Igniting Collaboration in the Next-Generation Enterprise

What You Will Learn

Influenced by consumer trends surrounding mobile applications, social media, video, and virtualization, organizations worldwide understand that now, more than ever, employee behaviors can tremendously affect business advantage. By creating workspace environments conducive to collaboration and mobility, IT managers can assume a pivotal role in facilitating change and igniting innovation across the organization. Enlisting support from proven experts to plan and build collaboration solutions can simplify the process, augmenting core competencies and providing best-practices guidance for enterprise IT decision makers who are:

- Exploring new types of platforms and/or architectures to integrate with legacy communications equipment
- Looking to move beyond unified communications and take the next step on the journey to improve collaboration
- Needing to respond to the rising number of diverse communications devices and applications in the work environment
- Seeking to improve collaboration to further business goals
- Evaluating mobile collaboration applications, but not sure how to begin

With an integrated architectural approach that strategically aligns with business priorities, IT can successfully promote employee productivity and satisfaction while also reversing their reputation from policing inhibitor to pioneering enabler.

Top Ten Considerations for Managing Mobile Collaboration in the Workplace

1. Provisioning and configuration

2. Application certification, distribution, updates, and activation

3. Security of device content (including proprietary information such as contacts and emails) and safeguarding device's access to corporate network

4. Regulatory and corporate policy compliance

5. Plan, build, and manage costs

6. Single solution to manage applications and devices (mobile and others)

7. Password enforcement and certificate management

8. Remote monitoring and management, including lock and over-the-air (OTA) wipe capabilities

9. Tracking of IT-purchased assets and/or enterprise-furnished devices

10. Integration with IT infrastructure

Personal Preference Takes Precedence

Consumer technology preferences are reshaping the traditional workspace. Attached to the utility, multifunctionality, and convenience that smartphones, tablets, and mobile applications bring to their personal lives, today's enterprising employees expect similar capabilities in the workplace. In fact, in 2011, consumers purchased more smartphones than PCs, and by 2016, the number of mobile devices will dwarf the number of PCs worldwide.[1] Once the center of activity, the corporate desktop/laptop computer has become just another productivity tool in an expanded work environment. Employees today imagine innovative video, virtualization, social media, and mobile services that help them access company resources on demand, from any network; collaborate more effectively; and fulfill job duties faster. It is easy to envision how these flexible, more collaborative workspaces could sharpen an organization's competitive edge in the global market. And it is just as easy to foresee the challenges IT will face to bring the vision to reality.

Attaining the full value of these benefits depends on two critical factors: successful technology planning and risk-free building. To execute new business models, collaboratively nurture innovation, and empower users to simply and securely use their preferred devices for work, IT leaders must welcome consumer-centric applications, technologies, and platforms. They must facilitate adoption of these communications tools, secure use, and proactively prepare for their effects on the enterprise network and communications infrastructure.

"The IT world is getting more and more complex, so someone who is expert in an area that I don't need to be expert in is really very valuable to me."

–Tracy Futhey, CIO and Vice President for Information Technology, Duke University

 [1] *The Future of Mobile, Business Insider, March 21, 2012.*
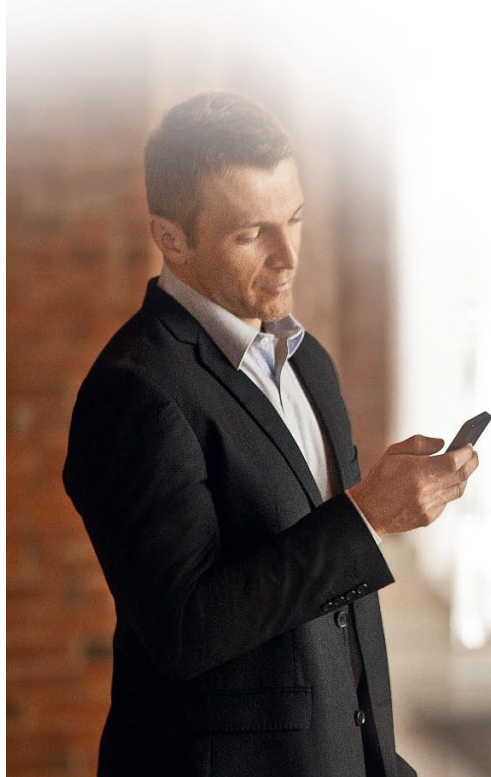
Strategies for Success

