



Lotus software

Lotus Workplace—an innovative platform for integrating people with business processes.

Help improve productivity by fundamentally changing the way people work together.



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Executive summary

When it comes to e-business on demand™, speed and agility can mean the difference between leading the pack – and trailing behind it. Customers with urgent questions won't wait long for answers before switching to a competitor more responsive to their needs. Partners and suppliers lose efficiency – and revenue – if your business processes are too slow and cumbersome. Employees lose valuable time looking for the right information – significantly decreasing productivity. A strong collaboration strategy can help you achieve essential business objectives. You can improve productivity and responsiveness, and connect geographically dispersed teams, all while protecting your investments and reducing your overall cost of ownership. With a collaboration strategy that offers these benefits, you can simplify access to information and business processes, and enable your staff to work more effectively with customers, suppliers, partners and colleagues.

According to Forrester Research, organizations should ensure their enterprise architectures include a complete set of collaboration components into which platform-level choices can be fit and against which they can be evaluated.¹ Embedding collaboration into your IT infrastructure means everyone along your value chain can work together more effectively to drive innovation, speed time to market, and make faster and better-informed business decisions. Having your organization's people, processes and information readily available to teams helps them solve everyday business problems more efficiently. Reduce operating costs and complexity – and create new business value from your existing IT systems to earn a faster return on your investment. And use the money you've saved to reinvest in your business.

“IBM delivers an open-standards-based collaborative infrastructure that provides unprecedented flexibility and choice—of platform, the ability to integrate as part of other vendors’ environments and the ability to give users the client experience that is best suited to their particular roles. This helps empower organizations to make business decisions based on the needs of their businesses and the needs of their customers, partners and suppliers—not on what the vendor wants them to do.”

*–Ambuj Goyal, general manager
IBM Lotus software*

In the collaboration software market, Lotus software from IBM serves as an industry leader. IBM Lotus® Workplace offers an innovative collaboration and human-interaction platform – designed to give people simplified access to the people, information and business processes they need – in a dynamic, security-rich environment. Lotus Workplace is built on IBM’s market-leading technologies, including WebSphere® and DB2® software from IBM, with IBM Lotus Notes® and IBM Lotus Domino® software serving as integral components to preserve and extend existing investments. Based on open standards, Lotus Workplace uses a family of integrated collaborative products that combines e-mail, calendaring, instant messaging, Web conferencing, team spaces, document and Web content management, and e-learning capabilities. All through a single, simplified user interface. So your entire workforce can connect, collaborate, and respond quickly and efficiently in the context of the work they’re doing. This is the essence of the on demand workplace concept.

This executive brief discusses how Lotus Workplace can help you tie together key collaborative business processes across your organization – and with those of extended communities, like your partners, suppliers and customers. It explains how Lotus Workplace products can help improve business productivity by providing individuals with fast access to the right information and the right people based on their particular roles in your business. And how it can help you on your journey to becoming an on demand business.

Delivering business value in an on demand world

No matter how much you’ve automated back-end processes, you can’t make your business run without people. Larry Bowden, IBM vice president of Lotus products, says, “Lotus Workplace is the front end of IBM’s e-business on demand strategy.” He explains that the front end isn’t just a minor element, but a crucial dimension of what on demand means. If your existing IT investments are effectively integrated with robust collaboration capabilities, your company can increase efficiencies while lowering operating costs. And be better prepared to satisfy customer demand – a key to your success.

The right collaborative workplace is one that is fully integrated to give people instant access to colleagues and collaborative processes as needed to drive business results. Rapid access to the right resources and applications means faster response times. Increased productivity. And more opportunities for innovation. So you can gain – and sustain – competitive advantage. A strong collaborative workplace lets you focus on your core business objectives – not the technology behind them. Accommodate the diverse demands of your entire value chain. And leverage existing investments. As a result, your business can more efficiently respond to – and manage – the internal and external conditions that influence it. Enabling you to immediately realize the strategic and financial benefits of e-business on demand.

Connecting your most critical business assets

By efficiently combining resources to optimize operations across and beyond your enterprise, an IT infrastructure with built-in integrated collaborative capabilities allows you to connect your most important assets:

- *People. Support for integrated collaborative business processes means employees, customers, partners and suppliers can interact with your business quickly and efficiently.*
- *Processes. Your organization can't afford to develop and maintain isolated, vertical business processes. As an on demand business, you can manage and coordinate your entire enterprise horizontally – and your IT infrastructure can keep pace.*
- *Information. Lotus Workplace gives everyone along your value chain real-time access to disparate, distributed information so your people and collaborative processes can leverage data and content resources from a variety of repositories.*

“We are bringing together a powerful set of collaborative products into a single-platform environment to enable the creation of dynamic role-based workplaces and to enable customization to fit specific industry or business needs. It’s the first step in a company’s on demand journey —to become more responsive to its employees, partners and customers —and to continuously optimize the business by responding faster to marketplace opportunities.”

