

Playbook versus the iPad

Based on project work and client experience the following table is a quick summary of where the iPad and the badly named Playbook stack up. 10 is highest, 0 lowest.

	iPad 2.0 score	Playbook score
Business Market usage	-Audits -Medical -Sales Presentations -Educational	-Same as the iPad except for Educational sector -Add Finance, Sales processes cross-industry -Possible to work on documents which connect to your BB phone and to your business resources
1. Naming and Marketing	10/10 Industry Leader. Clear, simple, retail based and uniform.	1/10 Terrible. Playbook is supposed to be a professional/prosumer tool. The name suggests otherwise. Blackberry phones have similar marketing/naming problems [Curve, Touch, Tour, Bold 8890, 9360, 9630 etc. Etc]. All of this gives administrators a headache to manage.
2. Screen size	7/10 Nearly 10 inches which is a little large to be a business-mobile tool.	8/10 7 inches which makes it this a portable mobile device.
3. Ease of use	9/10 Very intuitive and simple you can use 2 hands.	8/10 Not as elegant as the iPad but better than other tablets. One hand only.
4. Wi-Fi power ease to connect	8/10 – sometimes you have to disconnect and reconnect to restore connectivity.	7/10 – oftentimes loses a connection and has a weak transceiver.
5. 3G/4G connectivity	0/10 – not available unless you purchase a 3G plan with a local carrier. Not all carriers will have such a plan.	6/10 – if you have a Blackberry phone with a funny name, you can 'bridge' with the Tablet and render it a mobile device. However many teleco providers and some phones with 4.7 Oses or older do not have bridge capability. This is very odd since

		this one feature is where RIM bests Apple.
6. Multi-tasking	7/10 – Weak on the concurrent usage of business documents and podcasts or internet usage for example.	7/10 – Same weakness as the iPad.
7. Apps	8/10 – Apple uses a walled garden approach letting you install Apple approved apps. Some apps are actually useful re productivity, work, or science.	8/10 – Playbook lets you install a wide variety of apps in an open approach including Android apps [coming]. Let's face it most apps are not that necessary.
8. Technological future, upgrade paths, and staying in the market	10/10 Apple is here to stay with Tablets and the future iPads will only get better and more professional in their orientation ie they will cross over to the Pro-sumer market.	2/10 RIM has some serious problems including management, marketing and development cycles which lag Apple. It is unclear whether the Playbook will be renamed, and realigned with a proper strategy to protect the installed Blackberry base and provide an enhanced mobile unit capable of winning at least 10% of the Tablet market share.
	59/80	47/80

Conclusion:

Do businesses need one now? In short no. In most cases the current laptop that the business people use is good enough. Neither Tablet is really a business tool today. In the future they likely will be but you might as well wait. As well pricing for both is high - U\$600 for a 64 GB unit. Ouch.

A Playbook purchase might be reasonable for your workforce if you have a Blackberry, a lot of mobile staff and you want them to give high quality demos, and use the unit as a large mobile device for email, voice dialling and podcasts. Only RIM has a real 4G or 3G connection assuming that the user has a Blackberry phone. However RIM needs to work out its bridge software and its OS stability – it keeps issuing many OS upgrades which is annoying. As well RIM has terrible marketing which calls the entire company into question. Who is their market? What are they trying to sell? What is the branding and marketing message? None of these questions apply to Apple.

Apple has yet to cross over from a retail superstar to the business community. The iPad is a superior product to the Playbook in many ways. Yet there exists issues with integration with current systems, security and productivity of usage which plague Apple. It is hard to imagine business people using the iPad on the road as a serious replacement for a laptop. Like the Playbook, the iPad can be used to give presentations, and demos including good quality audio feeds.