

Case study

BT Empowers its People with Microsoft Lync

Bringing coherence to multiple market management

For Ruth Rowan, the words day job are meaningless. She's responsible for markets in Asia Pacific, the Middle East and Africa and works across ten time zones – fourteen, when you include contact with colleagues in the UK and the US. Getting the job done without too much travelling is a continuous juggling act.

Microsoft Lync helps Ruth manage her busy life. To find out who's available at times when there's little overlap between working hours in different zones. To avoid misunderstandings arising from cultural or linguistic differences, by sharing documents online with her multi-national team. And to pull people together on the fly to make decisions more quickly.

“ I was working on a demo for a launch event with colleagues in the UK, Australia and Singapore. Microsoft Lync enabled us to get together at short notice to look at the script and make final edits. Ten minutes later, the demo was ready for production.”

Ruth Rowan, Marketing Director, Asia, Middle East and Africa, BT Global Services



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Peter Scott, Director End User Technology and Security, BT Technology, Service and Operations

Microsoft Lync improves collaboration worldwide, demolishing barriers of space and time for unbeatable business agility

Best practice experience. Optimum UCC solution

Organisations today are judged on their ability to collaborate internally and externally. The right technology holds the key. As an early adopter, BT has first-hand experience of global unified communications and collaboration (UCC) best practice, and return on investment optimisation, which it readily shares with customers worldwide.

Vendor agnostic, BT has formed strong relationships with industry-leading suppliers of collaborative technologies and is well-placed to recommend the optimum solution for any given company or situation. It also has the ability to integrate disparate technology islands to create unified end-to-end solutions. And, as one of the pioneers of flexible working, BT deeply understands the people and process challenges too.

Internally, BT has adopted Microsoft Lync as its central UCC platform, to keep 89,000 employees in over 170 countries working together effectively no matter where they are or what device they happen to be using.

Commanding presence. Encouraging communications

Microsoft Lync gives users a single unified client to manage all communications including email, voice and video calling, multimedia conferencing, and instant messaging (IM). Integration with Outlook, SharePoint, OneNote, and other Microsoft applications, means Lync users don't have to leave the window they're working in when they need to reach out to other people.

Presence – enabling users to instantly see what mode someone's operating in, whether they're logged in, and how they prefer to be contacted – is a key Microsoft Lync advantage. Peter Scott, director end user technology and security at BT Technology, Service and Operations, explains: “For example, I have a contact at the Microsoft research centre near Seattle. He might be at his desk, at home, or on a smartphone. With presence I can see when he's available at any time of the day and we can instantly interact using IM to get the business done.”

Lync is also enabling new ways for senior managers to keep in touch, encouraging more open debate because it's a much more informal way to communicate. For example, some senior BT managers are now holding open IM sessions where people can pose a question and get an instant answer. A Lync-enabled conversation is far less daunting than asking questions face-to-face or on an audio call.

There are personal benefits too. Mike Willacy, senior portfolio marketing manager at BT Global Services, says: “I can save 45 minutes a day, fit more in and complete things more quickly. I may even get to leave work half-an-hour earlier. Those benefits of increased productivity and enhanced work life balance immeasurably improve the company's performance.”

Decision-making, new business and more: everything moves faster

Lync supports the BT flexible working ethos, providing an effective collaboration platform that's driving real estate rationalisation and reducing the need for business travel as audio, web, and video conferencing sessions replace face-to-face meetings.

In fact, BT saves around £60 million every year through office space reduction enabled by having over 60,000 flexible workers and more than 13,000 home workers.

Ruth Rowan, marketing director, Asia, Middle East and Africa at BT Global Services, visits each of the nine geographical hubs in her region twice a year. Without Lync, however, she would have to go four times a year, doubling her travel spend and disrupting her normal schedule. Ruth's saving £24,000 a year on travel costs, and gaining more time for productive work, while building and maintaining business and personal relationships.

But Lync-enabled business agility and efficiency benefits go even further. The ability to identify and target people who might be able to assist in real time, and then hold spontaneous meetings, speeds up decision-making and helps BT improve customer service. That potential extends into the sales environment, where improved responsiveness assists BT in winning new business.