–Ambuj Goyal, general manager
IBM Lotus software

You may have an IT infrastructure that allows you to communicate readily with external communities. But within your organization, you may be sitting on a disparate, widely distributed, increasingly complex infrastructure. One that’s made up of different kinds of human and IT resources – located and managed through different departments and geographic locations. The return on investment (ROI) value for connecting these people, processes and information has never been higher. According to a Butler Group report, the reduction in the cost of sales, as well as general and administration costs, can be as much as 35 percent overall for the average company.² An effective collaboration strategy enables your IT team to combine collaborative processes into a single unified environment, so they can easily manage, administer and deploy the capabilities your organization needs, while helping to lower your overall cost of ownership. With this single, cooperative environment, you can deal more effectively with the opportunities and disruptions that can influence your company’s future growth.

Enabling faster, more efficient decision making

Your business simply can’t effectively respond with speed to any customer demand or market opportunity without human intervention. And as Bowden points out, “That speedy response is the crux of on demand.” It’s not enough to provide access to applications or enable those applications to speak to one another. More than ever before, your entire organization must be responsive and accountable to everyone along your value chain. The productivity gains can be enormous if you take advantage of the benefits of an integrated collaborative environment – making it possible for employees, customers, suppliers and partners to share information collectively. Regardless of where people and information are located.

Everyone can make better decisions because they’re based on the most relevant, up-to-date information. Sales representatives with immediate access to information and people back at the office can close more sales, faster. A place to share documents – in real time – with colleagues around the globe helps your business reduce travel expenses and enables your users to make informed decisions on the fly. Communicating directly with customers in a secure environment can give your enterprise a competitive advantage.

Combining market-leading collaborative products that can run through a new variety of security-rich clients, IBM can help you deliver on demand access to important business information virtually anywhere. Anytime. Regardless of how the user accesses it – whether from a basic browser, mobile device, personal digital assistant (PDA) or even through the rich client experience offered by Lotus Workplace products. Enabled by new, innovative IBM Workplace Client Technology, a rich client user experience can give your organization unique productivity tools. Your mobile employees can work offline – and synchronize data when they reconnect. It can also simplify integration with PC-based applications and includes embedded document management. These capabilities can increase business-user productivity in ways browsers can't. With an integrated environment that provides users with more robust capabilities and faster response times, Lotus Workplace rich client capabilities can help employees make the most of their collaborative experience – and enhance their productivity in the process. Lotus Workplace products from IBM can help:

- *Provide more responsive interaction with resources to help drive business results, through dynamic, personalized workplaces, tailored specifically to each employee.*
- *Enable continuous business operations and improve employee efficiency and effectiveness by simplifying interaction with critical content, applications, people and processes.*
- *Increase loyalty and satisfaction by providing a personalized customer and partner experience that addresses unique needs.*

A single, simplified user interface to interact with relevant content, collaborative processes, experts and information means your organization can expand its market opportunities and do business with everyone along your value chain more effectively. Helping you drive new revenue, attract and retain loyal customers, and facilitate employee communication and teaming.

Addressing business needs on the fly

Butler Group suggests that long-term success is achieved by embedding collaborative capabilities into the organization, its business processes and applications.³ Lotus Workplace uses a family of integrated collaborative products built on open standards, centrally managed and administered so you can easily integrate this environment with your existing IT infrastructure. When combined with IBM WebSphere Portal software, you can add collaboration into your business applications and processes across your organization.

It's about agility. Efficiency. The ability to operate your business around the clock, at the speed the market requires. Not merely to survive, but to thrive, in an ever-changing marketplace. Because Lotus Workplace products are modular, they can be licensed in any combination to address your immediate business needs while giving you the ability to easily add other capabilities to meet evolving user, team or organizational needs.

Suppose, initially, you want to provide only e-mail to your users. Then, later, you decide to add Web conferencing, document management or learning. Lotus Workplace gives you the flexibility to instantly enable these collaborative capabilities as you need them. What if some users need a rich client experience, while others only need a basic browser client experience? Lotus Workplace products give you the flexibility and choice to offer the right client experience to users based on their business roles and needs. Your IT team doesn't have to reinstall software to add capabilities or reconfigure the whole system – helping reduce your cost of ownership. Giving your organization technological advantage over your competition. And letting you concentrate on beating them to market.

Summary

e-business on demand represents a fundamental shift in the way you do business. In the on demand era, you can streamline operations, lower costs and improve the quality of service you deliver to customers, partners and employees. And make gaining competitive advantage a priority—while driving revenue. The Lotus Workplace family of integrated collaborative products from IBM can provide the capabilities you need to interact with your business stakeholders more effectively—and to make your value chain more fluid and interconnected.

A collaboration strategy based on IBM Lotus Workplace means providing users with simplified access to and interaction with each other and the collaborative processes they need to help drive business results. What can result? Reduced travel and associated costs. The ability to solve problems and make decisions faster. And the ability for geographically dispersed teams to work together more productively. So you can speed your time to market, respond to customer needs quickly and increase your organization's ability to innovate. Helping save money in the process.

For more information

To learn more about how IBM Lotus Workplace can help you on your journey to becoming an on demand business, visit:

ibm.com/lotus/workplace



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- ¹ "Enterprise Collaboration: Time to Consider a Platform," Forrester Research, Inc. June 16, 2003.
- ² Butler Group Technology Evaluation and Comparison Report: Workgroup and Enterprise Collaboration, published September 2003.
- ³ Butler Group Technology Evaluation and Comparison Report: Workgroup and Enterprise Collaboration, published September 2003.