The Benefits of ICT

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The Benefits of ICT Help You Connect, Collaborate and Compete

A strong ICT (information and communications technology) strategy is pivotal to competitive survival for today’s businesses. It has become a pervasive part of our working and living environments, and will continue to be an integral resource for business, government and society at large.

ICT combines information, knowledge, processes, and technology to provide a foundation for driving efficiencies and fuelling innovation. It is the key to helping organizations of all sizes to connect, collaborate and compete more effectively.

What does an ICT infrastructure strategy do for you? It can:

- improve business performance, productivity and profitability through improved system performance, availability and security
- reduce administrative and back-office operational costs through the convergence of voice, data and video over IP
- enable and improve the quality, quantity and access to services from any location by allowing remote access, monitoring and management of systems and applications
- improve customer satisfaction, loyalty and service through the safe and secure deployment of customer-facing solutions
- enhance collaboration and networking among employees, customers and partners by removing the barriers to real-time communication and effective information sharing
- ensure enterprise security and compliance more efficiently at less cost
- provide opportunities for businesses to outsource non-core activities so they can focus on their core competencies and reduce in-house technical support requirements
- free up valuable funding resources that can be used to address other issues
- enable the mobile workforce
- improve work/life balance for employees
- cross geographical and time zone boundaries to meet the demands of a global economy
- contribute to environmental responsibility
- meet expectations of the new generation of employees in adapting to their communication habits (chat, etc.)

A converged world

The true business value of an ICT strategy is found in the ability to converge voice, data and video for greater efficiencies and capabilities. This opens the doors to countless integration opportunities – from VoIP and web conferencing to improved security and application deployment.

A converged infrastructure does far more than simplify administration and reduce overall maintenance costs however. It is an invaluable resource for helping organizations connect, collaborate and compete – all of which can play a key part in strengthening economic performance and profitability.

Connect

The ability to connect through multiple channels – whether via the Internet, wireless devices or telephones - has become a mainstay for organizations today. Over time this has led to incredible complexity and costs as communications systems have evolved over disparate networks and infrastructures. IT and telecom have traditionally operated in separate worlds and required extensive resources to support them. Convergence on the other hand breaks down the barriers of technology disciplines, distance and time to enable connectivity anytime, anywhere across any device.
In a converged world, communications over a single IP backbone can deliver tremendous advantages in terms of people, processes and technology. For example:

- Administrators can connect to all facets of their communications network across multiple locations from a central location without having to travel on-site to perform upgrades, monitoring or troubleshooting functions.
- VoIP can dramatically reduce communication costs while enabling interconnectivity between voice, email and wireless applications.
- Organizations can leverage IP convergence to connect employees, partners and customers to a myriad of online applications to improve productivity and responsiveness.
- An IP-based infrastructure also creates numerous opportunities to connect to professional level managed and outsourcing services for infrastructure hosting and support to reduce the capital costs and risks associated with building and maintaining in-house ICT resources.

Collaborate

According to a 2006 Yankee Group report, IP Collaboration Yields Business Efficiency, “IP collaboration tools will see strong adoption among enterprises looking to reduce costs, integrate remote workforce and improve business efficiency.” In fact, it notes that IP collaboration tools rank among the first integrated IP applications to demonstrate the value and power of IP.

The Yankee Group 2005 North American Economics of IP Communications Survey also notes that Canadian enterprises see collaborative applications as the top area for savings in their organization. Aside from cost savings, enterprises benefit from productivity gains as a result of less time spent establishing meetings, traveling or locating workers to make decisions.

Gartner, in its 2007 report Optimized Collaboration Planning, states: “The importance of the shift to rich collaboration services should not be underestimated. By the end of the decade, users will routinely employ an integrated set of collaboration tools, moving between them to reach the highest value combination of interaction services — both inside and outside the firewall, including fixed and wireless networks.”

