



# Moving from **Efficiency** to **Innovation**

## Advanced Communication and Collaboration Tools **Key to the Future**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The culture of business has changed, and information technology is changing with it. CIOs are focused on innovation, strategy, and using their unique insights on technology to move the business forward. Tasked with supporting a diverse constituency of tech-savvy workers, and customers moving toward real-time, always-on methods of communication and collaboration, IT must create strategies that play to these communities' strengths while increasing efficiencies and growing the business.

Information technology is no longer about using information to modify business processes. Nor is the mandate simply to cut costs and increase efficiencies. *CIO* magazine's 2010 State of the CIO survey revealed that out of nearly 600 CIOs, 39 percent think "innovative new market offerings or business practices" would be a significant accomplishment for them in 2010 — up 50 percent from the year before.

To keep up with these changes, businesses must redefine products and services, as well as channels of distribution and communication. That means IT leaders must search for the right technologies and integrate them effectively into the organization's infrastructure. The answer is innovation via advanced collaboration and communication technologies. This white paper will describe how organizations can use collaborative technology to create an innovative technology infrastructure that will promote growth and profitable revenue while increasing customer satisfaction and IT efficiency.

Avaya solutions empower IT organizations to take end users working on different devices in different locations around the world and merge them into a coherent, collaborative, creative, and productive workforce. Avaya continues to deliver innovative and compelling new products that address people-centric communication and collaboration. At the core, Avaya has delivered a communications capability that integrates all modes of real-time communications (voice, video, data, IM) into one footprint, delivered through one communications infrastructure, allowing customers to lower capital and operating expenses. More importantly, when a single infrastructure supports all modes of real-time communication, you have true unified communications.

## **Achieving Greater Communication Efficiencies**

The goals IT leaders aspire to today aren't new: deliver services to users that are responsive, cost-effective, and efficient; support business objectives; be innovative; and increase productivity. But today's conditions are unique. A worldwide recession has put unprecedented pressure on IT organizations; smaller budgets, leaner staffs, and slower growth have all had an effect. And don't forget the increasing velocity of technological change: IT as a service; virtualization; cloud computing; and the consumerization of technology are just a few of the factors that have upped the degree of difficulty for IT leaders.

Often, the difference between a company that thrives in times like these and one that struggles boils down to communications. The company with more efficient, optimized communications, inside and outside its walls, wins. The key is real-time communications integrating voice, video, real-time data, and IM into one footprint. The goal is an environment where the system understands context: who, what, when, and even what's being said. But like any goal it is not without challenges.

The first challenge is improving and streamlining internal systems to handle more advanced communication and collaboration. This includes not only formal business processes like ERP and CRM, order entry systems and inventory systems, but also traditional office collaboration technologies like phones and e-mail. Changing the way security is managed is the second challenge. IT departments must find ways to make resources that used to be locked down available to appropriate users, both onsite and off. That means looking at advanced security technologies like biometrics and two- or three-factor authentication. Corporate culture is the third challenge, and it's not to be taken lightly. Business today is all about teamwork, and employees must embrace the mindset, as well as the technology, that enables teams to work together for the greater good of the company.

The end result of meeting those challenges might look like this: Two coworkers set up a conference call via e-mail and calendaring. When it's time for the call to occur, one worker might be tied up on another call, or may not have the documents necessary to collaborate efficiently. An efficient system would automatically call the

participants at the appointed time, and serve up the documents to be discussed on participants' screens. This "personal workflow" is integrated with the business processes that support it, ensuring that the right people have the right information at the right time to make informed business decisions.

## **The Synergy of 'Time to X'**

By using a combination of information and interaction, companies can focus on what really improves business: "Time to X". X represents different values depending on what sort of business a company is conducting (when processing an order, for example, X represents payment).

Say there's a loan awaiting approval, and an order is entered with the wrong ZIP code. Depending on a company's systems and processes, an e-mail chain might be generated that takes too long to resolve and invites the possibility of human error. But if the system is smart enough to identify incorrect addresses and associate them with specific sales territories, it could either correct the problem itself or contact the proper salesperson — automatically and immediately.

