



A New Way to Work

Thought Leadership Series
Part 1: A New Way to Work

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Foreword

This is the first in a series of white papers about how to engage deeply with employees, partners, and customers in an increasingly virtual world.

ferrazzigreenlight

At Unify, we've been working on amping up the productivity of teams for some time. We've spent the last couple of years researching everything about how business teams perform – especially those teams with members on the road, in another office, or across the world. We've surveyed, spent countless hours watching the way people work, consumed volumes of research, and interviewed hundreds of thought leaders, academics, executives and front-line staff.

Our quest: to crack the code on how to embrace the realities of mobile/global business without compromising the secret sauce of business innovation and competitiveness: collaboration – true, genuine, sum of the parts exceeding the whole, inspiring, engaging collaboration.

We started out by teaming with the inspired minds of Frog Design, master innovators of user experience. They helped us study the way people really work and how they use – or don't use – today's collaboration and communication tools. Two things became immediately apparent. First, that we need to revolutionize the user experience with these tools so they augment the way people want to work. Second, we need to help the business community understand and capitalize on the new way to work.

To get our arms around the latter challenge, we partnered with Keith Ferrazzi and the team at the Ferrazzi Greenlight Institute to understand the management and behavioral aspects of teaming. Keith famously ties his work on building relationships through generosity and candor to a hard look at the new rules of

leading dispersed team in an increasingly virtual world. They helped us engage some of the brightest minds in business to study and articulate the behavioral and management “rules” for the new way to work.

Of course, we brought a few things to the table ourselves: our 160 year history as an innovator in the field of communications; a string of industry firsts, including the first comprehensive unified communications application; and the experience of being a global innovator serving 75% of the global Fortune 500.

From the technology side, you'll see the fruits of our effort soon: a revolutionary fabric for communication and information code-named Project Ansible. But that's not all. The research has made it very clear that technology alone won't improve teaming in most businesses. We need to think about the way we'll use emerging technologies, how they affect process, how to manage a virtual team or virtual enterprise, and how we can help teams adopt the behaviors that result in compelling collaborations.

This paper is the first in a series intended to share the vast knowledge we've gained about team performance and the human and technical aspects to mastery. If we've done our work well, you'll come out of this with a blueprint for achieving greater engagement of customers, partners and employees throughout your organization.

We sincerely hope you find the information in these papers valuable, and we welcome your comments, questions and ideas.

A New Way to Work

This white paper introduces the critical topic of Engagement - for employees, partners and customers; discusses why engagement is vital to enterprise performance; and lays the groundwork for subsequent papers diving deeper into the technology, behavior and management practices that define a new way to work in today's mobile, global, distributed business environment.

In the aftermaths of hurricane katrina and gale-force globalization, a vision of engagement

The stakes were high when the interoperability architect for the CIO of the army arrived in New Orleans with General Russell Honoré, newly appointed Commander of the Joint Task Force Katrina. It was two days after the Category 5 hurricane made landfall, with an area nearly the size of the United Kingdom (90,000 square miles) declared part of the disaster zone. The communications infrastructure throughout the region was "not simply degraded; it was, at least for a period of time, destroyed¹." In order to turn around what was widely believed to be a poorly coordinated performance by the state and local agencies and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the architect and Honoré depended on being able to leverage the communications equipment brought in by various first responder organizations.

They had just 72 hours to figure how to converge 54 agencies and make it possible to communicate and collaborate. What he

is reluctant to say, but is clearly stated in the government's Katrina postmortems, is that those systems were largely not designed to be interoperable. It is a testament to his skills that he was able to come up with creative ways to connect the systems and get the task done, and Honoré is generally credited with bringing order to chaos.

The lessons learned from Katrina provided invaluable perspective, a vision of how team collaboration should work. We sought out the interoperability architect who worked diligently behind the scenes as a contributor in our effort to bring greater connection and engagement to collaboration. Beyond the clear and urgent need to simply connect all the communication threads in New Orleans, he recognized the importance of communicating only what's relevant to the recipient's situation at hand, eliminating the irrelevant and avoiding information overload. "How can we deliver the right content to the right people, to the right place and device?" he asked. "How can I ensure that the communication and the collaboration is concise and that it's relevant based on a persona?"

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¹ <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/DIME/documents/Hurricane%20Katrina%20Communications%20&%20Infrastructure%20Impacts.pdf>

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The challenge of collaboration in an increasingly virtual world

The knowledge that the interoperability architect – and others like him – bring to the table is invaluable now, with hurricane-force currents brewing in the global economy to lend similar urgency to the enablement of collaboration in our increasingly virtual world.

