

AVANADE PERSPECTIVE

Seattle Office:
2211 Elliott Avenue
Suite 200
Seattle, Washington, 98121
seattle@avanade.com
www.avanade.com

Avanade is the only global IT solutions consultancy 100 percent dedicated to using the Microsoft platform to help enterprises achieve profitable growth. Through proven solutions that extend Microsoft technologies, Avanade helps enterprises increase revenue, reduce costs, and reinvest in innovation to gain competitive advantage.

Considerations for communication and collaboration

Digital collaboration is much more than selecting a platform vendor

In increasingly service-based economies, information is the vital asset-- communication and collaboration is the engine that generates value from this asset. Information technology is essential to enable enterprises to build a collaborative environment for competitive advantage and business success. Specifically, digital collaboration—the use of technologies to allow efficient and valuable connections among people and information—is critical to becoming an innovative company, to establishing high-value relationships with customers, partners, suppliers, and stakeholders; to attracting and retaining a highly skilled workforce; and to achieving high-performance operations.

In order for companies to realize the full potential of digital collaboration, IT departments will need to provide new service offerings and take a holistic and proactive view to enable companies with technology to meet their needs now and well into the future. What was once a perfect fit may no longer meet your business needs due to rapid changes in how people work together and what technology can now enable. However, Avanade believes addressing communication and collaboration needs is much more than selecting a technology and if it's a change, developing a plan for migration—we work with our customers to start with an end-to-end view of business needs and ensuring you have the dynamic infrastructure to meet those needs.

We also believe that technology decisions need to be made with a view toward a vendor's long term strategy and product roadmap rather than a feature-to-feature comparison. While a technology may be a great fit today, given a vendor's long term strategic direction and your company's business needs, it may not take you where you need to go tomorrow. In this paper, we'll review the considerations for your communications and collaboration platform, how to assess your short-term and long term needs and how best to move to the next level. We'll also review the considerations for selecting a technology platform and how to ensure you find a partner, such as Avanade, who has the expertise, assets and experience to help you manage any project in a cost efficient and effective way. To get started, consider some advice from a leading analyst at Gartner."

"Organizations must move the collaboration debate from emotions and politics into sound business reasoning, with an emphasis on long-term infrastructure directions and emerging collaboration and business process needs."

- Matthew W. Cain, Research Vice President, Gartner

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
How well does your communication and collaboration platform meet your business needs?	3
Aligning vendor strategies with your organization's goals	4
Start by assessing what you have	5
Build a business case for your long-term platform strategy	5
Determine how to manage the migration process	6
Find a partner with the expertise you need	6
Avanade Solution	7

Introduction

When it comes to communication and collaboration, the way we work and the technology that empowers us has changed dramatically. What was leading edge and made sense 7-8 years ago is now of limited value. As blogs, wikis, and other social networking tools become popular inside the corporation, employees are building cost-effective communities of knowledge that enable them to share information more efficiently and simplify knowledge transfer—but managing costs and security has become a priority, requiring a more controlled and centralized infrastructure, while compliance is becoming critical for tracking mechanisms. At the same time, vendor offerings have changed dramatically, and much of the custom and user-built applications of the past are now offered as built-in functionality, reducing the cost of ongoing maintenance, security and compliance.

With all these changes, it's time to take a hard look at your organization's communication strategy. Do you still have the right fit, or are you, in effect, using a cell phone from 1995?

Back in the mid-90s, if your cell phone had call-waiting, you were ahead of the game. Now, of course, you can use your cell phone to check your email, instant-message your team, schedule meetings—even watch videos. If you were still using that old cell phone, you'd be missing out on tools that would help you work more efficiently (and certainly more enjoyably). Relying on an outdated, outmoded communication and collaboration strategy has much the same effect on your organization. Are you seeing a lack of responsiveness among your employees? Issues with an increasingly virtual workplace? Compliance problems? Maybe it's time to rethink your platform.

Collaboration is much more than technology. To be successful, any technology you adopt needs to enable collaboration in a way that's intuitive and meets your business needs.

How well does your communication and collaboration platform meet your business needs?

Collaboration is much more than technology. To be successful, any technology you adopt needs to enable collaboration in a way that's intuitive and meets your business needs. So before you start evaluating the fit of your current platform and application strategy, we recommend identifying the communication and collaboration strategies the technology will enable.

To get started, consider how technology has increased the speed of business and raised the expectations of your employees, customers, partners, and suppliers.

⇒ **Faster response time and just-in-time collaboration:**

Globalization brings increased pressure to respond within the timeframe of local events—for example, sending approval at midnight Eastern Time for a proposal that must be submitted at 8 a.m. Greenwich Meridian Time.

⇒ **Virtual workplace:** The workforce is dispersed with worldwide, home, and mobile workers, and relies on a variety of tools for business from information exchange to project approval.

⇒ **Regulatory requirements and compliance/eDiscovery:** The need for control is growing, whether it's to manage access to documents by specific employees over the course of a corporate merger or to better share and track use of content in a virtual workplace.