Start with Strategy

Before undertaking a new collaborative technology deployment, it is vital to establish a strategy aligned with business priorities. Executives, line-of-business managers, IT, and even target user populations will all lend their own unique perspectives about business challenges and initiatives. The goal of these conversations is to define the business objectives that the organization is trying to propel through the network. Until this integral step is complete, decision makers should refrain from in-depth technology discussions of any kind.

Set the Foundation

Advanced collaboration solutions and applications require an advanced communications infrastructure. At a bare minimum, organizations must evolve beyond private branch exchange (PBX) and IP telephony to a flexible unified communications system that allows IT to layer on new collaboration capabilities. But specific needs might warrant additional enhancements. For example, organizations keen to embrace smartphones and tablets in the workplace need to transition from wired-only networks to combined wired-and-wireless networks. The point is to optimize the network foundation to allow for utmost flexibility, mobility, and scalability.

A unified communications network integrates data, voice, video, and mobile applications across both traditional office environments and next-generation workspaces that promote employee mobility, but executing the right migration path takes a thorough assessment of current infrastructure, successful planning, and an implementation based on a scalable and resilient design. Engaging a trusted partner knowledgeable about best practices and proven methodologies accelerates deployment and allows organizations to follow a phased approach, which helps keep costs in check. It also minimizes risks by establishing a core foundation that facilitates continued innovation with minimal business disruption.

No matter where they are in this process, IT decision makers who consult with a trusted collaboration services partner can get customized recommendations and roadmaps related to important questions such as:

- Which solutions should we explore?
- Which deployment models should we consider?
- What criteria should we use to select the best deployment model for us?
- Do we need to add all solutions at the same time?
- Can we take a phased or step-by-step approach to building the solution?
- How can we ensure strong ROI on our IT investment?
- How can we train employees and promote user adoption?

Forge Forward with Applications that Further Business Goals

With the right strategy and foundation in place, organizations are better positioned to consider and make decisions about collaboration tool alternatives that are right for their business (see Table 1).

Table 1. Potential Collaboration Initiatives

Initiative	Primary Considerations	Value for IT
Managing mobile devices and applications	Empowering mobile workforce: · Ensure network and data security while enabling easy, consistent user experience for employees · Allow access to collaboration applications from mobile devices · Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)	· Satisfy end-user requirements and support corporate objectives for productivity by supporting "work anywhere" functionality through mobile devices · Manage costs by tracking and managing mobility assets and monitoring asset usage · Secure corporate data and enforce corporate mobility policies
Desktop virtualization	· Demonstrate cost-effectiveness and ROI of virtual desktop initiative · Make sure smartphones, tablets, and other mobile devices and rich-media applications work transparently in new virtualized environment	· Increase productivity through access to anytime, anywhere, any-device services · Reduce desktop support costs · Improve physical desktop data security
Enterprise social software	· Effects on existing communications and network infrastructure · Support strategy for the enterprise social software platform and users · Plan for addressing user adoption and change management	· Support organizational objectives for more collaborative work styles · Provide user population with improved access to information, expertise, and other assets

Ten Pointers in Enabling the Next-Generation Workforce

1. Assemble a collaboration committee in your organization that represents the viewpoints of executives, line-of-business managers, IT, and users.

2. Facilitate in-depth conversations about collaboration strategies that focus on business initiatives and challenges before embarking on technology-oriented discussions.

3. Define a roadmap.

4. Establish an agile network foundation that supports advanced IP communications such as messaging, presence, and videoconferencing.

