Communications is the lifeblood of any organization. Workers, especially knowledge workers, need to find the information and resources they need to do their jobs effectively and they rely on communication tools to help them interact with the right people at the right time.

We've come to expect ubiquitous communications, including multiple modes of communications from any device and any location. The 24/7 mobile, virtual, distributed, always-on workplace requires new tools to help workers be more productive. Providing a variety of communication tools including instant messaging, presence, conferencing, and other tools, Unified Communications and Collaboration (UCC) solutions make workers more efficient and effective at doing their jobs, and better able to easily initiate, receive, and respond to business communications. UCC-enabled teams and workgroups can interact more effectively, leading to faster development time, quicker time to market, shorter project times, and greater organizational efficiency.

When it comes to UCC, the biggest ROI (return on investment) bang for the buck is from business application integration. By embedding the UCC capabilities into business applications such as email, CRM, and social collaboration, the ROI, which is generally based on eliminating delays and speeding up problem resolution, can be tremendous.

Unified communications and collaboration tools improve communications, providing flexibility and mobile access, as well as improved interactions with customers. Embedding UCC into the applications workers use every day – whether for sales, service, marketing, development, improves business processes and enhances efficiency. Simply clicking on a person’s name on their desktop screen or mobile device and connecting via IM or a voice call, without having to leave the application they were working in, makes communications significantly faster and easier.

Adding click-to-communicate tools to the applications and workspaces workers use in their day-to-day jobs lets users meet, share, and edit seamlessly without disruption. Being able to click to conference and start a live meeting right from the application means making faster and better decisions, developing and bringing products to market more quickly, shorter sales cycles, and better responsiveness to customers.

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Executive Summary

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No More Wasted Time

How much time do you waste each day trying to contact people and receive a response? If you’re like most people, the answer is 74 minutes a day — 74 minutes a day is wasted simply trying to connect with colleagues, customers, partners, or suppliers (Payscale.com). And according to a UCStrategies UC Productivity study, 25 minutes a day is wasted trying to set up and attend audio and web conferences. Playing “phone tag” and waiting for people to figure out how to join a web conference costs companies time and money and is unacceptable in today’s competitive business environment.

UCC provides the ability to view others’ presence status and brings an end to “voice mail jail” and wasted time, while cutting down on the number of unanswered emails sent to coworkers who may be out of the country or on a business trip. UCC’s mobile capabilities make it easy for anyone who is on the road or simply away from the office to be in constant communication with colleagues, customers, suppliers, and partners. Getting meetings started several minutes sooner can save time and money each day, while resolving issues faster through collaborative tools helps companies be more competitive and increase customer satisfaction.

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It’s all about attaining business benefits. Whether for individual workers, teams, or the organization as whole, UCC solutions have proven to help improve productivity and effectiveness, while reducing costs and impacting the bottom line. UCC has very clear impacts on critical business areas, including business continuity and agility, customer satisfaction, retention, and loyalty, all of which impact the bottom line. UCC-enabled workgroups interact and collaborate more effectively as distributed “virtual teams,” resulting in faster development time, quicker time-to-market, and better and faster decisions. The impact is clear across the business:

Sales-time wasted trying to get in touch with someone is time not spent selling. UCC makes it easier for sales reps to be able to contact people to get the information needed, and to be more accessible to customers.

Marketing can be more responsive to market changes, ensuring that the time-to-market schedule is met, and that product collateral and information is developed with input from the appropriate parties, which impacts sales and revenue.

Technical support and customer service reps can provide better and faster assistance using tools such as web collaboration and desktop sharing, leading to less downtime due to technical issues and improved customer loyalty.

Executives and management can communicate with internal and external parties, from simple communication to crisis management. Decisions can be made faster, and problems resolved without delay.
The Value of UCC—Improving the Time to "X"

We can look at UCC in terms of "Improving Time to X" — the speed at which decisions can be made, information can be shared and people can be reached. For example, if a new product can be brought to market before a competitor, the company can get a larger market share. If a manufacturing quality issue can be solved faster, the product can be built and shipped sooner. One software development firm uses web collaboration between its sales engineers and product experts to prepare proposals and responses to RFPs, and the system automatically initiates meeting requests with the appropriate people, reducing the bid cycle from 56 days to 15 days. In another example, a manufacturer with remote field sales teams increased its customers' ability to reach the sales teams by using its “find-me” mobility features. By using presence and click-to-call capabilities, sales teams were able to immediately find help from the sales support and logistics teams, resulting in a 20% year over year increase in sales.
Think about the application on your desktop where you do most of your work – it’s most likely a job-specific application like Salesforce.com, a social collaborative application such as Jive, or an office productivity suite like Google Apps for Work. Now think about how you communicate with people – you pick up the phone, send an email from a separate email application, or send an instant message (IM) from a separate platform. When you have a question or need to reach someone, regardless of whether you’re using a desktop application or a mobile device, you must stop what you’re doing to find out who to contact, how to reach them, and determine whether or not they’re available.

