



Aspect and Microsoft Global Strategic Alliance Frequently Asked Questions

MARCH 2008

PARTNERSHIP LOGISTICS

Why are Aspect and Microsoft partnering?

Aspect and Microsoft are partnering in order to bring unified communications to contact centers. Aspect and Microsoft will collaborate to develop next generation solutions to support that initiative. Aspect will design its Aspect Unified IP contact center solution to interoperate with Microsoft's platform for software-powered voice and unified communications and will offer it as the leading option to new and existing customers.

What are the goals of this partnership?

The goal is to provide contact centers with an end-to-end UC solution that will help them improve the customer experience they deliver by allowing them to tap knowledge workers within and across the enterprise.

Contact centers will be able to seamlessly escalate customer interactions to different channels – phone, instant messaging, email or conferencing – as appropriate. With this capability, contact center agents will have the ability to find and consult with experts anywhere in order to resolve inquiries in a single interaction.

What are the benefits to both companies' customers?

- Aspect customers will benefit from:
 - Market leading enterprise unified communications, multimodal capabilities and presence for their contact center applications through a familiar standards-based interface, full interoperability with Microsoft UC platform
- Microsoft customers will benefit from:
 - Access to expertise in communications-enabling business processes; ability to measure quality and effectiveness of interactions across multiple channels, and the ability to assess and engage information workers, full-featured contact center capability with Microsoft UC interoperability

What is the benefit to Aspect and Microsoft's customers' customers?

By bringing unified communications to the contact center, the alliance will deliver new benefits for businesses and their customers.

- The partnership will improve and speed customer-company and inter- and intra-company interactions, helping businesses improve the customer experience and reduce costs.
- Consumer experiences will dramatically improve when businesses use presence with instant messaging and voice to match customers with the right resources – inside and outside the contact center – increasing the likelihood that the inquiry will be resolved in a single interaction.

How does this partnership further the Aspect's long-term strategic vision?

The Aspect vision is to transform the way companies interact with their customers. The Aspect-Microsoft alliance supports that vision by bringing unified communications to the contact center, enabling companies to seamlessly access subject matter experts across the enterprise to improve the customer experience.



Aspect and Microsoft Global Strategic Alliance Frequently Asked Questions

Aspect and Microsoft have a long-standing history of partnering in various areas. Aspect® CallCenter® ACD was the first enterprise-class ACD to run on Windows and Aspect Unified IP is built on a .NET architecture. This alliance furthers our rich history of partnering with Microsoft to deliver the best customer interaction solutions to companies around the world.

The press release mentions Microsoft is investing in Aspect Software. What exactly does this mean? How much are they investing?

The amount of the investment is not being disclosed. Microsoft is making an equity investment in Aspect to accelerate solution delivery and adoption.

How is this partnership different from the Nortel partnership that Microsoft currently has?

Unlike Nortel, Aspect provides comprehensive contact center capabilities including a PBX-independent unified contact center solution and PerformanceEdge.

Is Aspect reselling any of Microsoft's products? If so, which ones?

Aspect is not reselling Microsoft products and Microsoft is not reselling Aspect products. Rather, each company will leverage the other when appropriate opportunities arise and the companies will work together to develop and market joint solutions.

In addition, Aspect will expand its Aspect Professional Services offerings with a practice for Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007. Aspect will help customers deploy, customize and manage Office Communications Server in their contact centers and throughout their organizations for enterprise telephony, instant messaging, presence, and conferencing.

Aspect just launched a Unified Communications for the Contact Center strategy. Is this part of that overarching strategy?

Yes, this absolutely is in support of the company's unified communications for the contact center strategy. Unified communications for the contact center streamlines and enhances customer-facing business processes with complete visibility and control – and enables businesses to seamlessly extend those processes beyond the traditional boundaries of the contact center to reach knowledge workers or subject matter experts in the enterprise in order to enhance collaboration.

