



Collaboration

Simply stated, a Collaboration solution allows people to work together to solve a specific problem by enabling team-centric communication that offers information in the manner, format and timeframe required by its consumers to act quickly and intelligently.

The business problems solved by a Collaboration solution are many – and often, are so obvious and pervasive they become part of the organizational culture. Some examples include:

- When immersed in their work, project teams often don't communicate with other teams. While this is usually an oversight, it can be quite damaging, as the work of one team can have wide-ranging impact on that of others. For example, if an IT team rolling out security patches does not communicate status and updates with the rest of the organization, the consequences can be disastrous.
- When new members join a team, it is generally incumbent on the team lead to bring the newbies up to speed and immediately get them working effectively. Unfortunately, the lead is usually the member with the busiest schedule, and so this on-boarding often happens haphazardly, if at all. This can slow the productivity of the new member, and sometimes even reverse previous team progress as the new members make decisions that don't take into consideration all the dependencies and foregone activities.
- When a team lead is assigned a new project, he often begins with a project initiation document that catalogs the project overview, details, deliverables and the like, which he then circulates among other team members, management and others. This results in multiple, edited versions of the same document, which the team lead must prioritize, merge and send out for more feedback. Midway through the second round of input, he may receive input from an executive who was forwarded the document during the first round, but whose input he is not ready to receive at this early point, setting the stage for political and workflow challenges.

Taken as one-off instances, these examples may appear annoying, rather than troubling. However, the whole is exponentially greater than the sum of its parts. These breakdowns in collaboration, added up across the enterprise, can have a vastly deleterious effect on organizational productivity – and ultimately, the bottom line.

The Catapult Benefit

The power of collaborative technologies lies in their ability to connect people not only with information but with other individuals who either have or have access to yet more information, resulting in better, more timely, enterprise-wide dissemination of on-point, formatted and digestible information. The benefits of this are clear and easy to see: better top-down intelligence, clearer bottom-up understanding, and faster decisions made better, for improvements ranging from increased employee morale to a fatter bottom line.

Catapult Systems employs a personalized approach to ensure that collaboration solutions are implemented and configured optimally to address your specific business needs. Rather than

force the business to adapt to the problem-solving tool, Catapult consultants first gain an understanding of how the business problem fits into how you operate.

Only then do we work to adapt the technology to your business, helping you install, configure, set up, customize, extend and integrate Microsoft enterprise products that help your organization

- work faster and more effectively
- manage processes and business partners more efficiently
- communicate with fresh, meaningful information

Collaboration Products

There are three types of collaborative activity:

- *Real-time*: this is as-it-happens communication in which the sender creates an immediate conversation, which takes the form of IM, telephone, WAP-enabled phones, and the like.
- *Near-real time*: operating on a receiver-driven schedule, this activity leverages applications and tools like email and portals.
- *Offline*: least collaborative, this method often takes the place during off-the-clock hours, and can take the form of a synched email application, or one working against a document library.

Microsoft technology offers organizations many options to take their collaborative activities to the next level. Some examples:

- SQL Server: a comprehensive database providing enterprise-class data management and integrated BI tools.
- Windows Server: platform powers connected applications, networks and Web services from workgroups to the data center.
- Office: this suite of productivity tools enhances users' abilities to save time, organize workloads, manage information, stay connected and collaborate better across the organization, with products like:
 - SharePoint Server: this integrated suite of server capabilities offers enterprise search, content management, business process facilitation, simplified information sharing and enhanced business insight.
 - Live Communication Server: this delivers instant messaging as part of a scalable, enterprise-grade solution offering enhanced security, seamless integration with other Microsoft products, and an extensible, industry-standard development platform.
 - Outlook: Email solution that offers new ways to manage time and information, connect across boundaries and protect information.

Learn more today!

Visit www.CatapultSystems.com

or contact 800.528.6248 or info@CatapultSystems.com

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