

Multi-Enterprise Collaboration

Achieving Operational Efficiencies in a Flat World

Innovation is rapidly becoming the cornerstone of modern businesses. The relentless pursuit of company growth, increased margins and customer loyalty drives companies to develop new products, new methods and new markets. Companies focused on innovation are turning to collaboration with the global business ecosystem – a network of relationships with customers, partners and suppliers – in order to stoke their fires of innovation with fresh ideas.

Collaboration beyond the corporate firewall can produce innovative results that far exceed what a business entity alone is capable of producing. According to a study published by IBM in 2006, global CEOs consider external collaboration as indispensable, with customers and other business ecosystems being cited as top sources of innovative ideas.¹

In the ever flattening world, collaboration is a tremendous challenge, severely jeopardized by the vast quantities of unstructured information exchanged. When compounded by the additional complexities of multi-enterprise collaboration across the business ecosystem, the challenge to sustain an innovative, competitive advantage is magnified considerably. Gartner reports that the same issues and concerns exist with collaborating with the outside world as with internal collaboration, but the challenges are at least ten times as difficult when reaching beyond the organizational firewall.²

Major suppliers of technology are providing increasingly robust and proven portal infrastructures designed to facilitate the exchange and organization of collaborative information, but simply enabling unstructured collaboration is not sufficient. The emerging trend for collaborating and managing projects across the ecosystem points to a need for a technology capable of managing multi-enterprise collaboration.

Multi-enterprise collaboration requires defying the traditional barriers of organization, time, geography, and culture in order to extend collaboration beyond the enterprise to include the entire business ecosystem of partners, customers and suppliers.

Managing Multi-Enterprise Collaboration – A Complex Challenge

As many participants in the IBM study explained, collaboration and partnering is “theoretically easy,” but “practically hard to do.”³ Ninety percent of collaboration across the firewall is currently uncontrolled and unsupported by collaboration technologies.⁴

Fragmentation is one of the most significant roadblocks to multi-enterprise collaboration. Today’s collaborative technologies are often separate and uncoupled, provoking the fragmentation of people, tools, processes and information vital to the success of projects. Different groups use different tools

for project work, from Microsoft Project, Word, or Excel to email, instant messaging, and separate discussion forums. Most of these traditional tools are not sufficient for multi-enterprise collaboration. They cannot be shared between enterprises or scale to the multi-enterprise level, which accounts for the high percentage of uncontrolled collaboration that is impossible to manage effectively.

Complex systems with steep learning curves do not support ad hoc work, an essential component to successful collaboration and innovation. Multi-enterprise collaboration can be obstructed by requirements for extensive training or cumbersome administrative overhead when flexibility and agility are what's important to rapidly respond to unanticipated priorities.

Confronted with these obstacles, it's clear why collaborative processes such as researching information, resolving issues, and tracking changes are far more difficult in the multi-enterprise context.

Managed Collaboration – Strategic Value for the Enterprise

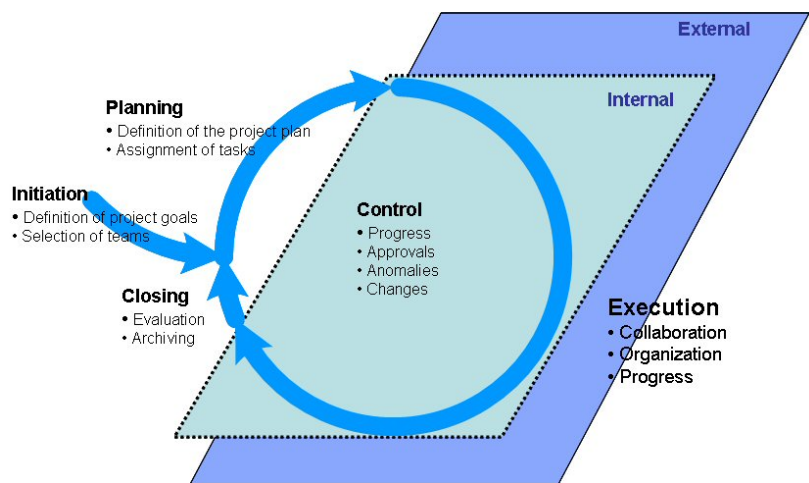
The strategic value of effectively managing collaboration in the global business ecosystem can be seen in the increases in productivity and greater control and visibility that result.