Thankfully, there’s a better and easier way to communicate. By embedding real-time communications into the business applications you use every day, organizations can save time and money, while increasing individual and team productivity. Embedded communications lets workers find the appropriate people, determine their presence and availability status (are they available for a phone call or chat session?), and have a real-time interaction with them using voice, chat, and even web or video conferencing with document sharing. Embedding traditional unified communications and collaboration (UCC) capabilities such as presence, IM, click-to-call, web conferencing, web collaboration, and video conferencing into a variety of applications makes it easier to share information, while reducing the time it takes to make decisions, solve problems, and serve customers.

Most workers today are disruption-driven – you get a phone call, IM, or need to join a meeting – and you have to stop what you’re doing in order to attend to the matter. Wouldn’t it be nice if these real-time communications were available simply and easily from within the applications you use to do your job? Embedding real-time communications into a range of cloud applications, including Google Apps for Work, Salesforce.com, Jive, Office 365, and others, makes it easy for users to collaborate and access features like voice, video, instant messaging and presence directly from the applications they use on a regular basis, without having to interrupt what they’re doing.
Use Cases Showing the Power of Embedded Communications

The true power of embedded communications can be shown through use cases that are typical in most organizations:

SALES
Embedding communications into sales tools such as Salesforce.com enables incoming and outgoing calls to be automatically and accurately logged, providing better insights into sales activity.

MARKETING
Marketing professionals in various offices and locations can operate as a team and collaborate in real time directly from Google documents. Marketing campaigns can be developed and executed more quickly and efficiently, as users can quickly initiate web conferences directly from documents and presentations.

RESEARCH + DEVELOPMENT
Remote team members can be on a Google Hangout or WebEx meeting and collaborate more effectively, resulting in faster development times.

HUMAN RESOURCES
Businesses can create a more connected experience where new and existing employees feel engaged.

SUPPORT
With live video meetings, support teams can better interact with customers, increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty.
Embedding real-time communications and UC capabilities into applications such as Salesforce.com makes the applications even more powerful and useful. This integration provides not only the convenience of click-to-call, but also records the call as an activity in the Salesforce record. Activities such as sales leads or interactions with customers can be tracked, and the data can be automatically entered into the record, ensuring accuracy and reliability. Rather than manually updating the Salesforce record, which can lead to errors, calls are logged and records are updated automatically and accurately, providing information such as the number of calls made, who was called, any follow up required, etc.

One company benefiting from the integration of UC with Salesforce.com is Arrow SI. Arrow SI, a technology systems integrator, uses Esna Technology’s Officelinx and iLink Pro solution integrated with Salesforce.com. According to John Norton, Executive VP of Sales, Arrow SI, “Our goal is to have our sales people spend more of their day within the Salesforce app and not bounce in and out of Outlook or other applications. They can do click-to-call right out of Salesforce and don’t have to stop what they’re doing to look up a phone number and make a call. In addition, the Esna integration with Salesforce gives us better tracking of calls and a complete history of our interactions.”

During the busy work day, sales reps may not have the time or ability to open the customer record when the customer calls, which means that the data and information from that call may not get entered into the customer record accurately – or at all. Norton notes, “Any CRM system is only as good as the data you put in it. This integration helps us by automatically entering data and tying in the call with the customer record.”

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Analyzing data in real time means having the information you need to optimize results. Who’s making the most calls, how long are the calls, what are the results, and how can we improve the results? Embedding communications into the CRM application arms organizations with the information they need automatically, without requiring manual input from the workers. As Norton states, “Now we get better notes, better status updates, and more measurable results.”

Context is key, and embedded communications provides more context about each interaction. When a customer calls in, the system recognizes the customer and pulls up the customer record, presenting a screen pop with information associated with the customer. Instead of having to navigate on screen to find the customer data, the information is presented to the sales rep when the call is presented, giving them a frame of reference by providing the information they need at their fingertips. Armed with this information, sales reps can more easily upsell and cross sell, generating more revenue.

By being able to make calls straight out of Salesforce, our sales people can make more calls per day and we’ve increased call volume by 10-15% based on outbound dialing capabilities.

