

Maximizing ROI with the Microsoft-Polycom Unified Communications Solution

Interoperable Unified Communications Platform for Enterprises

"Microsoft and Polycom are committed to a roadmap that will deliver interoperable UC solutions with choice and innovation in video conferencing and customer devices that will help transform enterprise communications. By integrating video, voice, instant messaging, and conferencing solutions, Microsoft and Polycom give customers the ability to be present, anytime, anywhere."

Gurdeep Singh Pall, CVP, Microsoft UC Group

Connect - Anywhere, Anytime

Reduce - Total Cost of Ownership

Maximize - Return on Investment

Increase - Productivity, Efficiency

White Paper

October 2010

Executive Summary

In today's global business environment, organizations are increasing their investment in advanced communications technologies to improve collaboration and efficiency. Yet after spending heavily on communications technologies and infrastructure, organizations continue to have high traveling expenses and hard costs, while employees' efficiency and productivity stagnate. Organizations are not able to realize the value of their investment, and they are potentially losing new business opportunities every day.

This white paper discusses how Microsoft® and Polycom® have formed a partnership to offer customers an end-to-end, fully interoperable unified communications (UC) solution that combines presence-based, real-time instant messaging (IM), voice, video, and data to immediately lower business costs, improve productivity, and achieve a faster return on investments (ROI).

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Contents

- Who Should Read This Paper4**
- Introduction4**
- Microsoft and Polycom Alliance.....5**
- UC Solution Summary6**
 - Reduce Costs.....6
 - Reduce Travel Expenses.....6
 - Decrease Conferencing and Telephony Expenses.....7
 - Minimize Real Estate and Facilities Expenses8
 - Optimize the Communications Infrastructure8
 - Consolidate Communications Systems8
 - Streamline Communications.....9
 - Merge UC Application Packages.....9
 - Simplify IT Management9
 - Use an Interoperable and Extensible Platform.....9
 - Improve Staff Efficiency10
 - Expand Security.....10
 - Improve Productivity.....11
 - Enhance Collaboration.....11
 - Speed Project Completion.....11
 - Shorten Sales Cycle Times11
 - Resolve Customer Issues Faster11
 - Attract and Retain Employees.....11
- What Customer Are Saying11**
 - LA Fitness.....12
 - Results and Benefits12
 - A.T. Kearney12
 - Results and Benefits12
- Conclusion.....12**
- Links13**

Who Should Read This Paper

This white paper is written for strategic decision makers who are responsible for reducing communications and telephony costs, maximizing ROI, and improving business collaboration and communication activities. Such roles include IT Decision Makers (ITDM), Business Decision Makers (BDM), Telecommunications Managers, and IT Professionals.

IT Decision Maker (IT Director, CIO): ITDMs want to deliver rapid, interoperable communications to users without having to overhaul infrastructure or provide extensive IT training. They also want to maintain a future-ready technical foundation that uses their existing investment. They care about end users and are attentive to business performance and spending. At the CXO level, they are focused on using IT and UC to achieve strategic business objectives.

Network Manager/Telecommunications Manager (LOB): This audience focuses on providing simple, secure, and reliable communications tools and telephony services to users while reducing telecommunications expenses. Line-of-business (LOB) managers investigate UC opportunities for their groups and focus on increasing productivity in key applications and work functions.

Introduction

Over the past decade, organizations have expanded their business globally, extending partnerships, branch offices, and supply chains across the world and taking on international opportunities. In this highly competitive global marketplace, collaboration becomes critical to any enterprise activity. To be competitive, organizations need to increase collaboration among geographically dispersed workers, remote employees, branch offices, supply chains, partners, and customers—thereby helping to improve productivity and efficiency at a reduced cost.

