Accelerate innovation: collaborate across your extended value chain.

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Executive summary

Companies worldwide increasingly rely on sources both inside and outside their organizations for information and innovative ideas that can change the course of business. When people, such as employees, customers, business partners and suppliers, have the opportunity to exchange thoughts and knowledge, simple ideas can turn into extraordinary solutions. Such solutions can help an organization respond to marketplace changes, enhance customer loyalty, simplify business processes and reduce costs. But making information easily accessible can be difficult, as can harnessing the collective knowledge of the extended value chain.

New Web 2.0 technologies are enabling people to better connect with one another by supporting improved collaboration and social networking. Not only are people connecting in a variety of ways—for example, through wikis and Web logs (blogs)—they are building personalized communities with others who have similar interests, backgrounds and needs, and they are getting together to share ideas that ultimately accelerate business and innovation. Forward-thinking organizations that want to gain a competitive advantage are embracing the same concepts and methods, but from a business perspective; they are using today's powerful collaborative capabilities to empower their employees and their entire extended business community with access to information, knowledge and experts.

Foster collaboration to advance your business

Employees work better when they have collaborative tools that enable them to work the way they want. And they work more quickly when they have immediate access to the people and information they need. Employees can find new ways to tackle challenges by sharing knowledge with colleagues and teammates. And team productivity is critical to drive operational and process efficiencies. Companies that provide employees with flexible, collaborative methods to help them find and share knowledge can unlock business agility.

"Seventy-six percent of CEOs say that collaboration with outside sources is critical; only 51 percent say their organizations currently collaborate extensively."[1]

Traditional approaches to collaboration used siloed applications, which created islands of information. This, in turn, severely limited access to and integration of information within an organization, which prevented the organization from tapping the collective knowledge of its entire value chain. But today, powerful collaborative tools with feature-rich capabilities can help individuals discover and share knowledge with disparate communities inside and outside their organization. These tools are designed to work together, integrate with existing applications and extend their capabilities, and make information more accessible.

Smart organizations that understand the sheer potential that sharing ideas can deliver are taking advantage of these technologies. These organizations understand that innovative thinking can inspire new solutions and new services. They understand that it is critical to facilitate effective collaboration with easy-to-use tools that allow everyone in the extended business community to share information, documents and ideas. By implementing a fully integrated, open and secure set of collaborative solutions, organizations can get ahead of competitors by:

- *Enhancing idea sharing and innovative thinking by building virtual communities—inside and outside the organization—based on knowledge, skills and interests.*
- *Empowering end users to work the way they want with flexible, easy-to-use collaborative tools that centralize all the information necessary to manage tasks and activities.*
- *Helping to ensure faster time to value by leveraging people, processes and information—cost-effectively.*

- *Increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty by advancing the level of knowledge among the workforce.*
- *Accelerating business processes by facilitating a common understanding of the business across units, groups and divisions.*

Empower your people and inspire innovation through a fully integrated approach to collaboration

Organizations need and want seamless, yet comprehensive, integrated solutions that facilitate effective and real-time interactions. Improving collaboration, for example by creating impromptu and formal business communities to quickly connect the right people to the right information, means companies can speed time to value. For immediate impact and fast return on investment (ROI), collaborative tools need to support the way people work. Imagine ascertaining whether a person is online and initiating a chat, while viewing a request in an e-mail, or linking to relevant team documents from live links embedded within an instant message. Imagine team members in different cities working together on a project, synchronizing tasks and activities, whiteboarding new ideas conveniently from their desks, without incurring time and travel costs. By using familiar tools like these, the productivity impact is immediate and felt across all aspects of the organization. The bottom line? Improved collaboration nets better idea sharing, improved productivity and increased cost savings across the enterprise.

IBM provides the essential collaborative tools to accelerate your business by leveraging your company's most important asset—its people. The comprehensive portfolio of collaborative solutions from IBM is designed to work in an integrated and intuitive fashion to enable richer, higher quality collaborative experiences. Based on open standards, IBM solutions can not only help to protect your IT investments but can offer you a choice of file formats to help eliminate your

dependence on proprietary software. And with feature-rich and security-enhanced IBM collaborative solutions, you can take advantage of capabilities that span across and beyond e-mail, calendar and group scheduling to instant messaging, advanced voice and Web conferencing, social networking, activity-centric team work environments and integrated Internet Protocol (IP) telephony. Designed to be easy to use and manage, IBM collaborative solutions can be mixed and matched and customized to address a variety of user needs and working styles.

