



GE



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Linda Boff, Global Director of Marketing Communications, GE

Company Snapshot

Founded by Thomas Edison in 1878

Headquarters in Fairfield, Connecticut

300,000 employees in more than 100 countries

A Dow Jones “sustainability leader” for six straight years

www.generalelectric.com

GE illuminates the potential of in-house iPad and iPhone apps.

GE may have started with a single bright idea. But its current influence extends far beyond light bulbs and home appliances. GE is one of the world’s largest technology companies, with business units devoted to aviation, clean energy, financial services, media, and health care technology, to name a few. As the company imagines, develops, and builds technologies that transform the way we live, it’s channeling the equally transformative power of iPad, iPhone, and in-house apps to generate new business possibilities.

“Innovating for the future is who we are,” says Linda Boff, GE’s Global Director of Marketing Communications. “We’re always thinking about what’s next. How can technology make lives better and help our customers be more efficient? iPad and iPhone are wonderful ways to inspire us and help us get GE there.”

Productivity to go

When iPhone was released, GE quickly recognized the business value of enabling its workforce with fast, mobile data access via an easy-to-use interface.

“We were early adopters of mobile technology,” says Dayan Anandappa, Director of Digital Technologies and Collaboration. “Not just for email, but for scheduling, productivity, and getting content anywhere. Before iPhone, travel and meetings always required a laptop. Now you’re no longer tethered to your location—and you’re still productive.”

The introduction of iPad created further opportunities for mobile productivity at GE. “iPad gives me access to email, contacts, PDFs, and PowerPoint presentations,” says Chief Information Officer Vic Bhagat. “I can even get GE-specific data and applications. It’s made things much easier, and a lot more mobile.”

For GE’s sales and marketing staff, the large iPad display makes it a useful interface for sharing business information and presentations, bringing greater immediacy to interactions with customers and colleagues.

“You can use it sitting across from somebody,” says Boff. “It’s not just a more portable laptop—it’s a different technology, and we use it differently. You have this beautiful device, and yet it quickly becomes our device. The apps and data are on iPad, yet it’s very much about GE and the GE brand.”

Business-building apps

To maximize its mobile capabilities, GE has established the GE Mobile Center of Excellence, an internal group that develops tools and strategies to make mobile devices more useful for its many business units. The group has already built dozens of apps for in-house use on iPhone and iPad, and has created its own web portal, the GE Mobile App Store, to make it simple for users to find and download apps.

The apps range from industry-specific monitoring and diagnostic tools to business intelligence resources. For example, the company's Transformer Monitoring app helps manage gas turbine inventory and electric transformers throughout the world, while PDS Movement Planner lets service personnel monitor railway tracks and get diagnostic information on locomotives.

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In combination with the unique capabilities of the devices themselves, GE's custom apps help the company's core clients accomplish their business goals faster and better.

"The easy flow of information, the ability to flick through pages, the ability to zoom in from a global map to a specific transformer and read all the key performance indicators—these are some of the 'wow' moments we get when we launch these apps," Bhagat says. "Could you do that on a terminal? I don't think so."

"GE has some of the best technologies in the world, and now we have the mobile platform to do something different," Anandappa adds. "The iPhone SDK allows us to seamlessly translate our creative ideas into the technology itself. We can make something easy to use, but the back end can be extremely powerful. The possibilities are endless."