

Enterprise Collaboration: Comparing SharePoint and IBM

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Enterprise Collaboration: Comparing SharePoint and IBM

SharePoint is cost-effective, users love it, and it has the market momentum. IBM's solutions are costly, complex and their old legacy apps have fallen behind.

INTRODUCTION

In today's business environment, Enterprise Collaboration is not an optional afterthought – it's a fundamental business capability that should form a foundational part of your IT strategy. Collaborative processes play a role in almost every part of your business – from research and marketing to operations and customer service – and the technology infrastructure you use is essential to deliver optimal performance.

Some vendors pitch various standalone software applications as the answer to these challenges. Microsoft sees Enterprise Collaboration as a melding of essential technologies – social networking, portals, workspaces, content management, data-driven insights, search, forms, workflow and application compositing into a single coherent software platform. The marketplace agrees with this approach, accordingly we are winning versus IBM and others with customers, independent analysts and the broad ecosystem of developers and ISVs.

REQUIREMENTS FOR TODAY'S COLLABORATION NEEDS

Enterprise Collaboration is about using technology to connect and empower people. Companies are embracing this category of software as a way to create unique business value by generating economies of scale in knowledge work, building their intellectual-property asset base, and improving organization agility and flexibility.

To realize these benefits, organizations need a technology platform that:

Connects people to each other. As companies outsource, decentralize and globalize, keeping your people connected to each other, aligned to a common culture, and working together seamlessly has taken on new importance and challenges. Critical aspects of connecting people include:

- Offering an anywhere, anytime communication channel: allowing people to work through multiple user interfaces - rich client applications, browser, and mobile devices - while maintaining consistent security and user policies and preferences.

- Enabling rich design and great user experience: ensuring collaboration and content tasks are intuitive for employees regardless of their language or location, while reinforcing a clear connection to your company's brand and mission.

- Finding the right people: using expertise insights, opt-in processes for reputation management, pervasive applied taxonomies and search technologies to create valuable new connections throughout the organization.

Connects people to their best ideas. The collaborative exchange of ideas is critical to innovation. Providing a mechanism for idea generation and the processes required for innovation to take place is an important way for companies to create competitive advantage. By aggregating and correlating ideas from multiple sources and applying collective wisdom to achieve better results, companies can harness the creativity of their people and channel it towards improved processes, products, services and ultimately business results.

Connects people to the best information. Informed decision making is essential, and it is becoming increasingly difficult as the volume and sources of data continue to grow. To solve this, your technology platform needs to:

- Provide visibility into internal and line-of-business data which may reside in multiple proprietary applications and systems
- Deliver content in the context of user's work/role so it makes immediate sense
- Automatically manage security and access privileges
- Ensure that the most current versions of content are easily discoverable and automatically updated/published

Connects organizations to their customers. In the age of user-generated content and increased digital participation, your customers are active participants rather than passive consumers. As a result, more and more companies are deeply engaging with customers through self-support services, web communities, blogs, and forums – and connecting this insight with internal business processes, systems and data.

Connects organizations to each other. Market ecosystems are complex – what used to be simple supply chains have become webs of interdependence among suppliers, service providers, regulators, buyers, resellers and other partners. Very rarely can a company be completely

Increase business agility by strengthening and accelerating communication patterns and social connections

Grow your intellectual property assets by harnessing and managing the informal knowledge base

Realize economies of scale in knowledge work by enabling participation from everyone, everywhere

independent, and often times it is the strength and efficiency of these relationships - particularly the ad-hoc, collaborative, project-based and unstructured ones - that have the most impact on business results.

OUR APPROACH - WHY WE ARE DIFFERENT

SharePoint is winning in the marketplace today because businesses of all sizes are finding that SharePoint delivers more value at lower cost than alternatives. For over 150 real-world SharePoint examples please visit (<http://www.microsoft.com/casestudies/>). These customers and more have chosen SharePoint because:

- It was the lowest cost solution

SharePoint is a single platform built to support both content and people. It is an integrated set of capabilities that span enterprise content management, sites, composites, insights, search and communities. There is no need for expensive point-solution software licenses and the resulting excessive system integration, administration, and infrastructure costs.

SharePoint is built to support intranet, Internet, and extranet scenarios. With SharePoint, customers can use the same skills, infrastructure, content and business processes to support the full range of enterprise collaboration.

Finally, companies also have the choice to deploy SharePoint Online, a Microsoft-hosted option, which for many customers delivers compelling cost-savings in infrastructure, administration and management.

- It was easy to start and easy to scale

SharePoint has a broad set of capabilities available out-of-the-box: Major time-consuming and resource-draining system integration projects aren't required just to get going. In many cases individual business departments can implement solutions themselves – giving your business a practical, efficient way to get started with enterprise collaboration.

SharePoint can scale to the largest enterprises: With Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010, your deployment can support millions of list items and many thousands of users distributed all across the globe. SharePoint provides a clear path from growing your collaboration environment to meet enterprise-wide needs.

- It was easy to extend

Your professional developers can use familiar tools, like Visual Studio, to build solutions and extend SharePoint. Since SharePoint is based on the

Cut costs with a unified infrastructure

Accelerate and simplify deployment using out-of-the-box capabilities

Benefit from available, skilled developers and the use of familiar tools

Benefit from real deployment choice, on-premises or online

Drive adoption, use and value by delivering the best end user experience

.Net platform, your organization can benefit by easily finding trained developers and quickly getting them up-to-speed and productive.

