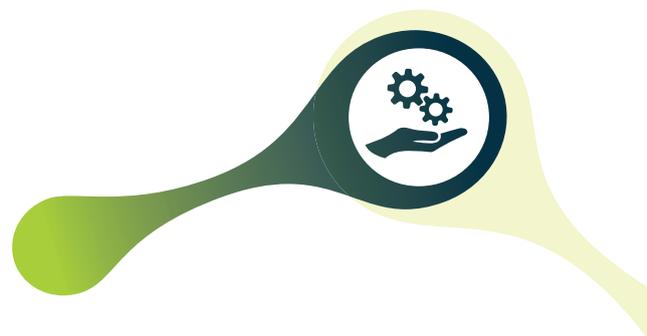




Reinventing ENTERPRISE COLLABORATION



JT's Global Credentials and Capability

JT operates as a global alliance of well-established and accredited business partners to deliver unique benefits to companies across the globe. This network of delivery partners enables customer's access to 'best in class' local resellers with the ease of centralised partner management from JT.

Removing the need to work with numerous resellers and vendors across the globe, JT, through a dedicated centralised management team can provide consistent pricing, a single contract and centralised project management skills to deliver complex implementations in a consistent manner.

JT has presence in over 110 countries and more than 100 partners' worldwide and with new members from increasingly remote regions joining on a regular basis, we have the ability to provide the extensive coverage our customers need.

Our proven expertise in the Avaya global communications market combined with our model of engagement with our Avaya partners, allows JT to offer clients unique services both in region and globally including:

- A single supply contract, simplifying procurement processes and management
- The best Avaya partner in each country, saving time in identifying an integrator for each country and managing multiple relationships
- Competitive pricing, by leveraging global spend
- Consistent service at every location
- Single SLA, but with localised support services
- Central management team but with local point of contacts that work closely together
- In-country expertise
- Access to more than 2,500+ Avaya engineers globally
- Access to a huge base of Avaya spares



Awareness: Reinventing Enterprise Collaboration

An Interview with Venky Krishnaswamy

Hot technologies create buzz, but they can also become fuzzy. Sudden popularity inevitably attracts a host of suppliers and this can lead to a certain amount of vagueness over what that technology really is and what it does. Each vendor spins the concept to its advantage.

Such has been the case with “context” or, what Avaya terms more broadly, Awareness. Rather than limited to variants of one-dimensional relational concepts like “presence” or “location,” Avaya views Awareness as an overarching, multidimensional technology that not only revolutionizes enterprise collaboration but also radically advances the way people work.

In a presentation at Gartner Symposium/ITxpo 2011, market research firm Gartner said: “Context is interrelated information that can be used to enhance an event.”¹ This definition points toward the extraordinary potential that Avaya believes enhanced context - or Awareness - holds. Awareness not only enhances events, it takes business and collaborative processes to new levels. And that’s why it’s creating such a stir in the marketplace.

“Context” generally refers to the delivery of relevant information, such as presence or location, with a communication. Avaya believes that Awareness can go far beyond that, bringing latent institutional wisdom to the surface, instantly available and actionable. The result is time saved, more informed decisions and better out-comes of collective actions resulting in huge gains in productivity and output.

According to Venkatesh “Venky” Krishnaswamy, Ph.D., a leading expert on Internet Protocol (IP) communications at Avaya Labs: “Traditional knowledge management is about storing and indexing the content collateral in an enterprise - i.e., documents, manuals, procedures and so on. Awareness is about capturing the meta-data - who, when, under what circumstance and for what purpose - that is vital to extracting wisdom from this knowledge collateral. And by integrating Awareness into collaboration tools, this latent institutional wisdom of the collective is filtered for relevance and made available and actionable just when it is needed. Thus, communications Awareness has the power to enhance every discussion, decision or action and make it a lot more informed than it would be otherwise. The overall result is a much smarter enterprise with the potential for highly amplified output per employee.”

¹ “Net IT Out: Contextual Communications — Putting Your Communications to Business,” Bern Elliot and Bob Hafner, Gartner Symposium/ITxpo 2011.



In the discussion that follows, Venky shares his experience with Awareness and describes some of the revolutionary benefits this technology holds for the future.



Venky, terms like “context” and “contextual collaboration” are being used today. What do they refer to?

All of these terms share the notion of context, but some are severely limited while others are more expansive and, in the end, more productive. For a fundamental understanding, a good place to start is with an objective third party like market research firm Gartner, which has no vested interest in how context is understood.

Generally, Gartner says that when the power of context is added to the IT mix, it can accelerate business processes and reduce costs. It breaks down the concept into its constituent parts of identity, community, environment and process. Context draws on information from these spheres and uses it to enhance events and processes.