"The IBM Lotus Notes and Lotus Domino® portfolio offers users a tightly integrated set of collaborative capabilities, such as e-mail, calendar and scheduling, along with features such as Web conferencing, application authoring, workflow and distribution capabilities—all based on a platform that receives high marks for security, reliability and scalability."[2]

Take information sharing to the next level

If you can help users better discover and share quality information and knowledge, you can open the door to a multitude of opportunities. And you can improve operational efficiency by ensuring that users have access to the most recent and relevant information and intellectual property.

Through Web-based team spaces, you can give teams a protected "place" to coordinate tasks, discuss ideas, share documents and communicate about decisions and actions—helping to optimize team collaboration and speed time to value. IBM provides team-based collaborative capabilities embedded right into the most common applications, so that users can be productive more quickly, with little to no training. And with team-based templates, business users can quickly assemble team spaces and customize them without IT support or extensive training. This gives business users autonomy and enables them to

take control and empower rich levels of collaboration—without sacrificing security or compliance with IT policy. So users can access documents and data directly from their desktop applications—whether IBM Lotus® Notes®, IBM Lotus Sametime®, Microsoft® Office software or a Web browser—without having to click between different interfaces.

Social computing capabilities allow you to take information sharing even further. Through capabilities including blogs, wikis, social bookmarking, profiles and activities, IBM social software solutions allow users to connect with specific communities inside and outside the organization based on their knowledge, skills and interests. Teams can benefit from best-practice templates for activities that can be shared across teams and departments, improving the consistency of business performance and enabling more informed decisions.

"IBM is the first and only suite that brings together all these capabilities in a single package. In addition, IBM Lotus Connections [social computing software] offers security, access control and review features that are important to corporations."[3]

Choose the technology you want or leverage what you have—it's up to you
Adopting a collaborative strategy that supports both open standards and multiple platforms can allow you to lower your total cost of ownership and increase your ROI by integrating existing technology investments. All while leveraging the skill sets your developers already have.

IBM collaborative solutions give you the flexibility to choose the collaborative technologies that best match your specific needs now and in the future. IBM solutions support open standards and a variety of client/server operating systems, including IBM AIX®, IBM i5/OS®, IBM z/OS®, Red Hat and SUSE Linux®,

and Microsoft Windows® software. Plus, IBM offers a fully integrated and secure solution set that enables users to work from anywhere on the device of their choice—whether from a laptop, a personal digital assistant (PDA) or a mobile phone. Ultimately, IBM collaborative solutions can help you empower people to work the way they want, when they want.

"Lotus also introduced two compelling collaboration tools: [IBM Lotus] Connections and [IBM Lotus] Quickr™ [software], delivering enterprise 2.0 services such as social bookmarking, online communities, content management, group collaboration and blogs in a package that addresses enterprise management concerns around security and compliance."[4]

Why IBM?

IBM has more than 20 years of proven experience in providing innovative, open-standards-based, security-enhanced collaborative solutions for businesses, regardless of size, location or industry focus. IBM uniquely offers a feature-rich, fully integrated, comprehensive collaborative solution portfolio to enable you to select only the tools you need—whether robust collaborative software, high performance systems or proven expert services—to advance your business. You can realize faster time to value, because IBM offers the flexibility you need to more easily integrate advanced collaborative capabilities within your existing IT environment—cost-effectively. In addition, IBM can leverage its extensive global network of IBM Business Partners to facilitate the implementation of effective and robust collaboration in your organization.

For more information

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

ibm.com/itsolutions/collaboration

1 *Expanding the Innovation Horizon; Global CEO Study 2006*. IBM

2 *E-mail and Collaboration Deliver Business Value.* Summit Strategies. September 2006

3 Steve Hamm. "IBM's Social Networking Push." *BusinessWeek*. January 22, 2007

4 Irwin Lazar. *IBM Lotus Announcements Signal Social Computing's Move Into The Enterprise.* Nemertes Research. February 2, 2007