Additionally, with SharePoint Designer, power-users can customize sites and built light-weight solutions to solve their own business problems. Accordingly, this can free up IT resources to tackle large strategic initiatives.

- It was the best end-user experience

Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010 allows end-users to be self-sufficient through self-provisioning capabilities, personal privacy settings, and ability to build their own profiles and create their own social networks.

SharePoint 2010 is designed to facilitate user adoption and usage by providing a familiar and contextual interface - like what your employees experience with Microsoft Office. Additionally, SharePoint delivers the superior experience for your users working with Microsoft Office 2010 applications and documents - with features like offline editing with asynchronous saves, co-authoring, and directly exposing SharePoint features within the Office UI, such as taxonomy, tags, and people.

Furthermore, SharePoint delivers a great mobile and offline experience. The SharePoint Workspace 2010 client application provides local and offline read-write access to SharePoint lists and libraries – including documents as well as external line of business data. Additionally, for employees traveling or in-transit, you can navigate sites, lists and libraries, search content and people and even view and edit Office content a mobile browser.

SharePoint balances this end-user empowerment with the necessary business control by providing granular security and privacy policies, centralized management, and reporting and analysis capabilities.

THEIR APPROACH – WHY IBM FALLS SHORT

Back about 25 years ago, the products at the core of IBM's enterprise collaboration offerings were built. Since that time, their set of products proliferated and evolved in different directions - occasionally they stagnated, sometimes to be reinvigorated and sometimes they were killed off. However, business needs continued to evolve, and as a result the marketplace moved away from the old IBM legacy position and embraced SharePoint. The primary reasons are:

- It has a sub-par user experience

IBM asks businesses to get familiar with new user experiences (e.g., like Notes or Connections or Quickr), which is a dubious strategy to drive broad adoption and usage within the enterprise - which is critical for enterprise collaboration.

Additionally, with only limited integration with the Office tools your employees use every day (i.e., through Quickr connectors) the value to your end users is severely affected. The limited ability for IBM customers to collaborate from within the Office experience is compounded by the lack of control over these documents across various IBM applications (i.e., versioning, encryptions and access rights, co-authoring) - unlike what customers get with SharePoint.

Central to successful enterprise collaboration is the ability to find and access the information that you need to do your job. This demands a powerful search experience, flexible navigation, document thumbnails, rich relevance factors – such as social data and usage/clicks, people and expertise search – including phonetic search algorithms. Customers and Analysts agree that Microsoft is the leader in this category with IBM continuing to slip further behind.

Finally, businesses demand robust offline and mobile search and access to all of their content – documents, lists, people - right out of the box, without the major system integration work or expensive "Accelerators" required by IBM's solutions.

- It is an expensive, complicated portfolio

Poor user experience
and unfamiliar tools =
learning curve, low use,
less value

Complicated portfolio of
overlapping point
solutions = complexity,
risk, delays, cost

To match SharePoint, customers are forced to purchase and integrate a variety of IBM point-solutions. The vast range of options include WebSphere Portal, Lotus Notes and Domino, Quickr, WebSphere Dashboard Framework, Alphabox, IBM Workplace Forms, Content Manager, FileNet, Lotus WCM, Sametime, Connections, Omnifind, InfoSphere, and IBM Content Analyzer. Furthermore, even within many of these individual products there are multiple versions, editions and deployment alternatives. (e.g., Quickr's Domino version and Websphere version; Omnifind's Enterprise Edition, Enterprise Starter Edition, Discovery Edition, Yahoo! Edition, etc.)

Many of these solutions have features that overlap (e.g., Connections, Quickr), implement different content repositories (e.g., Domino, Content Manager, FileNet), were killed or suffer from lack of long-term commitment from IBM (e.g., Domino Document Manager, Quickplace, Workplace) .

The result of this complicated portfolio of point solutions is:

- Complexity and the associated ongoing headaches with administration and management
- Increased difficulty in finding skilled and reasonably priced people to administer, manage and develop on old IBM legacy solutions
- Lack of out-of-box value, requiring major system integration projects
- Excessive software license and maintenance costs, and inefficient infrastructure from the use of overlapping products
- A confusing roadmap and unclear commitment which leaves customers confused on whether they can bet their business on elements of IBM's software portfolio

Additionally, many of these individual products and features are not available from IBM as a hosted service – limiting your deployment options and the potential savings available from online services.

CONCLUSION

The benefits of SharePoint for enterprise collaboration over the various IBM alternatives are clear:

SharePoint delivers a more economical solution - a single platform that supports internet, intranet and extranet scenarios with both on-premises and online deployment alternatives. This single platform improves

developer productivity and minimizes the complexity and costs of administration and maintenance.

SharePoint delivers the optimized user experience - across desktop, browser, and mobile devices, increasing business productivity. Microsoft provides the best-in-class collaboration experience to end users in the interfaces they use every day, on-line and offline, including Office applications.

SharePoint delivers a consistent architecture that is easy to maintain and a roadmap that provides clarity to business making critical software investment decisions. The combination of key capabilities – team sites and workspaces, content management, data-driven insights, social networking technologies and search – enable new enterprise collaboration scenarios and empower users in new ways. SharePoint, as the proven leader in these areas, has a track record of investment and innovation that you can rely on.

OTHER RESOURCES

- SharePoint 2010 capability overview:

<http://sharepoint2010.microsoft.com>

- SharePoint Communities whitepaper:

<http://go.microsoft.com/?linkid=9690857>