It also states, “The value to organizations will be realized in several ways. First will be the simplified and more effective use of the increasingly broad range of collaboration options. Second will be the improved responsiveness of individuals and groups to events. Third will be an increased integration of collaboration functionality with applications”.

Collaboration tools such as audio/web/video conferencing, presence, and instant messaging have become essential tools in enabling real-time collaboration. Along with information sharing tools such as document management and workspaces, they represent a particularly compelling benefit when addressing the demands of a global market, where businesses, customers and employees operate in different time zones and at geographically dispersed locations.

Collaboration allows organizations to:

- Enable the remote workforce, while facilitating instantaneous real-time communications - Collaboration tools can create a more productive distributed workforce that is not constrained by geographical boundaries.
- Reduce communication costs – Conducting communications over a corporate IP network dramatically reduces costs. When using a hosted solution, organizations can realize even further savings and more predictable monthly costs.
- Improve efficiency and productivity – Through collaboration tools, co-workers can quickly convene meetings, share information and engage in more meaningful dialogue. Conferencing applications allow users to simultaneously review documents and presentations, reach a consensus and make immediate decisions.
Compete

Organizations today have invested a vast amount of resources in their IT infrastructures. However, as Yankee Group states in its 2006 report *Are Canadian Enterprises Ready for the Unified Communications Promise?*, while technology has led to higher productivity, "considerable spending on hardware and software has not been leveraged effectively."

It cites several reasons for this underutilization of technology assets:

- a misunderstanding of how the technology aligns with business requirements
- a lack of integration among the systems in the enterprise, and
- a lack of a cohesive plan by internal staff to effectively train workers on the new technologies and integrate the new technologies into the day-to-day life of the typical worker

The key to competitive success is in finding ways to leverage existing technology investments to deliver optimum results. A converged ICT strategy can play a key role today in helping organizations realize the value of their investment and drive better business results. ICT convergence allows organizations to take advantage of the communications capabilities they have and deliver tools that can make employees more productive, processes more efficient and technology more effective.

The Yankee Group *Global Network Strategies Survey* also defines five focus areas that can deliver benefits through a unified infrastructure:

- Productivity gains from VoIP
- Resilience by reducing the elements of infrastructure risk
- Expansion of services for home/teleworkers through improved connectivity and application delivery
- Streamlined business operations through reduced operational costs
- Security through improved management over distributed workforce and business assets

**Industry benefits**

ICT convergence is addressing a broad range of industry-specific needs, from streamlining call centre operations to enabling e-commerce to optimizing supply chain performance.

In sectors such as education, ICT can help to create a more sustainable and accessible system through improved learning and teaching capabilities. Educators and students alike can enjoy the benefits of improved content quality, management and delivery for a richer learning experience.

ICT solutions also play a critical role in improving the public’s contact with government agencies. ICT solutions from Bell for example have been instrumental in driving Canada’s e-government transformation. Solutions such as 311 Citizen Contact, e-democracy, Secure Channel and others are helping citizens connect and transact business with various levels of government more quickly and efficiently than ever before.

ICT solutions can also play a role in addressing environmental responsibility. Innovations in mobile workforce and virtual office applications help to minimize commuting and energy consumption, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. ICT has also driven innovations such as smart metering to encourage energy conservation and usage optimization and reduce the growing pressure on the energy grid.
ICT benefits within Bell

As owners and managers of the largest and most advanced IP infrastructures in Canada, Bell is uniquely positioned to provide enterprises and governments with a comprehensive range of advanced ICT solutions to meet their communications and technology needs.

Through our extensive technology investment and innovation – backed by the country’s leading ICT infrastructure – we are playing a leading role in bringing businesses, governments and consumers together to enhance daily interactions.

