



The power of unifying communications and collaboration.

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Executive summary

In today's world, interactions are complex and fluid. People routinely work on dynamically constructed teams with colleagues in many different locations. To support their employees, enterprises have invested in a wide variety of collaboration, telephony and video technologies. Yet these are typically isolated and underutilized.

IBM offers a better approach to unified communications. IBM Unified Communications and Collaboration (UC²[™]) solutions integrate real-time tools—voice, data, video—into a single, intuitive user interface. We know that people work smarter when these capabilities are embedded in the way they work, so IBM delivers the unified interface through the e-mail clients, productivity applications and business processes people use every day. Ease of use and simplified access lead to adoption. And adoption drives better, faster decisions and can lower travel, telephony and other business expenses. IBM UC² solutions can help your people find, reach and collaborate smarter with others. Moreover, these uniquely comprehensive solutions can leverage your existing IT and telephony investments to save you money and help speed your time to value.

This paper highlights key drivers, benefits and characteristics of effective unified communications and collaboration solutions. It also examines end-to-end IBM UC² solutions and the advantages organizations can realize by teaming with IBM.

Today's challenges: human latency, expense and a complex infrastructure

Organizations face a variety of challenges, including slow business processes and response times, expensive travel, and complex, disparate technology platforms.

Business process challenge: dispersed teams and human latency

Twenty years ago, telephones, face-to-face meetings and travel were how people collaborated. In today's world, however, interactions with colleagues, customers and partners are, by necessity, much more complex and fluid. And because of

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competitive pressures, these interactions also need to be faster. However, the people who need to interact are likely to be in any of millions of locations all around the globe.

The result can be “human latency” in the business process. Waiting for e-mail to be returned. Playing telephone tag. Losing time while a team gets organized to tackle a project. Human latency can lead to lost sales, unhappy customers and decisions based on inaccurate or incomplete information. Consider these examples.

Customer care, contact centers and bank tellers can have tens or even hundreds of customer contacts in a day. Each contact is an opportunity to delight a customer, which can in turn improve loyalty and increase sales. But the representative or teller is seldom an expert in all of the companies’ offerings. So if the customer asks a detailed question, an expert needs to be contacted. However, one expert may be in an all-day meeting while another is on the phone. Meanwhile, the customer is waiting. Unfortunately, the best customer service that can be offered is: “Thank you for your interest. I’ll investigate this and get back to you.”

Consider an agent for a property and casualty insurance company. Questions come up during the underwriting process. The agent sends an e-mail, and then waits for the response. Or he picks up the phone to call an underwriter, but finds she’s on the phone with someone else. The underwriting process is delayed. Think about when it’s time to process a claim. Forms and photos are e-mailed. Questions arise. Repeated rounds of telephone tag and waiting for e-mail replies can slow the settlement of the claim. Meanwhile, the customer doesn’t understand the delay.

Healthcare can be affected by human latency, as well. Medical professionals need to speed a diagnosis to provide the best possible patient care. Experts—who may vary based on location, topic and availability—need to collaboratively review the digital results of an X-ray, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) or other radiological procedure. Are they available? How can they be reached quickly? Delays can cost lives.

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A company's sales force or consulting team is often on the move. Yet wherever they are and whatever device they are using, sellers and consultants still need to be in touch. A manager, business partner or customer may have a quick question. Or the representative may need to pull in experts from around the globe to address a customer concern. Delays from missed phone calls can mean missed sales. Delays in pulling together the experts may impact customer satisfaction. Meanwhile, when salespeople travel, they often run into exorbitant cell phone roaming and hotel access charges.

Marketing professionals provide value by discovering and combining expertise and information. They work on dynamically constructed teams that may be in different cities, across the country or even on different continents. Yet their company may have expense controls in place—or a “green” initiative—that allows for little or no travel for face-to-face meetings. And they need to quickly and easily collaborate with others.

