

Presence Management: Deploy to Maximum Effect

Deploying Presence Management technology is definitely worth the effort. 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 location-based services and benefits instant messaging and telephony applications. Presence done right can change not only the way your business communicates; it can enhance and streamline your entire organizational structure.

But doing Presence "right" is what will make the difference between lukewarm improvements and a real definable advantage to your business. So what is the best way to deploy a Presence Management system?

Unified Communications-The Only Way to Go


Many companies tend to think they are utilizing 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 Presence Management can deliver. In order to realize the maximum benefit of Presence Management, it must be deployed across a true Unified Communications platform. 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.

This can be accomplished through an application-based server and the use of the Presence Management application itself to bridge your voice and data networks. (If your company is already using VoIP for your voice communications, then your voice/data bridge is already in place.) By using a Unified Communications infrastructure, you can integrate Presence Management around the three key factors of mobility, messaging and voice.

Other Factors to Consider

There are several other considerations in order to maximize the productivity levels you reap from Presence Management. One major step is to examine how you will provision your users when deploying Presence Management. You'll want your power users to have access to the full breadth of communication possibilities that are available. However, if you operate in an environment such as manufacturing, you may want to consider limiting usage. Offering full Presence Management capabilities to your assembly line workers may actually be counterproductive and a drain on system resources.

Also, when looking at access levels for your organizational team, you will 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. In order to prevent opening up security vulnerabilities within your company, we recommend setting up offsite users with a VPN



connection. And make sure security procedures are well established and followed by everyone.

Finally, user adoption rates must also be of concern. When looking at the Presence Management solutions, 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. The best Presence Management technologies work right within Microsoft Outlook. If an employee schedules a meeting using Outlook's calendar function, their Presence status will update automatically. It's that kind of functionality that will build quick acceptance, and enable you to rapidly build productivity across your entire organization.

Vendor Selection

There are two key components to keep in mind when selecting a Presence Management vendor. One is their ability to integrate disparate platforms. Many companies employ a hybrid network that may even include older Legacy systems. The right Presence Management technology should be able to bridge all of these. Ideally, the vendor should provide a full-service solution, rather than making you support multiple products from multiple companies. The second factor is to make sure the solution you're considering has a very intuitive interface that your employees will actually use. It should be able to support the lowest common denominator when it comes to accessing the system. In this case, that denominator should be the traditional DTMF phone interface.

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. If you take a Unified Communications approach to deploying your Presence Management technology, and if you give proper consideration to the needs of your users, you can be one of the executives that realize the solid and substantial gains in productivity that Presence Management can offer.