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Performance management is key to service delivery

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This 2-part white paper explains how Prognosis real-time performance management helps service providers deliver quality unified communications to their customers.

Part 1: Validating performance with real time and historical metrics.

Performance management for Service Providers

As a service provider you're responsible for the performance and availability of your customers' enterprise communications. Their needs, preferences and service level agreements will determine the type of service you offer. Some of the most common service delivery models are shown below.

Service delivery model	Performance management requirements
① RIM **Remote Infrastructure Management** Remotely managing equipment and systems at the customer's premises.	Managing time-sensitive applications Gaining complete insight to LAN and WAN network performance Eliminating the need for on-site presence and truck rolls Providing accurate diagnosis, identification and issue reporting Monitoring customers' environments proactively to avoid failures Using remote tools and repeatable processes.
② ITO **IT Outsourcing:** Outsourcing IT functions that can be done more cost effectively than in-house.	Delivering time-sensitive applications Providing accurate diagnosis, identification and issue reporting Managing risks and crises Managing project quality and timeliness Ensuring accountability and service delivery reporting.
③ BPO **Business Process Outsourcing** Outsourcing specific business process tasks such as payroll.	Managing complex back office functions and business support like help desk, HR and procurement Ensuring delivery of service level agreements and KPI reporting Managing incentives for high performance Being responsive to change by keeping one step ahead Ensuring service levels and milestones are met Gaining visibility into day to day service delivery to avoid shadow organizations emerging within the business Avoiding dissatisfaction with service level delivery Aligning technology with business goals.
④ UCaaS **Unified Communications as a Service** Providing both equipment and services to clients.	Gaining complete insight to LAN and WAN network performance Monitoring systems and networks 24/7 Acknowledging and responding to faults Remotely diagnosing performance and quality problems Producing customer-branded monthly reports Analysing IP network and application performance.

When customers choose you as their service provider, they're not just looking for another vendor. They need a trusted advisor who can supply valuable advice and support on a wide variety of technical issues. If you can answer questions like those below, and validate them with supporting metrics, you make your value abundantly clear.

- What specifically have we done for you today?

- What issues have we prevented?

- How have we saved you money?

- What should your top IT hardware and software investments be and why?

- How can IT do a better job of supporting your core business?

- Where is your network at risk?

Cross platform end-to-end UC performance management plays a critical part in helping you provide these answers. By monitoring quality, availability, throughput and capacity you can be proactive in managing issues that can impact your customers' communications abilities, and move beyond a reactive, break-fix model of traditional IT service and support.

Making the transition from service provider to trusted advisor also enables you to :

1. Safeguard your clients' communications needs; removing the impetus for them to look for an alternate service provider, thereby helping you secure your user base.

2. Participate in internal planning; helping clients identify new efficiencies and services. If your customers see you as a provider that goes the extra mile and anticipates problems before they occur, your position within the organization becomes more entrenched.

   Clients are likely to need your help with:

   - Identifying and understanding technology challenges

   - Delivering and deploying solutions, including hardware, software and applications

   - Training users on new products and services

   - Providing ongoing technical service and support.

3. Potentially pursue new business models:

   - Designing communications solutions based on their business goals

   - Selecting appropriate vendors and products, including those outside of your vendor partners

Drive your success

Ultimately, despite the complexities and challenges associated with the deployment and operation of any technology, it's the experiences of its stakeholders that will define your success or failure. And because UC has broad reach within an organization any failure will be felt widely. When a communications system becomes noticeable to users, it's often for the wrong reasons like poor voice quality, disconnected calls, echo and feedback, out of sync updates between Presence servers, poor video quality and so on.

By using end-to-end UC ecosystem management from the PSTN to each endpoint and everything in between, you'll be able to ensure a quality experience for customers, partners and staff.

Visibility and insight

There may still be times when something occurs that is completely unexpected or outside your control. When that happens, it's critical that you can identify and resolve the problem promptly through broad and deep visibility into the entire UC ecosystem. One of the reasons problems can take months to resolve, and is echoed in frequent laments of voice

administrators, is that they are blind to the root causes of problems. They just cannot see where they lie, and can often be looking in the wrong place. One voice administrator provided the following anecdote "Our voice quality problems were intermittent and affected internal, external, long distance and local calls" he said. People were experiencing calls that were not only of poor quality but in some cases were just being disconnected, or dropped in the middle of the conversation, and no matter how we tried to piece the bits together we couldn't."

Engineers spent many hours looking at the problems. One by one, they went through all the switches, looking at the QoS settings of each. Everything appeared to be configured the same even though there were just a couple of ports that were experiencing quality issues.

This administrator has a close relationship with his company's service provider, and between them they spent months investigating the issues. "Traces showed that problem calls went out on specific trunks so we were looking at SIP trunks," he added, "but we were going down the wrong path because it ended up being an incorrectly configured data port on one of our switches. All ports should be configured full duplex, and one port was not configured that way. It was creating packet loss and the media gateway was connecting to the port that was giving us problems."

Proactive performance management

Smart service providers keep a close eye on and can see deep into the customer's infrastructure to understand in great detail how UC is being used and where greater efficiencies, cost savings and benefits can be achieved. Real time performance management insight gives you the ability to look at what is happening within a client's UC infrastructure and diagnose issues before they develop into problems.

Successful SPs are able to leverage near-constant visibility into client business networks to predict and avert failures. This helps build a deeper, more trusted relationship with clients. Clients of SPs tend to stay for the long-term, and once that relationship is established the opportunity for cross and up-selling increases. This allows for proactive recommendations for remedial action, which can often lead to further sales.

For more information about how Prognosis can help you maintain and grow your role as trusted advisor to your clients please visit our resource center.

Part two of this white paper discusses some of the real time and historical metrics to validate service delivery and will be available to download in late July 2013.

Why Service Providers choose Prognosis

Prognosis has been monitoring VoIP performance for over 12 years and providing mission-critical infrastructure management for more than two decades. This out-of-the-box domain experience has evolved to manage the complexities of the complete UC experience. Viewing a myriad of components, devices and platforms through a single pane of glass means systems managers can rapidly identify, address and resolve UC quality of experience issues.

If you'd like to read more white papers and case studies about optimizing UC operations and resources visit http://www.prognosis.com/resources/uc-resources/ white-papers.

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