By partnering with Microsoft, Aspect can more quickly bring products to market that deliver interoperability with Microsoft unified communications software products to enhance collaboration between the enterprise and the contact center, as well as between the contact center and its customers.

PRODUCTS

How do the two companies' technologies complement one another?

Microsoft brings more than 30 years of innovation to the enterprise and to the home. Aspect brings more than 30 years of innovation and expertise to the contact center. Together, the companies deliver a comprehensive unified communications solution for contact centers and enterprises. The Aspect Unified IP solution is built upon Microsoft technologies and manages the inbound and outbound voice, email, and Web interactions within the contact center. Combined with Microsoft's Office Communications Server 2007 solution, the joint offering will enable the contact center to intelligently extend to the enterprise with presence, preference, prioritization and skills to engage information and knowledge workers in the company-customer interaction. The alliance demonstrates the power and velocity of the software-based approach to communications. Through software, Aspect and Microsoft are bringing the power of unified communications to contact centers and enterprises.



Aspect and Microsoft Global Strategic Alliance Frequently Asked Questions

Who is leading development of the new product?

Aspect is leading the development and release of new versions of Aspect Unified IP. This will be done in conjunction with Microsoft in order to ensure tight interoperability between first, Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007 for IM and then later for the OCS voice over IP platform.

What products are available immediately?

In addition to the currently available releases Aspect Unified IP and Microsoft OCS, this year, Aspect will release a new version of Aspect® Unified IP™ that delivers a powerful “ask an expert” capability using instant messaging and presence technology in Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007.

Which products will be supported going forward and for how long?

This announcement has no impact on the evolution or support of products. Aspect Software will continue to support its products based on current Lifecycle announcements, including its Signature line of products, its PerformanceEdge products and of course its Aspect Unified IP product.

How does this partnership fit into the recently announced Aspect Software Unified Communications for the Contact Center Strategy?

This partnership fits perfectly with the Unified Communications for the Contact Center strategy that Aspect recently announced. Microsoft offers complementary unified communications applications, like presence engines, that will enable contact centers using Aspect solutions to easily leverage knowledge workers (or subject matter experts) to provide a superior and seamless customer experience.

Will the Aspect Software openness/support for Avaya, Cisco, Nortel CTI integrations, etc. change due to this?

Throughout its 35 year history, Aspect has been open and supported third party PBXs through both telephony and CTI. This proposition is fully supported by Microsoft and will continue into the future.

How will this affect pricing?

Pricing will not be impacted. We will continue to offer our products as we do today.

Are there any new products/technology in the works from Aspect Software? If so, when can we expect to see them?

Microsoft and Aspect will begin integrating the technologies immediately. This year, Aspect will release a new version of Aspect® Unified IP™ that delivers a powerful “ask an expert” capability using instant messaging and presence technology in Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007.

Subsequently, Aspect Software will release a new version of Aspect Unified IP that will be built on Microsoft's unified communications VoIP platform

What will the new product be called?

Rather than focusing on creating a new product, the new development work is to enhance Aspect Unified IP including interoperability with Microsoft OCS.

Who will support this product? Both Aspect and Microsoft?

As part of the agreement, Aspect will expand its Aspect Professional Services offerings with a practice for Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007. Aspect will help customers deploy, customize and manage Office Communications Server as well as Aspect Unified IP in their contact centers and throughout their organizations for enterprise telephony, instant messaging, presence, and conferencing. Aspect Technical Services will continue to support Aspect Unified IP and will be fully trained to support the interoperability with Microsoft OCS.



Aspect and Microsoft Global Strategic Alliance Frequently Asked Questions

PARTNERS AND CHANNELS

How does this impact the other Aspect Software partnerships?

This alliance gives our partners something new to bring to their customers in pursuit of implementing unified communications for the contact center.

How does this impact International partners who are the main distribution channel in those regions?

Same as above.

Are partners eligible or authorized to carry all solutions from the two different companies?

This will not affect current partner agreements. Partners who wish to add Aspect or Microsoft to their portfolio will be encouraged to work with the individual company to do so.