Increasingly, we are remote, mobile, and distributed. More and more companies are lowering operating and infrastructure costs and increasing flexibility by minimizing fixed office spaces. Where teams were once collocated and met face-to-face daily “at work”, work today is an activity – not a place. Virtual teams are assembled ad hoc from around the globe based on skills, knowledge, and varying labor costs. Teams form and reform with great speed, not along the lines of an organization chart or even a management matrix, but across multiple functions and even among multiple organizations.

By the year 2015, an additional three hundred million mobile workers will join the one billion currently active in the global workforce. Those 1.3 billion virtual team members, International Data Corporation (IDC) claims, will be a driving force in productivity gains worldwide² ... presuming we can help them be more productive than many are today. A May 2013 McKinsey study says the growing share of social networking and communication channels used to co-create products and conduct business is a dominant (IT)-enabled trend for the next decade³.

This wide proliferation of disparate communication options creates its own challenges. Expectations are high. Surely the power of communities formed around multimedia communications technology – experienced by users through easy yet powerful smart phones and tablets, intuitive social networks and consumer video – can collapse the physical and emotional distance between group members, just as Facebook does in the personal realm. On the other hand, how do you deal productively with the onslaught of public and private social media outlets, text messages, instant messages, emails, voicemails, documents, phone calls, audio conferences, shared workspaces, web conferences, video conferences – and the list goes on. Just checking in once a day ... can take all day. The proliferation of disparate communications has too often created a complex, fragmented and overwhelming mess for users to manage – in many cases hindering collaboration and productivity.

The core qualities that solidify team performance – trust, commitment, engagement, communication, accountability and results – are unchanged. And that makes the urgency of meeting the many challenges clear. Karen Sobel-Lojeski’s quantitative analysis shows that virtual teams with what she calls high “virtual distance” – separated physically, operationally, and through lack of affinity – suffer a 90 percent drop in innovation effectiveness, more than 80 percent plunge in trust, and 60 percent decline in finishing projects on time and within budget, among other negative effects⁴.

We can’t put the mobility genie back in the bottle – and none of us would choose to do so. We simply must find a way to overcome virtual distance.

² Worldwide Mobile Worker Population 2011-2015, International Data Corporation, Mobile Enterprise Group research.

³ http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/high_tech_telecoms_internet/ten_it-enabled_business_trends_for_the_decade_ahead

⁴ Uniting the Virtual Workforce: Transforming Leadership and Innovation in the Globally Integrated Enterprise, by Karen Sobel Lojeski and Richard R. Reilly, published by Wiley, April, 2008

Choose to thrive with high engagement of employees, partners, and customers

Achieving high engagement changes everything.

A highly engaged enterprise is that one that rises above bombardment by messages and work artifacts to rich and meaningful conversations that advance ideas and productivity.

Conversations supporting the current step of a business process include all the disparate media from email to documents to video. They maintain continuity across the entire workflow or series of meetings, beginning with an opening recap, like the voiceover at the beginning of a television show to remind you where you are in the series. Rich audio and video and a simple user interface allow team members to engage with each other almost as naturally as if they were in the same room, increasing engagement and easing adoption across the enterprise and your business network.

Going beyond explicit knowledge to nourishing what's implicit

A highly engaged enterprise gets transformational boost via a new way of working that goes beyond today's management of explicit knowledge (documents, data) to better manage and leverage the up to 95 percent of organizational knowledge that is implicit (in people's heads, often limited to certain teams and projects, and surfacing only during conversations). The potential power is clear. The highly engaged enterprise nourishes advancement of this implicit knowledge by simplifying ongoing conversations that are nothing less than the primary vehicle for shaping and advancing ideas.

Beyond capturing, unifying, and orchestrating the next development of these conversations and narratives, the highly engaged organization makes sure these multi-channel, multi-platform conversations are not confined in a few people's heads. Transcription and filtering makes ideas easily searchable and makes it simple for others to contribute to their further development.

Simplifying the leverage of both explicit and implicit knowledge as it continues to develop supercharges a range of activities. Applying the guideposts, continuity and self-correction inherent in this new way of work is advantageous in almost everything you do collaboratively in the workplace.