To improve their competitive advantage, organizations want to be at the forefront of the communications scene. For that, they need the flexibility to deploy the right UC solutions and the capability to embed communications in business applications at minimum cost and effort. In addition, to improve individual and team results, organizations should consider establishing flexible work environments that allow users to access corporate information whenever and wherever they are. Users also should be able to participate in business processes from different places and time zones to better balance their work and life needs.

In addition to promoting a flexible work environment, UC solutions can be embedded in applications to optimize collaboration. Communications-Enabled Business Process (CEBP) inserts UC capabilities such as IM, email, voice, video and web conferencing, telephony, and application sharing into LOB applications and other business processes. CEBP promotes contextual collaboration, reduces worker latency, limits delays, and extends the reach of applications to mobile devices and web pages. Organizations should consider CEBP to increase efficiency, lower cost of entry, and enhance the user experience.

To address the range of communication and collaboration challenges, organizations are looking for technology solutions that deliver on all fronts. The unified communications solution area can address these challenges and fulfill collaborative business needs.

UC can help to reduce costs immediately and dramatically improve collaboration over the long term. Communications are always a significant variable cost; conferencing service fees, mobile phone bills, toll charges, and meeting costs are all expenses that can be reduced rapidly with an effective combination of UC applications and hardware. Organizations also can achieve significant savings by reducing operational costs, such as those associated with travel, real estate, and facilities.

To address key business challenges—total cost of ownership (TCO), interoperability, productivity, and efficiency—Microsoft and Polycom have come together to deliver a complete, compelling, and interoperable end-to-end UC solution. This combined UC solution is based on open standards, is fully interoperable across multiple platforms, and easily connects to customers' legacy systems—helping to maximize their investments. The interoperable platform helps organizations reduce and control TCO, as well as increase business productivity and efficiency, thereby helping to grow ROI.

Microsoft and Polycom provide deep experience and insight into UC solutions. Along with other industry leaders such as HP, Microsoft and Polycom are founding members of the Unified Communications Interoperability Forum (UCIF). Drawing on this expertise, the two companies are dedicated to helping organizations dramatically reduce costs and improve ROI by pairing the Microsoft software-powered UC solution with Polycom high-definition (HD) UC products for voice, video, and conferencing endpoints.

Microsoft and Polycom Alliance

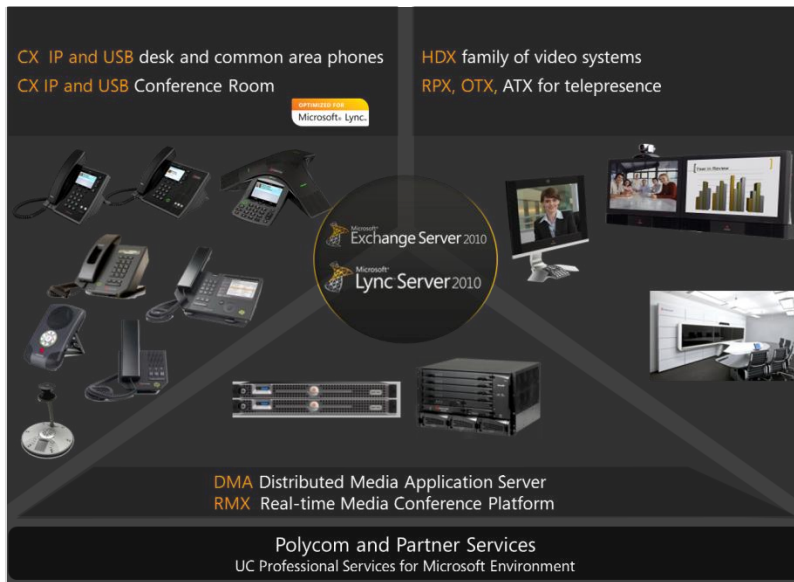
Through the right UC platform and endpoints, organizations can bring different communication modes together to provide effective, rich collaboration at a reduced cost. Microsoft and Polycom jointly deliver a comprehensive voice and video solutions portfolio that adheres to standards and open interoperability.

