IBM

Extending the IT infrastructure to support anywhere, anytime communications.

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Communication and the workplace: a changing equation

A day at the office simply isn't what it used to be. Once upon a time, people had straightforward connections to their work. In most cases, whether they were full-time employees or contractors, workers commuted to the office, performed their jobs and left for the day. And if they were mobile workers, they connected with the office via the phone or a laptop. Those days are long gone.

Today, work is increasingly performed outside the traditional office setting. Remote workers, be they temporary or full-time, are becoming commonplace. And while many full-time employees still rely on desktops, more and more companies are also equipping employees with laptops with full connectivity to the company via virtual private networks. This enables workers to choose to work from home and still accomplish everything they normally would at the office. While a remote connection to the office may be a nice-to-have for many employees, for mobile employees it's essential and may encompass numerous handheld mobile devices in addition to a laptop. Mobile workers need to access data, applications and one another via wireless connections and the Internet at virtually any time. At customer sites. In cars. At their home offices. In hotels. At airports. And everywhere in between.

To optimize organizational responsiveness, people must remain productive no matter where they are or what communications device they're using. Companies need communications capabilities that allow individuals and teams to work when, where and how they choose—without breaching or compromising security. Historically, many companies built their infrastructures to meet regional or departmental needs, resulting in a mishmash of different voice, video and data technologies. Such a disparate infrastructure can not support the increasingly mobile and dispersed workforce. Technologies and infrastructures that were never intended to work together now must do so.

Given business trends, unified mobile communications and collaboration capabilities are becoming must-haves. Work will occur in locations where workers depend on wireless and remote-access infrastructures. Organizations risk losing highly talented employees as more people choose to sign on with companies that provide communications and collaboration tools to support enhanced work-life balance. Fortunately, new technologies are available to support extended, highly mobile and dispersed organizations. The movement to communications based on Internet Protocol (IP) is well on its way.

This brief highlights how IBM can help companies take full advantage of the range of capabilities offered by this convergence of devices and networks to support integrated voice, video and data. It describes the IBM vision for unified communications and collaboration and provides scenarios to show you how you can use the modular, standards-based IBM solutions to foster business agility and employee responsiveness, and control costs. By the end of this paper, you should have a clearer understanding of how you can make it easier for people to find information, reach each other and collaborate through a unified and consistent communications experience. One that is available anytime and anywhere—regardless of the access method.

Convergence drives responsiveness and efficiency

Most business activities and outcomes are enabled by formal and informal communications. The convergence of voice, video and data on IP networks is fundamentally changing how employees communicate with one another and clients, and how companies transact business. Take the example of a client

trying to reach an employee, while the employee is away on a business trip. Imagine the employee is using his laptop in a hotel or at a café. He can see that his office line is ringing, automatically redirect the call to his cell phone and address the caller's concerns without playing "phone tag."

Or consider a production engineer who thinks there may be a problem with a part for a new product. She can use a customized solution that enables her to click on the part in question, right from the three-dimensional drawing on her screen, and immediately see who was on the design team for the part and whether anyone from that team is available. One of the designers is in, and the engineer simply clicks to initiate a call from her laptop. She's immediately engaged with the right person, and they resolve the issue quickly.

Such scenarios were not possible before, because solutions didn't exist to easily integrate communications and collaboration tools, including telephony, e-mail, Web and video conferencing, and instant messaging (IM). Today they can be unified into a single infrastructure and configured to support more responsive, real-time business models that allow organizations to respond immediately to client requests, emerging marketplace opportunities and competitive threats—around the clock and around the globe.

At the same time, the convenience of powerful tools that can be used anytime and anywhere is fueling adoption of mobile handheld devices in all walks of life. And as people become more and more proficient with these devices, they provide another excellent means to facilitate collaboration and improve employee productivity. To ensure that employees actually take advantage of device capabilities, however, it's important to provide them with the types of tools they are most familiar with and want to use.

The need: simplified, integrated, security-rich communications across the enterprise
Many communications convergence projects are prompted by a need to reduce costs. And by combining your current voice, data and video systems onto the IP communications backbone, there is tremendous potential to do just that. But smart organizations realize that cost savings are only the start of potential business benefits. Organizations can also enable a productive mobile workforce with a continuous and consistent work experience anytime, anyplace, anywhere.

To gain productivity and increase responsiveness through communications and collaboration, organizations must be prepared to provide simplified and integrated business communications across traditional and nontraditional environments. The challenges are twofold: Organizations need to bring together converged communications with collaboration services—including real-time, presence, Web conferencing, voice, video, unified messaging and telephony capabilities—and make them accessible through a consistent, familiar user experience. And they need to secure data on devices, during transmission and on servers.

Ultimately, approaches that derive the greatest possible business benefits and differentiation from competitors will enable people to securely communicate and collaborate with whomever—whether it be an individual or group—using whatever means (for example, voice, video, text or graphics) is most appropriate for the task at hand. At the same time, platform, time and location should be irrelevant. People need the option to use a computer, phone, personal digital assistant (PDA) or network appliance. And to achieve this vision of anywhere, anytime access, companies must embed collaboration technologies into business processes.

Enabling anywhere communications

With IBM, you can tap into all the essential software, services and hardware elements — including IBM's relationships with leading telephony and software companies — you need to help your people stay connected to applications, data and one another, anytime, anywhere. People can connect any way they choose, whether it's through a desktop or laptop, or even a kiosk, PDA, cell phone or smartphone, and communicate over the same system using the device that works best for them, depending on where they are and what they are doing. They can also work offline, with applications syncing automatically when a network connection is available. With IBM, you can unify all your communications capabilities to improve productivity, speed responsiveness and lower operational costs, while creating a better, more attractive work environment that's easier to manage, extend and enrich.

