

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



## TOWARD MORE FLEXIBLE, NEXT-GENERATION COLLABORATION SOLUTIONS

SURVEY POINTS TO THE NEED FOR TOOLS THAT OFFER NEW MODELS FOR FLEXIBLE, INTEROPERABLE COLLABORATION SOLUTIONS, ENABLING ENHANCED COMMUNICATIONS WITHOUT VENDOR-SPECIFIC CONSTRAINTS.

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Providing employees with collaboration tools that enable them to work together effectively, no matter where they may be located, is no longer a wish-list or nice-to-have item: it's a requirement. But it's a requirement that, for most companies, is not being adequately addressed.

That's the upshot of a study by IDG Research Services, which recently surveyed 100 senior IT executives on their experiences with and plans for collaboration software. A full 80 percent of respondents say it is of critical or high importance that individuals in their companies have the ability to collaborate securely within and beyond organizational boundaries. But fewer than half say their current collaboration solutions are extremely or very effective in enabling collaboration among individual knowledge workers (42 percent) or among teams and virtual teams of knowledge workers (43 percent).

Those results point to a disconnect between what customers expect and what they're getting. But that shouldn't be surprising, says Andy Fox, vice president of engineering for Novell, Inc., of Waltham, Mass. While various sorts of collaboration tools have been around for some time, he says customers are still trying to figure out how best to effectively apply the technology.

Additionally, the tools customers have been using to date haven't been sufficiently effective. That's because too often they are implemented in a silo fashion, rather than seamlessly integrated with each other and with existing applications that workers use every day – forcing users to change the way they normally work.

“We're moving toward models that are easier for customers to adopt and that allow them to get through the barrier of change by making the change less dramatic than with some of the models we've seen in the past,” Fox says (see box “Novell answers the call”).

This new collaboration model is based on an open source technology development process and open IT standards. The result is collaboration tools that run on a range of operating systems, integrate easily

with each other and with users' existing messaging, word processing, spreadsheet and other productivity applications. Such open solutions can foster collaboration among individuals and groups regardless of organizational or geographical boundaries. They also allow customers to implement the tools they need in a modular fashion and are easier to customize for specific requirements.

### **Collaboration takes hold**

Customers are certainly interested in buying collaboration tools. Nearly half of survey respondents, 46 percent, report they plan to increase spending on collaboration in 2008, by an average of 24 percent. Another 43 percent say they'll maintain the same level of spending and only 2 percent report their collaboration budgets will decrease.

Respondents use, or expect to use, their collaboration tools for a bevy of tasks and projects, ranging from simple communication to time and resource coordination, knowledge management and brainstorming among dispersed teams.

Kavlico, a manufacturer of sensors and transducers based in Moorpark, Calif., is a case in point. The multi-national firm relies heavily on its engineering expertise and has engineers located across the globe, says Oleg de Bode, IT manager with the firm's Custom Sensor Technologies division. “Collaboration is essential to us because we don't actually see each other except on rare occasions,” he says. “We need to find ways of working together on a project.”

Product launches, for example, require input and approvals from many departments, from electrical and mechanical engineering to program managers, sales and service. “They must be able to work together to get that product to market, in a manner that supports work being done in multiple time zones on a truly global basis,” he says.

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As the Kavlico example suggests, companies are particularly interested in ensuring their knowledge workers use collaboration tools to increase organizational innovation, productivity and efficiency, with 67 percent of respondents saying it is of critical or high importance. And 52 percent say it is of critical or high importance that their knowledge workers have access to next-generation collaboration tools and software like wikis, blogs and online team workspaces.

It's important that companies be able to use such tools not only for their own employees, but also to collaborate with partners, customers and suppliers. Indeed, more than half of the respondents say they are extending their collaboration systems to customers, or plan to, while more than a third say the same about partners and suppliers.

At the same time, however, many respondents are concerned about providing security for their collaboration implementation, with 45 percent citing it as factor that is inhibiting or slowing the adoption of collaboration solutions.

"The biggest concern our business management has about implementing collaboration is security," says the IS manager for a large, U.K.-based bank. He says they want to know, "who is actually enforcing compliance and security in terms of changing passwords and controlling what information can be accessed, and levels of security within the system."

The key to addressing security concerns, Fox says, is to make it simple for users to expose the right resources to customers, partners and even other employees, while keeping more sensitive materials under wraps.

"What you deliver to customers and partners is straightforward—a URL and logon that lets them into the collaboration environment," he says. "But what you do in terms of the software architecture behind the scenes, to make sure the right information goes to the right parties, is the bigger part of the job."

#### **Tallying the benefits**

Asked which potential benefits of collaboration they considered to be most important, respondents put these items at the top of the list: increased productivity; improved communication and knowledge sharing; ability to capture and exploit knowledge; and better decision-making. At least 70 percent rate each either a 4 or a 5 on a 5-point scale.

