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**SCOTT STONHAM,**  
VP, Marketing, and **JON DOYLE,**  
VP, Business Development  
at **CommuniGate Systems,**  
discuss the implementation  
of a successful Unified  
Communications system  
and its value to the customer



# GOING MOBILE WITH UC

**Business Trends Quarterly** Many people talk about Unified Communications from different points of view. **In your opinion, what is UC?**

**JON DOYLE** There has definitely been a lot of talk about Unified Communications over the years, and I think it depends on what type of vendor you are speaking with. You oftentimes will get different viewpoints of what is included in UC. If you look at Wikipedia, UC is a complete set of media types that you use for communicating, not only telephony but it is also the messaging aspects like e-mail, groupware, file sharing and instant messaging. One of the key things that we believe glues all this together is the presence capabilities – knowing when a person is on-line and having that presence information interact with the applications. If you look at some sectors of the market, there is a lot of focus around telephony or IP PBX with a lot of vendors, and then there is another side of the market that is really messaging focused. For example, Microsoft or Lotus Notes from IBM that is much more on the traditional e-mail and groupware aspects in gluing that together with telephony. For us, we believe that UC should be delivered from a single vendor and it should be delivered as a single solution in the SaaS model,

particularly for small businesses that don't want to run a dozen different products from a dozen different vendors in their company.

**BTQ** What type of businesses do you expect to invest in this kind of service?

**JD** Many companies today have really just started kicking the tires of UC. It started oftentimes with moving to an IP-based telephony solution. But also we started to see that small businesses in particular have a real interest in gaining UC because they are much more mobile. If you think about your doctor's office or a law firm of small size – two to twenty users, not a gigantic enterprise – these folks don't tend to sit in front of their desk all day or inside of a cubicle. They move around a lot, so they need communication technologies delivered to them through web 2.0 or maybe to the mobile handset. They are much keener to get it as a service rather than running an entire IT shop. They are very much used to buying things as a service, for example, outsourcing your payroll or outsourcing a CRM system online. I believe that the trend will be over the next two to five years that UC will be delivered through the web more as a service rather than installing it on a bunch of servers in your IT department.

**BTQ** What can an SMB really quantify as value and how can UC be delivered to prove its value?

**SS** It has changed quite a bit over the last few years. When we first started talking about UC and unified messaging, a lot of the things people were talking about were increased

productivity. That was really where the focus was. But now with the current economic situation, UC is definitely still about productivity. But it's also very much about profitability and also increasing the sales that are coming into the company as well. A lot of our customers are asking us about how they can use UC to reduce the latencies involved in working, not just with the customers, but internally as well. They are looking to increase their sales velocity, reduce overhead, and ultimately become a much more successful and profitable business. The hosted SaaS model is a very effective way for them to do this. It becomes a more flexible way for them to adopt and grow their business.

**BTQ** What can businesses specifically gain from a SaaS model?

**SS** Businesses are really looking for a way to reduce their capital expenditure with a rapid return on investments. The SaaS model allows them to use and pay for the services that are appropriate for them at that particular time. We are talking about low capital expenditure with rapid return on investment, but also being very flexible in terms of how these services are delivered. Today they may want messaging and shared calendars and contacts. But tomorrow they may want voice over IP, instant messaging or some of the other capabilities that these kinds of platforms can offer. It's not just about the costs and ongoing investment, but it's also about being able to adapt and change with the business as the business grows.

**BTQ** Are there any "hot items" the operator should look at?

**JD** If you look at this feature side of what the operator might want to deliver, definitely mobility is the key thing we see with small businesses. As I said, small business doesn't tend to sit in front of a single desktop or desk the entire day, especially doctors or lawyers. They are out meeting with customers or clients or



“...YOU COULD BE ON A STARBUCKS LAPTOP AND YOU CAN ACCESS THESE SERVICES FROM JUST ABOUT ANYWHERE ON ANY TYPE OF COMPUTER.”