The collaborative execution stage is typically the longest in duration and most resource intensive in the project life cycle. A small increase in productivity at this stage – by decreasing cycle times involving larger numbers of participants through effective managed collaboration – can be equivalent to significantly larger increases at any other phase of the project life cycle. Much of the collaboration at this stage is with customers and partners, which adds further to the strategic value.

Effective managed collaboration enables tighter control, which also adds significant value by providing visibility regarding progress, awareness of issues, and the flexibility to change direction to continually correspond to strategic business objectives.

Realizing the strategic value of managed collaboration for the global business ecosystem requires:

- The capability to collaborate between and among team members regardless of their geography, culture, organization or computing platform
- A simple and intuitive means to contribute, organize and share communication and information relative to a specific project
- The means to quickly identify and resolve deviations to the project plan and adapt to changing business requirements
- The ability to secure access to information based on project specific roles
- Personalized views that focus on the activities required to accomplish specific tasks and goals
- The ability to visualize and control the progress of multiple projects.



Multi-Enterprise Collaboration - A Cast Study

One company that realized the strategic value of multi-enterprise collaboration for ecosystem projects is JWT. This global organization ranks as the largest advertising agency brand in the United States and as the fourth largest full-service network in the world. JWT presents an excellent example of driving innovation through successful multi-enterprise collaboration.

As a creative enterprise, innovation that matters and successful multi-enterprise collaboration with external clients are critical success factors for JWT. The JWT Detroit organization specifically realized that revolutionary, innovative changes were necessary to retain key customers, increase customer satisfaction, increase business agility, and improve productivity in today's flattening world.

The JWT Detroit operation tackled the challenge head on with JWT's first process-centric, activity-centric collaborative portal. The secure, multi-enterprise collaboration portal is used by JWT and its clients to collaborate on innovative advertising campaigns and allows JWT Detroit's customers to easily access deliverables and provide feedback in a highly collaborative project environment.

Not only is JWT retaining existing customers, they have increased new business because of this competitive advantage. It is no exaggeration to say that project transformed the business process of JWT Detroit's organization. With its high performance workplace infrastructure, customer satisfaction has increased and process cycle time has decreased by up to 98% for processes requiring customer feedback. JWT has attained their objectives of increased agility and increased productivity.

"Our high-performance workspace has evolved over the past five years to be a single source of truth for contextual information access and collaboration," said John Tripp, Director, Systems Development for JWT Detroit. *"Our workspaces have*

*allowed JWT offices in which they are deployed to standardize operations and provide data more transparently, and have resulted in our having the capacity to respond to the rapidly changing business environment in ways that, for us, previously were not possible."*⁵

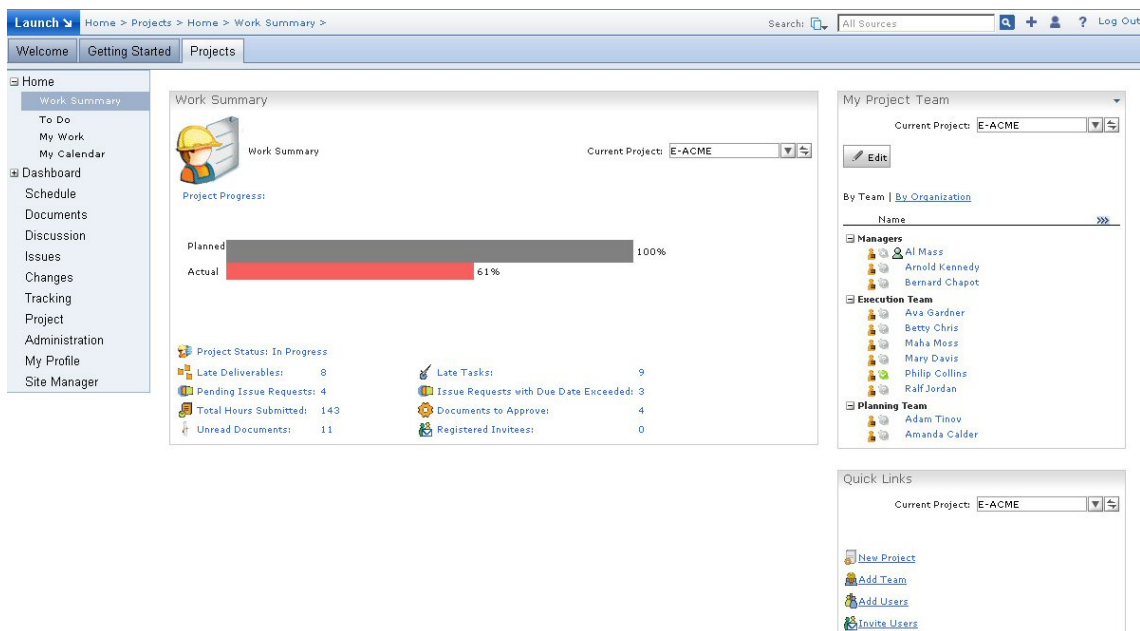
Emerging Technologies for Managing Multi-Enterprise Collaboration

