

HP Services

Company background

HP Services, a global services organization of 65,000 people operating in 160 countries, is comprised of Customer Service, Managed Services, and Consulting & Integration Services. In the highly competitive and, increasingly, commodity business of professional services, HP is focused on moving up the value chain with its core competencies as a services organization. To make this happen, the organization has a strategic eye on instituting improved practices around value creation and value capture. Their goals include:

- Increased global reuse of knowledge
- Increased efficiencies
- Reduced costs

To achieve these goals, HP Services is building a three-tier knowledge structure. At the top level is a global intranet. At the mid-level are "micro" portals that enable the establishment of communities of practice. Providing the foundation is enhanced global team collaboration.

Essential to the entire structure is effective collaboration. Not only is it at the heart of increasing global reuse of knowledge within HP Services, but, as we'll see, it's having a particularly dramatic impact on reducing sales and project-cycle times.

Business Problem

Two key areas where HP Services requires effective and efficient team collaboration include proposal creation and project management. To shrink sales cycles, teams must assemble quickly to produce and approve content. For project cycles, the challenge is managing multiple client projects among geographically dispersed teams.

Proposal Development

HP Consulting & Integration teams want to further improve their proposal bid-to-win ratio, avoid project losses and margin deterioration, and ultimately mitigate any risk that jeopardizes the financial success of a project. Collaboration is the key as it plays an important role during opportunity assessment, proposal development and bid approval.

The time-frame allotted to assess project requirements, assemble a proposal development team, and develop the proposal is dictated by the customer, and can range anywhere from several weeks to several months. During this time, anywhere from a few to 10 or 20 people are responsible for quickly developing a project schedule, assigning responsibilities, establishing resource requirements and preparing the client proposal. Participants in an RFP response sometimes have little or no experience working together - they are brought together for the sole purpose of responding to the specifics of the client's request. The team is also often geographically dispersed. Both factors can slow the production of a high-quality proposal under stringent time constraints.

Project Management

HP Services has field personnel running hundreds of client projects at any given time. Some of these project teams are on the intranet, some are in home offices, some are on the client's intranet, and some spend most of their time on the road.

Highlights

- Company's collaboration goals included increased knowledge re-use & efficiencies, reduced costs
- Chose Groove for cross-domain security, fast ad hoc team formation, elimination of information bottlenecks
- Results: reduced costs for projects & travel, no network headaches, improved efficiencies

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Account reps and project managers use Microsoft Project to manage the tasks and schedules that need to be shared with other team members, many of whom work remotely. Traditionally, the project manager "owns" the .MPP file, updating it as needed and sharing it via email or file-share.

For smaller projects or project startup (where it is uncertain a contract will be won, and so may not be worth the effort to request a project "space" for file-sharing from an eRoom administrator), project documents, including the .MPP file, are exchanged via email. While this has been a dependable approach -- since everyone reads email -- it is also the most time consuming and prone to error. For example, team members are constantly checking to see if they have the latest version of the schedule.

Although eRoom and similar Web-based collaboration technologies solve the version problem (the space always has the latest version), they still present two drawbacks:

1. Unless the team is extremely diligent in understanding and avoiding ownership issues at a task level, the project manager is left with the administrative task of collecting all event updates and putting them into the MPP file.
2. For those team members on the road or on-site at the client location, accessing the team space is very difficult. For road warriors, remote access requires significant forethought, as special effort must be made in order to download important files before going offline. Later, as files are uploaded, team members must take care to resolve the confusion that ensues when their offline changes conflict with those made by others.

Ironically, these collaboration technologies resolved the currency issue, but did nothing to reduce the workload on the project manager or improve the situation for field personnel. In fact, while using eRoom, HP actually found that a significant number of project documents continued to be passed back and forth via email.

