

# The Business Value of Rich, Spontaneous Collaboration

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Virtual teams must collaborate at significantly higher levels than they did only two or three years ago. Their greatest roadblock, however, has been an inability to have spontaneous encounters and instant informal meetings. For example, same-site teams could run into each other in the hallway, drop by each other's work area, or walk to the small meeting room down the hall. Virtual teams had no equivalent in the virtual space. The loss of these critical informal links made team collaboration plummet across distance by 84 percent, compared to their same-site counterparts.

For the first time, breakthrough technology gives virtual teams powerful ways to connect and collaborate spontaneously. This new environment truly rivals traditional, same-site informal human communication, and is an essential capability for today's fast, mobile, and global virtual teams. In fact, when it comes to interacting about the work to be done, this new environment is often better than traditional, same-site collaboration. This paper focuses on the business value of rich, spontaneous collaboration—what it is and why it is so critical to record-setting virtual teamwork.

High-performance virtual teamwork requires high-performance virtual collaboration. In fact, virtual teams must collaborate at significantly higher levels than they did only two or three years ago. It is no longer enough for any team to exist in a world where virtual communication is “a substitute” or “something less than face-to-face” for team collaboration. Today’s global businesses demand team collaboration from the desktop that is at least as effective as face to face, if not better.

Collaboration is a word that is so overused today, it has lost its meaning. So let’s be clear. Collaboration is more than sending e-mails to other people or watching slide shows in virtual meetings. To the contrary, collaboration enables *interaction velocity* from the desktop and is designed to speed connections and speed results. Interaction velocity accelerates how quickly people get connected in real time, once the need for collaboration arises. Interaction velocity then accelerates what team members do once connected, such as speeding brainstorming, problem solving, decision-making, alignment, commitments, and other outcomes. Interaction velocity is critical for high-performance global teamwork.

## The Business Case for Rich, Spontaneous Collaboration

There are strong business reasons for creating a significantly stronger foundation so virtual teams can experience rich, spontaneous collaboration. Teams that communicate effectively, perform effectively. Most virtual teams are forced to work in a communication environment that restricts the quality and frequency of collaboration they need for success. Look at these key facts:

1. Informal communication is critical for high-performance virtual teamwork. In a traditional working environment, a whopping 92 percent

of interactions are informal and not pre-arranged.<sup>1</sup> Fifty-two percent are unintended,<sup>2</sup> and happen when people come into each other’s presence. Informal, spontaneous interactions play a critical role in creating collaborative relationships, as well as maintaining existing ones. Unintended interactions are also a primary way that people obtain essential information. For most virtual teams, these informal links are severely broken. As a result, collaboration across distance isn’t happening.

2. Collaboration frequency across distance drops by 84 percent.<sup>3</sup> What is the purpose of a virtual team except to collaborate? That is, to leverage the insight, location and creativity of each team member in every site. In reality, the typical virtual team hardly collaborates at all. A key reason for this dramatic drop is that the informal links that lead to collaboration are broken, virtually. Some of the broken informal links include knowing who is available for collaboration, letting others know you are available, or having an easy way to get the entire team into an informal meeting, spontaneously. Another key reason for the drop in collaboration is that the virtual team needs an array of rich media meeting choices in order for collaboration to flourish online. It is no longer acceptable for anyone to be excluded from viewing or participating in every aspect of a team’s virtual meeting, no matter where in the world they happen to be.

3. Virtual teams are becoming more widespread. Virtual teams—not same-site teams—are the norm, and they are becoming more virtual. Seven out of 10 people work virtually.<sup>4</sup> In addition, one out of every three leaders works in a different location from at least some members of their team, or they have a distant boss themselves.<sup>5</sup> The Gartner Group estimated that there were 137 million teleworkers world-

wide in 2003. In 2001, one-fifth of the adult workforce in the United States did some telework.<sup>6</sup> Nearly half (42.4 percent) of the employees in America work in a combination of locations, not just one.<sup>7</sup> Virtual teams need significantly improved ways to connect and collaborate informally from anywhere in spontaneous time.

