Will iPhone Conquer The Enterprise? 428,000 Search Results Point to Yes

▷ *by Steven Brykman on 16/07/09 at 9:21 pm*

Steven Brykman is Director of Usability at Apperian, a mobile application development company, and contributing editor for iPhoneCTO.

Ask any critic what makes a great movie great and they'll tell you in one word: emotion. It's just the way we are. If you go to a movie and don't feel anything when it's over, you didn't enjoy it. You might not even remember it (Arlington Road comes to mind. I couldn't tell you what that one was about. Even the title was utterly mundane.).

Now, consider the way people talk about the iPhone. Think about the words they use: excitement, love. A Google search for "iPhone Love" reveals 428,000 results while "Blackberry Love" has a paltry 135,000. This may seem obvious, but people literally love their iPhones. Why? First off, because it's so much more than a phone. It's an actual platform: a pocket computer that lets you play games, music, movies, text, chat, record audio, shoot and edit video and surf the web, all displayed on a colorful high-res screen. Not to mention the seemingly unlimited uses the app-world has come up with. I don't know about the rest of you, but I rarely use my iPhone to make calls anymore.

Of course, there's the fact that the iPhone interface is so intuitive that even my two year old can use it to feed a panda. But on a more fundamental level, when first introduced, the iPhone enabled users to do what no other device did. It let you touch and manipulate (multi-touch) the screen with your finger. Two years later, this may sound ho-hum, but at the time it was revolutionary. You could actually interact with the 'objects' on the screen —pinch them, tickle them, poke them in the eye.

Not to get all psychological on you, but according to the lady who runs the local flea market, in her many years of experience, she's noticed that whenever a potential customer handled an item, that person was much more likely to buy it. Call it the power of touch. Because when you touch something, you develop a close, unconscious, emotional bond to that thing. You've already experienced a sense of 'ownership' of the item, just by holding it in your hands, which in turn makes you want to possess the item that much more.

Our company, Apperian, is focused on getting iPhone into the Enterprise space. But as it turns out, this isn't such an easy task. Fidelity Investments tells us they aren't ready to deploy iPhones to their employees due to its lack of configuration control, a common complaint. Version 2.0 of the iPhone Configuration Utility (free) along with Apple's Enterprise Deployment Guide may resolve some of these issues, though likely not all. One drawback is the new iPhone OS still doesn't let IT manage users' applications wirelessly. Device management must still occur through profiles distributed via e-mail or online. But all this is just a matter of time. Because no matter what anyone says, the iPhone is nothing like crack. It's way more addictive than crack. It's like a kind of crack that gets better every nine months or so when they introduce a new (free) crack OS update.

The facts are clear. As my friend at Fidelity says, "Everyone in our office wants an iPhone. They're getting antsy." Lets not underestimate the power of desire. Nor the power of the people to effect change. But don't take my word for it. According to J.D. Power and Associates, as of November, 2008 (pre-OS 3.0, even), the iPhone has the highest satisfaction rating of any smartphones among—get this—business users. Way ahead of Blackberry, in fact, where all you get to touch are the buttons. Emotion, it seems, really does conquer all. Even in business.