Microsoft and Polycom are investing in product development and go-to-market initiatives to deliver high-quality UC options for customers, with rich interoperability across the Microsoft and Polycom portfolio. Together, the companies can provide a complete, standards-based, and interoperable UC solution for voice, video, conferencing, and collaboration, giving customers a choice through the scalable Polycom infrastructure and Microsoft Lync™ platform. Customers can benefit from an enterprise-quality, personalized communications experience that is more collaborative, engaging, and accessible—virtually anytime, anywhere, with lower costs.

Microsoft Lync delivers presence, IM, conferencing, and enterprise voice capabilities through a single interface that is consistent across PC, browser, mobile device, and other endpoints. Only Polycom offers interoperable solutions that span voice, video, telepresence, services, and application integration across the full suite of the Microsoft Productivity platform. This means that customers can reduce costs and improve business productivity—all helping to provide a faster ROI.

Polycom is a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner, and the Microsoft UC platform works with a full suite of Polycom HD voice, video, and UC infrastructure solutions, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Microsoft UC platform partnered with the Polycom product suite



UC Solution Summary

The strategic alliance between Microsoft and Polycom can provide customers with:

- Nearly seamless communication across multiple media: IM, voice, video, and web.
- Communication that spans desktops, conference rooms, mobile devices, and remote sites.
- Presence-aware HD voice and video endpoints.
- Unique, first-class user experience through easy-to-use Polycom HD voice and video.
- Use of existing investments to lower TCO and improve ROI.
- Standards-based, highly scalable and secure platform.
- Capabilities for simplified UC deployment, provisioning, and management.

To provide a better understanding of the Microsoft and Polycom UC solution, we will discuss its capabilities as they relate four main business outcomes:

- Reduce Costs
- Optimize the Communications Infrastructure
- Simplify IT Management
- Improve Productivity

Reduce Costs

Using the Microsoft and Polycom UC solution, an organization can achieve immediate savings in three main areas that usually have variable and significant associated costs—travel, conferencing and telephony, and real estate and facilities. With the joint UC solution, an organization can save up to 40 percent by reducing travel and associated costs.

For example, by deploying the joint UC solution, fitness giant LA Fitness saves \$500,000 annually and is able to provide a stable enterprise voice platform for its employees, helping to improve customer service.¹

Reduce Travel Expenses

Travel expenses are usually a substantial expenditure in any organization. Typical travel scenarios include getting employees to and from local or remote sites for client reviews, conferences, business meetings,

¹ LA Fitness case study, http://www.microsoft.com/casestudies/Case_Study_Detail.aspx?CaseStudyID=4000008058

training, or seminars. However, an organization can avoid many of these trips and associated costs by implementing a rich technology solution for audio, video, and web conferencing.

Reduce Trips and Associated Costs

The Microsoft and Polycom UC solution provides a connected experience that enables remote users, distributed workers, supply chain representatives, and even customers to conduct and attend meetings and collaborate without spending time and money on travel. This combined solution provides interoperable audio, video, and web conferencing capabilities to reduce the number of trips and associated costs. For example, employees can use the Polycom CX5000 conferencing device, which gives a 360-degree view of the actual conference room; they can use the Microsoft Lync™ Online meeting service to conduct an interactive virtual meeting; or they can use a Polycom personal telepresence system to join a team meeting right from their offices. These devices and services overcome geographical distance and allow individuals and groups to collaborate without being in the same room.

After deploying the Microsoft and Polycom UC solution, organizations can arrange internal meetings, training, and presales activities without travel. Staff training can be delivered on desktops, providing further savings in the areas of food and lodging, registration fees, and productivity. With Microsoft Lync™ 2010, users can quickly and easily share their desktops in a single click through ad hoc desktop sharing. They also can start audio and web conferences with a single click from an active conversation or schedule a conference from within Microsoft Outlook®.

