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UC RFP Template Solution Description Job-Specific Comm-Enabled Portals

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 Job-Specific Comm-Enabled Portals.

Description: Job-Specific Comm-Enabled Portals

UC Job-Specific Comm-Enabled Portals provides the combination of communications capability with enterprise information portals to improve job performance and to accelerate transaction completion. This UC application is very similar to (and roughly a subset of) the Seamless Information for Mobile Personnel UC application, yet the users and uses are different enough to warrant a separate application template.

The major business process improvement goals for this application area include:

- Faster transaction completion through elimination of delays.
- Elimination of almost all labor spent in identifying the proper point of action or finding the proper contact information for the task and situation at hand.
- Conversion of costlier (primarily in time and disruption) into less costly forms such as database updates, automated alerts, and Instant Messaging.
- Automated record-keeping with reductions of labor and improved ability to measure, review and audit for continual improvements.
- Reduction in error rates by assisting each process step with appropriate software, information presentation, and validity checking
- The ability to automatically reroute or queue failed requests to assure optimal transaction completion times.

Effective use of Job-Specific Comm-Enabled Portals can:

- Increase revenues by:
 - Shortening the elapsed time to billings
 - Increasing overall business capacity (for billings, shipments, etc.)
 - Increasing competitive advantage, with faster, more accurate processes

- Reduce costs through:
 - Elimination/reassignment of staff positions based on efficiency
 - Elimination/reassignment of staff positions based on less error correction
 - Reduction in asset levels such as inventory and receivables.

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. A mobility voice communication client, capable of controlling and, preferably, transmitting the appropriate set of media (voice, text, images, etc.). This could be provided by an IP PBX client, a mobile desktop client, or possibly a mobile carrier client with synchronization to the enterprise applications (e.g. Blackberry).
 - Possibly, Unified Messaging to converge all the messaging queues related to the associated transactions. However, these message queues should be incorporated into the Job-Specific Comm-Enabled Portal, not managed in a separate client.
- Advanced UC Tools including:
 - Software-based information portals and applications that are configured to the appropriate networks and devices as listed below.
 - Software-based clients primarily able to operate securely on both wired IP networks (perhaps with TDM for IP-controlled voice) with multi-media (PC/browser) interfaces. Optionally, provide this functionality via wireless IP (handheld or cell phone) end-point devices, should users of this application need to be mobile at times. (If mostly mobile, then see Seamless Information for Mobile Personnel.)
 - Integration to enterprise business applications and transactions to provide current information and appropriate execution capabilities for each transaction and communication event.
 - Presence with “rich presence” features (location, current task, skills, etc.) that is integrated to methods and applications, similar to the experience in contact centers, working dynamically with the devices.
 - The appropriate set of IP Communications modes accessible to the user in an automated mode, managed by the portal software (e.g. “click to IM/call” or even “launching IM/call”. Should include voice, text, Instant Messaging and possibly video to and from the portal client with access both to other enterprise end-points and to any accessible contact points needed for the applications. This may require federation methods for presence and IM functions.

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

Technology Element	Typical Examples	Potential Suppliers
Presence Servers with “rich presence” capability	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, Netel, 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, Netel, Siemens, et al.
Unified Messaging, preferably with message store in e-mail. Should be embedded in the Portal.	Avaya Unified Messenger AVST CallXpress Adomo Cisco Unity Microsoft UM in Exchange	IP PBX providers. Independents such as AVST, Adomo, et al. Microsoft Enterprise Apps Providers
Software-Based Clients for wired multi-media IP devices	SAP BEA Systems AquaLogic Siebel IBM WebSphere Salesforce.com Microsoft	SAP BEA Siebel/Oracle Salesforce.com IBM Microsoft
Software-based information portals and applications	SAP BEA Systems AquaLogic Siebel IBM WebSphere Salesforce.com Microsoft	SAP BEA Siebel/Oracle Salesforce.com IBM Microsoft
Integrations To Business Apps, Information Portals, Tracking Systems, etc.	Pro Services or VARs for the selected technologies and the applications in your enterprise.	Pro Services or VARs for: Enterprise Apps Providers - BEA Systems, Oracle, SAP RIM (Blackberry) Microsoft IBM

Potential Bidders for UC Job-Specific Comm-Enabled Portals

As indicated in the table above, there are two main types of bidders for the UC RFP for Job-Specific Comm-Enabled Portals: Business application software providers and Desktop (fixed, mobile, virtual) application providers.

The UniComm Consulting recommendation is to include in the RFP bidders list at least your enterprise's provider of the enterprise software applications that are most pertinent to the relevant personnel. If the personnel work primarily with e-mail and office desktop applications, then inclusion of your enterprise's preferred Desktop Application provider is appropriate. IP PBX providers would be included primarily as potential partners with the other two groups, not as primary respondents, though a strong incumbent may be able to act as the prime contractor of a Seamless Information for Mobility UC solution.

Please note that there is no requirement to purchase a new IP PBX or new E-mail or desktop application suite or enterprise business application software system in order to achieve the benefits of the UC Job-Specific Comm-Enabled Portals applications, though many of the potential bidders will offer more functionality in conjunction with their latest software platforms.

To proceed with the UC Job-Specific Comm-Enabled Portals 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.