5. Recognize that the new collaboration environment is complex, and enterprises are typically better off engaging a services partner versus tasking their IT teams to plan and build a new collection of collaboration tools.

6. Calculate the qualitative benefits as well as quantitative ROI for hosted, managed, or software-as-a-service (SaaS) solutions in comparison to on-premises infrastructure.

7. Consider how you will enable and manage business transformation as it relates to the collaboration build.

8. Establish proper training and support, enabling employees to adopt the new tools and allowing your enterprise to transition smoothly and successfully.

9. Chart progress against initially outlined business objectives and revise policies to ensure optimum results.

10. Most importantly, champion change. Healthy, productive collaboration promotes business innovation and growth.

Not only do enterprise organizations have flexibility to deploy collaboration solutions that make the most sense for them, but they have flexibility with delivery options, too. For example, IT might elect to build the solutions:

- On premises, on their own network
- Off premises, "in the cloud" with a subscription to services using a provider
- Hybrid, a mix of both on premises and off premises

Cloud-based delivery can improve collaboration by facilitating mobility and providing flexibility. On-premises deployment might offer more control and customizability. Choosing the right consumption model for the right application for your organization should be a strategic decision rather than a technology one.

Maximize Adoption to Maximize ROI

Ensuring successful user adoption short and long term is integral to the success of any enterprise collaborative technology initiative. Along with the technology itself, organizations must consider the people and process components as well. Change management services can help overcome challenges enterprises might encounter with collaboration deployments such as:

- Large, complex deployment of unified communications with business video, conferencing, and/or enterprise social software
- Collaboration technology deployments dependent on a certain business outcome (for example, a business objective to reduce travel savings depends on effective utilization of videoconferencing solutions)
- Culture, people, process, or political issues interfering with getting full business value from collaboration
- Slow or stalled deployment

Change management services teams address the people, culture, business, and technical process issues around using a collaboration solution to obtain desired business outcomes, acknowledging that most deployments require high user interaction to realize projected benefits.

How to Pick the Right Services Partner for Collaboration

Rather than overburdening the enterprise's IT department, IDC encourages organizations to use a third-party services team that specializes in collaboration (IDC Analyst Connection, "Key Questions to Ask When Considering Collaboration Solutions," August 2010). Here are a few fundamental questions to consider:

- Does the services firm have proven methodologies for evaluating, designing, and deploying collaboration solutions?
- Is the firm certified with the appropriate broad spectrum of collaboration suppliers: hardware, software, desktop, video, and voice?
- Does the vendor understand the organization's business factors and the complexities of migration?
- Can the company conduct successful business transformation conversations with decision makers at various levels within the enterprise? Is it experienced in uniting disparate stakeholders?
- Does the firm offer global coverage and services support?

Conclusion

Today's consumer technology trends translate to new collaboration and innovation opportunities for the enterprise. By engaging with a trusted services partner, enterprise IT managers can focus on core competencies and organizational priorities while learning what is needed to develop and administer an integrated architectural approach that supports a virtual, mobile workforce. To realize full value from advanced technologies, organizations must carefully set the right foundation for success—yet there is no universal roadmap to effective implementation. An experienced services consultant can work with enterprise organizations to custom-build a comprehensive plan with small, manageable steps, so that the migration to collaboration is technically smooth, financially sound, and strategic for business.

Discover Collaboration, Uncover Opportunity

To find out how the adoption of new collaboration technologies can address your business priorities, ask your Cisco representative or partner to schedule a Collaboration Discovery Session. Hosted by Cisco Services and industry experts, these half-day workshops bring technology and business leaders together to discuss business imperatives, identify pain points, outline mobile collaboration opportunities, and share ideas about strategies and architectures.

While you prepare for the session, visit these online resources:
- **Website:** Collaboration Services
- **Video:** Duke University: A Global Network
- **White paper:** The New Collaborative Workspace

CISCO