Communications also can be embedded in applications to promote collaboration and avoid unnecessary travel. CEBP makes collaboration richer and easier: remote team members share the same project context; real-time communications reduce downtime; business processes are more efficient; and applications are extended to more endpoints, such as web pages and mobile devices.

Reduce the Carbon Footprint

Today, many organizations want to “go green” and reduce their carbon footprint. To help achieve this, the Microsoft and Polycom UC solution provides remote working capabilities, such as anywhere, anytime access. With the joint UC solution, employees can participate in business processes and effectively collaborate from wherever they are. As such, they do not need to commute as much, thereby helping to minimize carbon emissions.

Likewise, the Microsoft and Polycom UC solution can decrease the need to travel for business meetings, conferences, training, or supply chain events. Online meeting and visual conferencing capabilities can reduce unnecessary travel and fossil fuel consumption. Voice over IP (VoIP) users also can reduce power consumption by using Polycom USB phones, which use less power than traditional phones. With Lync 2010, users can single-click to easily share desktops, presentations, or other applications for ad hoc discussions with colleagues. In addition, they can initiate audio or video conferences directly from an IM conversation window.

Decrease Conferencing and Telephony Expenses

An organization’s success largely depends on its communications and collaboration infrastructure. To maximize regional and international opportunities, an organization likely spends a significant part of its budget on maintaining multiple audio, video, or web conferencing systems for internal and external collaboration. In addition, telephony charges—including mobile phone, toll, and calling card fees—are a major concern.

The Microsoft and Polycom UC solution can help organizations reduce these costs by providing on-premises and cloud-based IM/presence and conferencing solutions. Organizations can deploy an in-house conferencing infrastructure for audio, video, or web conferencing requirements or take advantage of software-plus-services offerings for IM and conferencing in the cloud. Organizations also can have

hybrid scenarios, in which some employees use an on-premises infrastructure and others use cloud services. This means that customers can have flexibility in how they use a hosted solution.

The joint UC solution has built-in VoIP and unified conferencing capabilities to help reduce long-distance charges and audio conferencing minutes; this can drastically reduce the telephony cost. Using VoIP, Lync can bypass toll-based networks by routing calls over the corporate data network or the Internet, directly cutting telephony costs. In addition, presence capabilities broadcast people's availability and status, helping users make the right communication choices by picking the best way to connect and avoiding wasted calls from mobile devices. Plus, employees can use IM to avoid short phone calls, resulting in reduced telephony costs.

For example, A.T. Kearney is a global management consulting firm that has 3,400 employees in 47 locations. By implementing the joint UC solution, the firm can reduce high telephony costs by five percent and save \$200,000 per year.²

Minimize Real Estate and Facilities Expenses

Reducing real estate and facilities expenses is another major savings opportunity for organizations. With the Microsoft and Polycom UC solution, organizations can achieve immediate cost reduction by delivering an audio, video, or web conferencing experience directly to users' desktops and laptops, helping to maximize the use of virtual conference rooms. The joint UC solution can help organizations provide a flexible environment that allows employees to work from remote places, including a home office, customer site, or partner location. This can reduce office space per employee and minimize operational costs such as light, climate control, and security. In addition, a flexible work environment can help to increase employee satisfaction, productivity, and efficiency.

Optimize the Communications Infrastructure

Using the Microsoft and Polycom UC solution, organizations can consolidate communications systems, streamline communications, and merge UC application packages. After consolidation, organizations no longer need to maintain disparate, traditional communications systems. This can help to reduce the administrative, maintenance, and licensing costs for multiple communication workloads, including telephony; messaging; audio, video, and web conferencing; and applications.

Consolidate Communications Systems

To be competitive in the global market, organizations use various communications systems—such as voice mail; IM; telephony; and audio, video, and web conferencing—from multiple vendors. However, implementing all of these systems can lead to redundancies and inefficiencies for both end users and IT administrators. The licensing and administrative costs for disparate applications and devices for a full suite of UC features can be very high. Reducing these infrastructure costs without impacting business effectiveness is a major challenge for IT departments.