Human resources challenge: using talented people—wherever they are located

Hiring the right people can give you a competitive advantage. But talent knows no boundaries. How do you use the best people around the globe, but still respond as quickly and effectively as if everyone were sitting in the same building? How do you build a common corporate culture with offices on multiple continents, employees at the customer site and key contributors who work from home?

Expense challenge: travel and telephony

Meanwhile, enterprises are under immense pressure to reduce expenses. Travel and telephony budgets are at the top of the list. How can teams:

- Minimize traveling for internal and external meetings?
- Avoid high cell phone roaming and hotel access charges on international trips?
- Slash other telephony costs?

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- Postpone expensive PBX migrations?
- Reduce expensive monthly subscriptions to hosted Web conferencing services?
- Reduce maintenance and real estate costs by enabling staff to work from home?

Infrastructure challenge: complexity

To address these challenges, many enterprises have invested in collaboration, telephony and video technologies incrementally. Unfortunately, these systems tend to be isolated, complicated and, typically, underutilized. As a result, these companies run—and therefore must support—multiple infrastructures and IT platforms from multiple vendors.

The convergence of voice, video and data on IP networks provides a way to unify communications and reduce costs in the long term. But does unifying communications mean that the enterprise needs to do a complete migration to IP telephony and rip and replace their existing infrastructures? Or do organizations have a choice?

A better way forward: IBM UC² solutions

There is a common misconception that UC equals IP telephony, which implies a wholesale replacement of perfectly viable existing infrastructures. However, UC includes a wide variety of communications technologies: instant messaging; e-mail; voicemail; audio-, video- and Web conferencing; as well as IP- and time-division multiplexing (TDM)-based telephony. And moving all of these technologies to a common data network only solves part of the problem. While they utilize a common infrastructure, they are still separate and isolated.

IBM proposes a better way forward. IBM Unified Communications and Collaboration (UC²) solutions provide a common interface to your real-time collaboration tools, while also leveraging and extending your enterprises' existing telephony, video or IT infrastructures. IBM end-to-end solutions provide the essential hardware, software and services to help your people easily find, reach

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and collaborate with each other. In addition, IBM also has an extensive ecosystem of IBM Business Partners that extend IBM UC² solutions with a wide variety of capabilities.

IBM can help enterprises develop powerful, flexible unified communications and collaboration solutions, allowing them to:

- Communications-enable business processes to reduce human latency.
- Support a variety of collaboration and communications methods, so people can quickly select the right approach for the task at hand.
- Embrace multivendor IT, video and telephony environments deployed in the enterprise.
- Provide security-rich exchange of information among parties.
- Enable smarter collaboration to become part of an enterprise's DNA.

Lotus Sametime software can make unified communications and collaboration simple

IBM Lotus® Sametime® software is the cornerstone of IBM UC² solutions. It provides a core set of real-time communications services—voice, data and video—that help people find, reach and collaborate with others. Intuitive and easy to use, Sametime software makes unified communications simple. This simplicity drives adoption, which in turn can deliver business value to the enterprise.

Sametime software provides:

- Rich presence information—online status, availability, automatic location awareness and optional telephony status makes it easy to quickly find the people you need.
- Security-rich, enterprise-class instant messaging (IM)—reduces phone and voicemail costs while providing an unobtrusive way to engage with colleagues who are otherwise unavailable.
- Out-of-the-box integration with Lotus, IBM WebSphere® and Microsoft® products—quickly adds collaboration to the products people use most often.

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- Integrated VoIP and high-quality desktop video—delivers a more interactive collaborative experience and lower telephony costs.
- Online meetings with audio- and videoconferencing—reduce travel and enable remote workers to fully engage with their colleagues.
- Community collaboration—saves hours by making it possible to find and interact with experts in the organization you didn't even know.
- Federation with public IM systems—helps people keep in touch with customers, partners, family and friends.
- Mobile device support—gives people access to colleagues and information when they're on the road.