4. The need for clarity and trust are soaring. Today’s virtual teams are not just dispersed across one country. They’re working together from points all over the globe. They have to communicate effectively, despite heavy accents and varying proficiencies in the language of the meeting. They also have an intense need to find new ways to create and grow relationships from the desktop. Today, their primary communication is through e-mail and phone calls, which filter away 80 percent of the cues that people need to create rapport and understanding. With reduced travel, virtual teams are starved for richer informal collaboration that lets people build the rapport and results they need for high-performance collaboration as a team.

5. Current travel levels are more or less permanent. People used travel to fill the void in informal human communication when people were virtual. In fact, the average business traveler in early 2001 spent 8.5 years of his or her life involved in air travel.<sup>8</sup> Travel plummeted after September 2001, and has made small gains since then. In a more recent study, a startling 93 percent of respondents say the reduction in travel since 2001 is permanent.<sup>9</sup> People who are waiting for travel levels to return to the good old days may have their heads in the sand. Budgets may come back, but none of us can buy more time. Time is the real change agent here.

<sup>1</sup> R. E. Kraut, R. S. Fish, R. W. Root, and B. L. Chalfonte: “Informal Communication in organizations: Form, function, and technology.” S. Oskamp & S. Spacapan (Eds.), *People’s Reactions to Technology*, Sage Publications, London, 1990, pp. 145-199.

<sup>2</sup> S. Whittaker, D. Frohlich, and O. Dary-Jones: “Informal workplace communication: What is it like and how might we support it?” *Proc. CHI’94* (Boston MA, April 1994), ACM, pp.131-137.

<sup>3</sup> Robert E. Kraut, Carmen Egido, and Jolene Galegher: “Patterns of Contact and Communication in Scientific Research Collaboration,” *Intellectual Teamwork: Social and Technological Foundations of Cooperative Work*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, New Jersey, 1990, pp 149-171.

<sup>4</sup> “Meetings in America III: A study of the virtual workforce in 2001: MCI Conferencing: <http://e-meetings.mci.com/meetingsinamerica/pdf/MIA3.pdf>.

6. Business people embrace conferencing. People have become smarter about how to communicate and conduct business globally. Travel is no longer the first choice, nor the only choice. One study of 1000 virtual leaders found that seven out of 10 leaders loved face-to-face meetings, yet preferred conferencing if the meeting was two hours or less.<sup>10</sup> In that same study, seven out of 10 said conferencing saves time and is a more efficient way to meet.

Let's face it. Virtual teams are here to stay. In fact, they are evolving at breakneck speed to be more global, more dispersed, more mobile, more complex, and more virtual.

However, virtual teams can't succeed if they communicate like they did even two or three years ago. A virtual team that spends 20 days a year together spends 90 percent of its time apart. To be competitive in today's global business environment, focus on dramatically improving the team's spontaneous, rich collaboration when virtual. Doing so gives virtual teams the platform to feel like a team, interact like a team, and perform like a record-setting team.

### Rich, Spontaneous Presence and High-Performance Collaboration

Let's take a closer look at human communication. This section compares same-site communication with "typical" virtual team communication, so the differences are clear. To evolve to the next generation of virtual teamwork, virtual leaders must understand the problem. If they want to improve results, then they must take effective steps to change it. This paper is designed to provide the insight you need for success.

The essence of high-performance teamwork is human collaboration. The purpose of teamwork

is to create a breakthrough result by leveraging the unique talent, creativity and perspectives of team members. If you have ever been a participant of a high-performance team, you understand what team synergy is about. The synergy is the "human rocket fuel" that lets virtual teams achieve pure magic, and enjoy the human experience every step of the way.

Synergy doesn't happen because people work together. Instead, it is the direct result of how the team communicates with one another on a very informal, human level. Let's look at three specific factors that lead to synergy: presence, spontaneity and a rich collaboration environment.

### Presence in same-site teams

The first and most important element needed to create team synergy is human presence. Presence is the feeling of working in the company of other human beings. As human beings, we are wired to seek and build connections with each other as individuals and teammates. Once in close proximity, we open the door to informal communication that lets us build our relationship, launch our collaboration, and interact comfortably about our work. The centerpiece of presence is access, availability and interaction through informal communication.