Microsoft and Polycom provide software-powered and presence-aware endpoints to facilitate a complete, standards-based, and interoperable UC solution. This solution can help organizations consolidate costly third-party solutions and eliminate the capital investments needed to maintain traditional communications systems.

The joint UC solution also can connect with an existing voice solution, such as a PBX, to give users a full UC experience in parallel with their phones. This capability allows an organization that has invested in a PBX to use the existing technology and replace it at its own pace. One possible configuration is to deploy the joint solution and connect Microsoft Lync™ Server 2010 to the existing PBX. With this configuration,

² A.T. Kearney case study, http://www.microsoft.com/casestudies/Case_Study_Search_Results.aspx?Type=1&Keywords=A.T.%20Kearney&LangID=46

people can use Lync 2010 in addition to their existing PBX phones. Lync 2010 rings at the same time as the PBX phone, meaning that a mobile workforce can receive calls on the road or in the home office. Plus, employees have the option to use Lync 2010 as a primary endpoint wherever they are, even in the office.

Streamline Communications

Although today's technologies are rapidly changing and security issues are increasing, mobile and globally distributed teams still require access to corporate resources at almost any time, from nearly any location. This is a major challenge for the IT department—how to optimize the enterprise communications infrastructure so that remote workers can use familiar tools to access business information when they need it, in the context they want it, all without compromising security and compliance.

The Microsoft and Polycom UC solution can help organizations provide a personalized communications experience that is more collaborative, engaging, accessible, and secure. Microsoft and Polycom are helping to change and enhance how people interact with colleagues, customers, and partners through an intuitive, interoperable UC solution that allows contacts to connect virtually anytime, anywhere.

The joint UC solution streamlines communications, giving people the ability to quickly find and connect with the right contact from within familiar and easy-to-use applications. With Microsoft Lync, users can IM, call, view voice mail (voice-to-text transcription) in real time, and share documents more securely without needing a VPN connection, right from their workstations, a kiosk, or a shared computer. The new Polycom CX phones feature patented HD Voice technology and are certified interoperable with Lync to provide rich and life-like voice calls and an exceptional UC experience. These Polycom phones and video conference systems give users the ability to connect through voice, video, and other communications modes. In addition to interoperating with Microsoft Lync Server 2010, Polycom products offer a rich conferencing solution for Microsoft Exchange Server and Microsoft Outlook, as well as the ability to publish, manage, and view video content securely from video-enabled Microsoft SharePoint® sites.

Merge UC Application Packages

Using disparate applications and devices to piece together UC capabilities can increase the cost of ownership and hinder users with an awkward, inefficient experience. The Microsoft and Polycom UC solution can consolidate collaboration software and traditional hardware, such as call recording systems, message archiving systems, IVR, IM, presence, audio and video calls, web conferencing, video conferencing, and speech attendant. Because the joint UC solution integrates these functionalities, the expenses associated with managing different servers and systems—including administration and maintenance, training, licensing, support, and energy—can be greatly reduced.

Simplify IT Management

With the Microsoft and Polycom UC solution, IT can increase its flexibility and streamline administration; at the same time, it can help to simplify infrastructure management, maximize resources, and secure the voice and video UC infrastructure.

Use an Interoperable and Extensible Platform

With a fragmented communications infrastructure and a lack of centralized management capabilities, administrators face difficulties in deploying and managing systems for communications and collaboration, such as legacy PBX, desktop and mobile phones, email and voice mail, VoIP, IM, video conferencing, and web communication applications. In addition, different vendor standards can cause problems and delays in phone and conferencing solutions.