As technology infrastructures that facilitate the exchange and organization of collaborative information become more readily available, vendors are building solutions that leverage these infrastructures to effectively manage multi-enterprise collaboration.

Trilog Group is one of the visionary collaborative technology providers that has focused on the need for solutions that leverage today's robust collaborative services and portal platforms to manage collaboration for ecosystem projects. Trilog Group was a key vendor, working together with JWT Detroit to create their portal with embedded process automation, workflow, and communication and collaboration tools to meet JWT's business objectives. Trilog extended the JWT solution to design and build a complete infrastructure for managing multi-enterprise collaboration in the context of ecosystem projects.

Trilog Group's ProjExec™ is an innovative solution for multi-enterprise collaborative project management. ProjExec leverages cutting-edge collaborative technologies to implement project management best practices. ProjExec centralizes the information exchanged in the context of a project within a secure portal, providing significant productivity gains. ProjExec facilitates project tracking and automates issues management to minimize their impact on project success.

"As projects increase in number and complexity, we see companies struggling to execute and control multiple complex projects across multiple organizations." said Alex Homsy, Trilog's President and CEO. *"ProjExec is unique in providing a simple and robust way to collaborate on activities*



spanning multiple projects while automatically organizing and securing the information exchanged between project team members.”

ProjExec has won three excellence awards in 2006, including the prestigious *IBM PartnerWorld Beacon Award for Best Lotus Software Solution*. The JWT solution built using Trilog's collaborative component framework was also awarded the 2006 High Performance Workplace (HPW) Excellence Award for Business Innovation by Gartner, the leading provider of research and analysis about the global information technology industry.

Conclusion

Innovation is becoming the driver for managing multi-enterprise collaboration. In response to the need to direct and control collaboration, technology providers are beginning to offer solutions, such as Trilog's ProjExec, that can serve as the strategic backbone for managed collaboration in the global business ecosystem. Organizations that are focused on innovation to compete – particularly those that depend on a network of partnerships to secure their competitive advantages – should seriously consider the strategic value of managing multi-enterprise collaboration. Trilog Group's ProjExec

provides the capabilities that address the multi-enterprise collaboration challenge.

Optimized for IBM WebSphere Portal platforms, ProjExec is an affordable open standards web-based solution available for any web application server.

¹ "IBM Global CEO Study 2006." IBM Business Consulting Services.

² Mann, Jeffrey, "Collaborating With the Outside World: Partners, Vendors and Suppliers." 4/06, AE Portals Content & Collaboration Summit 2006, Gartner, pg. 7

³ "IBM Global CEO Study 2006." IBM Business Consulting Services. p 25

⁴ Mann, Jeffrey, "Collaborating With the Outside World: Partners, Vendors and Suppliers." 4/06, AE Portals Content & Collaboration Summit 2006, Gartner, pg. 4

⁵ "Gartner Announces Winners of High Performance Excellence Awards," April 10, 2006, <http://www.tekrati.com/research/News.asp?id=6799>



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