Engaged conversations bolster existing structured workflows, such as those powered by enterprise requirements planning (ERP) and business process management (BPM) programs. Highly engaged conversations also vitalize everyday unstructured collaboration you'd never pour into a workflow container – such as:

- Departmental meetings
- Ongoing collaborative problem-solving sessions
- Brainstorming sessions
- Ad-hoc problem-solving confabs
- Stand-up meetings
- Ad-hoc interactions with customers
- Project progress reviews.

In both structured and unstructured collaborative work, achieving high engagement will benefit the three key stakeholder groups common to all global organizations: customers, employees and partners/suppliers. Where to start?

Of the three key stakeholder groups, you must engage and get commitment from employees before you can cascade the impact of engagement to the others. Let's start, then, with employees.

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Increasing Engagement with Key Stakeholders: Employees, Partners, and Customers

In an increasingly virtual world, the connection between employee engagement and an effective engagement platform results from the profound impact of technology that can facilitate human connections and trust.

Employees

Increasingly, organization executives are absorbing the findings from a range of scientific disciplines that show:

- Increasing employee engagement improves performance
- Deploying a highly engaged workforce can significantly lift productivity and reduce costsⁱⁱ.

But what is engagement and how do you measure it? Like many key performance indicators, a rather sophisticated calculation stands behind the concept, but it boils down to this:

- Engaged employees love their jobs, believe in their employer, and have a positive influence on the company's performance.
- Disengaged employees look at their jobs as trading time for dollars.
- Actively disengaged employees demonstrate, in word and deed, their dislike of their jobs and/or employer.

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Partners and suppliers

The kinds of processes and measures that bind employees to each other in everyday work are almost identical to organizational collaborations with external "departments" that make the work flow, i.e., partner organizations and suppliers.

Think about it for a second. When you have a meeting intended to share project management information or to engage in ad-hoc problem solving with an external partner, if you're doing it in a healthy, productive way, it should work the same as the process of collaborating with internal resources. The functional difference between working with employees, contractors, external partners, and vendors to whom you outsource work should be negligible if you're truly collaborating effectively. If you want to win in the globalized reality, you need the cost-cutting advantages of outsourcing, but not at the cost of friction-filled collaboration.

An engagement platform delivers the foundation that lets you replicate the level of shared culture that came more naturally when your organization sourced all functions internally. For vendors

managing functions that were never logical choices for internal management, you can infuse an unprecedented level of accountability and team responsibility by inviting suppliers and procurement partners directly into regular meetings that focus on their areas of expertise.

Customers

Engagement Increases Customer Satisfaction (and Retention of Customer-Facing Employees). You already know that, in an important transaction, customers given a choice will almost always choose to do business with people over equipment. Even if it's great equipment. Even if they don't have to listen carefully on your help line because your menu options haven't changed.

In addition, all else being equal, customers will choose to listen to the nuanced value proposition of a salesperson they know and like over someone they don't. Having a good relationship often leads to winning business.

Having an excellent relationship with someone in your organization also makes customers more likely to stick with you through the occasional non-excellent experience with your organization.

As you'll see throughout this white paper, there are a host of ad-hoc, non-structured customer touch points at which a highly engaged organization can seize a strong competitive advantage.

Such creative, difference-making practices are only feasible with a true engagement platform as a backbone to the culture and processes that guide the "how-to" rules of a highly engaged organization.

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The Characteristics of a Highly Engaged Enterprise

Five of Gallup's 12 engagement factors relate directly to outcomes that we can affect significantly with our new rules of engagement in an increasingly virtual world.

An iceberg lies beneath the surface of each one, but let's mark them carefully for just that reason: the three characteristics an organization must exhibit if they are to reap the benefits of a highly engaged organization are to:

- Measure engagement
- Implement more engaging communications
- Follow the rules of engagement in an increasingly virtual world.

Measure engagement

You can only improve what you can measure. The generally acknowledged authority on measuring employee engagement is Gallup. Gallup's methodology for measuring engagement is also a roadmap of specific, actionable levers with which companies can boost engagement. In their 12 Dimensions of Employee Engagement⁵, Gallup establishes that engaged employees:

1. Know what is expected of them at work
2. Have the materials and equipment needed to do their jobs right
3. Have the opportunity to do what they do best every day
4. Receive recognition or praise for good work on a weekly basis
5. Feel that their supervisor (or someone else at work) cares about them as a person

6. Have someone who encourages their development
7. Feel that their opinions count
8. Feel their jobs contribute to the organization's mission or purpose
9. Believe their co-workers are committed to doing quality work
10. Have a best friend at work
11. Have had someone talk with them about their progress every six months or so
12. Have had opportunities to learn and grow within a given year.

