

Hewlett Packard Enterprise connects with SharePoint

Driving communication and collaboration helps HPE maximize the value of employees

Objective

Bridge time, space, and culture to connect over 250,000 employees located in every region of the world

Approach

An enterprise SharePoint® environment provides a common platform for global communication and collaboration

IT Matters

- Integration with Microsoft® Lync® and Microsoft Exchange allows users to initiate seamless Unified Communications and Collaboration experiences from within SharePoint sites
- Centralized, integrated collaboration and communication software easier and faster to use than former patchwork of tools such as email, network file shares and custom web pages
- Employee learnings can be documented in searchable repositories, improving knowledge-sharing and boosting productivity
- Easy-to-use interface minimizes time investment required to master

Business Matters

- Faster communication and information-sharing boosts business agility and improves the quality of business response to market and customer needs
- Collaboration functionality helps unleash employee resources, enhancing a critical competitive advantage



As an enormous, global company, Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) must find innovative ways to help its employees connect across time, space, and culture. It has therefore implemented one of the top five largest Microsoft SharePoint deployments in the world. The result: enhanced employee collaboration and communication, which in turn drives enterprise agility and boosts the value of HPE's greatest resource: its people.

Companies as large as Hewlett Packard Enterprise enjoy distinct competitive advantages. They command enormous resources, leverage economies of scale to keep operating costs low and efficiencies high, and tailor products and services to customers' needs across regional and national boundaries.

However, large, global companies must also function at the human level. "HPE is a

technology company," notes David Brehm, director of SharePoint Engineering, End User Solutions, HPE IT. "We offer many of the world's most innovative technology products and services. But at the end of the day, what matters even more than our products are our people: who we are, and what we know."

It is therefore critical for HPE to ensure that its employees—over 250,000 altogether, plus another approximately 80,000 vendors, partners, and contractors—can communicate and collaborate effectively. That, in turn, means HPE must address the barriers to collaboration which are inherent to companies of its size and scope. "Our people are separated by both space and time," says Larry Hackney, Sr., service manager, HPE IT. "Our challenge is to enable them to team up with one another as if they were in the same room, working as partners around the same table."



HPE IT has therefore implemented a powerful technology to foster global communication and collaboration: Microsoft SharePoint.

Consolidated, enterprise SharePoint platform

The decision by Hewlett Packard Enterprise to deploy an enterprise SharePoint platform originated over a decade ago. During HPE's data center reduction effort started in 2006, HPE reduced its data centers from 85 to 6. It also drastically reduced the number of applications deployed within its IT environment. Before the consolidation initiative, for example, the business units (BUs) within Hewlett Packard Enterprise had implemented many ad hoc SharePoint farms. As a component of the consolidation effort, HPE migrated those onto a single SharePoint platform, creating a standardized, enterprise resource that the BUs can leverage as an IT service.

Today, the SharePoint deployment by HPE is one of the five largest in the world—and as a consolidated, centrally-managed environment, it delivers a range of benefits to HPE.

The company has integrated SharePoint with other enterprise communications tools, including Microsoft Lync and Microsoft Exchange. This allows users to initiate a seamless Unified Communications and Collaboration experience from within SharePoint sites. They can see if other users are also logged in, for example, and if they are, whether they're available or busy. They can easily send emails from Outlook or open Lync chat sessions. "The integration of the Microsoft suite of communication tools is very strong," Hackney notes. "It significantly enhances the value of SharePoint to HPE users."

Another benefit of the SharePoint consolidation is cost efficiency. The SharePoint environment at Hewlett Packard Enterprise runs on 573 HPE ProLiant BL460c and ProLiant BL465c Server Blades, with 754 TB of storage space allocated across a mix of HPE XP P9500 and HPE XP20000/XP24000 Disk Arrays. This is a far smaller hardware footprint than would be required if the SharePoint environment was comprised of several scattered, one-off

deployments. Support costs are also lower, and fewer resources are required to maintain the SharePoint software. "Consolidating SharePoint lets us administer it, at the application level, much more efficiently," Brehm notes.

In addition, HPE IT can leverage enterprise-class HPE Software solutions to manage its SharePoint environment. HPE IT uses HPE SiteScope to perform applications monitoring, for example, and HPE Universal CMDB to store, control, and manage software and infrastructure components. HPE Server Automation enables HPE IT to automate processes like the deployment of server patches. HPE Data Protector performs backup and recovery, and HPE Service Manager generates service tickets in the event of system issues, helping HPE IT respond to those issues via ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library) based processes.

While the cost savings of consolidating were welcome, the most important benefit of the enterprise SharePoint deployment was the increased adoption of SharePoint as a collaboration tool. Offering SharePoint as an IT service made it easier for HPE employees to take advantage of it, so usage took off. Today, there are more than 150,000 SharePoint sites deployed within HPE, representing 90% of the company's intranet landscape.

Users also leverage SharePoint functionality in more sophisticated ways. "We saw a shift from generic, isolated use cases to complex sites that support critical business processes," says Brehm. "We now consider SharePoint to be one of our business critical applications."

Sharing data, documents, calendars; managing workflows

Today, the most common way HPE uses SharePoint is Team Sites: project teams spin up sites to support activities by sharing data, documents, and calendars. "Anyone at any region can create a site," Hackney says. "Sites can be focused on a project or theme. They create a place for people to connect, and to store, tag, and 'like' documents. They can set up virtual meeting rooms."

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— Russell Van Liew, Presales Infrastructure program manager, Hewlett Packard Enterprise

SharePoint sites also support HPE operationally by serving as a workflow management tool. “Many people use SharePoint to facilitate document review and approvals,” Hackney explains. Because SharePoint automatically notifies people who need to sign off on process steps and tracks approvals and rejections, “it’s much easier and faster than email or manual approvals. People no longer have to track down managers to get approvals—SharePoint does it for them.”

