Moving Beyond Email – The Era of SMB Online Collaboration Suites

SMB Readiness Grid: Online Collaboration Suites

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Abstract:

Collaboration is probably the only activity that everyone in every company engages in every day. Whether a CEO or new hire, an accountant or a construction worker, everyone needs to share and manage information, ideas, resources, and connections to get their jobs done.

Until recently, most small and medium businesses (SMBs) could get along just fine with a few tools such as email, calendars, document sharing, and the good old telephone. But today, many SMBs are finding that they need more effective collaboration tools to share knowledge, streamline processes, and keep everyone in the organization "on the same page". They need to make information easier to find, share, and use as well as to connect with the right people at the right time—on any device. According to SMB Group survey data, a quarter of SMBs intend to invest in collaboration solutions in the next 12 months.

Because the need to collaborate is so fundamental, many vendors see it as an irresistible opportunity. As the cloud-based computing model has matured, both traditional collaboration giants such as IBM and Microsoft, who have long offered on-premise solutions, and cloud-centric players such as Google and Zoho, have launched integrated online collaboration suite solutions designed to appeal to SMB needs and budgets.

In this study, we examine the online collaboration suite landscape. Our analysis is based on in-depth interviews with online collaboration suite vendors, several SMB customers that use and/or have tried their solutions, data from our recently completed SMB Routes to Market Study, and secondary research. We start by discussing the collaboration challenges that SMBs face and examine how online collaboration suites can help them address them. Then, we compare the SMB market readiness of eight online collaboration suite vendors, evaluating their marketing strategies, solution capabilities, service offerings, and differentiation.

The report features the SMB Readiness Grid and detailed comparison reports designed to help SMBs evaluate solutions based on several criteria, including: company strengths, solution capabilities, and marketing strategies relevant to the SMB market. Detailed vendor profiles are also included in the study.

Vendors covered: Google Apps for Business, HyperOffice, IBM LotusLive, Microsoft BPOS, OnePlace, Salesforce Chatter, VMware Zimbra, and Zoho Business.

Main Report: 37 pages   **Appendix:** In-depth vendor profiles, 28 pages

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