"The idea is to make the right documents available to people and give teams a forum to communicate and spread information more rapidly," Fox says.

### **Novell Answers the Call for Leading-Edge Collaboration Tools**

Novell Teaming + Conferencing is representative of the kind of innovative, next-generation collaboration tool that respondents to the IDG Research Services survey clearly want.

Based on the ICEcore open-source collaboration platform, Novell Teaming + Conferencing uses a series of open standards and interfaces, enabling it to integrate easily with the productivity tools that customers already use. "We support what's necessary, even if it's a proprietary interface, to make sure we give customers the modularity they're looking for and the ability to integrate not just within our own product line but across products in the collaboration landscape," says Andy Fox, vice president of engineering for Novell.

Novell Teaming + Conferencing also takes cues from consumer-based social networking sites (familiar to many end users) and includes a dashboard-like entry point to all of its underlying capabilities. All of the Novell solution's numerous collaboration components—including application sharing and whiteboarding tools, wikis and blogs, instant messaging, voice and Web conferencing, and presence—are seamlessly integrated, to allow for better productivity and ease of use.

Novell's recent acquisition of SiteScape, the founder of the ICEcore open source collaboration project, adds to Novell's long history and expertise in delivering leading business-focused collaboration solutions. SiteScape has been focused on collaboration technology for more than 10 years and brings extensive team workspace and real-time collaboration capabilities to Novell.

"All of that results in enhanced productivity and certainly provides cost savings to the enterprise."

Respondents specifically associate many of the same benefits with more flexible and interoperable collaboration solutions. These benefits also include the freedom to collaborate on the platform of choice (such as Windows or Linux), increased innovation, minimized vendor lock-in and seamless integration among communication applications, regardless of which vendor they came from.



Increased innovation struck a chord with Phil Karren, product manager for Novell's Teaming + Conferencing collaboration suite. Proprietary vendors rely on their own employees to build and test all of their software. By contrast, an open source approach, "engages the community at large," Karren says. "It creates communities of contributors—which is important because good ideas come from all over, not just inside a software vendor's walls."

When the 31 respondents who said they were using open collaboration (more flexible and interoperable) platforms were asked which benefits they are already experiencing, the top responses were: increased productivity (48 percent); improved communication and knowledge sharing among staff, partners and suppliers (39 percent); and the ability to capture and exploit knowledge (39 percent). More than a third cite reduced costs, including reduced travel expenses, along with better decision-making throughout the organization and better alignment among employees, teams and management.

While many of these may be "soft" benefits that are hard to quantify, travel is not. "Having web conferencing tools and asynchronous communications tools that mitigate the need to get together in person provides a very tangible benefit that you can see and quantify right away," Fox says.

At Columbia University, the idea of not having to get on a plane provided the impetus for the adoption of many collaboration technologies, says Joel Rosenblatt, the university's manager of network security. "The business case is mostly about cost and time savings," he says. "The cost of sending people to remote locations is very high and time consuming and after Sept. 11 there has been a much greater interest in avoiding unnecessary travel."

Today the university, which is part of the high-speed Internet2 network, uses conferencing for everything from extending guest lectures to a wider audience to enabling musicians in different locations to perform concerts together in real time. "These are collaborative efforts with a very high level of technology involved," Rosenblatt says.

"Online meeting tools help geographically distributed teams work more as if they were on the same floor," Novell's Karren says. "They can get quick answers to questions, pick up on the team's way of doing work and refine ideas."

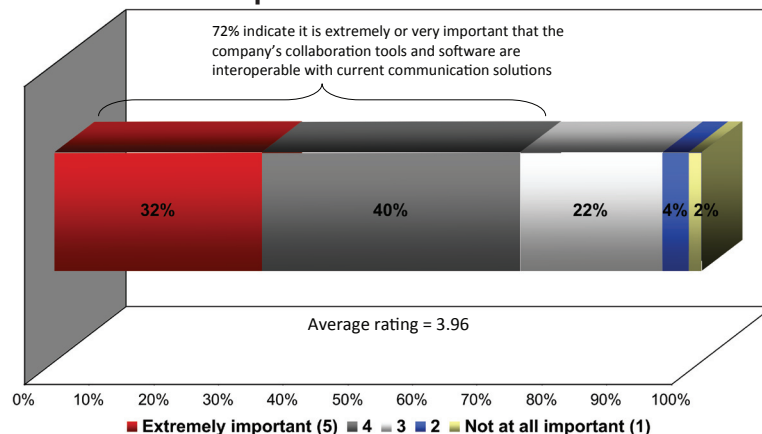
### Challenges and inhibitors

While the benefits to be had from collaboration are significant, organizations may first have to overcome some equally significant barriers to entry. Chief among them is the age-old resistance to change, cited by 57 percent of respondents. The second-most often cited barrier is lack of integration with existing technologies necessary to accomplish daily tasks.