For example, on an individual level, we feel presence when we pass by each other in the hallway, stop by each other's office desks to talk, or see that a teammate is at his or her desk. Presence includes awareness of each other and the comfort that comes from being there for each other. At its best, presence includes all those human factors that bond people to the work and each other.

On a team level, we feel presence when we all walk into the small meeting room down

the hall or sit around the table for our team session. We increase our sense of presence as we interact informally about the issues, use a flip chart to work issues, and watch each other's nonverbal cues during the discussion.

### The presence challenge in virtual teams

One of the most universal human challenges in virtual teams is "Remote-itis." This term describes a sense of isolation, being "out of the loop and out of the group," or "transparent (not visible) to other people on the virtual team." Remote-itis is the direct result of a dangerously low sense of presence. With remote-itis, people may be members of a virtual team, but their communication is not rich enough to let them feel, see and sense that they are a team, when virtual. When anyone on your team says that the only time they feel like a team is when they are in the same place together, you know you have a significant problem with lack of presence.

What communication pitfalls make virtual teams feel a lack of presence?

- Most of the communication is one-way, such as through e-mail. E-mail lacks the presence of voice. E-mail also lacks the presence of warm interaction with others.
- In conference calls, the leader does most of the talking. The meeting lacks the presence of vibrant interaction with other team members' voices.
- In conference calls, we hear other team members, but we do not know their faces. Maybe we have never met them face to face, so we have no image to personalize the voice.
- In conference calls, someone asks, "Do you have any questions?" There is silence,

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Donald D. Davis and Karen A. Polonko: "Telework 2001 Summary," <http://www.telecommute.org/telework/twa2001.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Special research study published by the National Business Travel Association in 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Executive Summary: Third Annual U.S. Business Travel Survey of Major North American Corporations: Business Travel Coalition, October 6, 2003.

<sup>10</sup> Meetings in America V: Meeting of the Minds: MCI Conferencing: <http://e-meetings.mci.com/meetingsinamerica/pdf/MIA5.pdf>

which reinforces a lack of the team's presence in the meeting. We wonder who is paying attention or if anyone is still on the call.

- In video conference meetings, some people are in rooms, and others are only able to link by phone. The people around the table feel a team presence, but the person dialing in by phone is relegated to just "listening in." The people around the table do not feel the dial-in person's presence, and subsequently ignore him or her in the meeting.
- A team member has an urgent need to collaborate with a distant team member. But there is no way to know if the distant teammate is present at his or her desk and available for collaboration. So the team member sends an email. No response. Then the team member makes a phone call, and gets voice mail. No response. The result? Collaboration doesn't happen, and trust breaks down.

The good news is that presence, when virtual, doesn't have to be this way.

## Spontaneity in same-site teams

The second factor that creates synergy is spontaneity. Creativity isn't produced on a schedule. Problems don't appear when you want them to. Challenges won't wait for the next scheduled team meeting. All of these happen *in the moment*. Equally as important, they need to be resolved *in the moment*. Delaying the resolution to a later time loses the spark and urgency of the moment.

It is very easy for same-site teams to communicate spontaneously with each other. Early same-site teams were located in close proximity for one clear reason: So that informal interaction happened throughout the day. There is a well-known communication theory that if people pass within eight feet of each other, and if they have a need to communicate, they will. So a walk down the hall to the water cooler could result in a chance meeting or quick conversation about work. That conversation could be complete in itself, or it could launch further collaboration in the moment.

Spontaneous meetings also occur at the team level. Because all same-site team members are present in that location, a peek over the cubicle or down the hall would let us know who was at his or her desk. In minutes, the entire team could take a few steps to the small meeting room down the hall. Together, the entire team can informally work the issues, make decisions, and get aligned on the solution. Same-site teams don't have to wait for the next scheduled meeting, but instead are designed to respond instantly as teams. And every time they did, synergy grew.

