

Presence Management Evolves to Deliver Even Greater Business Value

Presence Management redefines how executives are reached in the business world. Now presence itself is once again redefined. In addition to typical interfaces available over the PC or laptop, executives can now update their presence status on smart phones such as the Apple® iPhone®, Google™ Android™, Blackberry® and Windows® Smart Phones. All that is needed to integrate these phones with your corporate Unified Communications (UC) system is a simple application that is easily downloaded to the phones. The application will enable users to change Presence Management settings right through their personal devices.

Why is Presence Management so valuable to the business world? Think about the value of GPS to a driver. Through GPS, a driver's location can be tracked and then the driver can be sent information on traffic patterns that save them time and money. With Presence Management, an executive's location and status can be determined in real-time, and important information can be sent and received to that person in the format that is most convenient at that moment, saving even more time and money.

Presence can change not only the way your business communicates; it can enhance and streamline your entire organizational structure. For internal calls, you can check on someone's status before making the effort to place the call. For outside callers, the system can redirect calls to other extensions, outside numbers, cell phones, or any other way that the employee in question wants to be reached. And employees can tailor messages to update the caller as to their current status, and how they can best be reached.

With the right product, the Presence Management application should integrate with the user's phone calendar. By simply setting an appointment through the phone, presence status can be updated. Users can select status options such as "Office," "Meeting," "Lunch," or "Away on Business." They can also create their own customized locations based upon their preferences. Through "Find Me/Follow Me" when a call comes into the corporate phone system, it can be routed to wherever the user specifies, including desk phone, cell phone, voicemail or any number specified. Calls can be routed based on caller ID and unique ringtones can also alert the user as to where the inbound call is coming from.

Presence Management in Action

The robust productivity benefits offered by Presence Management make the deployment effort very worthwhile. Imagine an executive at her son's ballgame. Three calls come into her extension from the corporate PBX. One of the calls involves a corporate housekeeping issue. The system does not recognize the inbound caller ID as a priority number, so the call is routed to voicemail. The second call is recognized as important. The caller is given a custom message stating that the executive cannot take a call, but to please send an IM. The executive handles the conversation discretely, while not missing a single important moment of the game.

When the game ends, the executive uses her smart phone to update her status to available, right as the third call comes in from a very important client. She takes the call and has effectively maintained a working business presence throughout the day even while not in the office.



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Now consider this example: Imagine a customer sending an urgent email to place a supply order at the last minute. The employee who receives the email is away on vacation, but through text-to-speech, the employee listens to his or her email right on a smart phone. The employee dials into the corporate system and — through Presence Management — locates an employee who can help resolve the issue. That person is dialed at his or her current location. There is a question about the order, so the second employee uses IM to contact a sales manager who is in a meeting. The sales manager answers the question over IM, allowing the order to be completed.

The employee on vacation is notified by the smart phone that the customer's order has been placed. The employee leaves a message to the client that the order has been processed successfully. If it is more convenient, the employee could also send an email right from the smart phone. From the customer's perspective, they never knew that their sales contact was on vacation. All they know — or care about — is that their order was processed seamlessly.

Through their smart phone, a user can review the presence status of every employee within their organization, making it a great tool for setting up meetings and conference calls. Businesses used to commonly refer to the "water cooler effect" as the productivity boost that occurs when workers unintentionally bump into each other throughout the day and happen to exchange progress reports and remind each other about deadlines and deliverables. The new paradigm is known as the "presence effect,"¹ where Presence Management increases the productivity of today's mobile workers to a level previously unknown at the water cooler.

Presence Management is an offering every company should make available to every employee who is not chained to a desk. When selecting a vendor, interoperability is essential. The vendor should support mobile access to Presence Management on all of the popular smart phones. You want your employees to be able to access the best Presence Management has to offer, including Find Me/Follow Me, speech recognition and text-to-speech applications. That capability will energize your mobile workforce, and enable them to access the full breadth of presence advantages from anywhere.

¹ Christopher Glenn, "This Isn't Your Father's Telecommuting," *The Seamless Enterprise*, (April 07, 2009), <http://seamlessenterprise.com/collaboration/this-isn%e2%80%99t-your-father%e2%80%99s-telecommuting/>



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