

# MOBILE DEVICES: RUGGED OR CONSUMER?

We are often asked why we believe that rugged handheld devices are more cost-effective than consumer devices. Here are just a few of the reasons:



**PRICE:** This is where the consumer units at first seem to win, as the purchase price of a rugged device is often much higher than a consumer device. However, the difference isn't as great as it might seem. Consumer devices are far less versatile than rugged units. If they are brought up to a similar level of functionality, the overall costs of the two types of devices are much closer.

**TOTAL COST OF OWNERSHIP:** Rugged devices win easily here. Looking at the full lifetime of the devices, a rugged device will typically have a TCO that is a third lower than that of a consumer device.

**LIFETIME:** Rugged units will almost always last longer than consumer devices, due to their robust nature. Because they have a shorter life, consumer models are constantly changing, which often also requires the replacement of the supporting infrastructure (e.g. chargers, cables etc.).

**FUNCTIONALITY:** Rugged devices have more features and are therefore much more versatile than consumer units. They also incorporate features such as an integrated barcode reader or RFID reader for data capture.

**DURABILITY:** Rugged devices are specifically built to withstand harsh environments and rough handling. Consumer units aren't, and are therefore much more susceptible to damage. This leads to higher maintenance costs, lower reliability and a shorter length of life. Rugged devices are also designed to work in extreme temperatures, whereas consumer devices struggle.

**DOWNTIME:** Downtime affects productivity, efficiency and profitability. Consumer units can have a three or four-fold higher failure rate than rugged handhelds. They also have a downtime that is typically 40 - 50% higher than for rugged devices.

**SUPPORT:** Although support plans for rugged handhelds are usually more expensive than those for consumer devices, they are much more comprehensive. The higher failure rate of consumer units also means that the cost of supporting them is often actually much higher overall. In addition, the warranty periods for rugged devices are often longer than those for consumer units.

**In summary, although rugged devices might cost more initially, they are much more durable, more feature-rich and more dependable – so in the long term they give far better value for money.**