Using the standards-based, interoperable platform provided by Microsoft and Polycom, administrators can embed presence and real-time collaboration functionalities within other applications and services, providing investment protection and multiple deployment options. The platform interoperates with Lync

Server 2010 to deliver the full Microsoft UC experience, and it is easy to deploy, use, and manage. Polycom CX IP phones, designed especially for Lync Server 2010, are true plug-and-play devices that do not require additional software or drivers to be installed, simplifying deployment and reducing cost. The Polycom CX600 and CX500 IP phones can be installed through a single integrated PoE port and are wall mountable. This highly scalable and flexible solution lets administrators take advantage of the existing infrastructure while reducing TCO.

Active Directory acts as a common directory across Lync Server, Exchange Server, and other Microsoft server applications for managing the identities and relationships that comprise network environments. IT professionals can manage users, servers, and global settings easily, while monitoring the entire communications system and reducing administrative time and effort.

Improve Staff Efficiency

Information workers and IT professionals often must struggle with different applications—desktops, phones, IM, and VoIP—to collaborate with people inside and outside the organization. For example, to make a phone call, a user has to look up a contact number from the address book and then dial the number from a phone. This process requires the user to switch from the main application to another, reducing efficiency and productivity. To foster more efficient collaboration, organizations need a way to streamline both one-to-one and one-to-many communications, giving employees nearly anytime and anywhere access.

Together, Microsoft and Polycom have developed a solution that enables a more seamless experience for users as well as efficient IT operations. Communicating directly from the context of a task and contacting the right person using the more effective method can increase productivity and reduce time to decision. The joint UC solution simplifies communications tasks and provides click-to-communicate from an email, document, or contact name. All the ways in which people contact one another are combined into a single environment that uses a single identity and presence spanning phones, PCs, and the Internet.

With a simple user interface and consistency across applications and devices, the joint solution also saves server management time and reduces training costs. Similarly, using the web-based GUI control panel or Microsoft Windows PowerShell™ can increase the efficiency of administrative tasks.

Expand Security

When an organization has multiple communications systems in place, different security policies and protocols can lead to unsecured IM, voice, video, and data interactions. Administrators are challenged to ensure that the data moving through the network is safe from malicious users and other security threats, such as viruses and spam.

The Microsoft and Polycom UC solution enables native, secure, and standards-based interoperability among communications systems and applications, helping administrators monitor all activity. Advanced Transport Layer Security (TLS) and Secure Real-Time Protocol (SRTP) on HDX endpoints and CX phones provide integrated, system-wide authentication and media encryption—helping to deliver a more secure communications infrastructure. In addition, the Polycom management application (Polycom DMA) enables high availability and redundancy with automatic load balancing and intelligent routing.

Plus, administrators can limit users' ability to access specific functions, such as send or receive hyperlinks, exchange documents, or contact external users, based on corporate policy. All communications between clients and servers are encrypted, including SPIM (spam over IM) controls. To meet compliance requirements, archiving and retention policies enable the archiving of IM, call/session records, and meeting content for individual users, specific groups of users, or everyone in an organization.

Improve Productivity

With ever-increasing volumes of communications such as email, voice mail, IM, and RSS feeds, workers can be overloaded with multiple communication modes and tools, which can result in lower productivity. Organizations need an easy-to-use solution that helps employees manage this communications overload. With the Microsoft and Polycom UC solution, users can better connect to team members, partners, and customers across geographies and time zones. In short, UC can improve productivity outcomes in five key areas: collaboration, time to project completion, sales cycle time, customer issue resolution, and employee retention.

Enhance Collaboration

The Microsoft and Polycom UC solution makes it easier to find and contact colleagues, check for messages, and stay productive while out of the office. Users can save up to 30 minutes a day as a result of improved team collaboration³.

Speed Project Completion

Improved communication within a project team can increase efficiency and reduce time to completion. Similarly, the ability to contact external subject matter experts can help teams complete more projects. Moreover, these same capabilities can help to reduce product development time, resulting in decreased time to market for new products. Forrester conservatively estimates that project time can be reduced by 10 percent through improved communication⁴.

