Skype for Business Unifies Communications across Accenture for Anytime, Anywhere Collaboration

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Today, Skype for Business is the primary digital communications tool across Accenture’s global enterprise, a VOIP-enabled platform enabling Accenture professionals to communicate, meet virtually, and collaborate online with anyone, anywhere, every day. Massive investments in technology and infrastructure have made Accenture's Skype for Business the largest and most stable such platform in the business world.

"Moving the entire Accenture workforce to Skype for Business has been a migration of unprecedented scale and complexity," notes Accenture's Chief Information Officer Andrew Wilson. "The benefits for Accenture have been significant: massive cost efficiencies, as well as huge gains in productivity and collaboration.

Opportunity

Accenture's people are constantly on the move, serving clients and solving problems for enterprises in more than 120 countries. Essential to Accenture’s performance is its ability to make its very best talents and resources available to clients, anytime, anywhere. The vision of Skype for Business is to equip every employee with a single fully integrated tool capable of meeting every communications need.

Solution

Accenture's internal IT organization began introducing advanced communications to the Accenture workforce beginning in 2008 with Office Communicator. Lync was launched in 2010, and in 2015, Accenture rolled out the Skype for Business client. To promote its adoption, extensive communications and training programs were undertaken to encourage Accenture employees to adapt their long-established work habits and take advantage of the powerful capabilities of Skype for Business.

"Moving the entire Accenture workforce to Skype for Business has been a migration of unprecedented scale and complexity. The benefits have been significant: massive cost efficiencies, as well as huge gains in productivity and collaboration. But the technical execution of so large a change demanded the very best effort from our internal IT team," notes Wilson.

Throughout the initial implementation, Accenture's internal IT organization worked closely with Microsoft experts on Lync and with Avanade, a technology consulting company specializing in Microsoft technologies, to fine-tune Lync's functions for the requirements of the global Accenture workforce.

"The introduction of Skype for Business is a perfect example of Accenture's internal IT organization driving our digital agenda across the enterprise," says Wilson. "We saw the power of this solution, we knew it already was and will continue to be a tremendous competitive advantage for Accenture, and so we are committed to making it the most stable collaboration platform in the business world."

Reflecting Accenture's commitment to the communications tool, the company made a significant investment as part of a 2013 upgrade to enhance the underlying network infrastructure. Don Galzarano, an Applications Architect Senior Manager and the lead on the Skype for Business team, explains: "More than three-quarters of past performance issues of the tool were related to network infrastructure, rather than to the solution itself. We have built and continue to build the foundations for higher-quality video via Skype for Business."
As a result of the new investments, Skype for Business now features new carrier-grade network hardware, including load-balancing architecture and appliances, updated carrier-grade switches, new firewalls and updated routers. A new architecture was devised to utilize redundant hardware and to dedicate portions of the network to exclusive use of Skype for Business. The Skype for Business network now has at least two sets of all network hardware, including ISP routers, MPLS routers, core switches and aggregate switches, external and internal firewalls, and load balancers. Many of these appliances also include multiple network cards, which are the brains of the appliance and act as another layer of redundancy within the devices themselves.

Results
More than 410,000 people—virtually the entire Accenture workforce as well as many partners and contractors—are enabled with Skype for Business. Nearly all Accenture conferencing—99.8 percent—now takes place via Skype for Business.

- Migrating to Skype for Business cut the average cost of an Accenture audio conference call by 83 percent.

- Skype for Business audio minutes, including conferencing and peer-to-peer audio, is nearly 215 million minutes per month.

- Skype for Business video minutes, including conferencing and peer-to-peer video, averages 8 million minutes per month.

- There are 90 million minutes a month of desktop sharing using Skype for Business.

- More than 520 Accenture clients are federated with Skype for Business.

Features
Video Gallery View: All conference participants’ video or picture automatically appear, with the four most active speakers appearing as large boxes and the remaining participants as small thumbnails below the gallery view.

Meeting Tab: This tab lets users quickly check their upcoming meetings for the day, and even join a Skype for Business meeting right from the Meetings tab, if the meeting was set up by an organizer inside their company.

Web App: The Web App enables users to join a Skype for Business call via a web browser. Web App can be used from any computer, not just the employee’s; the Skype for Business client does not need to be installed on the PC in order to use it.

Mobile Features: Skype for Business for Mobile enables employees to maintain their presence wherever they are and with whatever device they are using: Windows Phone, iPhone, iPad or Android device. Users can e-mail, IM, chat or join an audio and video conference with just one touch.
About Accenture

Accenture is a leading global professional services company, providing a broad range of services and solutions in strategy, consulting, digital, technology and operations. Combining unmatched experience and specialized skills across more than 40 industries and all business functions—underpinned by the world’s largest delivery network—Accenture works at the intersection of business and technology to help clients improve their performance and create sustainable value for their stakeholders. With approximately 373,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries, Accenture drives innovation to improve the way the world works and lives. Visit us at www.accenture.com.