⇒ **Virtual teams of customers, suppliers, and partners:** To keep a competitive edge, business have to provide 24/7 response and access for growing networks of business-critical contacts.

- ➔ **End user expectations and familiarity:**
New employees coming into the workplace have grown up with e-mail and blogs, and have most likely used Microsoft® Outlook.

In a constantly changing workplace, communication is more than a technology—it needs to be part of a strategic long-term vision for your business and technology platform. Does your platform offer the flexibility to provide users what they need today and will want tomorrow? Does it offer a strong foundation to build on? When looking at your current platform and strategy, be sure to consider the following:

- ➔ Mobility advances
- ➔ Ongoing product support
- ➔ Securing, maintaining, upgrading applications
- ➔ Security and compliance
- ➔ Integration of new technologies, backward compatibility, and full functionality with current systems.
- ➔ New IT strategies and best practices, including server virtualization and consolidation place new demands

When evaluating your long-term strategy, it's also important to consider vendor leadership, product roadmap, and vision for communication and collaboration.

Aligning vendor strategies with your organizational goals

The next step is to ensure your platform vendor's long-term product roadmap and strategy aligns to your company's goals. Since the launch of communication technologies, there have been dramatic changes in the leading vendors' offerings and strategies—and as a result, what was once a perfect fit might not be the best choice as you head into the future.

Leading analyst firms such as Gartner and Forrester agree that Microsoft® and IBM® will continue to dominate the collaboration market through the end of the decade. They see the Microsoft product roadmap moving toward increasingly advanced support for communication

and collaboration, while IBM's long-term strategy and the evolution of Domino® toward workplace is not as clear.

IBM and Microsoft take a very different approach to communication and collaboration. IBM takes a portal-centric, role-based approach to process automation and contextual collaboration, and can be services-heavy. Domino® is IBM's vehicle for driving workplace adoption, which is less about collaboration and more about portal-based application composition and exposure. Microsoft, on the other hand, takes an Office-centric view, focusing on user efficiencies for collaboration (IM, e-mail, VoIP, teamware, Web/video conferencing, etc.). With the addition of Microsoft Office SharePoint Server, Microsoft has built the portal elements but do not yet have all the pieces for composite apps and role-based provisioning.

Avanade, as a Microsoft expert, is very excited about the next wave of Microsoft technology

including Microsoft Exchange Server 2007, Live Communications Server, and Microsoft Office SharePoint Server. These technologies help users identify associations between people and content, which enables them

In a constantly changing workplace, communication is more than a technology—it needs to be part of a strategic long-term vision for your business and technology platform.

to establish communities of knowledge to support business process—for example, team blogs that are set up to discuss issues and share knowledge become a record of institutional knowledge, that can be instrumental in helping new employees get up to speed. Once they are equipped with collaboration tools, these communities are able to assume responsibility for business process without the constraints of communication medium or individual availability. For example, in the absence of a project supervisor, an employee might seek time-sensitive authorization from others with appropriate authority or expertise, who happen to be available by mobile phone or instant messaging, but not by e-mail.

Avanade believes that Microsoft's long-term product strategy, and the fulfillment of Microsoft's communication vision with Exchange Server 2007, makes a compelling case for a commitment to the Microsoft platform. If your

company is not yet on the Microsoft platform, but your business needs and vendor strategy would support such a move, Avanade brings a proven set of best practices and recommendations to migration projects, minimizing impact on business operations. We recommend a strategic and measured transition with three major phases: first gaining a thorough understanding of the existing environment, then rationalizing application functionality with business operations, and finally determining the functional effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of moving required applications.

Start by assessing what you have

To understand the scope of a platform change and to effectively manage migration, companies need to know what applications they have and how they are used today. Given their specialized nature, custom applications may have been replicated throughout the organization as users shared and adapted them to their own needs.

Avanade recommends that companies conduct rounds of reviews to ensure a complete inventory and audit of the applications that serve the business. First, set a baseline to determine which applications are used, and with what frequency. Next, determine how the applications' functionality meets business needs and determine if this functionality could be addressed by another application or system now or in the future. Finally, identify what's required to make an application most efficient and useful, including whether it needs to become Web-based to adapt to new workflow requirements, or e-mail-enabled.

Keeping the long-term business and technology strategy in mind, conduct a holistic assessment of applications, overall infrastructure, and support by identifying:

- ➔ **Tasks** that applications are performing and related security or compliance requirements.
 - ➔ **Application type**, whether discussion database, team repository, or workflow.
 - ➔ **Frequency of use**, whether daily, monthly, or on occasion (for example, in conjunction with quarterly or year-end events).
 - ➔ **Level of utilization**, whether by a few users, a work group or division, or company-wide.
- ➔ **Impact of company growth** or physical expansion on the applications that users built and how users have adapted (for example, by replicating those applications).
 - ➔ **Number of application servers**, their geographic distribution (or distribution of data), and candidacy for consolidation.
 - ➔ **Accessibility**, from data synchronization across application instances to employees' ability to use an application through multiple channels (making applications both easier to access and more vulnerable to changes in infrastructure).

Equipped with an inventory of collaboration tools, usage, and the infrastructure foundation, organizations can determine what makes sense to migrate or build and when it makes sense to do so.