Of course, identity refers to who a person is, but it also includes reputation. Community involves the groups - social, professional and otherwise - that people belong to. Environment brings in location, but also end-point and network data. And process includes the user-defined rules that control the contextual services both from the individual's standpoint and that of the enterprise.

With this as a framework for understanding context, you can see that some interpretations fall short and others expand upon it. For example, some vendors lump presence and location services with a notification system, throw in some call-specific data and call it contextual services, or some such terminology.

At Avaya, we prefer to think of context more broadly. By doing so, we can empower Awareness to have greater impact on enterprise processes.

How does Avaya define Awareness?

Awareness takes into account relevant realms of information and ties them all together in a coherent manner that's intuitive for the user. These are:

People: Who, based on past and future interactions, are the people that the user is most likely to be involved with?

Conversations: What conversations, and with whom, are relevant to the user's current activity?

Information: Which public documents, internal e-mails, notes, slide presentations or other written material are relevant to the user and the topic at hand?

Event streams: Which calendar events, past and present, will have a bearing on what the user is doing now?

One important, underlying principle here is that these four realms are examined in a predictive way by the underlying “Awareness engine” - the set of software agents that continuously monitor and analyze communications and information, predict the needs of the moment, and provide relevant context to any application that can benefit from it. In other words, the Awareness engine uses all of the available information around the individual - it's really institutional wisdom or insight, along with connections to other people who might provide additional related information - to predict that individual's needs. So once he knows he needs something, or that some sphere of knowledge is required, it's already at his fingertips.

How can Awareness be applied in the real world?

Let's look at a few scenarios. Consider first a situation that happens daily for investment brokers, but also in many other similar situations across industries. An investment broker receives a call from a client about a particular investment, and a buy-sell-hold decision needs to be made very quickly because of an event taking place in the market that day. The client wants an answer now.

That broker needs to quickly pull up records to understand the client's risk profile, investment history, current portfolio and positions, and other information that can help support the recommendation. At the same time, the broker needs to understand what's being covered in the news media; what's being said internally within the investment firm - for example, among other brokers who are watching movement in pre-market prices or on internal microblogs; what additional commentary is issued externally, such as from regulators or other analysts; and even what “chatter” might be detected across relevant social media sites, which could impact the investment from a reputational perspective.

In a traditional setting, the broker would have to access many of those streams separately, each requiring several minutes at least to locate and open. In a communications-aware environment, the Awareness engine - running transparently in the background - would be aware of the broker, the streams of information, expertise and connections that are relevant to high-quality decisions. It would bring all these together in seconds so the broker can quickly sift through all of the information and communicate with others as needed.

Such a situation isn't unique to financial services - similar activities take place every day in emergency response contact centers, technical support centers, sales support centers and corporate shared services centers around the world. Awareness could play a role in any of those situations.

In another example, think of a lawyer at a large firm who needs to assemble a team for an upcoming case. Based on e-mail threads, case briefs, correspondence, chatter from social media postings, and any other relevant contextual data points, the Awareness engine would present the lawyer with background information and a list of colleagues who have relevant expertise or who have researched precedents relevant to the case. The lawyer could actually sift through the pertinent discussions among the lawyers in the firm that might possibly help construct the arguments for the upcoming court appearance.

Here's another example. Your job might involve frequent interaction with suppliers or customers. A person at a supplier company calls and the Awareness engine immediately brings up previous contact records, relevant information about the partner company and links to internal processes or content you might need to consummate a transaction. You're productive as soon as you pick up the phone. That's the power of Awareness.

I hope these examples highlight what's really important about Awareness - that it's about giving time back to busy people, helping them make better decisions faster, and giving them a new type of collaboration tool that dramatically extends their reach. When these capabilities are replicated across an enterprise, they can add up to tremendous pro- productivity gains. The enterprise reaps tremendous benefits from the entire process.



Why does Avaya believe now is the time for Awareness?

If you think about our heritage and competencies as an organization, we are well positioned to understand the need for Awareness and the ability of enterprises to deploy such capabilities. We have a long history of expertise in unified communications and how to bring coherence to it. We also have tremendous experience with software applications for contact centers. That means we know how people interact, what they are likely to need during these interactions and how to provide that.

Awareness of the type described above involves the merging of these competencies with a new layer of pre- predictive capabilities, which is underpinned by sophisticated IP-based communications technology. Anything less than that will simply be presence or context.

Of course, it also helps that we have forward-thinking clients who provide us with tremendous insight into enterprise communications, contact centers and communications needs. These clients play a vital and active role in the direction we move and the products we take to market. Bringing all this to bear on the concept of Awareness has brought about this revolutionary leap forward in collaboration.

About the author

As senior director, IP communications research, Avaya Labs, Venkatesh "Venky" Krishnaswamy, Ph.D., is responsible for developing innovative new applications and technologies in the communications/collaboration space. He has developed technology road maps for Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and IP telephony applications and technologies.

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T +44 20 7920 2000

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