

# DEVICE MANAGEMENT AND ANALYTICS

In addition to providing smart data for the retailer to understand the customer better, an area that is gaining a lot of IT traction is mobile device management (MDM) and analytics. One of the toughest challenges a retail enterprise faces is configuration, deployment and maintenance, especially on larger deployments of untethered or mobile devices. This pain point provides yet another perfect opportunity for VARs to leverage the same sorts of technology (Wi-Fi device tracking and device monitoring).

Many of these solutions have grown out of local network monitoring and control packages and have become large companies such as AirWatch-VMware, SOTI, Symantec, MobileIron, B2M, and ProxToMe, to name a few. These companies are working with many different hardware manufacturers to embed various levels of remote management capabilities into future generations of devices, including basic diagnostic features such as battery condition, usage statistics, firmware version control, network configuration, consumables information, etc. The actual monitoring and managing of this information remains an opportunity for VARs.

Some of these MDM companies, like SOTI and B2M allow VARs to take on the role of offering the service of monitoring and managing these devices for a fee to the retailer. As an example, VARs can operate their own SOTI network operations center, with dedicated staff to take care of their most important customers. This drives incremental recurring revenue, which also cements a closer working relationship with the IT customer. VARs then are more than just a hardware provider, they are a trusted IT partner, working as a



team to make the deployment and management of mobile devices go more smoothly, ensuring faster ROI to the retailer. Better still, it opens the door to the notion of hardware as a service (HaaS).

If a retailer wants to ensure that the investment in the technologies is being used, the same MDM platforms can track how (and if) employees are using the technology. The same Wi-Fi location services that you can use to monitor customer traffic can help retailers do a better job with their own in-house mobile technology. VARs can play a crucial role in managing these devices as a service to their customers, providing customers with the smart data they need to get the most out of their IT investment. **c**