Five to Thrive Strategies: Transition to a Borderless Enterprise

Extending your company’s reach around the globe with collaboration and virtualization strategies lets strategic partners play more integral roles in the way you develop products and services and go to market. Through the network and collaboration capabilities, businesses and their partners can establish and maintain strong relationships, support active participation among team members anywhere in the world, accelerate decision making, improve complex project execution, and facilitate innovation. Here are three ways that can happen.

1. **Make full use of your entire network of partners**: Highly secure collaboration technologies give you the ability to meet face to face with remote partners without traveling, which significantly improves your communications with more partners. Collaboration lets you quickly and personally assess potential partners, and it accelerates decision making with your existing partners.

   **Global Automaker Partners for Innovation**
   An entire class of consultants has grown up to help corporations locate partners to extend product lines, tap new markets, and streamline their supply chains. A global automaker turned to NineSigma, a firm that uses the Internet to match companies with outside scientists and engineers, to find partners to help develop hydrogen fuel cell technology. This approach opened doors to people and communities that the firm was not connected with and enabled it to match its special needs to partners with unique capabilities.

2. **Work together globally for greater impact**: Two companies can often combine their products and expertise to win more business than either could win alone. But close collaboration is essential to building solutions that benefit both partner companies.

   **Cisco and Japanese IT Firm Win New Business**
   Cisco and a large Japanese IT company partnered to develop a solution that would help the Japanese company win bids from a large customer. Thanks to their close collaboration across borders and enterprise boundaries, the company won 60 percent of the customer’s core network business, worth ¥30 billion in the first two years.
3. **Include all stakeholders in ideation, improvement, and expansion**: Effective collaboration means all participants contribute their ideas and expertise. But for global companies, widely distributed teams and cultural differences can make collaboration difficult. Collaboration technology solutions can reduce time and distance barriers by supporting effective remote face-to-face meetings that help improve cross-pollination of ideas.

**Software Company Reduces Development Cycle Time**

A specialized software company wanted to use the agile software development methodology to increase engineering productivity, improve software quality, and reduce its support costs. The firm used Cisco Unified Communication solutions with virtual whiteboarding, technical experience sharing, and on-demand communications to facilitate collaborative software development across distributed teams. The result was a significant reduction in cycle time and support costs. The company was able to accelerate time to market and revenue, resulting in a US$35 million increase in annual margins. Thanks to this solution, the company also improved the quality of its software, saving another US$4.5 million in annual support costs.

**Transitioning to a Borderless Enterprise**

The Five to Thrive Transition to a Borderless Enterprise strategy represents a proven, sound approach for building success. Now is an excellent time to reach out to partners throughout the world to gain new expertise, improve your supply chain, and respond more quickly to customer demands and opportunities. Today’s collaboration technologies can make worldwide partnering even more efficient and effective than face-to-face meetings, and by opening the borders of your company today, you stand to thrive tomorrow.