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FEDERATE OR DIE OUT

THE EVOLUTION OF COMMUNICATION

A whitepaper by Robert Pope, Outsourcery's Head of Business Development

FEDERATE OR DIE OUT

When it comes to the evolution of communication, is your business embracing technology or still nursing a recession hangover? The evolution of man has become the evolution of communication and businesses can't afford NOT to evolve.

Skype for Business is the hottest and most anticipated Unified Communications (UC) solution to hit the market in recent years. It combines the familiar user experience of Skype with the enterprise functionality and security of Microsoft Lync. Skype for Business brings with it many commercial advantages which are discussed at great length in a number of whitepapers, tech journals and the IT press. Well-documented benefits include cost savings, improved productivity and internal collaboration, however one benefit often overlooked is **federation**.

Federation is the functionality within Skype for Business to 'see' into another organisation using Lync or Skype for Business and to connect with the 300 million Skype users around the world. In doing this, users are able to leverage all the core features of Skype for Business such as 'presence' and 'instant messaging', and move higher up in the communication value chain with voice, video and desktop sharing.

The federation feature within Skype for Business enables the development of trusted and encrypted relationships between organisations. In simple terms, making it easier to see that the person you need to speak to is available to instant message, receive a call or collaborate with through desktop sharing.
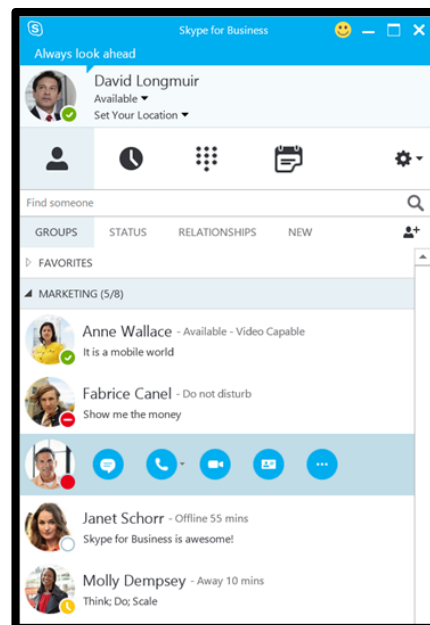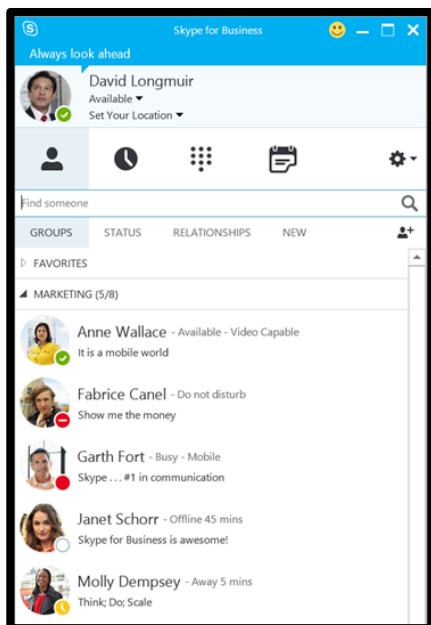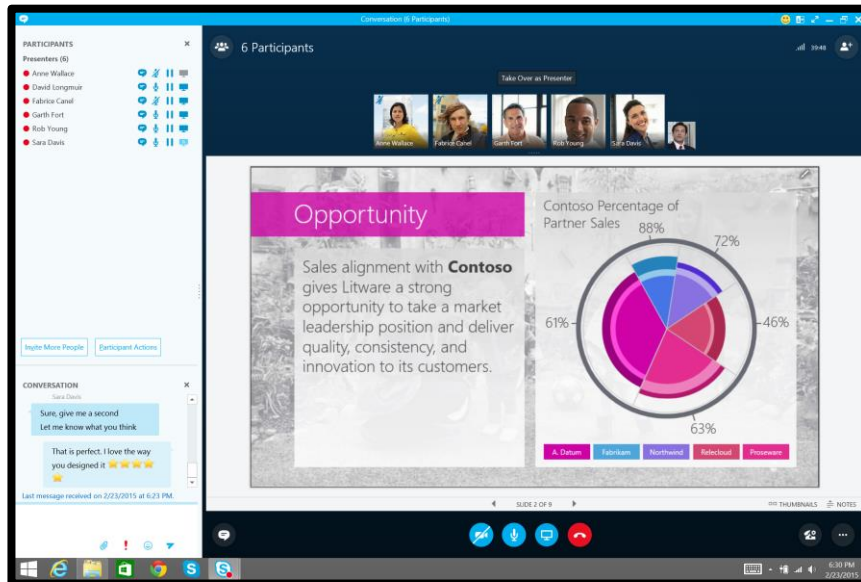
THE EVOLUTION OF 'COMMS'