Build a business case for a long-term platform strategy

When business considerations drive your choice of platform, the work of planning and execution becomes far more strategic as well. When making your strategic platform choice, Avanade recommends that you base this decision on your long-term IT strategy and business needs for communication and collaboration. Be sure to consider the following:

- ➔ **Business requirements.** Current collaboration tools and custom applications may no longer serve their purpose, or at best, may serve only present-day operational requirements and not the company's future plans.
- ➔ **Software lifecycle status.** User-built applications differ from enterprise software in that they typically are created in reaction to a present need rather than future requirements. They tend to evolve organically and may be abandoned when they no longer serve their purpose, making support and elimination challenging and complicating enterprise-wide issues such as security and virtualization.
- ➔ **Access requirements.** Changing business requirements may mandate new controls or wider access to applications. In addition, employees may need to be able to continue to use certain functions within the legacy system in order to ensure that business continues to run smoothly.

- ⇒ **Consolidation suitability.** Advanced and built-in functionality in the Microsoft platform affords the possibility of consolidating servers.
- ⇒ **Availability of packaged applications.** Applications may be candidates for replacement, as enterprise packages offer more sophisticated functionality.
- ⇒ **Maintenance and administration.** Custom applications may be difficult to maintain as their creators change roles or leave the company. At the same time, different tools and skills may be required to support the new platform.

Avanade has worked with many customers to manage migrations from Lotus® Notes®/Domino® to the Microsoft platform. We take a strategic approach to minimize impact on operations.

Best practices for managing the migration process

When planning a migration, a first focus may be technology and budget, but Avanade believes companies should first take a step back and consider business operations: the way business is run today, where it is headed, and the functionality, collaboration, and “presence” capabilities needed to serve the business now and later—as well as long-term cost-of-ownership requirements.

A strategic platform migration starts with a decision that's grounded in business objectives rather than in technical feasibility.

- ⇒ Team skills in relation to tools available. It's vital to understand not only IT staff skills but also user skills and their role in the company's production of intellectual property. If users are a primary source of IP and prospective employees (particularly new graduates) are familiar with the Microsoft platform, then the company's future will be affected by the choice to continue investment in the Lotus Notes platform.
- ⇒ Alternatives to wholesale migration. If your organization's average custom-built application's lifespan is about two years and its data can be maintained and presented in a spreadsheet, it may make more sense to consider alternatives such as decommissioning to gradual retirement (sun setting),

modification, Web enablement, archiving, or replacement with packaged software.

- ⇒ Service level agreements. Determine whether service levels will be affected by changes made to the system, such as application deprecation.
- ⇒ Compliance and regulatory requirements. Determine what controls need to be maintained or added for integrity and traceability over the course of application deprecation, and resources necessary to make sure that system changes are performed in compliance with segregation of duty and similar requirements.
- ⇒ Licensing requirements. Application migration strategy may require retention of a few Lotus Notes Domino licenses for support.

Find a partner with the expertise you need

A strategic platform migration starts with a decision that's grounded in business objectives rather than in technical feasibility. A measured approach to implementing that decision often starts with a

partner – but it should start with a partner that has demonstrated understanding of both the business and technical aspects of migration. A seasoned partner will provide more than an application inventory in the assessment phase, and develop an appropriate roadmap for change should be undertaken. Avanade offers customers expertise and support in all aspects of a migration project, including:

- ⇒ Helping you build a business case for migrating to the Microsoft platform, and perform the actual planning and migration.
- ⇒ Assessing the state of your environment.
- ⇒ Building a project plan with realistic timelines.
- ⇒ Providing knowledge transfer and training for your current staff.
- ⇒ Helping you understand the scope of project, or in other words, the size of the elephant.

- ➔ Providing the upfront planning and ongoing communication to achieve success.

Avanade Solution

From years of experience, Avanade brings holistic insight to the work of helping companies transition from Lotus Notes to the Microsoft platform. We have established a Center of Excellence for Lotus Notes-to-Microsoft migration work, where we continue to hone our expertise in modernizing IT environments and enabling employees, their customers and partners to work together collaboratively and effectively.

Avanade can offer an end-to-end migration solution for messaging, directories, and applications using proprietary "tried and tested" assets, templates, delivery methodology, and a Global Delivery Network Center of Excellence application migration team. Using Microsoft tools along with our own proven assets, we save your organization money and hundreds of project hours. Some of our most powerful assets include:

- ➔ Messaging Migration Engine for Lotus Notes/Domino™
- ➔ ACA® Dynamic Systems Framework
- ➔ Applications Estimator for Lotus Notes/Domino™

Avanade offers its clients unmatched expertise and powerful tools for success, consultants who are highly adept with both operating systems, and innovative extensions of Microsoft toolsets that result in more accurate needs assessment, effective system design, and efficient implementation. Using our proven methodology, we help customers build a business case for migrating to the Microsoft platform, plan a measured approach to migration and expenditure, and train and transfer knowledge to our customers' IT staff during project execution.

For more information please visit www.avanadeadvisor.com.