## Spontaneity challenges in virtual teams

A key differentiator of virtual teams is a severe drop in spontaneous communication. The heart of effective teamwork is collaboration. The problem is that virtual teams have an almost impossible environment for spontaneous collaboration. There is no virtual water cooler. Outside of planned encounters, the spontaneous ones rarely occur. As a result, collaborative meetings have to be planned, or they just don't happen.

The pressure for high performance is greater for today's teams than ever before, and the inability to connect spontaneously is a huge void. Spontaneous access to each other is THE major way same-site teams reach high performance. When virtual teams have an urgent need to connect with each other, they get caught in the ineffective alternatives: desperate e-mails, excited voice mails, and other frantic attempts to connect in real time across distance. The inability to reach each other in a timely way breaks trust and teamwork every time.

The spontaneous communication that is lacking in typical virtual teams includes:

- What virtual team members are available for collaboration right now?
- What technology does my team member have available to use with me for collaboration right now?
- How can I show that I am available to collaborate with others?

- How can I let my virtual teammates know that I need uninterrupted time?
- How can I send an instant message and get a quick response to a brief question from a distant teammate?
- How can we quickly call a spontaneous meeting of the entire virtual team?
- If I am working on a document and need to collaborate, how can I quickly connect with the right person(s) for a collaborative meeting?

Spontaneous communication, when virtual, doesn't have to be this way.

## Rich collaboration environment in same-site teams

The third factor that creates synergy is a rich collaborative environment. Whatever the level of collaboration that is needed, teams naturally rely on an array of choices that give them what they need for optimal interaction and results. The choices need to be convenient, powerful and flexible. And they need to be available throughout the day, so people can connect informally and interact effectively.

One of the richest parts of a same-site environment is being able to see each others' nonverbal cues. As humans, we seek feedback from each other's faces and other body language. Non-verbal communication is a very comfortable way for us to exchange messages beyond words alone. Body language lets us know if we are interrupting someone from work, or how they feel about a suggestion we are offering.

Another major part of the rich collaboration environment is the meeting space in which the team works. Whether the team needs to use a flip chart or just talk around the table, the meeting space is designed for rich team interaction. Whatever is needed to help people interact and reach consensus is close at hand. The team can choose among flip charts, highlighters, laptop connections, a projector, projection screen, TV or video equipment, and other tools. It can also

include a door to close off outside distractions. Some meeting rooms add warmth with plants, posters and wallpaper.

Individuals also have many choices of meeting space. It may be enough to walk by someone's desk, exchange a few words and have the collaboration that you need. At other times, they may want to use a meeting room, or even leave the office altogether. The important point is that collaboration occurs at many levels, and people naturally use the environment that is best for that specific interaction.

### Rich collaboration environment challenges in virtual teams

Most virtual teams struggle to create a rich collaboration environment. The technology exists today for outstanding collaboration from afar. Virtual teams can choose video conferencing, Web conferencing, audio conferencing and instant meeting technology. But most fall into predictable patterns that keep them from collaborating at the level they need for next-generation virtual teamwork.

The four most common traps that limit a virtual team's ability to collaborate effectively from a distance are:

1. **Conference call meetings.** Teams that meet by conference call alone communicate with 80 percent fewer cues than same-site teams. Yet a large share of today's virtual leaders still meet via conference call technology alone. Conference call technology is an essential part of all virtual team meetings, but it should be combined with other rich media offerings that raise the communication and collaboration value of the meeting.

2. **Uneven access to meeting cues.** If one group meets around a table, and another team member links in from afar, the virtual team exchanges uneven meeting cues. The people around the meeting table are communicating with face-to-face cues, but the person linked by phone can't see the meeting documents, gauge nonverbal reaction of teammates, or enjoy an equal chance to speak. In this day and age, no one should ever feel they are not a full participant in the meeting.

3. **Using the rich collaboration environments poorly.** Some teams actively use video, Web and audio conference technologies, but the meetings are not interactive. Virtual meetings must go 50 percent faster than face-to-face meetings, and leaders need to learn new skills that leverage the power of technology to speed problem solving, decision-making and overall collaboration on issues. The solution is not about how to operate technology. Today's technologies are so intuitive that people can use many of their features with minimal instruction. The differentiator is learning the human dynamics that make online meetings fantastic.

