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UC RFP Template Solution Description Resource Identification and Problem Resolution

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 Resource Identification and Problem Resolution.

Description: Resource Identification and Problem Resolution

UC Resource Identification and Problem Resolution provides improved and accelerated location and access to resources required for problem resolution and support of the communications needed to complete the resolution.

The goal of this application is to find the right skill, approver, authorizer, or knowledge source in the shortest period of time with the least impact on other business processes; this is similar to contact center techniques for delivering optimum service levels across incoming media channels and customer segments. While similar to contact management, this UC application focuses primarily within the enterprise value chain, while contact management is primarily an application for support of clients, customers, or prospects.

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

- Rapid transaction completion in any area where the completion enables billings, improves service, or lowers asset usage. Examples include:
 - Gain approval of sales price/discount requests
 - Find and dispatch technical resources
 - Solve service or logistics problems
 - Access key knowledge or skills to inform actions or decisions
 - Obtain required approvals required for workflow (personnel, finance, purchasing, etc.), regulatory compliance, or other process-related steps.
- Avoidance of expensive business-impacting events such as production stoppages, idle time, service outages, inventory shortages, etc.

Effective use of Resource Identification and Problem Resolution can increase revenue if more transactions are completed in a fixed time period. Also, this UC application can cut costs or avoid expenses by shortening the time spent on a problem, by eliminating rework or overtime, or by reducing the assets (e.g. inventory) that are tied up or held as reserves due to the occurrence and duration of the problems.

UC technologies needed for this application are:

- Basic UC Tools including:
 - Basic presence to show availability status of specific persons; however, best if using “rich presence” as described below.
 - Instant Messaging to enable rapid exchanges or confirmations of questions, information, etc.
 - Find-me/Follow-Me or Locator application to direct problem solving requests through to the appropriate person. Use in association with a mobility client. A number of providers offer find-me/follow-me functions, so it will be important to pick one type to be the primary find-me/follow me server, then assess whether or not other tools are needed.
 - A mobility client, capable of receiving multiple modes of communication including voice and text (IM and e-mail) and also 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).
 - Information portals on both wired (desktop) and wireless (mobile) devices to allow reference to the problem being solved.
 - Basic voice conferencing to enable additional consultation when necessary.
- Advanced UC Tools including:
 - Presence with “rich presence” features (location, current task, skills, etc.) that is integrated to methods and applications, similar to the experience in contact centers, to maximize first call resolution of problem solving requests. User presence should adjust automatically to the extent possible (e.g. based on current activity or location) and should be controllable by the user from both desktop and mobile devices.
 - Integration to enterprise business applications to identify the person or list of persons best able to assist with the current process step or problem.
 - Integration to problem tracking or process management software to assure progress on the problem is visible for status and progress, and can be measured for continuous improvement.
 - Directory access to current records of skills, knowledge or association with specific processes.

- Contact Management Rules to enable override of current user activities, depending on the criticality of the problem.
- Consulting and Professional Services to provide cross-client best practices knowledge and to assist in application design and implementation.

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, 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.
Find-me, Follow-me	Features on IP PBX systems such as Nortel MCS, Siemens OpenScape, Cisco Mobility, Avaya Extension to Cellular, etc. Features on almost all voice mail systems. Features on Microsoft OCS and IBM SameTime.	IP PBX providers such as Avaya, Cisco, Notel, Siemens, et al. Voice Mail/Unified Msg. providers such AVST, all IP PBX providers, Microsoft UM in Exchange 2007. Desktop Application providers, such as Microsoft, IBM, et al.
Mobile Communications Client	Microsoft Mobile Communicator. IBM SameTime Everywhere IP PBX mobile clients, though most only support voice and voice mail. RIM Blackberry Some application providers	Microsoft IBM IP PBX providers such as Avaya, Cisco, Notel, Siemens, et al. RIM (Blackberry) BEA Systems, Oracle, SAP

Technology Element	Typical Examples	Potential Suppliers
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: Microsoft IBM IP PBX Providers RIM (Blackberry) BEA Systems, Oracle, SAP
Directory Access and Contact Management Rules	Pro Services or VARs for the selected technologies and the software services in your enterprise.	Pro Services or VARs for: Microsoft IBM IP PBX Providers RIM (Blackberry) BEA Systems, Oracle, SAP

Potential Bidders for UC Resource Identification and Problem Resolution

As indicated in the table above, there are three main types of bidders for the UC RFP for Resource Identification and Problem Resolution: Desktop (fixed, mobile, virtual) application providers, IP PBX providers, and business application software providers. RIM is primarily a partner with or extension of the desktop application provider category.

UniComm Consulting believes that the Resource Identification and Problem Resolution application can be approached from either an application or a desktop/PBX perspective, depending on the nature of the most important problem resolution cases in your enterprise. If your enterprise's operations are tightly coupled to an enterprise application such as logistics, provisioning, service management, etc., then be sure to look at the options available from your application provider(s). If your enterprise's operations are more focused on knowledge and information such as consulting, professional services, financial or similar types of work, then look to either Desktop application or IP PBX providers as the lead respondents to this RFP. In many cases, the Desktop application provider may offer more flexibility across the desired media types (i.e. by adding voice to e-mail, IM, calendar, web, etc.).

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 Resource Identification and Problem Resolution applications, though many of the potential bidders will offer more functionality in conjunction with their latest software platforms.

To proceed with the UC Resource Identification and Problem Resolution 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.