As the number one ICT leader in Canada, we have:

- over $1.2B in revenues
- a nationwide team of 2000 ICT professionals with cross-industry experience and extensive expertise in key vertical markets
- recognized industry leadership in delivering voice, data, Internet and infrastructure solutions, as well as managed services and outsourcing (IDC and Forrester)

We are strongly committed to investing in the future of ICT and our economy through our extensive commitment to R&D initiatives. For example:

- We invest $1.5B annually (or 10% of gross revenue) in R&D to further technological advancements, as well as to attract and retain top talent in Canada
- We invest $3B annually in our network, operational support system (OSS) and business support systems (BSS)
- We have established 12 ICT Innovation Centres across Canada
- We maintain strong alliances with leading technology providers to co-develop and deliver new and innovative solutions to the market.

Bell solutions have also played a key role in delivering environmental benefits for society. For example:

- Bell e-billing enrolment has eliminated 16.6 million pieces of paper and 468 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions in 2006 – enough to heat 1,018 households. For each customer registration, Bell also donated $1 to the Nature Conservancy of Canada.
- Conferencing solutions from Bell have translated into an estimated 1.7 million metric tons of CO₂e in 2006, which is equivalent to the emissions from 340,000 mid-size cars.
- Bell has enabled more than 20,000 teleworkers, which is expected to save up to 11,000 tons of CO₂e annually.
- E-learning solutions have helped organizations deliver training while reducing paper usage and travel.
- Web-based interface and hardware from Bell has been used to support the Smart Meters program in Ontario for enabling energy conservation.

How can Bell help your organization?

Bell has developed a portfolio of solutions that help organizations understand their ICT planning, implementation and management requirements. Our customized integrated solutions deliver value through meeting the business objectives of government, financial services, healthcare, education, manufacturing and transportation and retail operations.

These solutions include:

**Enterprise Resiliency** – This end-to-end offering provides a comprehensive, top-down enterprise view of risk management that encompasses the technology, people and processes required to support your operations. We work with you to develop a practical
and effective approach to reducing exposure to risk and protecting your business operations —from your facilities to your workforce to your infrastructure.

**Collaboration** – Bell offers an array of communication applications to enable collaboration for today’s connected enterprise. Our Collaboration portfolio spans the entire lifecycle of services, from consulting through to implementation and management. With Bell, you can unify all of your communications – including messaging, conferencing, Internet and mobility – to create a truly collaborative environment. The result is a rich, multi-dimensional communications experience for your customers, your employees and your business partners.

**Virtual Office** – Our Virtual Office portfolio encompasses a comprehensive range of professional services - from communications and security technology to managed services – that are designed to support enterprise workforce mobility. We can provide expertise and technology support in leading applications for voice/data, messaging and conferencing, contact centres, security, wireless, web solutions, and business processes.

**Areas of Expertise**

ICT solutions from Bell combine Professional services (consulting and integration); Managed services (infrastructure, business process outsourcing and network management services); and Infrastructure services (selection, procurement, provisioning, deployment and maintenance). Each of these services can be customized and integrated to address ICT strategies and implementation for:

- **Contact Centres** - helping customers understand the interrelated and dynamic factors that drive contact centre success.

- **Converged Communications** - working with you to gain an in-depth understanding of what it takes to ensure that your IP convergence strategies meet your business goals.

- **Security** – offering a single point of contact for all your security needs, from strategy development, risk assessment and systems design, to implementation and ongoing management.

- **Supply Chain**- helping you optimize the technologies that support your supply chain activities to improve competitiveness and drive business growth.

- **Systems and Storage** – delivering solutions that help enterprises resolve their IT systems and storage technical and business challenges and enable business growth.

- **Web Solutions** – developing, implementing and supporting all of your electronic delivery initiatives, from e-commerce to online marketing.

- **Wireless Solutions** – bringing the expertise to ensure you realize optimal gains from your fixed and mobile wireless initiatives, from RFID to field force automation.

At Bell we are committed to helping organizations achieve their goals. We have the depth and breadth of products and services – backed by industry leading experience - to help customers leverage their ICT investment to connect, collaborate and compete in today’s global market.

For more information, please contact your Bell account representative or go to [www.bell.ca/enterprise](http://www.bell.ca/enterprise).