These issues must be addressed on several fronts, Fox says. For one, IT executives should find allies for their collaboration efforts from the lines of business that will benefit from them. Additionally, the collaboration products must be easy to use—which is, in part, a function of seamless integration of various collaboration and productivity tools. That in turn results from adhering to standards for things like e-mail and calendaring, as well as building interfaces to the most popular word processing, spreadsheet and other productivity applications.

The tools should also offer immediate value to users who may be familiar with consumer-oriented collaboration solutions—such as those using public social networking sites—and to those who are new

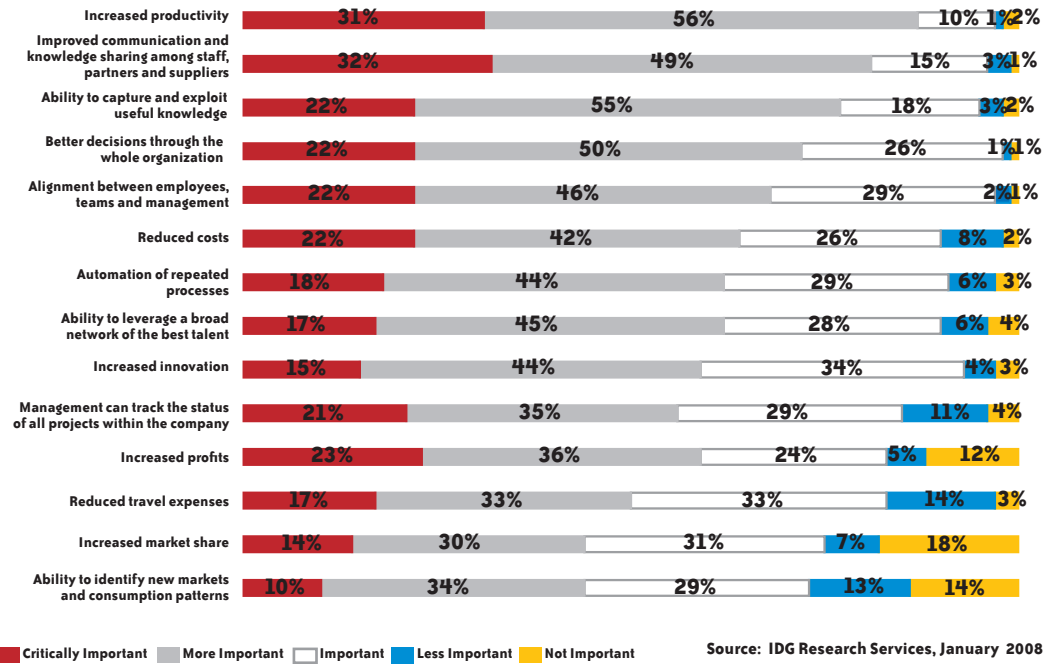
### 72% indicate it is extremely or very important that the company's collaboration tools and software are interoperable with current communication solutions



Source: IDG Research Services, January 2008



## Importance of Potential Benefits of Collaboration Solutions



to the concepts, Fox says. For example, collaboration tools that provide a personal workspace where files can be organized, or a blog that allows for easy recording of experiences or information, will help users realize immediate value, even before they begin collaborating with others.

Finally, respondents clearly want flexibility in their collaboration solutions. Nearly three-quarters say it is extremely or very important that their collaboration tools interoperate with existing communications applications. And nearly half (48 percent) say it's extremely or very important that they're able to choose application vendors and software that meet each department or functional area's needs, rather than standardize on software from a single vendor.

"Interoperability is critical for us because we are becoming a mixed environment with both commercial and open source products," says Columbia's Rosenblatt, noting that in RFPs the university often requires that open standards be employed. "Even if we are looking for a commercial product, we want it to support the standards our systems are running. We're trying to limit interoperability problems. We also believe that open source generally helps us avoid vendor lock-in."

### Conclusion

The IDG research clearly points to a market need for flexible, next-generation collaboration suites that can

deliver increased productivity and knowledge sharing, along with choice of application vendors.

Organizations understand that, unlike most traditional applications, collaboration tools reach across the enterprise, driving a broad set of activities. In essence, collaboration solutions become part of the business backbone, forcing buyers to weigh their options especially carefully. Robust, easy-to-use collaboration solutions such as Novell Teaming + Conferencing, with its inherent flexibility, interoperability and promise of greater innovation, clearly hold great appeal.

"We're excited to see the survey responses align with the kinds of things we're doing," Fox says. "Interoperability and the ability to integrate various applications in one unified environment that works with different types of IT infrastructure is a big part of our strategy. It's great to look at this survey, hear what IT executives are saying, and know that our product strategy is aligned with them."

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about next-generation collaboration solutions, please go to [www.novell.com/teaming](http://www.novell.com/teaming)