4. **Collaboration by e-mail.** Because there are no other options, many virtual teams try to collaborate by e-mail. The problem is that e-mail is too slow, and it is not designed to do what many people are using it for. Instant messaging is a rich collaboration environment for rapid collaboration by text, or escalation to an instant collaborative meeting environment when needed.

Rich media collaboration, when virtual, doesn't have to be this way.

### The Look and Feel of Rich, Spontaneous Collaboration

Polycom-enabled Windows Messenger (WM) is the centerpiece of enabling rich, spontaneous collaboration for virtual teams. In a comfortable, nonintrusive way, Polycom-enabled WM allows team members to be aware of each other's presence and availability for collaboration. It even shows device presence, so distant teammates can connect in the richest way. With a simple click of the mouse, team members can collaborate spontaneously with each other. That collaboration can be a spontaneous exchange of instant messages, or it can range all the way up to a spontaneous video, audio and Web meeting with the entire virtual team.

Windows Messenger technology is so ubiquitous and easy to use, even people that work in the same location take advantage of its convenience and power. The online meeting

room is always available and powered with essential collaborative tools that match the meeting with the media needed for highest levels of collaboration.

Let's look at the look and feel of team collaboration in the new model:

### 1. Polycom-Enabled Windows Messenger (WM) is the Centerpiece of Spontaneous Presence

For years, researchers in virtual team collaboration have been searching for a nonintrusive way to give virtual teams a presence with each other, from afar. Researchers initially put overhead cameras pointing at the coffee stations and overhead cameras scanning cubicles at distant sites. But people reacted negatively to the "big brother" feeling both of these methods created. People felt their privacy was invaded. No one wants a camera from a distant site looking at them throughout an entire day. People also resisted this approach because their conversations could be overheard by others in distant locations. Overwhelmingly, people wanted cameras only after permission was granted. The most important reason why this approach failed, however, is that it didn't create greater collaboration across distance.

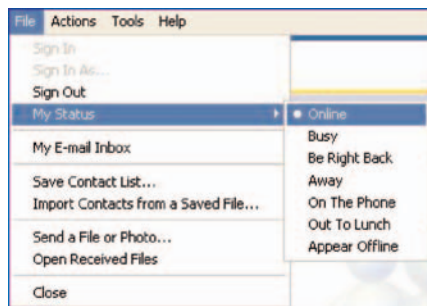
Polycom-enabled WM, however, is an enormous breakthrough that really works for virtual teams. The Polycom-enabled WM window gives virtual team members a way to establish a team presence and individual presence in a comfortable, nonintrusive way—by icon. The Windows Messenger design is nonintrusive because each team member controls which people are included in his or her WM buddy list. Also, each team member controls his or her availability for collaboration. Polycom-enabled Windows Messenger enables four levels of presence for virtual teams. Each is important in creating an environment for spontaneous collaboration. Each sets up an environment that is only one click away from collaboration.

**Team Presence.** Each virtual team can have presence as a group. Within that group are instant links to any or all of the people in your buddy list. You can see who is online and who is not. You can instantly tell who is at lunch or who will be right back.

**Individual Presence.** You can add individuals to your buddy list, as well. So if your virtual team crosses corporations, those virtual teammates can be added to specific teams or as individuals on your buddy list.

