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Microsoft Kicks Its Unified Communications Offerings Up a Notch

Bringing it to contact centers worldwide

Microsoft has kicked its unified communications offerings up a notch through an alliance with Aspect. According to the Redmond company, the multiyear strategic partnership will serve to offer its unified communications solutions to contact centers worldwide. With an emphasis on the need to accelerate both development of new products, as well as the customer uptake, once the new solutions and devices become available on the market, Microsoft also announced, at the VoiceCon Orlando 2008 conference, an equity investment in Aspect. The two companies now plan to bridge the Aspect Unified IP contact center with the Microsoft software-powered voice and unified communications platform. "Our alliance and the resulting joint solutions are designed to enhance sales, service and support capabilities for organizations of all types and sizes, across many industries. We strongly believe that the combination of Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007 and Aspect Unified IP will redefine the way companies interact with their customers. With this alliance and its equity investment, Microsoft recognizes Aspect Unified IP as an ideal fit with its software-powered voice platform," revealed Jim Foy, president and CEO of Aspect. The new .NET-based Aspect Unified IP product will play nice with Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007. At this point in time, Microsoft has pointed to the end of this year for the availability of the new Aspect optimized solutions which will begin development as soon as possible. With a strong focus on interoperability, Aspect will continue to evolve the Unified IP with Office Communications Server in order to introduce software-powered voice. "A key pillar of Microsoft's unified communications vision is improving access to the people and information you need to do your job better and more quickly, and, with Aspect, we aim to make this vision a reality for contact centers. Contact centers demand reliable and flexible communications solutions. The fact that Aspect, a noted leader, is choosing to optimize its next-generation solution for Microsoft UC is tremendous validation of the strengths of our unified communications and voice over Internet protocol platform, and for the momentum behind software-powered voice," stated Gurdeep Singh Pall, corporate vice president, Unified Communications Group at Microsoft.