

How Accenture Does IT
Lync Unified
Communications



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Seamless collaboration and “anytime, anywhere” videoconference capabilities are changing the way enterprises work. Accenture is leading the way, expanding its communications ecosystem to connect more than 281,000 employees with one another, not to mention with nearly 400 client companies. Driving this massive transformation is Lync, a unified communications platform that integrates audio calls and instant messaging with videoconferencing and content sharing, saving time and money while speeding collaboration.

Business challenge

Ever since the distributed global workforce emerged as a business trend, managers have wondered how to recapture that easy “water-cooler” communication and the face-to-face collaboration found in a physical office, even when people are spread around the world. For Accenture, the answer is Lync, now the primary communications tool across Accenture’s global enterprise. Virtually all Accenture professionals have adopted Lync in one of the largest deployments in the world.

Lync is the VOIP-enabled go-to tool for every communication need, combining audio phone calls, instant messaging, screen and content-sharing and videoconferencing together with many other features. Lync allows Accenture professionals to meet virtually for real-time meetings and collaborate online like never before with anyone, anywhere, every day.

How Accenture helped

Accenture’s internal IT organization began introducing Lync capabilities to the Accenture workforce in 2007 via Lync’s predecessor, known as Office Communicator. The initial migration effort was completed in 2008 and a subsequent platform upgrade was completed in 2012.

Accenture employees were introduced to Lync’s technology, trained in its many features through internal communications such as electronic postcards and short training video clips, and were encouraged to adapt long-established work patterns in order to take advantage of Lync’s powerful capacity for collaboration.

“Moving the entire Accenture workforce to Lync has been a migration of unprecedented scale and complexity,” notes Andrew Wilson, Accenture’s Chief Information Officer. “The benefits are compelling: massive cost-efficiencies, as well as huge gains in productivity and collaboration. But the technical management of so large a change required our internal IT team to mobilize its very best talents.”

Throughout this period, Accenture’s internal IT team worked closely with experts from Microsoft and Avanade (a technology consulting company specializing in Microsoft technologies) to manage one of the largest workforce deployments ever and fine-tune Lync’s capabilities to the requirements of the global Accenture enterprise. New enhancements to the Lync user experience that are in progress via the Lync 2013 platform include high-definition

Lync brings clients closer in all industries

Here are several real-world examples drawn from Accenture teams working in various industry sectors that are videoconferencing on a regular basis, as well as from the nearly 400 client organizations that are already “federated” or connected with Accenture in a Lync ecosystem that is steadily growing:

Consumer Products: One of the world’s largest consumer products companies set an ambitious goal to cut travel spending by 20 percent, and challenged Accenture to help them reach this goal through the use of video collaboration tools such as Lync.

Financial Services: More than 350 Accenture people working for a national housing and mortgage finance client are using Lync and Roundtable video to increase client engagement, saving time and money.

Communications, Media & Technology: A leading telecommunications company is using daily Lync videoconferencing to connect the members of its 2,000-person Accenture team in Australia and India.

Energy: Accenture is pioneering innovative ways to use Lync in an energy industry BPO engagement to hold face-to-face meetings, drive effective solutions, strengthen relationships, support sustainability, and reduce travel costs by approximately 25 percent.

Health & Public Services: Lync is enabling the Accenture team for a major prescription drug provider to adopt a flexible travel arrangement, allowing members to work off-site up to eight days a month.

video, the ability to see up to five meeting participants at the same time, and the Lync Web App, which allows external participants to join Lync conferences through a browser. More enhancements are also planned, notably the ability to use video and sharing via the iPhone, iPad and other mobile devices.

"The introduction of Lync is a perfect example of Accenture's IT organization driving the digital agenda across our enterprise," Wilson concludes. "We didn't wait for people to ask for Lync. We saw the power of this solution, we knew it would be a tremendous competitive asset for Accenture going forward, and so we championed its introduction."

High performance delivered

Lync equips Accenture's global workforce with tools that advance seamless collaboration while simultaneously delivering substantial savings. The value and benefits of Lync have prompted Accenture professionals to double their use of the tool in the past year alone. Total usage of Lync voice now exceeds 122 million minutes

per month across Accenture, 75 percent of which is conferencing. Accenture's use of Lync extends well beyond voice, with over 35 million minutes of content sharing and over 180,000 Lync-enabled video meetings per month.

Over the past three years, as more Accenture people have migrated to Lync, audio conferencing volume has increased by 198 percent. Over the same period, the introduction of Lync has led to an 83 percent reduction in audio conferencing costs. In addition, Lync has enabled a reduction in Accenture's telecom and mobile charges as users leverage Lync for PC-based communications.

What's more, Lync is a critical enabler driving Accenture's Workplace 2.0 strategy, which is transforming Accenture offices worldwide from daily office space to locations where Accenture teams gather to collaborate. With the freedom to work anywhere anytime, Accenture workers in locations such as Houston and Brussels only come into these office locations when they need to meet physically with colleagues, and the offices themselves are equipped with far fewer phone handsets. Less office space translates into lower operating costs and fewer people commuting to work reduces Accenture's carbon footprint.

Lync's productivity and collaboration gains have dramatically changed the way Accenture professionals work:

- Teams can create and review content more efficiently through desktop content-sharing.
- In time-critical situations and SWAT team efforts, Lync communications keep everyone in touch all the time.
- Whiteboarding and polling easily capture feedback from participants, making meetings more productive.

Gone are the days of end-to-end pre-scheduled audio conference calls, when many participated but only a few were truly engaged. In their place is the continuous and effortless daily interaction that Lync facilitates, enabling fully engaged teams to meet at a moment's notice, identify business challenges earlier, and create new innovations faster.

Lync makes work smarter

The vision behind Lync is to equip every employee with a single advanced tool capable of meeting every communications need. With just one click, a user can escalate a Lync IM conversation to an audio call, or add video to meet face-to-face with colleagues. The full spectrum of Lync features include:

Audio/Phone: Lync allows users to make and receive phone calls from a PC. Lync can also route calls to voicemail, an alternate phone number or mobile device, or to another contact.

Videoconferencing: Users can communicate with contacts via video calls by turning an audio call into a video call with a single click. Lync offers panoramic view features as well as full-screen video.

Presence Indicator: A user's real-time availability and location are indicated, making it easy for colleagues to interact and collaborate. Users can see the Presence Indicators for each primary contact at a glance.

Conference Scheduling: Lync provides a robust online meeting experience that is easy to schedule via Outlook's Calendar. Meeting participants can easily join a conference by clicking on a link included in the invite.

Instant Messaging: Users can send a secure instant message (IM) to persons and groups in their contact list as a quick, informal way to communicate.

Sharing: Participants can share a desktop or program, create and share a whiteboard that participants can contribute to, or conduct a poll during a meeting.

Mobile: Lync Mobile combines instant messaging and audio conferencing in a single application that is familiar to Lync users and allows users to stay connected on-the-go.

External Participation: External participants (Accenture employees joining a call from a non-Accenture computer, or clients and external contacts) can join Lync meetings in various ways – via Lync Attendee, via Lync Web App and/or dialing into a meeting.

About Accenture

Accenture is a global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company, with approximately 281,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries. Combining unparalleled experience, comprehensive capabilities across all industries and business functions, and extensive research on the world's most successful companies, Accenture collaborates with clients to help them become high-performance businesses and governments. The company generated net revenues of US\$28.6 billion for the fiscal year ended Aug. 31, 2013. Its home page is www.accenture.com.

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