Communication methods have changed over the centuries, from smoke signals to telegraphs, radio to fax, and more recently e-mail and social media. Some readers may still remember getting a telephone at home or a fax machine at work, whereas others may not even remember a time when Facebook didn't exist. Nowadays, modern communication the world over relies on technology and the bottom line is that now, without an e-mail address, you can easily become disenfranchised – cut off from communicating with the world around you, both socially and in business.

DID YOU KNOW?

➤ It took radio 38 years to reach 50 million listeners
  ➤ It took terrestrial TV 13 years to reach 50 million viewers
    ➤ It took the internet four years to reach 50 million people

But it took Facebook less than nine months to add 100 million users. And if you're not on it, you're not in it.

With over 60% of enterprises of 500 seats and above using or adopting Skype for Business, federation will become more and more important on both sides of the commercial chain.

FEDERATE TO STAY IN THE GAME

If, as a supplier, you aren't part of the ever-growing business network of Skype for Business users, then you'll likely become the 'great aunt' to your customers – sometimes thought about, but rarely visited – simply due to the fact that there isn't an easy and effective way for people to keep in touch. Even with a phone number and an e-mail address (and likely a fax machine lurking in your office somewhere) digital communications are evolving, with social tools and Unified Communications fast-becoming the contact method of choice. More onerous methods are slipping away into the days of communications past.
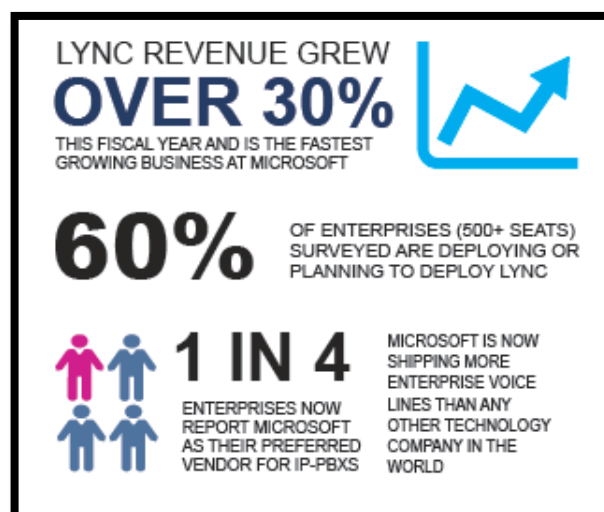
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For those readers using Skype for Business already, they will identify with the notion that reading a phone number from an address book or a screen and punching the digits in to a dial pad now feels clunky and old-fashioned – it has become that bit less convenient than just double-clicking the Skype for Business icon. So naturally, those are the calls that happen first.

Enhanced features, like calling someone by clicking on the 'from' address in an e-mail or clicking on an invitee's name in a calendar entry, mean Skype for Business makes communicating with customers, partners, suppliers, colleagues and other business stakeholders a seamless experience. Businesses using Skype for Business, and even better businesses that federate with their clients, will reap the rewards not just from a communications perspective but tangibly on the bottom line. Revenues will increase, as people in business are often short of time and will choose the quickest and most efficient way of getting in touch, whether that be to purchase a service, request a consultation or to close a deal. And like with Facebook in the social space, when it comes to Skype for Business, you need to be on it to be in it.