Before deciding what technologies or types of interaction make sense for your company, it's important to know where the company stands, as well as where it needs to be. That means performing an honest self-assessment of internal and customer-facing processes:

- ▶ **Step 1** Examine your customer-facing business processes.  
What issues drive variations in a process? Can you reduce the time between order and delivery? What would it take to shave off 20 percent of that time?
- ▶ **Step 2** Examine your informal business processes.  
How do employees work with each other? How much of their time is spent doing things that could be done differently? How much time are you spending trying to coordinate meetings?
- ▶ **Step 3** Focus on improvements  
Determine how to improve each of those areas using information, integration, and collaboration.

Once you've completed the self-assessment, it's time to take a deeper dive into how you handle customers. You might for example focus

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## It's A Remote World

- ▶ **89 of the top 100 U.S. companies offer telecommuting**
- ▶ **58 percent of companies consider themselves a virtual workplace**
- ▶ **Only 9 percent of employees work at headquarters**
- ▶ **67 percent of all workers use mobile and wireless computing**

(Source: <http://www.insight-corp.com/reports/mwf.asp>)

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on optimizing customer service, nurturing and growing existing markets, and reaching new markets. It's important to acknowledge that today's consumers have many choices and will continue to remain customers only if their needs are met. They also are better informed than ever. You'll need to find ways to answer their questions and concerns quickly and accurately. The goal is to automatically route queries through the path that gives the customer the best experience. So, if a customer knows exactly what he wants but has a simple question, a live online agent or call center interaction model might be best. If the customer has a specific problem, the key is to route them quickly to someone with the right set of skills to address the problem, while managing the workflow effectively. If the question is about a specific product, today's well-informed customers often know more about the specific topic than salespeople. That means finding them an expert quickly. One way might be to hook them up via video chat with a vendor representative.

Combining information and interaction also improves processes on the business side. For example, companies today typically install an IP-based conference system where employees have personal conference numbers, allowing them to send out meeting invitations. Often, however, these systems are used for conversations between just two employees — which, if one party is on the phone with someone else, can lead to missed opportunities since the only option for the other party is to leave a voice mail or just hang up. If, however, the system is a conference bridge, the person who calls may be willing to wait for a few minutes, increasing the probability that the meeting will take place.

Taking it up a few notches makes a big difference. With presence technology, one employee can see if another is on the network. This greatly increases the chances for collaboration, but it's only a step in the process. The next step is an availability system, which allows employees to modify their availability preferences individually. For example, when contacting Employee X, Employee Y might find out that Employee X is available via specific modalities of communication at specific times. Again, this increases the chance that collaboration will take place.

## Innovation through Collaboration and Communication

Imagine being represented by an avatar in a virtual meeting. As you get closer to another avatar, you can hear them more clearly. You can set up a podium in the virtual meeting room so everyone can see and hear you, while people who are close together can have sidebar conversations. After the meeting, a sidebar might turn into a small group, its conversations and interactions bringing to light problems and issues you hadn't known existed, eventually leading to new, innovative ideas. Collaboration in today's business culture takes place between groups instead of individuals; doing it well takes deep knowledge of unified communications and Web 2.0.

### Collaboration and Unified Communications

For many companies, the most visible step toward incorporating technology into the collaboration process is telepresence: an infrastructure that allows people to communicate with others as if they were present in the same location. Telepresence is part of a larger group of unified communications tools that can lead to innovation — personal workflow tools like Microsoft Outlook; multi-function video via videophone and VDI (Virtual Desktop Infrastructure); and others.

Adding availability to the unified communications infrastructure increases collaboration. For example, a user's online address book, typically ordered A-Z, forces users to page through to find the desired contact. By adding intelligence to the process, the address book will start to recognize which contacts the user interacts with most frequently, and at what time of day. It can then predict which contacts the user may want, and may even be able to display those contacts' availability options.

