

That's a staggering number. And IT staff know it means the burden on them will keep getting heavier. Large organizations with the money, infrastructure, and people to support wireless management in-house may not struggle with the growth. The same does not apply to most small and mid-sized enterprises. These businesses often do not have the resources to effectively take charge of their own mobile environments. In those cases, the chances of missing critical details, overspending, and of opening doors to breaches, skyrocket.

One Source has long known there must be a way to help this underserved segment gain the same levels and benefits of wireless expense management solutions as their Fortune 100 peers, and has spent years delivering on that philosophy.

MMS Is the Better Way

With apologies for introducing yet another acronym, meet MMS, or Managed Mobility Services.

MMS passes responsibilities for the wireless environment from the enterprise to the vendor. Organizations will want to be aware, though, that not all MMS providers offer the same tiers or coverage. Some are more comprehensive than others, and have designed their portfolios to fit the unique needs of small and mid-sized businesses.



What Makes One Source's MMS Different

True Managed Mobility Services comprise trained, knowledgeable people and flexible, adaptable technology – not software as a service platforms. To that point, here are some of the specific activities One Source provisions, and results it produces:

Data Security & Compliance

- Wipe lost and stolen devices to mitigate risk of compromised data
- Maintain client compliance with industry and government regulations
- Protect and control corporate assets with end-to-end support of the customer's Mobile Device Management platform

Streamline Workflow & Heighten Employee Productivity

- Reduce demands on clients' employees with our end-to-end mobility solution
- Optimize time spent on troubleshooting by providing 24/7 help desk services through our U.S.-based specialists
- Boost productivity and morale by relieving clients' teams of repetitive and low-value tasks

Expense Management Solutions/Bill Management and Bill Pay

- Simplify invoice management
- Telecom expense audits monthly to identify billing anomalies and reduce costs
- Improve employee productivity by streamlining invoice management through a consolidated repository for all services
- Ensure on-time payment of invoices with advance bill payment, eliminating rushed invoice processing and validation

Portfolio Optimization/Sourcing & Procurement Management

- Identify and cut unnecessary services through inventory centralization and visibility
- Avoid unnecessary hikes in rate plans through end-to-end contract lifecycle management
- Use our carrier-agnostic approach to ensure best-in-class services to drive operational excellence
- Fully managed commissioning and deployment of telecom/network services and mobile assets
- Process moves, adds, changes, disconnects

Visibility & Accountability

- Identify and reduce "zombie devices" so clients pay only for what they need and use
- Promote end-user accountability through mobile device usage policy enforcement
- Target selective deployment of mobile solutions to the right users

Gain Control Over Mobile Usage & Expenses

- Implement proactive plan changes on the go with real-time usage and notifications
- Promote financial accountability through reporting of indiscriminate use of company resources
- Manage unnecessary expenses through device lifecycle from deployment to retirement

Usage Optimization/Cost Recovery

- Translate usage trends and turn business needs into implemented changes
- Prevent indiscriminate usage through granular reporting
- Recover billing errors through a fully managed bill dispute process
- Provide visibility to end users and management through shared services charge-back manageable reports

Service & Support/Help Desk

- Deploy our fully managed Mobile Device Management (MDM) application
- Develop and enforce mobile policy uniquely crafted for each client's business needs
- Provide access to our well-trained help desk specialists with extensive vendor, hardware, and service knowledge
- Reduce downtime by going through our dedicated carrier escalation channels

"WEM" is too narrow in a mobile-first world. Organizations of all sizes need more than basic expense management as they enable employees to work, successfully, beyond the confines of an office. Managed Mobility Services address the requirements inherent to modern enterprise mobility management in ways wireless expense management (WEM) on its own cannot. They also plan for, and work with or around, the constant changes and risks that emerge as technology advances. MMS from One Source presents the ideal option for small and mid-sized enterprises seeking the same performance and protections as their large counterparts. Contact us to learn more.