



Vol.6 Number 12  
November 2006

## Presence Management: Productivity Defined

Picture this scenario: You schedule a meeting using the calendar function in Microsoft Outlook. Three weeks later, when the meeting occurs, someone calls your extension and receives a message stating that you're in a meeting. The caller then has the option of sending you an instant message if it's an important matter to be discussed. All of this happened automatically. You did nothing but add the meeting date to your calendar. That's the power of Presence Management.

The idea of "Presence" is the new driver behind the latest productivity and corporate collaboration initiatives being deployed by businesses everywhere. In fact, according to Nemertes Research, 92% of IT executives list real-time communication tools such as Presence Technology as one of the factors that help them to manage their remote workforce. But what defines Presence Management, and how can it be put to best use within your organization?

Many companies tend to think they are employing Presence Management when their corporate network shows whether or not an employee is logged-in, but this is only a small fraction of the value that real Presence Management can deliver. Presence done right is the ability to see where people are, what they are doing and how they want to be reached—all in real time. This is accomplished through the use of multi-faceted technologies such as instant messaging, telephony applications and location-based services. Presence done right can change not only the way your business communicates; it can enhance and streamline your entire organizational structure.

### Empowering the Mobile Workforce

With Presence Management, you can be working anywhere and collaborate with members of your team as if they were in the next cubicle over. Inbound callers who dial your extension will have no idea of where you're actually working. They'll just be amazed at how easy you are to reach. And if you need privacy, you can update your status to "unavailable" and direct inbound messages to wherever you want them to go.

### Making the Most of Presence Management

In order to realize the maximum benefit of Presence Management, there are several things to keep in mind. The first is that Presence Management only works to full effect if it is deployed through a Unified Communications platform. Data and voice need to be integrated, in order to maximize the connection options available to your employees. If



you're like most companies, you have an email infrastructure, a voice infrastructure and a data network infrastructure. For Presence Management to be effective, you need a bridge across all 3 platforms. Fortunately, Presence Management applications are designed to be just such a bridge. Just make sure you select a vendor that can integrate between various disparate systems.

When looking at access levels for your organizational team, you will also want to consider the needs of your remote users. Empowering the mobile workforce is one of the strongest benefits that Unified Communications can deliver. But you'll definitely want to control and protect remote access to ensure the privacy and security of all your important corporate communications. Done right, Unified Communications can enable remote users to work as if they were all in the same office.

Finally, user adoption rates must always be of primary concern. When looking at the Presence Management solutions of different vendors, examine how the interfaces will be integrated into the tools that your employees use everyday. If the solution puts a burden on the normal daily workflow of your team, they will not accept or use it. However, if using a Presence tool is easy and intuitive, it will become a normal extension of how an employee does their job. That's when you'll start to see your entire organization function like clockwork-communicating in ways that build business, not roadblocks.