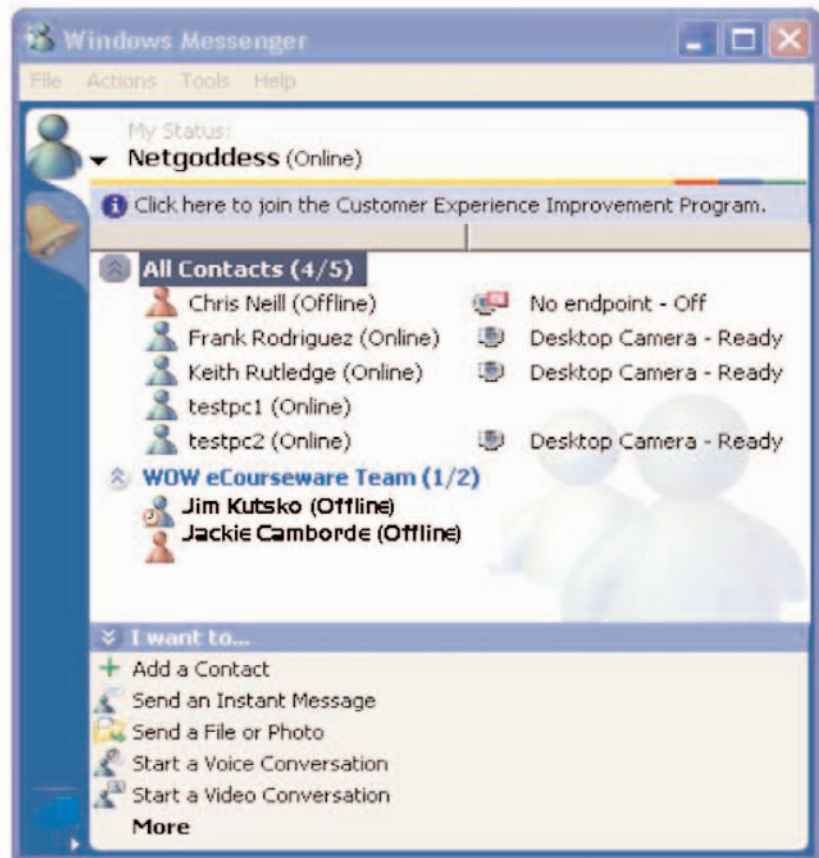
**Device Presence.** Device presence makes it easy to connect to one another through rich media. In other words, if your desktop computer has a desktop camera (active) and the person you want to collaborate with also has a camera, you are one click away from having a desktop video conference with each other, rather than just a phone call. If you move to the small meeting room down the hall, a quick drop-down menu or the “auto detect” feature in IM lets you and others link with whatever devices are available at that moment.

**Your Presence.** You also have complete control over how other virtual team members “see” you, as well. A simple drop-down menu lets you flag your availability to distant others. In one click, you can signal, for example, that you are “Online,” “On the Phone,” “Out to Lunch,” among other cues. Highly effective virtual teams change this menu throughout the day.



## 2. Meet Spontaneously

No longer does a virtual team member need to wonder if a distant teammate is available for spontaneous collaboration. Polycom-enabled WM makes it very easy for virtual team members, or entire virtual teams, to enter

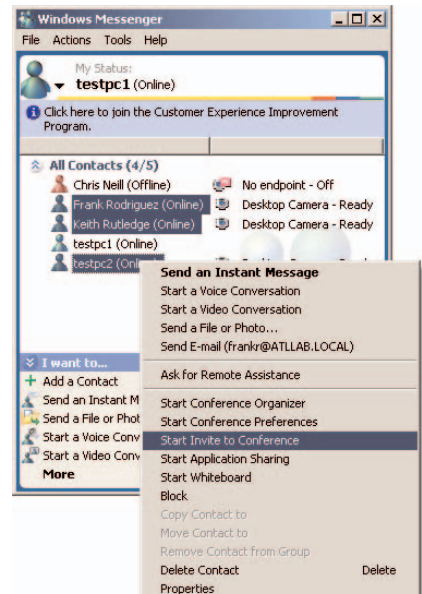
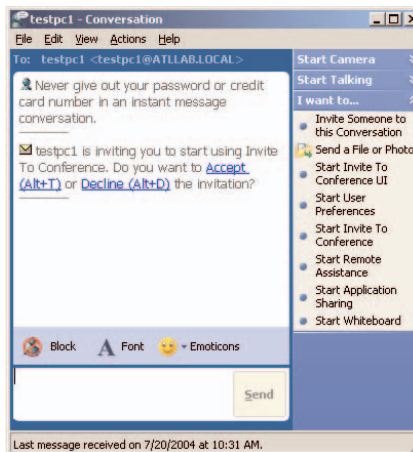


into spontaneous collaboration. Spontaneous meetings are only a click or two away from anywhere, anytime.