Russell Van Liew, Presales Infrastructure program manager at HPE, agrees. Van Liew manages the HPE Presales organization’s infrastructure, a global network of resources that plays a vital role in managing corporate customers of Hewlett Packard Enterprise. Key responsibilities of HPE presales consultants include performing assessments of customer IT environments, creating product demonstrations and pilot programs, and architecting and testing solutions and migration plans.

To support these processes, presales consultants must maintain a detailed, up to date understanding of HPE technologies, the capabilities of HPE partners, and industry trends. “As an organization, we represent an incredibly rich repository of tribal information,” Van Liew explains. “But in the past, we struggled to find ways to make that repository accessible.”

Before SharePoint, for example, the presales team relied on a patchwork of technologies, including email, phone calls, custom web pages, network file shares and e-room applications, to share information and collaborate. While this approach was certainly adequate, it was far from ideal. There was no centralized, searchable repository of information. Accessing information from outside the HPE firewall could be time-consuming.

SharePoint resolved all of those issues. “Once HPE IT got behind SharePoint as an enterprise collaboration tool, all the pieces fit together,” says Van Liew. “We now have a standardized SharePoint platform where the team can engage to support both customer-facing and back office processes.” SharePoint allows presales consultants to quickly and easily access up-to-date documentation, whether they need technical data sheets on firmware updates, proposal templates, or organizational charts. When consultants solve problems, SharePoint lets them document the solutions in a format that is accessible and searchable. “Thanks to SharePoint,” says Van Liew, “our consultants are less likely to invest their time researching an issue that someone else already solved.”

At the same time, SharePoint lets the presales team balance accessibility with security. “We can create customized data views so that information is presented appropriately, based on who is authorized to view it,” Van Liew explains.



Easier to locate resources; easier to manage projects

Van Liew also appreciates how SharePoint makes it easier for presales consultants to connect with other HPE and partner resources. “Before, we had to use email or search the HPE intranet to find people with specific skillsets,” Van Liew says. “Now consultants can use SharePoint sites as the starting point for searches. It makes it easier to locate resources with background or experience in specific situations.”

Individuals outside the presales organization can also use SharePoint to find and engage with presales consultants, which helps ensure that account managers can put together presales teams with specific skillsets.

SharePoint’s calendar tools make it easier for presales consultants to manage their schedules. This is particularly important for managing presales training programs. “We can create training calendars and then automatically export them to peoples’ individual calendars,” Van Liew says. “Our consultants no longer have to manually enter training dates and times. It’s a big time-saver.”

Some presales teams also use SharePoint workflows to track activities and project approvals.

Workflows are also useful for managing alliance and partner relationships. “We use SharePoint now to track deals and specific activities like demos that require us to coordinate with our partners,” Van Liew says.

“Later we can use that information to debrief and report to our respective management teams.”

While SharePoint functionality is powerful, it’s also easy to use. “What our people don’t have is time,” Van Liew explains. “We can’t have tools that take a lot of time to learn. The SharePoint interface is user-friendly and intuitive, and because we can do so much within a single tool, it cuts down on the number of technologies our people have to master.”

These benefits are further enhanced by SharePoint 2013, which adds rich social functionality to the collaboration platform. “SharePoint now lets us use tools like hashtags and ‘liking’ to make it easier to sort and identify relevant information,” says Van Liew. “And because it’s so similar to the social tools we use outside of the workplace, we can leverage those features without acquiring specialized technology skills.”

Other organizations and departments at HPE leverage SharePoint in ways that convey similar benefits.

HPE has leveraged SharePoint to build a knowledge management portal, for example to support the HPE Technology Services (TS) consulting business. The Knowledge Management portal Nexus is a central platform for consultants around the globe to obtain reference documentation for services collateral as well as for developing best practices in consulting through continuous sharing and feedback of expertise gained in real projects.

Case study

HPE IT SharePoint

Industry

High Tech

Customer at a glance

Hardware

- HPE ProLiant BL460c and ProLiant BL465c Server Blades
- HPE XP P9500 and HPE XP20000/XP24000 Disk Arrays

Software

- Microsoft SharePoint
- Microsoft Lync
- Microsoft Exchange
- HPE SiteScope
- HPE Universal CMDB
- HPE Server Automation
- HPE Data Protector
- HPE Service Manager

Services

- Technology Services
 - HPE Strategy Services for SharePoint
 - HPE Platform Services for SharePoint

“HPE’s people are our greatest resource—and SharePoint helps us bring them together.”

— David Brehm, director of SharePoint Engineering, End User Solutions, Hewlett Packard Enterprise IT

Unleashing employee productivity

By enabling powerful collaboration and communication, SharePoint makes it easier for HPE employees to connect with each other and share the information they need to excel in their jobs.

That, in turn, drives a number of high level business benefits to HPE.

“When HPE IT looks to our business, we see many of the same challenges that our customers face,” says Brehm. “Like our customers, we need to be agile. We need to be able to change course quickly if business conditions require us to adapt. We need to respond quickly to market opportunities and customer needs.”

SharePoint, by enabling HPE employees to more easily organize and share information, helps HPE become a more nimble and responsive enterprise.

Equally important, SharePoint allows HPE to maximize the ability of each employee to contribute to the company’s success. “SharePoint helps us unleash the productivity of our employees,” Brehm says. “Our people are our greatest resource. SharePoint helps us maximize the value of that resource, which in turn improves our ability to serve our customers and grow our business.”



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