

Enterprise collaboration- What are the benefits of using Microsoft Sharepoint for SMBs

Business organizations are run with the help of a large number of people. These people work in different areas to ensure the smooth functioning of the organization. To manage an organization and its operations, every department needs to work to achieve the goals set by the organization. Every department in an enterprise follows the activities of planning, organizing, directing, controlling and coordination to ensure that the goals specified are achieved without any deviations. In their course of work, all the departments within an organization need to communicate with each other. Communication is essential in an enterprise because it helps everyone in the organization to know what a particular department is doing and what has it achieved. The oral and written system of communication that has been followed by organizations for ages is fast being replaced by computers. This, however, does not imply that the old system of communication is not used in an organization.

The increasing complexities of a business and the increasing competition have made it difficult to manage an enterprise effectively. Effective and efficient management of an organization requires an effective communication and information system. These days, to stay ahead of the competitors, organizations need to make use of enterprise collaboration. Enterprise collaboration in simple terms enables the people in an organization to work together more effectively to achieve organizational goals.

Enterprise collaboration system is basically an information system which included networks, and tools that are essential to manage communication in the entire organization. Enterprise collaboration system provides tools that help every individual in an organization to manage the documents, communications and all information that has to be shared with others in an organization. This information system helps the people working in an organization to work more efficiently.

There are several enterprise collaboration systems available these days for enterprises. Before setting up an enterprise collaboration system in an organization, there are many things that need to be considered and thought of. These include:

- The different network topologies available
- The type of network required by an enterprise
- Methods of deploying wireless LAN
- Methods to secure the wireless network
- Methods to optimize the wireless network

On the basis of the above mentioned factors, an organization can select the enterprise collaboration system which meets the needs of the organization in the best possible manner.

Of the various available systems, Microsoft Sharepoint is one such system which has gained popularity across the world. This tool simply makes it easy for people to work together. It makes the communication process of an organization more effective. Using Microsoft Sharepoint, people can manage their documents; build websites to share information with others in an organization and also publish reports that can help others know how the work is proceeding in an organization and to make better decisions.

Microsoft Sharepoint is being used in large, medium as well as small business organizations to make the working of the organization more effective. Microsoft sharepoint has many features and capabilities that make it the most demanded and popular enterprise collaboration system being used these days. The following are the capabilities of this enterprise collaboration tool which are effectively used in SMBs.

- Provides an infrastructure for all business websites- Microsoft sharepoint offers tools using which people in an organization can develop any type of website. These tools also help one to manage, modify and customize the business websites. These websites are the best way in which people can share information with each other. Also they can publish any information for others to use.
- Helps to create business solutions- This enterprise collaboration system helps the businessmen to create effective business solutions that meet specific business needs and also manage these solutions. The best thing about using this tool for creating business solutions is that one does not need to be a skilled programmer. With this tool, one can easily create custom sites and solutions that cater to the needs of specific target audience.
- Provides an integrated collaboration platform- Microsoft sharepoint provides an effective platform for people to work together easily. It also provides a collaboration platform that can help people to share ideas and expertise. It helps the enterprise to locate business information in a secure and well managed environment.
- Provides content management- The enterprise collaboration system helps to manage content in the organization. The system provides a platform to manage documents, records, web content and other media in an effective manner. This also reduces the cost of content management which would otherwise have cost a lot.
- Provides business information for everyone- Microsoft sharepoint helps everyone in the enterprise to access business information so that they can take effective decisions. The employees in an enterprise can access information from databases, reports and other business applications. This information is then utilized to address business needs of specific clients. This in turn is beneficial for the organization as its productivity is increased.

- Provides a platform for search- This enterprise collaboration system helps the enterprises to search for information, people and business applications. It helps to search for content in a quick and cost effective manner. It helps to search relevant and refined content.

These features collectively help an enterprise to respond to the changing business trends easily and quickly.

A large business organization has many employees and effective systems to manage the operations of an organization. In addition, a large business organization has sufficient financial resources that can help the enterprise to get any system to manage the work and information. The same however does not apply for the small and medium business organizations.

Small and medium sized business enterprises do not have a big workforce and also do not have many financial resources. For these business organizations, it becomes imperative to make use of collaboration systems which are both cost effective and efficient. SMBs need a collaboration system that can help increase the productivity of the enterprise by using the limited resources that it has.

For SMBs, the best enterprise collaboration system available is Microsoft Sharepoint. This web based application is used by SMBs for sharing and collaborating effectively within the organization. Microsoft sharepoint has many benefits for small and medium business organizations. These include the following:

- Improved productivity- This enterprise collaboration tool connects people with information and resources they need to complete a specific task. It offers several collaborative tools to the organization which can be used to create and manage information and also help in communication using different means. This in turn means that the communication and information management process within an organization is quick and so people are able to work better; thus increasing the productivity of the enterprise.
- Ease in the management of content and documents- Microsoft sharepoint allows easy management of content and documents in the sense that the information can be retrieved and viewed easily. Also modifications can be made easily and quickly. In addition, this system ensures security of the documents. With limited manpower and other resources, this type of automation is a huge benefit for SMBs.
- Deploy solutions that meet the business requirements- With Microsoft sharepoint, organizations can easily develop and deploy business solutions that can be used to achieve the specific goals set or can be used to meet specific business needs.

- Build collaboration environment- This enterprise collaboration system helps SMBs to easily and quickly create a collaborative environment. This can be done in a cost effective manner. Also it reduces the administrative efforts required.
- Ease of securing business information- Business information for any organization is important and it must be ensured that it is not compromised with. For this, Microsoft sharepoint helps the SMBs to create controls that can increase the security of the business information.
- Securing company resources- Every resource- content or employees are important for SMBs because these are limited in number. Thus, SMBs need to properly secure these resources. Microsoft sharepoint offers security solutions to protect these resources at various levels by utilizing effective controls.
- Improved file sharing- Microsoft sharepoint helps the SMBs to easily store and retrieve information and content easily from files. Also it allows easy backup and restoration of the content. This reduces both time and effort in managing stored information.
- Cut costs with a unified infrastructure- Communication is vital for the operation and success of any enterprise. The process of communication and the infrastructure required are both expensive affairs. Microsoft sharepoint helps SMBs to reduce this cost as it offers a single platform where all communication networks can be consolidated.

The ever challenging and changing business environment requires that the business enterprises respond quickly to the changes. Small and medium businesses need to do this even faster because they face tough competition from the established large scale business enterprises. Microsoft sharepoint helps the SMBs to do this. It helps the SMBs to create applications and business solutions to meet the specific needs quickly. This enterprise collaboration tool helps the SMBs to cut down the training and maintenance costs, save administrative efforts and time required to complete a task and also allows the small and medium business organization to focus on other business priorities.