Shorten Sales Cycle Times

The Microsoft and Polycom UC solution promotes collaboration on sales presentations and faster responses to customer questions. Presence awareness can help salespeople find the right subject matter experts to answer questions quickly and easily, which can reduce the time spent on proposals and customer queries. These advantages can increase the number of proposals delivered and won by up to 20 percent⁵.

Resolve Customer Issues Faster

Presence awareness, call forwarding, and other UC tools can help to improve communication among customer service representatives and subject matter experts. This means that customer issues can be resolved more quickly, reducing the cost required to field calls and handle interactions.

Attract and Retain Employees

The Microsoft and Polycom UC solution can be implemented to provide a flexible working environment, an attractive incentive that can help to reduce turnover and hiring costs. Further, being able to provide leading-edge tools can have a positive effect on attracting new talent.

What Customer Are Saying

In this section, we take a look at the experiences of sample customers who have deployed the joint UC solution from Microsoft and Polycom.

³ North, Jeffrey. [The Total Economic Impact™ Of Microsoft Unified Communications Products and Services](#). [White paper.] Forrester Consulting, 2007.

⁴ North, Jeffrey. [The Total Economic Impact™ Of Microsoft Unified Communications Products and Services](#). [White paper.] Forrester Consulting, 2007.

⁵ North, Jeffrey. [The Total Economic Impact™ Of Microsoft Unified Communications Products and Services](#). [White paper.] Forrester Consulting, 2007.

[LA Fitness](#)

Fitness giant LA Fitness offers a network of more than 300 sports clubs that provide fitness and wellness services to customers throughout North America. LA Fitness reduces costs and improves customer service with Microsoft UC.

"What really made the decision for us was the fact that with the Microsoft solution, we could solve our telecommunication problems, and we could get all of these other capabilities [conferencing, instant messaging, and presence] as well."

George Bedar, Chief Information Officer,
LA Fitness

Results and Benefits

- Significantly reduced cost for voice solution
- Potential to save \$500,000 annually
- Improved customer service using IM, presence, and auto attendant
- More efficient operations (ability to have multiple conversations at one time)
- Improved productivity through enhanced collaboration

[A.T. Kearney](#)

By implementing a UC solution based on Microsoft technologies, A.T. Kearney has enhanced both the work and home life of its mobile consultants, while also improving communications and collaboration across the board for all employees.

"The ability to tie [Lync] into our PBX environment is very key; it helps give access from anywhere on earth that you have an Internet connection, plus it helps drive down our costs. We can intelligently route that traffic to a local PBX when it's possible. We can also provide online conferencing at virtually no cost, which is a huge component of our capabilities inside."

John Laughhunn, Chief Technology Officer, A.T. Kearney

Results and Benefits

- Reduced communications costs
- Enhanced collaboration
- Improved work-life balance
- Potential to save \$200,000 by reducing high telephony costs by five percent

Conclusion

Microsoft and Polycom deliver an interoperable, standards-based UC solution for voice, video, conferencing, and collaboration. The joint solution uses Microsoft Lync and market-leading Polycom voice and video systems. The solution transforms traditional business communications by reducing complexity and putting people at the center of the experience. It integrates the many ways workers contact each other into a single environment, using a single identity, presence, and inbox.

Customers can benefit from an enterprise-quality, personalized communications experience that is more collaborative, engaging, and accessible—virtually anytime and anywhere. Plus, the Microsoft and Polycom UC solution can help customers reduce costs, optimize the communications infrastructure, simplify IT management, and increase business productivity and impact.

Links

For more information about the Microsoft and Polycom UC solution, visit:

- Microsoft Lync
<http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/lync/default.aspx>
- Polycom Solutions with Microsoft
www.polycom.com/microsoft
- Polycom
Visit www.polycom.com or email TeamMicrosoft@polycom.com