The results are impressive. According to Norton, “We benefit as a sales organization by integrating UC with the app we’re in every day, and get a productivity lift out of our sales people based on having better data and better utilization of Salesforce.” He adds, “By being able to make calls straight out of Salesforce, our sales people can make more calls per day and we’ve increased call volume by 10-15% based on outbound dialing capabilities.”
Social software tools provide features such as communities, user profiles, microblogging, and activity feeds, making it easier for workers to find, interact, and engage with each other across the organization. For example, user profiles make it easy for workers to find colleagues throughout their organization based on name, location, department, skills and expertise, and so on.

Social software is great for providing the content (information) and connections, or the people and resources with the expertise you need throughout your organization. What’s missing is the ability to engage in real-time interactions, including voice. That’s where unified communications comes into play. Using social software, you can find the people you need based on expertise, projects they’re working on, communities of interest, etc. Add UCC to the mix and you can view their presence and availability, and then communicate directly from the social software client via IM, voice (using click to call), or have a web or video conference. When users have an integrated UC/collaboration/social solution, they can access the tools they need from whatever application they’re using, without having to switch between them. This makes it easier to find, reach, and collaborate, and leads to business process improvements.

Thomson Reuters, a source of intelligent information for businesses and professionals with 60,000 employees in 110 countries, uses Esna Technologies to integrate Jive Software with its Cisco phones and applications, including WebEx Connect and Jabber. According to Tim Wike, Vice President, Communications Platforms of Thomson Reuters, “We’re a huge Cisco shop and also use Jive as a general working area and landing page for employee profiles. Esna bridges the gap between our Cisco and Jive solutions and lets us use Jive to start IM conversations or WebEx meetings easily.”
Wike explained, “Everyone in Thomson Reuters has an employee profile page on Jive with their contact information, as well as their skills, organizational position, and more. From within Jive, users can click on this information to start a conversation, which brings up the Cisco IM client, or click a button to start a meeting, which brings up WebEx. Esna is the glue and makes the handoff from Jive to Cisco much simpler.” He added, “It’s about the task people are trying to do, not the technology stack. Many of our users are non-English speakers and it’s easy for them to see ‘Start a meeting’ or ‘Start a conversation’ icons easily get to the right function without having to leave Jive.”

“We’ve seen a 12%-15% increase in our use of Cisco tools, as they’re now embedded and populated in Jive. Using the Jive profiles, our employees can find the people and expertise they need more easily, and can start an IM conversation, have a meeting, share a document or desktop, without having to go to a separate communication method to reach someone.”
The future of communications and collaboration is in the cloud. Tying together cloud-based, real-time communications and collaboration solutions with cloud-based office productivity software such as Google Apps for Work and Microsoft Office 365 removes wasted time and delays caused by communications bottlenecks, and makes workers more efficient and productive.

Here’s a typical scenario without embedded communications. You’re working on a Google Apps document and need to interact with a team member about making a change to the document. You leave the document and call your colleague - only to reach their voice mail. You then send the colleague an email, and hope to hear back within a reasonable time. When you eventually get a call back, you realize that you also need to bring in another team member to join the call, only to learn that they’re in an all-day meeting. You then set up a third-party conference call for the next day. Everyone needs to dial in to the bridge and find the document they were working on in order to begin to collaborate. Sound familiar?

It shouldn’t have to be so difficult. With embedded communications, a five-or six-step process can be reduced to just one click of the mouse.

Google Apps for Work, a cloud-based productivity suite, provides some very basic UC components including IM/presence, video, email, and SMS, but falls short when it comes to real-time voice solutions. Embedding UC into Google Apps requires a solution like Esna Officelinx for Google Apps.

Here’s the same scenario with communications embedded into Google Apps for Work: You’re working on a Google Apps document and need to interact with a team member about making a change to the document. From within the document you can see not only all of the people associated with that particular document, but also their presence and availability. If the appropriate people are available, you can click-to-call and have a real-time conversation.
Esna Embeds Communications Inside Cloud Applications

Esna's UCC capabilities, embedded directly into cloud-based applications, make it easy to view the presence status of colleagues, send them instant messages, and click-to-communicate all directly from within the application. Whether at the office or on the run, communications and collaboration tools can be conveniently accessed from the browser or mobile device.

Esna makes it easy to connect, communicate and collaborate with team members. By giving people the freedom to choose the tools they use to communicate with one another inside the applications they use daily, collaboration becomes a natural and organic part of how work gets done.