WM doesn't offer just one way to enter into collaboration. Rather, it offers many, and each makes team collaboration quick and easy. Virtual team members can enter into spontaneous collaboration from the Polycom-enabled WM buddy list, the Actions

menu, or the WM “I Want To” menu. It is easy and fast to select all names in the entire team, or just one or two people. Then, a simple right click opens a menu that leads the team directly into a spontaneous meeting.

If a virtual team member is working on an application and needs to collaborate spontaneously with one or several distant teammates, he or she can access Polycom-



enabled WM's spontaneous power directly from the application. It is not necessary to quit the application or even go to a different screen. A right click from the application is all that is needed to get collaboration going.

Highly effective virtual teams set clear and purposeful norms related to spontaneous communication in Polycom-enabled WM. Those norms articulate the kind of communication that the team considers spontaneous and appropriate for this powerful technology.

### 3. Hold a Rich Media Collaborative Session

Rich media conferencing gives virtual teams an array of choices for collaboration. Meet with one person or many, in exciting new ways. In fact, the toughest challenge is choosing the right media for the virtual team meeting—instant message, video, voice or data. And the best part of all, these components are accessible individually or in combination through the Web.

#### Instant Message

Some collaboration requires only a quick check of a fact, quick response to a question, or one- sentence response. These are the kind of quick collaboration messages that people typically exchange at the water cooler or by stopping at each other's desk for a moment. Instant messaging lets virtual team members

exchange quick text responses in real time. Different than e-mail, instant messaging is much more informal and short. It is typically written in short bursts—often in phrases, sprinkled with abbreviations, and short one- and two-sentence responses. Sometimes messages go back and forth several times.

If instant messaging doesn't produce the needed result, it is very easy for the virtual teammates to choose a richer collaborative environment. A simple right click in Polycom-enabled WM lets them continue interacting, but in a more robust environment.

#### Video

Virtual teams typically spend 90 to 95 percent of their time apart. They may be used to all of the e-mails and conference calls, but they are starved for richer communication. In the vacuum of voices and words, they want richer ways to connect on a human level. They don't want to be cut out of being a full participant in the meeting if they can't get to a video conference room. They want more flexibility in bringing everyone, everywhere into view and fully participating in the video conference. Now they can. Polycom-enabled WM makes it very easy for individuals or entire teams to enjoy video conferencing, anytime, anywhere.

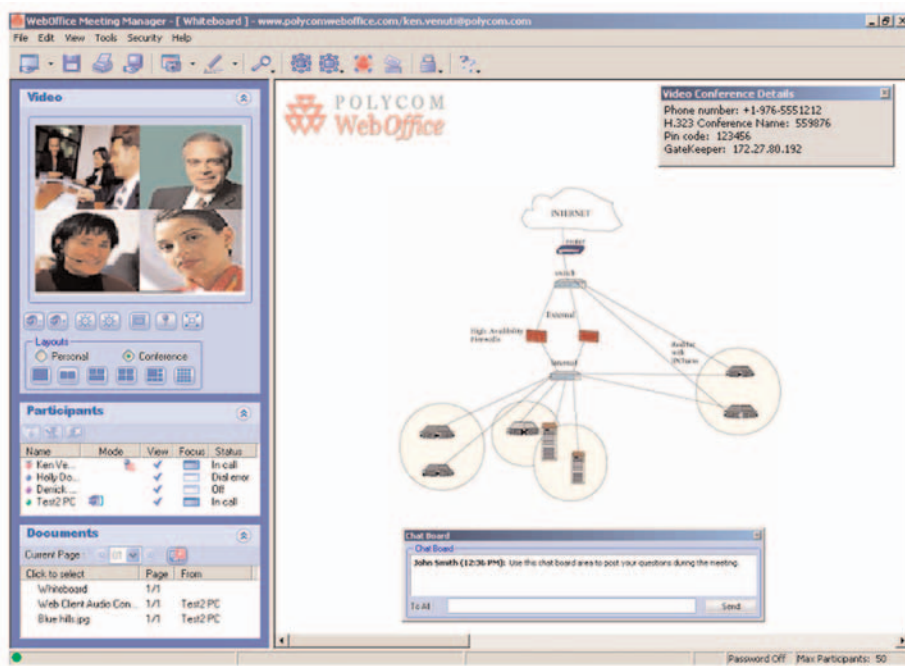
When virtual teams collaborate, they want to see the faces and reactions of other team members. Now virtual team members can see live video images not only of people in the familiar video conference rooms, but also live video of people linking from the desktop. Whether members of the virtual team are mobile or in a traditional office building, everyone can enjoy participating in a live video conference together. The video images can be configured in a corner of the eMeeting window, or expanded to full screen. Best of all, video conferencing is very easy for anyone to use.