IBM provides modular, standards-based software and services with robust, enterprise-strength security to simplify and unify all modes of business communications — so you can begin realizing the benefits of anywhere communications, right now. With multivendor support, open standards and extensions, IBM solutions work with the systems you have in place today, so you can:

- *Adapt to user preferences by integrating the solutions into the environment that users are most comfortable operating within, or into the environment that is best suited for the task being performed.*
- *Span a continuum that includes document-centric, e-mail-centric, real-time-centric, application-centric and Web-centric environments.*
- *Integrate into existing business processes and business applications.*
- *Accommodate multivendor telephony environments deployed in the enterprise.*

An effective anywhere communications approach doesn't stop with converging technologies and capabilities to drive responsiveness and productivity. Security is critical to any successful strategy. IBM uses a tested method to build security functions and components into its solutions. And IBM not only has the knowledge required to help you build security-rich, end-to-end solutions that cover wireless devices, operating systems, middleware, applications networks and development environments—IBM also can help you assess infrastructure needs and create security and risk management processes to support ongoing infrastructure security. Moreover, IBM can give you access to a suite of industry-leading services, key strategic alliances and expertise attained through 20 years of successful collaboration solutions for clients worldwide.

Anywhere communications strategies in action
Organizations that are adopting anywhere communications and collaboration strategies are achieving compelling results.

A United States natural gas company transformed its field-related business processes with IBM Lotus® mobile and enterprise access software. Instead of receiving hard copies of work orders every morning, field service engineers now can use PDAs to receive work orders and send status updates to their dispatchers—all wirelessly and in real time. They can also work smarter onsite by accessing online technical documentation and charts, eliminating the need to carry and fumble through bulky, outdated manuals. With more transparent status information, dispatchers have the flexibility to shift resources as needed, achieving a 30 percent increase in their service call completion rate. The solution has also saved the company more than US$635,000 annually in administrative costs.

An **Italian bank** used IBM Lotus Sametime® software to renovate its voice infrastructure. The bank integrated voice chatting, IP-phone and wireless devices as part of its standard communications architecture. The new infrastructure supports PC-to-PC voice chatting to minimize phone costs and enhance voice communications capabilities among branches, contact centers and business units. It also supports voice chatting between banks and clients. The bank estimates that the Voice over IP (VoIP) solution saves it nearly US$4.7 million per year by eliminating an obsolete and difficult-to-manage telephone infrastructure and by significantly reducing the cost of calls among colleagues within the organization.

IBM itself is building one of the world's largest converged networks, and as have other companies, IBM adopted an integrated business communications approach to gain specific business advantages. In addition to cost savings, IBM sought to enhance employee productivity and business processes. Today, IBM has converted a significant portion of its telephony system to VoIP and plans to complete the transformation by 2010—at which time it expects nearly 50 percent of its employees will be remote or mobile, and will be supported by a converged network infrastructure. By integrating the communications channels that employees use, including e-mail, IM and conferencing, into a unified set of services and capabilities, IBM projects that it annually saves up 4.5 million man-hours for the company. IBM estimates that its annual telecommunications bill has decreased by 35 percent with VoIP audio conferencing, and its long distance calling costs are 60 percent less than the cost of traditional long distance services. And its increasingly remote workforce helped IBM reduce rent by 17 percent worldwide.

Why IBM?

With more than 20 years of experience in building innovative, security-enhanced collaboration solutions for businesses, regardless of size, location or industry focus, IBM has virtually unmatched knowledge for providing anywhere communications solutions. The IBM approach is balanced to meet your business needs. IBM blends experience, industry-leading services and key strategic alliances to deliver unified communications and collaboration solutions and convenient and elegant mobile and wireless capabilities that work on- and offline.

IBM is the only vendor that provides a feature-rich and comprehensive collaborative solution portfolio to allow you to select only the capabilities you need—whether software, systems or services—to advance your business. Organizational resources that span the continuum of document-centric, e-mail-centric, real-time-centric, application-centric and Web-centric environments underpin the IBM portfolio. And IBM builds robust security capabilities into all of its products as a matter of course. Overall, the IBM approach:

- *Enables phased migration plans with support for message networking to legacy systems, allowing for interoperability with older voicemail systems.*
- *Offers open standards and cross-platform support for ultimate flexibility when selecting current and future communications and collaboration technologies.*
- *Provides experience and technical know-how to help you define and implement your evolving anywhere communications strategy.*

In addition to providing a flexible and robust set of software, systems and services, IBM can leverage its extended global network of IBM Business Partners to facilitate the implementation of effective collaboration in your organization. And to help you get started with minimal up-front cost, IBM offers a total financing approach that lets you integrate complex IT solutions — including hardware, software and services from IBM and third parties — into a single financing contract with a single periodic invoice.

Reinventing the day at the office

Clearly, given the advantages of converged communications technologies, the way people communicate, and where and how they work, will evolve rapidly. Organizations that move expeditiously to take advantage of anywhere communications capabilities can not only begin to reduce costs — they can respond to clients more quickly and get a jump on the competition. IBM's own experience with unified technologies has validated the converged communications promise. And IBM has helped more than 100 organizations realize the benefits of converged communications. So whether your organization is looking to reinvent the way people work together or gain cost savings, look no further than IBM.

For more information

To learn more about IBM anywhere communications solutions, contact your IBM representative or visit:

ibm.com/itsolutions/empowerpeople