



Topic: Content Management

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

IBM Partners With Box To Offer Predictive Content-Enabled Vertical Applications

Summary: *IBM and Box announced a new strategic partnership that will help both firms offer a set of Content-Enabled Vertical Applications that take advantage of predictive analytics and are Mobile First.*

Event: On June 24th, 2015, IBM and Box announced their partnership, which will combine the strengths of Box's cloud-based content collaboration services and IBM's ECM, analytics, security and global cloud to allow for better cloud services and more innovative solutions.

Analysis

By partnering, both Box and IBM will both be able to offer more complete solutions in certain vertical industries. Box gets to leverage IBM's advanced ECM and predictive analytics platform and IBM can embed Box into its solution portfolio and growing cloud ecosystem. IBM Global Services will be able to offer a more complete set of Content-Enabled Vertical Solutions (CEVAs).

Transformation of Enterprise Work

One of the three main areas of the Box-IBM partnership, Box will integrate with IBM's content management system to potentially bring enterprises improved control and flexibility when it comes to content management in the cloud and on premises. IBM will also bring their Watson Analytical system to the partnership, enabling enterprises the ability to analyze data from the cloud to speed workplace efficiency.

Finally, the two firms will work to integrate Box's capabilities with IBM's Connections and IBM Verse, combining email and social network with Box's content collaboration technology.

Benefits to Box

This deal places Box in a position to expand its customer base by leveraging IBM's large enterprise footprint. By adding IBM's implied endorsement, Box is poised to challenge Microsoft as the go-to choice for storing content in the cloud. The combined offering, which will leverage IBM's Predictive analytics will serve as a platform to offer Predictive Business Applications that focus on specific outcomes in a range of industries.

Box also gets to leverage IBM's flagship Enterprise Content Management offerings, such as Content Navigator, Case Manager, StoredIQ and Datacap, which will be able to connect with Box Repositories to manage critical compliance related content. Balancing the management of ad hoc content along with mission critical content has always been one of the challenges. This is important for enterprise planners who want access to a broad range of content and collaboration services.

The combined offering will make it easier to solve this challenge, which also represents a threat to the Microsoft SharePoint franchise.

Benefits to IBM

IBM, which is now totally focused on both cloud platforms via its Bluemix offerings, has been transforming itself into much more of a partner-focused organization. The Box partnership builds

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on other recent moves, such as the Apple partnership in 2014 and the Open HR Platform and SAP Partnership that its Smarter Workforce just announced in May 2015.

IBM will also benefit by gaining access to Box's set of development tools and collaboration tools. Using Box's platforms, IBM's analytical solutions and IBM's global cloud, the partnership will bring enterprises secure connections that have both global reach and access to local data.

New Content Rich Mobile Apps & Solutions

The partnership will also enable IBM and Box to develop content management solutions together, and to incorporate Box technology into certain IBM Mobile First applications. This can potentially help to further the growth of mobile enterprises, and the incorporation of Box technology means that it will potentially be easier for mobile enterprises to share and collaborate. IBM is also allowing developers to integrate Box APIs on their Bluemix developer cloud, so developers can build smarter, more connected, and content rich applications for both the web and mobile.

Final Thoughts

We believe both companies aim to expand their customer base with this partnership. Box gets access to IBM's customer base and also its security and analytics which makes its offering more attractive to enterprises that are in regulated industries and have compliance concerns. IBM gets access to a different type of customer base that they normally don't reach.

In similar fashion to Microsoft, IBM is aiming to be a broad scalable cloud provider with a wide array of services. To do that, IBM needs to partner with other companies to provide more services in its cloud.

Aragon Advisory

- Enterprises who currently use one or both services should request a detailed roadmap of the integrated services so they can leverage key aspects of the partnership.
- Enterprises who share a lot of information and are looking to develop new applications should look to IBM's Bluemix cloud. The built-in Box integration will make it easier to build applications that allow sharing and collaboration.
- Enterprises that are multinational should look at either or both. The global reach of IBM is now also the global reach of Box, and allows multinational companies to store their data in the datacenter of their choosing, while also granting access to Box's collaboration tools.

Bottom Line

The shift to Open Platforms that leverage multiple Cloud Services is underway. IBM is focused on Solutions and with Box it can now offer a more complete set of Content Enabled Vertical Applications (CEVAs) that will make the combined solutions a compelling alternative to Microsoft and others. Enterprises need to evaluate how the Predictive Business Applications offered via this partnership can give them a competitive advantage.

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