“If I'm on a conference call and a customer issue arises I can use IM to ask a question of one of my team in real time without leaving the conference,” says Peter Scott. “It's a much more efficient way of working. And even my wife can see if I'm available and send me an IM; a neat way for us to keep in touch.”

Each day over 60,000 BT people typically log on to Microsoft Lync. In an average month, there are approaching 700,000 IM sessions generating 53 million IMs across BT globally – a figure that's growing all the time. Just consider the cost of the equivalent number of phone calls. Peter Scott says: “Having presence data and using IM and a myriad other Microsoft Lync features are making us an unbeatably agile company. Now, for most people in BT, being without it would be unthinkable.”

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Mike Willacy, Senior Portfolio Marketing Manager, BT Global Services

Moving forward with Microsoft Lync 2013

Microsoft Lync 2013, currently being rolled out in BT, has a vast number of advanced features, including federation with Skype, to open up a whole new world of communications possibilities. It also offers productivity enhancements such as one-click video call set-up and persistent chat rooms, as well as enhanced enterprise voice connectivity and multi-party HD video.

Enterprise Voice, which remains an undisputed BT strength, is another essential Lync function. That’s one of the reasons why BT is able to use it so productively and deliver it so effectively to external customers, achieving great performance and substantial cost savings. “We’re drawing on our voice pedigree to offer

our own organisation and our customers truly exceptional Lync services,” says Ann Wood, head of BT Microsoft Alliance and BT One Lync at BT Global Services.

The BT Microsoft Lync 2013 rollout will drive more cost reductions on mobile and travel spend, while providing tools to further improve employees’ work life balance. That’s because the deployment of Lync 2013 opens the door to innovations such as video calling and conferencing. Field workers, for example, will be able to share video images and leverage colleagues’ expertise for faster problem diagnosis, while communicating with supervisors without needing to return to base.

Enterprise Voice is being extended to 15,000 information workers across the UK. Neynes Ladha, programme director for Own Use in the BT CIO organisation, says: “I’m an early adopter of Lync 2013 with Enterprise Voice

and the impact’s been unbelievable. My line manager’s based in Newcastle and we now have Lync video conference calls and one-to-one meetings instead of travelling.” From a day-to-day perspective, Lync allows teams to be brought together from all locations to collaborate through desktop sharing and white boarding, for example.

Another big benefit is the use of Lync 2013 with Enterprise Voice on mobile devices, which means people are contactable on the move with access to Active Directory for IM, phone calls, and video sessions. “I’m able to respond to my internal and external customer needs almost instantaneously,” concludes Neynes, “not to mention the ability to join Lync conference calls via my smartphone or personal tablet with one click. I’ve seen my mobile spend reduce by 75 per cent as a result.”

Flexible Microsoft Lync delivery options

BT delivers Microsoft Lync to external customers in a variety of formats so they can consume it in different ways. BT One Enterprise Lync, for example, suits customers wanting a dedicated on-site solution, while BT One Cloud Lync is a hosted service offering a fully managed infrastructure with pay-as-you-go pricing; hybrids of the two are also available.

In addition, BT provides Lync to smaller businesses as part of Microsoft Office 365 offered by BT, a hosted service that gives secure access to email, documents, contacts and shared calendars on just about any device. And the possibilities don’t end there. With so many Lync options available, how do customers decide what’s best for them? BT has this covered too. The BT One Cloud Lync Pathfinder service with BT Advise professional services help customers build a business case, make an informed decision, and try their chosen solution – all before buying it.

Whatever form of Lync they choose, customers often want to integrate it with legacy and current technologies. BT Hybrid Architecture Services are designed to help those previous investments interoperate with Lync. “We try to be as flexible as possible in how we deliver Lync, at every stage of the process, so that it’s easier for customers to get the results they want,” says Ann Wood, Head of BT Microsoft Alliance and BT One Lync at BT Global Services.

BT itself has chosen to consume Microsoft Lync as a private cloud-based solution with Lync servers hosted in a number of BT data centres for resilience. To further boost its value, BT has federated its Lync platform to allow connectivity with selected suppliers, partners, and customers.



Offices worldwide

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