Developing Requirements for Unified Communications

Preston Burkhalter – Summer 2012

Agenda

- What is Unified Communications?

- History of Unified Communications

- Why is it important?

- Developing requirements for Unified Communications

- Transforming the organization with Unified Communications

- Future direction…

What is Unified Communications?

- **Unified communications (UC) is the integration of real-time communication services such as:**

  - Instant messaging (IM) and Email

  - Presence information

  - Telephony

  - Video conferencing

  - Data sharing (desktop sharing and interactive whiteboards)

What is UC?

- Unified communications encompasses all aspects of communication via TCP/IP

- Communication that optimizes the processes and output of a business or unit

History and Evolution of UC

- In the late 80's, voicemail systems with the capability of interacting with users and emailing voicemails were considered "UC"

- The term UC wasn't broadly used until the mid 90's, when the first product that displayed presence of employees was released by New Zealand based IPFX.

History and Evolution of UC

- IP networks greatly changed the landscape of UC, as phones became just another device with Ethernet capabilities.

- With the onset of the cloud, new laws around communication, enhanced networking protocols, and mobile device integration, UC is constantly evolving.

Why is UC Important?

- A 2010 study by Katherine Beise revealed that teams working virtually who embraced technological advances in communication were more productive than their counterparts who didn't utilize the tools available.

- UC enables users to communicate quickly with colleagues in different parts of the world

- Being connected to the office when physically out of the office enables more productivity from end-users

Developing Requirements for UC

- **Understand how UC fits into the strategic vision for your organization**
  - One of the first things you must determine is the true business need for UC
  - Executive management buy in for this project is important, but so is end-user
  - The end users must want UC for it to truly work in your organization
  - Push vs. Pull

Developing Requirements for UC

- **Ensure that input is sought from both technical and non-technical stakeholders**
  - Use discussion based working sessions with staff to understand wants vs. needs
  - Working sessions can also be a testing ground for UC products

Developing Requirements for UC

- **Define your "Service Catalog" early**
  - Your service catalog is what services you will offer and at what level
  - The service catalog assists in several ways:
    - Educating and training your users
    - Limiting the scope of the project
    - Determining what UC package to use
    - Budgeting

Developing Requirements for UC

- **Find use cases that fit your basic needs**
  - One of the most effective ways of determining requirements for a UC project is to find out how others organizations are using UC
  - Sales engineers can be of great support in finding these use cases
  - This can also help encourage end-user buy in of UC

Transforming the Organization with UC

- **Unified Communications also poses unique challenges:**

  - The traditional way of communicating may be more appealing to some users, they must be shown the value of instant communication across multiple platforms

  - Initial resistance due to the high cost of software licensing and expensive hardware (can be combatted with cloud based offerings)

Transforming the Organization with UC

- Integrating legacy systems into a new UC infrastructure can be time consuming

- A solid understanding of the current state of the organization will help drive decisions

Future Direction..

- IPTV
- Federation with external organizations
- Digital signage

Future Direction…

- BYOD
- UCaaS – UC as a Service
- Professional social networks

Works Cited

- http://networkingexchangeblog.att.com/types/blog/developing-a-unified-communications-strategic-plan-and-transformation-roadmap-part-ii

- http://dl.acm.org.libproxy.utdallas.edu/citation.cfm?id=1899639.1899644&coll=DL&dl=ACM&CFID=342488140&CFTOKEN=42424996