Based on IBM analysis, more than 22 million people worldwide—including employees at over half of the 20 most profitable companies in the world and 28 of the Global Fortune 50—use Sametime software to gain instant access to people and information. Sametime software is valued because it is designed for:

- **Simplicity.** It delivers these services, as well as those from hundreds of IBM Business Partners, through an intuitive, consistent front end. A person can move seamlessly among text chats, video calls and online meetings—whatever is most effective for the task at hand. The software knits together and masks the complexities of heterogeneous back-end systems, including the telecommunications network, data infrastructure, video platform and core business applications.
- **Choice.** It supports a variety of clients and servers, which makes it attractive for organizations of just about any size, industry or geography. IBM Business Partner extensions provide additional choices. Our ecosystem includes, but is not limited to, the following: 3Com, Alcatel-Lucent, Avaya, Avistar, Cisco, Dialogic, GN NetCom, InterCall, Mitel, Motorola, NET, Nortel, Plantronics, Polycom, Premiere, Psytechnics, Radvision, ShoreTel, Sprint and Tandberg.

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- **Investment protection.** It supports and integrates with multiple client and server operating systems, e-mail platforms, directories, telephony, audio- and videoconferencing systems. For example, it integrates out of the box with IBM Lotus Notes®, IBM WebSphere Portal and several Microsoft products. It also can provide connectivity to multiple, multivendor telephone systems—virtually independent of which telephone system they access.
- **Extendibility.** It provides a software development kit (SDK), built on the open source, standards-based Eclipse programming model, to enable developers to extend the built-in functionality and integrate with third-party applications. Developers can also use standard Web 2.0 tools to create communications-enabled business processes (CEBPs).
- **Cost savings.** While the real power of Sametime software is its contribution to productivity gains and the reduction of human latency in business processes, it enables hard cost savings as well. Sametime customers have been able to minimize travel costs, lower audio- and Web-conferencing service costs and dramatically reduce telephony costs. These savings are typically large enough that the Sametime solutions pay for themselves in less than a year. IBM research estimates that advanced audioconferencing in a converged network environment can save as much as 35 percent over the cost of traditional approaches. In fact, IBM typically realizes over US\$100 million in significant annual savings in phone and travel costs from its use of these solutions.
- **Security and scalability.** Sametime software offers the proven security features, reliability and scalability enterprises require.

IBM services can help speed your time to value

IBM offers cost-effective professional services designed to help you develop a UC strategy that supports your unique business design and that takes advantage of the multivendor infrastructures that you have today—or might have tomorrow.

IBM can provide industry expertise and workforce transformation services to identify business processes that would benefit from communication and collaboration capabilities.

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IBM Software Services for Lotus can help you better understand your technology options and how to leverage Lotus collaboration solutions to help you lower your IT total cost of ownership and increase your organization's productivity. IBM provides technical consulting, training and Software Accelerated Value Program services to help you accelerate the time to value of your software investment.

IBM also offers a comprehensive suite of integrated communications services that can assist you in combining existing technology investments with new solutions to better support successful implementations. Our professionals can help you gather requirements, design a reliable solution, create a phased implementation plan, implement new software and hardware, and manage projects. Moreover, IBM offers automated end-user support services that can help lower the total cost of ownership (TCO) for IT while potentially boosting overall end-user productivity. And our professional security services augment the security of confidential information and conversations to assist you with addressing regulatory and business policies.

For example, IBM can provide services to:

- Design and integrate multivendor converged communications and wireless networks and solutions—including those on a global scale—to help companies proactively manage challenges and opportunities as they move applications onto the IP network.
- Assess, plan and design the best converged network and IP telephony applications to address your needs, from determining business requirements and vendor-neutral planning, to assessing your internal processes and policies, to making network recommendations.
- Plan, design and build a comprehensive unified messaging solution to bring together e-mail, voice, video and fax messaging applications into a single inbox, which users can access with their phones, Web browsers or e-mail clients.

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- Design and deploy a solution that combines presence, data, voice and video communications, location information, instant messaging, Web conferencing, discussion forums, desktop sharing, IP telephony and other real-time collaboration technologies to enable virtually anytime, anywhere collaboration.
- Deliver a security-rich, integrated solution that can also include support for end users and end-user devices.