Both Proposal Development and Project Management processes face three major issues:

1. Communication

- Email: Erratic lag time, limited functionality, inability to handle large files, not secure
- Phone: Inability to record discussions, errors, responsibility confusion
- Travel: Expensive and time consuming
HP had been reliant on email and phone as primary means of communication for developing proposals and sharing scheduled projects. These communication channels bore several limitations and consequential challenges. Broken email threads and inbox clutter often delayed the flow of information and hampered effective decision-making. The occasional "missed" email thread or document version caused confusion, consuming precious time and impairing quality of work. eRoom and similar Web-based collaboration solutions proved to be insufficient because of their limitations in security, offline access, and cross-firewall reach.

2. Travel

- Productivity loss
- Inability to equally leverage all participants
- Interrupts team workflow
Frequently traveling participants play a critical role in winning business and executing projects. Travel creates communication delays, impacts the ability to fully leverage all contributors, and places an additional burden on others to update absentees and ensure currency among the group.

3. Network

- IT inefficiencies
- Administration costs
- Limited use of knowledge resources
Proposal documents can be many hundreds of pages translating into many megabytes in file size. These documents often need to be broken into several parts before they're sent across the network. These cumbersome network inefficiencies cause managers to limit the number of recipients in order to save time. The result? The team's ability to fully leverage its knowledge power is impaired. Worse still, communications with clients and partners become less-than-secure while posing a burden on IT resources.

The Groove Workspace Solution

- HP Services selected Groove Workspace because it enables secure, cross-firewall team collaboration on and offline. Groove Workspace is the best-suited solution for geographically dispersed project collaboration because it:
 - Dissolves cross-domain security issues
 - Enables ad hoc, self-organizing groups, enhancing the ability to harness knowledge
 - Reduces coordination steps
 - Eliminates information bottlenecks and errors associated with phone and email

**"We view [Groove] as a true paradigm shift in how teams will inter-operate in the future."
- Craig Samuel
CKO, HP Services**

Results and Business Value of Groove

Groove's value to proposal participants and project managers is directly related to how well it reduces process complexity. We know that complexity increases with the number of team members, and markedly so when external participants become involved. With more team members involved in proposal creation or client projects, lag time occurrences between email threads and voicemails increase, document edits are more likely to overlap, roles and assignments take longer to assign, error rates increase, and managers must take on increased responsibilities. All of these factors pose challenges to producing a quality proposal within a strict deadline or to managing a client project efficiently. From a business value standpoint, an inefficiently managed project takes longer to complete, resulting in a higher cost of doing business. Missed deadlines, of course, often mean lost business.

Groove Workspace significantly reduces project costs by reducing travel time, IT administration costs, and overall project times. Simultaneously, Groove increases "value per member" by leveraging greater intellectual capital from each external and traveling contributor. To HP Services, Groove has brought the following:

Reduced Project Start-Up Costs: With Groove, the proposal process begins immediately. Less time is spent coordinating and more time is spent producing quality work. As a result, proposals are being completed much faster (saving 25-60 percent of the time of previous projects) and the Sales team is handling more deals based on an increased reuse of knowledge.

Improved Project Efficiencies: Proposal participants are often geographically dispersed,

imposing limits on communication and work synchronization. Groove Workspace provides offline synchronization capabilities and a simple, end-user driven method of securely involving outside-the-firewall customers and partners. The presence awareness feature lets others know when project members are online and/or in the shared space, enabling "just-in-time" interaction.

No Network Headaches: Groove transparently traverses firewalls, automatically brokering connections between offline members (who may never be online at the same time) and members separated by network firewalls. Additionally, the time associated with compartmentalizing documents into network digestible bits through multiple emails or zip files is eliminated. By alleviating problems with document transmittal, firewalls and time zone differences, Groove improves efficiencies for geographically dispersed RFP contributors and project team members.

Travel Cost Savings: Groove offers a common place where project participants communicate and work together on or offline. Whether team members are in the office, at the client site or en route to a client site, Groove shared spaces are available to them. During any given project cycle, Groove Workspace enables remote team members to be more productive while away from the office or disconnected, and minimizes the need for