patients and they typically have in their pocket their computer, which is the smart phone. And that smart phone needs to be connected to all sorts of media types, whether it is IM, file sharing, e-mail of course, and synchronization of the calendar. If you think about what an operator needs to do to be efficient and to be able to make money at the end of the day, they need to look at a technology that is efficient and has high density. The same problem that a small company has running 10 different products or 10 different servers, well that becomes a much bigger problem if you just put it into a carrier. You don't want to have the same set of problems just amplified, you need to have a solution and a platform that can scale very effectively at a cost price they can actually turn around and resell with a profit on top of it, and they need to do it in a way that can be scaled up to not just thousands, but many thousands of small businesses, each with their own set of users. Most enterprise technologies are not designed to be in a carrier, so if you buy a PBX from Avaya or an e-mail service from Lotus Notes, it's not really a hosting platform. It's not designed to have building interfaces, it's not designed to have self-care portals, and it's not designed to be virtualized with thousands of small companies on it. They need to be really keen to look at what features are important for the customers, but also how can they scale that up effectively and still be able to make money with it.

**BTQ** A lot of what you mention is available through RIMs'

**BlackBerry service, isn't it? Is BlackBerry a UC solution?**

**SS** I think this comes back again to what Jon was answering at the beginning. What do you define as a UC solution? Certainly under some of the definitions, BlackBerry could be considered a UC, but it's also probably more so along the lines of unified messaging. Lots of what we're doing is talking about what could be offered outside the BlackBerry experience. BlackBerry is an incredibly successful business model and service that has really captured a lot of our customer's and mobile operator's imagination. It just stops there with the BlackBerry device. When you go into the shops and you look at what mobile carriers are offering, BlackBerry is one of many smart phones that are being offered to the business consumer, but it doesn't have to be that way. There are many other smart phones that can be used to deliver a BlackBerry style experience with your unified messaging and UC with e-mail, shared calendars, shared contacts, and so on. We are trying to make that type of service available across many more handsets. They are very lucrative devices and would obviously make sense if we could expand that. BlackBerry is just part of a UC solution. You still need to have a separate desktop experience. We see BlackBerry as part of UC solution, and one that really helps illustrate what the power of UC could be like.

**BTQ** How do you launch such a service?

**SS** The great thing about working with the host

model and the SaaS model is that it's incredibly easy. We are already talking about having a service running where the customers will be walking out of shops with a UC on the smart phones within one calendar month. We are talking with the hosting provider, so it is a case of choosing the right hardware and installing the software on this, with a handset. In terms of deploying this it is very easy, you just need to find someone who can host it. We have plenty of people hosting these services on our behalf. Sign up, find a handset, connect the thing and off you go.

**BTQ** How are potential customers able to view the product?

**JD** We've made that incredibly easy as well. We put up a public server available to anybody in the public to register that will allow you to view not just the synchronizations and mobile handsets that we've been talking about, but also use the Web 2.0 client that we've developed in flash. It's called Pronto. Pronto allows people – and it might not be fixed to a certain laptop or PC or even Mac – to go anywhere and log in. You could be at your sister's house, you could be at your client's house, you could be on a Starbucks laptop and you can access the services from just about anywhere on any type of computer. The customers can register for this site in a very easy process. They can use that off of our server to take it for a test drive before they would get it from a real service provider. That Web site is talktop.com, and as I said, anyone anywhere in the world can register for a free account and use

**SCOTT STONHAM**, Vice President, Marketing, CommuniGate Systems, brings over 13 years of mobile telecoms experience to the management team. Prior to joining CommuniGate, Mr. Stonham served as Vice President of Product Marketing at Miyowa, a leader in mobile communications. As a member of the management team at Miyowa, he drove the product and company positioning to achieve worldwide industry leadership status, helping the company achieve impressive growth across all aspects of the business in the U.S., EMEA and Asia.



**JON DOYLE**, Vice President, Business Development, and CommuniGate Systems, has a proven track record of accomplishments in strategic alliance management, corporate strategy and product marketing. Mr. Doyle is responsible for driving the strategic partnerships and corporate development at the company. Mr. Doyle has extensive experience with unified communications, Rich Media delivery, and digital assets management solutions in the mobile and broadband operator segment. He has been involved in communications technologies for over 15 years, and regularly speaks and contributes articles about the emerging trends and technologies in the industry.

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## Unified Communications



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