But the video doesn't stop with team meetings. Individuals collaborating across distance are no longer restricted to phone conversations. They can video conference from the desktop, too. Since the video phone was introduced at the World's Fair in 1964, people have been fascinated by the idea of being able to talk on the phone and see the individual as she or he talks with you. Now Polycom-enabled WM brings this reality to virtual teams. The one-to-one live video is an exciting new alternative that lets virtual team members feel closer to one another and create warmer relationships. Since so many virtual teams today have little to no travel, the one-to-one video capability gives them a powerful way to be more real to each other. The results are better relationships, better human communication, and greater frequency of collaboration across distance.

#### Voice

Internet phone has come of age. No longer do you have to arrange your audio conference separately from your video or data conference. In Polycom-enabled WM's Conference Organizer, virtual teams can set up the system to dial out, or have people dial in to your rich media meeting—automatically! Because it uses an Internet phone, configured into Polycom-enabled WM, when you enter your rich media meeting the audio is there!

Once in the meeting, virtual teams can use the Polycom-enabled WM to control the mute function, so no hold music puts a virtual team meeting on hold.



## Data Conferencing

No longer is any virtual team member excluded from viewing live documents, sharing applications, or participating in the virtual meeting. Whether the team member is linking from home, airport, or traditional office, the data conference lets everyone be on the same page.

A picture is worth 1,000 words. Data conferencing lets a virtual team create whiteboards, import slides, share applications, go Web surfing together, and so much more.

Polycom-enabled WM's interactive meeting features enable virtual teams to use polling, annotations and chat to speed problem solving, decision-making and results. There is even a powerful whiteboard with all the tools a virtual team needs to create diagrams, flow charts and other illustrations. Best of all, the documents can be saved—with annotations—as team records.

## Summary

Rather than spending time trying to find a time to collaborate, Polycom-enabled Windows Messenger (WM) gives virtual teams a much faster and more effective way to interact spontaneously, from afar. The Achilles' heel of virtual teams has been the inability to have rich, spontaneous collaboration. As a result, virtual teams weren't real teams. Instead, they were individuals or separate sites that worked on the same projects, but did not truly work together across sites.

Polycom-enabled WM gives virtual teams powerful new ways to connect and collaborate in real time. Because Polycom-enabled WM is so easy to use, virtual teams embrace its power and use it often. Polycom-enabled WM provides an exciting and essential new platform for team collaboration that revolutionizes virtual teamwork. Now, instead of spending time trying to get connected, a new generation of virtual teams uses Polycom-enabled WM to collaborate in record-breaking time. Because of the array of rich media technology, virtual teams can choose the right media for the meeting with a simple right click. They can select video, voice, data, instant messaging—

individually or in combination with each other. In fact, these choices are so easy and powerful that even same-site teams use and benefit from them. The result is interaction velocity that gives your virtual teams a distinct competitive edge.

With solid norms for how to use Polycom-enabled WM to speed teamwork across sites, virtual teams collaborate at significantly higher levels than they did without it. In fact, this new Polycom-enabled WM platform is so effective in improving virtual team collaboration that the only barrier left to virtual teams may be time zones.

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