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UC RFP Template Solution Description Basic UC Productivity Tools

The Unified Communications (UC) RFP Template Toolkits focus on the new solutions that are enabled by new communications capabilities, not on the evolution of established communications tools such as calling, basic voice conferencing, voice mail, e-mail, calendar or web. For an overview of eight (8) UC Solution categories that are supported by the UC RFP Template Toolkits, please visit www.UCStrategies.com.

This is the UC Solution Description for Basic UC Productivity Tools.

Description: Basic UC Productivity Tools

UC Basic UC Productivity Tools focus on application of Presence to find an available resource most quickly and to avoid time waste and disruptions. The use of Presence is complimented with Instant Messaging, to allow rapid, parallel interactions rather than a more time-consuming and potential incomplete interactions such as a phone call or an e-mail or voice message.

The goal of this application is to enable employees to work more efficiently between themselves and with suppliers, partners and customers if those parties accessible through federated IM/Presence or public IM/Presence services. Users learn to avoid the time and expense of calling or messaging to others by seeing who is currently available to answer a question or solve a problem (via Presence). Users also learn to use a short IM message to check the other party's availability before starting a phone call or IM chat session; users can also verify whether the other party is able to perform a requested task (review a document, update a file, contact a customer, etc.) before calling or messaging to make the request.

There usually is not a set of business process improvement goals for this application area, since this Basic UC Productivity approach only assumes that by providing the latest tools, the users will be more effective, of their own initiative. Prior examples of this include cell phones, e-mail, mobile e-mail, softphones for remote work, etc. However, users do report more control and faster task completion when using presence and IM, so it may be possible to observe some improvements (increase in sales performance, fewer project overruns, etc.) though there may be other factors causing those improvements.

If your company wishes to leverage these Basic UC Productivity Tools to produce measurable results, then we recommend you review other UC Solution Descriptions and UC RFP Templates that use enhanced UC tools and target measurable results, such as:

- Contact Management
- Resource Identification and Problem Resolution
- Collaboration Acceleration
- Job-Specific Communication-Enabled Portals

The primary business areas for application of Basic UC Productivity Tools include most desk-based information processing jobs such as Information Workers (IW) and Knowledge Workers (KW) in general. Jobs that are more process specific, such as retail clerks, supply chain workers, production positions, etc., usually would not use the Basic UC Tools, but would have Presence and IM designed into their role-based solutions as suggested above.

UC technologies needed for this application are:

- Basic UC Tools including:
 - Basic presence to show availability status of specific persons in the collaborative team; however, best if using “rich presence” as described below.
 - Instant Messaging to enable rapid exchanges or confirmations of questions, information, etc.

Technologies that are included in the RFP request and the potential suppliers are:

Technology Element	Typical Examples	Potential Suppliers
Presence Servers	Microsoft Office Communication Server (OCS) 2007 IBM SameTime Jabber IP PBX Presence Servers All of the above to provide tools, toolkits or APIs, with VAR or ISV channels, to integrate for “rich presence”	Desktop Application providers, such as Microsoft, IBM, Jabber, et al. IP PBX providers such as Avaya, Cisco, Notel, Siemens, et al. Note that the IP PBX presence servers may have limited functionality, which would show in the RFP response.
Instant Messaging	Microsoft Office Communications Server IBM SameTime Jabber Public IM Services PBX-branded IM servers	Microsoft IBM Jabber IP PBX providers such as Avaya, Cisco, Notel, Siemens, et al.

Potential Bidders for Basic UC Productivity Tools

As indicated in the table above, there are two main types of bidders for the UC RFP for Basic UC Productivity Tools: Desktop (fixed, mobile, virtual) application providers and IP PBX providers, with associated independents for various components.

Since the Desktop application providers have richer products and more experience in the Basic UC Productivity Tools application space and also can expand their functions across more media types (by adding voice to e-mail, IM, calendar, web, etc.), the UniComm Consulting recommendation is to include at least your enterprise's preferred Desktop Application provider in the selection of potential RFP respondents.

Please note that there is no requirement to purchase a new IP PBX or new E-mail or Desktop application suite in order to achieve the benefits of the UC Basic UC Productivity Tools applications, though many of the potential bidders will offer more functionality in conjunction with their latest software platforms.

To proceed with the UC Basic UC Productivity Tools RFP process, please download and review the RFP sample and, if appropriate to your enterprise, please purchase a licensed copy for modification and publication to your potential bidders. Economical consulting services are also available to support your UC RFP process.

For questions, please visit www.UCStrategies.com or write to mparker@UniCommConsulting.com.