Just to show that there's a method to our madness: Five of Gallup's 12 engagement factors (numbers 1, 3, 4, 5, and 9) relate directly to outcomes that we can affect significantly with our new rules of engagement in an increasingly virtual world. Another two (numbers 2 and 10) are almost certain to be positively impacted by more engaging communications. The remainders are likely occurrences in an enterprise that puts both the appropriate rules and communication in place to become a highly engaged enterpriseⁱⁱⁱ.

In a future white paper we'll delineate some of the metrics that track the success of individual applications of greater engagement for specific business processes.

Implement more engaging communications

Which brings us to the next characteristic: implementing more engaging communications.

Melanie Turek, Vice President, Research at Frost & Sullivan, has seen the impact of moving to more engaging communications technology for team collaboration firsthand as an employee who has worked from home for 25 years for various companies.

The notion of more engaging communications in a highly engaged enterprise can be spelled out in the details of what analyst Geoffrey Moore, noted technology guru and Managing Director of TCG Advisors, christened “systems of engagement.” Such systems must:

1. Communicate needed information based on business context
2. Expand communication to internal and external social networks
3. Foster and capture rich, multi-way conversations
4. Orchestrate access to a multitude of media types, information, and people
5. Operate at the real-world/real-time speed of conversations
6. Aggregate multi-channel networks with the reliability of dial tone
7. Seamlessly embrace new, non-structured types of data and information
8. Apply a richer social orientation
9. Add intelligence to filter, summarize, and act on events
10. Bring the delight of simplicity to communications.

Rather than bog down further yet in details, we’ll continue to set the broader table and refer you to our upcoming white papers on the technology infrastructure required for success in deploying an engaging communication platform as well as a specific instance of an engagement system.

Follow the rules of engagement in an increasingly virtual world

The third requirement to become a highly engaged enterprise is to apply new “people rules” for an increasingly virtual world. The interconnection – business is about relationships, and relationships start with conversations – becomes very clear in our hard look at what it takes to get dispersed teams to engage with the trust and candor required for real productivity in this now quite virtual world.

You can follow the Keith Ferrazzi series in Harvard Business Review on which these rules are based, but here’s the gist of it.

1. Get the size, structure and personnel right for your virtual teams.
2. Human relationships make or break virtual teams.
3. Start virtual meetings with personal/professional check-ins.
4. The mindsets of generosity, intimacy, candor, and accountability deepen engagement, improve trust.
5. Virtual teams thrive on trust and fall apart through virtual miscommunication.
6. Kick-start virtual teams with Relationship Action Plans.
7. Keep virtual teams on the reward side of the fear-reward seesaw.
8. Speak the right language, amplify the signal, fight the illusion of transparency.
9. Don’t allow multitasking, limit “mute,” and encourage video.

Clearly, we have our work cut out for us to make sure we’re as effective when engaging remotely as we are when face-to-face, but the effort will be well worth it. Beyond the cost savings from better orchestration of that collaboration, the upside of shifting just 10 percent of your distributed workforce from disengaged to engaged can take your organization from average business results to world class. Now, that’s a highly engaging proposition.

“The one thing that’s the hardest to fix is: I don’t know who any of these people are. I don’t see them. I don’t talk to them in the hallways. And with social, that has changed dramatically... Now, when I see them in person or when I get a request from them, I have a real connection to them.”

Melanie Turek, Vice President, Research at Frost & Sullivan

i Worldwide Mobile Worker Population 2011-2015, International Data Corporation, Mobile Enterprise Group research.

ii Harvard Business Review Analytic Study 2013.

iii The remaining five processes (#1, #3, #4, #6 & #12) are all factors dependent on management choices independent of technology or workflow.

Next in the New Way to Work thought leaders series:

Rules of Engagement in a Virtual World. Keith Ferrazzi shares best practices for putting together, leading and managing distributed teams to produce results.

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Unify is one of the world's leading communications software and services firms, providing integrated communications solutions for approximately 75 percent of the Fortune Global 500. Our solutions unify multiple networks, devices and applications into one easy-to-use platform that allows teams to engage in rich and meaningful conversations. The result is a transformation of how the enterprise communicates and collaborates that amplifies collective effort, energizes the business, and enhances business performance. Unify has a strong heritage of product reliability, innovation, open standards and security..

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