What's more, IBM's leadership comes from extensive hands-on experience. IBM has helped transform business communications for hundreds of midsize and large international organizations worldwide—including its own enterprise communications system with 110,000 users and 190,000 communications devices running on VoIP.

IBM UC² solutions can help transform your business

IBM UC² solutions can help you leverage and extend your existing infrastructure to put the right tools in front of the right people. With colleagues, partners and customers only a click away, you can help speed and improve decision making. And you can also contain costs. Consider how IBM UC² solutions can impact the scenarios we outlined earlier.

Customer care centers or bank tellers can use a communications-enabled business process (CEBP) to tap expertise quickly. Online and telephony presence information in the CEBP shows which experts are available. Collaboration can start with a one-to-one IM chat and then easily add another expert or an account manager as needed. A single click can turn an instant message into a voice call or into an audio- or videoconference for a three-way consultation with the customer. The result can be quick and seamless collaboration with the right expert at the right time to sell new services and improve customer satisfaction.

The insurance agent can now use a company's extranet to view online or telephony presence information to find an available underwriter. The agent can then use IM or VoIP voice chat with the underwriter to ask questions or resolve issues to

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speed the underwriting process. When it is time to process a claim, a field agent can use IM, audio and video communications with claims specialists to reduce processing time. The result can be agent and customer satisfaction and also an accurate, lower settlement paid. And, in both cases, the use of these CEBPs may drive cost savings from being able to support the same volume of business with fewer staff.

The radiologist can simply click on the referring physician's name within a communications-enabled medical application and initiate a remote consultation—whether the physician is in the hospital, in a medical office or using a handheld device. The medical professionals can also share computer screens in real time, highlighting key parts of an image to collaborate on a diagnosis.

The sales representatives or consultants are reachable even while they are on the move. Rich presence information—including whether they are using a handheld device—can tell other employees, customers and business partners whether they are available for collaboration. Enterprise IM can be used to get answers quickly. Online meetings can pull in experts from around the globe to consult with customers. And when they are traveling, integrated telephony can help them avoid expensive international mobile or hotel phone calls.

Marketing professionals can easily collaborate with others on ad hoc teams. Rich presence information—online, available, in a meeting, away, do not disturb, on the phone—can let them know who is available for collaboration right now. Enterprise IM—including voice and video options—can be faster than waiting for e-mail replies. Online meetings can make it easy to “meet” without travel expense.

The company that was looking to hire—or retain—a remote worker can now offer the employee a variety of real-time collaboration tools, including IM and a variety of online meetings. Online business cards in IM contact lists and audio- and videoconferencing put a face to the contact names. Regular or ad hoc online meetings can keep the entire extended team in touch.



In all these scenarios, people are able to access the tools they find most effective in order to find, reach and collaborate with one another quickly. They can work smarter together to quickly deliver more valuable results.

Many of these real-time communications technologies can also help enterprises reduce costs. IM and integrated VoIP can slash telephony costs. Online meetings or audio- and videoconferencing can minimize traveling for internal and external meetings. All these functions can enable staff to work from home, thereby reducing maintenance and real estate costs—while also producing green benefits from reduced employee commuting.

Summary

IBM UC² solutions can help your organization realize the power of unified communications and collaboration. Lotus Sametime software integrates key real-time tools—including presence information, IM, VoIP and audio-conferencing, online meetings and community collaboration—and provides access via an intuitive, consistent user experience. Sametime software makes UC simple. And it works with your existing telephony, video or IT infrastructure. The breadth and depth of our services and our large ecosystem of IBM Business Partners can help speed your time to value.

Using IBM UC² solutions, people can find, reach and collaborate smarter with colleagues, partners and customers. The result can be reduced expenses. Superior customer service. Smarter business processes. Faster, better decisions.

For more information

To find out more about unified communications software and services from IBM, visit: ibm.com/lotus/uc2

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