

## Mobile Adoption in Hazardous Manufacturing Environments is Key Despite Limited Options, According to VDC Research

*Mobile applications in hazardous environments are expected to remain in niche market for the foreseeable future.*

“We are now at a crossroads in the market with a growing portfolio of product options from participating vendors addressing many of the previous functionality and performance gains.”

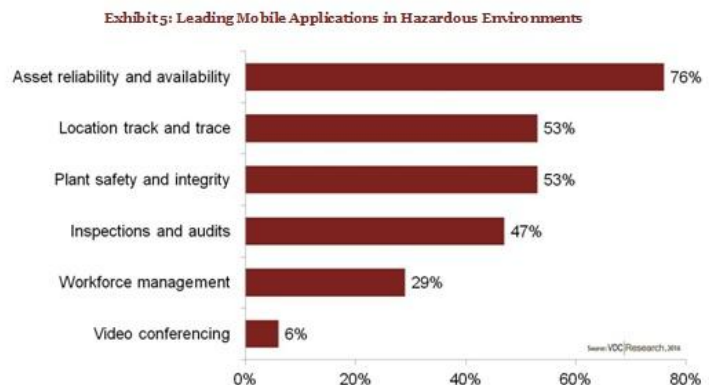
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The automation of workflows in hazardous environments is a segment where manufacturing organizations are increasingly focusing their attention, according to a new report by VDC Research ([click here](#) to learn more). Mobile technology is catching up to demands to address key worker safety, inspection, asset management and other applications. However, there is a general consensus that the limited portfolio of competitive offerings has represented a major growth barrier.

A key challenge limiting mobile adoption in hazardous environments has been the functionality, and to an extent cost, of available devices. Today, there is a shift away from application –specific mobile data collection terminals to modern and more multi-functional tablets and smartphones. The majority of the market – approximately 90% of shipments - are devices designed to operate in Class 1 Div 2 or ATEX Zone 2 environments. However, a key gap in the market for intrinsically safe devices (supporting Class 1 Div 1 or ATEX Zone 1) that meet today’s performance and ergonomic requirements is being addressed, further opening up the market. In addition to “purpose built” devices, the availability of hazardous rated cases for tablets and smartphones have become an increasingly popular option. However, these accessories can introduce some functionality limitations and there is some confusion surrounding how these options are being tested and certified.

Another key challenge is the lack of a global standard. While end users express interest in a product that is both ATEX and IECEx compliant, significant cost of these devices has represented an adoption barrier. “This market is confounded by myriad certifications and unclear messaging from participating vendors” says David Krebs, Executive Vice President of Enterprise Mobility. “This is driving a strong requirement for market education and development programs. A further challenge has been in the accuracy of how environments are rated. It is not uncommon for environments to be rated more stringently which impacts the type of technology that can be deployed.”

Despite the challenges, recent advances in mobile device, network, and application sophistication, enterprise mobility solution opportunities are increasing rapidly. By applying technology to help manage their mobile workforces, forward-looking manufacturing organizations are seeing almost immediate benefits through lower costs, higher workforce productivity, improved worker safety, and enhanced customer experiences.



**About VDC Research**

Founded in 1971, VDC Research provides in-depth insights to technology vendors, end users, and investors across the globe. As a market research and consulting firm, VDC's coverage of AutoID, enterprise mobility, industrial automation, and IoT and embedded technologies is among the most advanced in the industry, helping our clients make critical decisions with confidence. Offering syndicated reports and custom consultation, our methodologies consistently provide accurate forecasts and unmatched thought leadership for deeply technical markets. Located in Natick, Massachusetts, VDC prides itself on its close personal relationships with clients, delivering an attention to detail and a unique perspective that is second to none.