

Aragon Research

Topics: Collaboration

Issue: Who are the collaboration providers and how will they evolve?

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Biba Aims To Disrupt With New Mobile Communications App

Summary: Biba Systems' release of its new mobile communications app continues the growing disruption in the communication industry fueled by smartphones, tablets and lightweight messaging apps that are outside the control of carriers and telecom providers.

Event: On June 25, 2013, Biba Systems debuted its new mobile-first business application that allows users to connect and communicate quickly in real-time. The solution is free, and delivers conference calls and messages across company boundaries and on multiple devices, including Mac desktops. Calendar integration is supported for scheduled calls.

Analysis

Biba's release of its new mobile communication app continues the disruption of the existing enterprise unified communications (UC) market, due to Biba's free conference calls on multiple devices with full calendar integration.

Mobile messaging has gained traction and is disrupting the entire communications market. Free and easily accessible mobile messaging applications have emerged and are gaining rapid adoption worldwide. This has been challenging to carriers and telecom providers, who have to deal with Skype calls and messaging apps such as WhatsApp impacting their business. This disruption is still in its beginning stages.

Product Details

Biba's offering will include conference calls where the service dials out to the user. It uses

active speaker detection to know who is speaking. It can also mute noisy lines within the conference. The Biba Messaging capability supports group chat in invite-only chat rooms, and receipt notification for sent messages.

The Biba Presence feature allows users to see others' free/busy status and when they will be available based on calendar integration. This presence feature is interesting because IM and presence vendors don't usually allow you to see availability for the full day ahead. That look-ahead feature by itself can potentially improve communication effectiveness between sender and recipient.

Pricing and Availability

The following is Biba's guidance on pricing and availability by level of access:

- **Personal:** Individuals can now download Biba to their iPhone, iPad, Android or Mac for free.
- **Team:** Entire teams can join Biba for free. Administration tools for IT are also free.
- **Pro:** Add toll-free and international dial-ins for 2 cents per minute per caller.

An interesting difference between Biba and other providers is that its freemium model extends to IT admins as well as end users. Other tools with similar freemium models usually require IT to procure an enterprise-level license to get full administrative control.

The Consumerization Effect On Communication

The lesson of tools such as Skype and WhatsApp is that users like convenience and

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quick, easy access to communication tools when they need it, on the device they have at the time. We've also learned that users want the same level of convenient communication with their business colleagues that they have in their personal lives. This business use of personal tools is a major driver of IT consumerization. For example, the impact and viral adoption of consumer instant message services forced enterprises to include IM in their communication and collaboration strategies to meet user demand. Mobile communication and messaging is following the same trajectory.

This new Biba offering is at the heart of a major trend in mobile and BYOD. BYOD and the "bring your own apps" (BYOA) phenomenon are making it easier for people to interact with internal and external colleagues and partners on any device without barriers. The disruptiveness of tools like Biba is that they take communication and messaging control away from carriers and telecom providers. We hear this from Aragon clients and other organizations worldwide. We recently used the Biba app ourselves on iOS devices to interact in real time with external constituents in another company, over Wi-Fi, and the process was very easy.

Challenges And Opportunities For Biba

As with any startup and new technology tool, Biba will face challenges around enterprise adoption. It will need to clearly message the specific business use cases for the product and how it enhances users' ability to communicate. The emerging interest in enterprise app stores, due to BYOD and BYOA, gives Biba an opportunity to gain traction in enterprises.

Aragon Advisory

- Assess how users communicate and interact with regards to devices and applications, in order to focus communication and collaboration strategies around users' needs.

- Update your mobile policy to include support and direction for BYOD and BYOA.
- Develop a strategy around creating an enterprise app store and evaluate the Biba product as a tool to enhance internal and external business communication among users.

Bottom Line

The consumerization of IT as evident with BYOD and BYOA indicates that users want to use their own devices and the applications familiar to them to get their work done. Communications is a key component here, where users want to use the tools available without barriers to interact and conduct business transactions. Enterprises will need to ensure the right mobile strategy focused on enabling users to communicate. The Biba product represents the future where users are more prone to use their devices and lightweight apps for messaging and conferencing.

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