The same type of integration is possible on the customer-facing side as well. For example, an investment bank with wealthy clientele could reduce the time between proposing an investment to receiving the funds from the customer. It's a process that typically takes three to four weeks, because the investor wants to talk to various experts before committing, and rounding up all those experts is time-consuming. But if a broker could find an expert during the initial interaction, by looking at presence

## B2B Social Media Has Arrived

**86 percent of B2B firms are using social media, compared to 82 percent of B2C.** (Source)

- ▶ More than half (53.5 percent) of marketers surveyed said they currently use social media as part of their marketing strategy. (Source)
- ▶ Annual growth in U.S. B2B online marketing spend is forecast at eight percent in 2010 and is set to reach 14 percent by 2012. (Source)
- ▶ Forrester predicts B2B interactive marketing spending will reach \$4.8 billion by 2014—almost double the 2009 estimate of \$2.3 billion. (Source)
- ▶ B2B social media marketing spending, just \$11 million in 2009, will grow to \$54 million in 2014. (Source)
- ▶ U.S. B2B advertising and marketing spending will increase by 0.8 percent this year, to \$129 billion. (Source)

<http://socialmediab2b.com/2010/08/b2b-social-media-statistics/#ixzz0zc7yiUzu>

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and availability around the country, the time to it takes to close the deal could be reduced significantly.

### Collaboration and Access/Mobility

People need to be able to collaborate not just in the office but everywhere — including coffee shops, airports, and their own living rooms — and from many types of devices. The usability of handheld devices is especially critical, as is the way those devices present information.

For example, a technician might be working to repair an intricate problem on a circuit board that's preventing critical work from being done. Despite consulting the vendor and relevant message boards, the technician is still stumped. He then enters a system and explains that he needs an expert for a specific problem. The system finds the right expert and makes the connection. After communicating via IM, the technician shoots a quick video to show the expert the problem so the expert can troubleshoot it on the spot. In the past, it might have taken a cell phone, a laptop, and a portable video camera to complete all these tasks; today they can be managed on one small smartphone.

Pairing the simplest user interface possible with intelligence on the back end is another key component of a quality handheld device. The combination provides the intelligence to point users to information and contacts that meet their needs quickly and intuitively. For example, a salesperson on the road might get a message on her smartphone that says "Call Bill." On the back end, the "Call Bill" command has selected the most likely Bill from all of the Bills the salesperson knows, based on her current set of activities and recent communication. The result is faster, more effective communication.

### Collaboration and Social Media

Social media — everything from blogs and wikis to social networking sites and Twitter feeds — started in the consumer world, but has quickly become an important collaboration tool for businesses. For example, SAP's professional social media communities boast more than two million members worldwide (<http://wiki.sdn.sap.com/wiki/display/profile/Mark+Yolton>). With social media, people can interact on subjects that are outside of their normal areas of expertise, and these interactions can lead to broader ideas and innovative outcomes.

The challenge for any organization is to turn social media to its advantage, translating it into an effective business tool. That means taking it from the consumer world, where there may be thousands of participants but low collaboration, to a place where you can interact more with fewer people.

Consider a contact center, which typically handles phone calls and e-mails. By adding social media, the contact center can redirect Twitter feeds, blog entries, and social networking posts via filtering and scanning engines to more effectively communicate with customers, potential customers, and even detractors.

### Collaboration and the Cloud

Cloud computing allows companies to run multiple applications and processes with few internal resources and a tiny physical footprint. Unified communications is a type of cloud computing. For example, a company with three locations in different time zones, along with dozens of branch offices around the country, can use unified communications to help its employees share ideas, publish and annotate documents, access corporate data on the fly, and track all aspects of a project. With cloud computing, the right employees can collaborate at the right time in the same place, making important decisions and developing better ways of doing business.

### Conclusion

Although not without challenges, changing processes to improve collaboration will yield significant competitive advantage over the next decade. And the possibilities for innovation are almost limitless. New ideas lead to new products, which lead to new customers and greater profits. As technology improves even more, the potential will grow even further.

A communications capability that integrates all modes of real-time communications (voice, video, data, IM) into one footprint — delivered through one communications infrastructure — is the vision for the future. Today's solutions provide contextual collaboration, an environment where the system understands who's in a conference, who's collaborating, what documents are relevant to that group of people, and even what's being discussed. This is the flowering of a more effective, more efficient, easier-to-use communications and collaboration infrastructure that will drive innovation within the enterprise.