DEATH OF A PHONE NUMBER

Skype for Business is increasingly becoming the Unified Communications solution of choice, with increasing global adoption; a solution which once deployed turns a device (think mobiles, tablets and laptops) into a handset or a 'phone' in the most traditional sense of the word. A contact becomes a person, no longer an impossible-to-remember sequence of digits. We could ultimately see the death of the phone number.

The ability to select a name and instantly communicate and collaborate effectively is the 'comms' method of the future. Microsoft Lync, the predecessor of Skype for Business, has been leading the way in Unified Communications as this infographic published by Microsoft in 2014 shows and the launch of Skype for Business will only accelerate this growth:

At Outsourcery, in a single day we speak more times to our suppliers who have Skype for Business, than we would in a month to those suppliers we need to contact by phone. And in our offices in London, Manchester and Leicester you won't find a single 'phone'. You will, however,

see lots of wireless headsets, smart devices and state-of-the-art conferencing facilities – all fully mobile and utilising the latest in cloud technology. What's more, from a service perspective, we can provide a better level of support to our customers and partners using Skype for Business – for them and for us it's a straightforward connect, communicate and collaborate. One of the reasons we are 'the cloud experts' is the fact that all our employees live, sleep and breathe the cloud solutions that we sell.

WHEN THE GREEN GLOWS

Skype for Business is 'the new e-mail' and much, much more. It is a technology solution that facilitates communication and the ability to leverage instant opportunities for collaboration, triggered often by the availability of the recipient. With Skype for Business, when the green glows, you're good to go.

But federation is key.

Federate or die out.

ABOUT OUTSOURCERY

Outsourcery is a world-leading UK-based Cloud Services Provider (CSP), offering one of the broadest offerings of cloud-based services built on Microsoft technology and best-of-breed HP hardware, for businesses of all sizes.

The company aims to remove the need for organisations to own and manage on-premises IT, Unified Communications and conferencing applications and infrastructure. End-customers range from start-ups to FTSE-100 businesses and Outsourcery serves an extensive partner base of over 500 IT and 'telco' providers, which include Virgin Media Business and Vodafone.

Outsourcery offers hosted software applications (software-as-a-service), cloud infrastructure (infrastructure-as-a-service) and next generation Unified Communications and collaboration solutions, as well as connectivity and professional services to tailor and fully integrate solutions to meet the needs of customers, partners and the UK public sector alike. The product suite includes Skype for Business, Exchange, Dynamics CRM and Office365, along with its own enterprise-grade, Ofcom regulated O-Cloud server platform.

Outsourcery's O-Cloud platform has been certified to run government classified information at OFFICIAL and OFFICAL SENSITIVE over the internet. This gives Outsourcery CESG Pan Government Accreditation (PGA) (formerly IL2) to meet data sovereignty and security specifications for the public sector.

Outsourcery, working with Dell and Microsoft, is also in the process of designing and deploying a high security cloud platform, accredited to carry OFFICIAL and OFFICAL SENSITIVE classified documentation, with PGA and Public Services Network (PSN) Protect (formerly IL3) connectivity, also for UK government.

Outsourcery was the first company outside of the US to be named Microsoft's worldwide 'Hosting Solutions Partner of the Year' and also the UK's first certified carbon neutral CSP. The business was named HP's Most Innovative Service Award 2013 and the UK Cloud Awards' Collaboration

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Product of the Year 2014. Outsourcery is a Microsoft Certified Gold Partner with a total of eight competencies of which three are gold and five are silver. The business is also a HP Cloud Agile Partner, a Microsoft CityNext Partner and a Microsoft Cloud Accelerate Partner as well as a founder member of the UK Cloud Industry Forum. Outsourcery is also a corporate member of MSDUK and holds ISO 27001, ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 standards.

Outsourcery has over 100 employees, with offices in Manchester, London and Leicester.

GET IN TOUCH

At Outsourcery, we are always ready to talk cloud. To understand more about federation, or to discuss what Unified Communications could do for your business, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

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