INTERVIEW WITH ED BRILL

Lindsey Green:	Hello and welcome to the Biztech Report's Internet Radio. Hi, I'm Lindsey Green and today we present the next installment in our IT Solutions Series, Doing More With Less, sponsored by IBM. In today's report, we once again discuss the challenges IT managers are facing and explore the latest trends and approaches being used by leading edge organizations around the world to accomplish organizational objectives. Here to bring us another discussion on how organizations in today's economy are doing more with less is Biztech Report's editorial director, Lane Cooper.
Lane Cooper:	Thanks, Lindsey. The issue of collaboration and messaging in general has of course been with us for at least a decade and a half in sort of its current generation, but it is I think taking on greater importance as people look for ways to enhance their efficiencies both within the organization and across organizations. It's an issue that is going to be central to trying to do more with less with limited resources, harnessing that potential that exists within our organizations and with critical partners and customers.
	Here today to help us understand some of the issues that IT managers should face when they try to harness this technology to do more with less is Ed Brill, who is Director for IBM's End User Messaging and Collaboration practice and brings a tremendous amount of experience, two decades of experience in understanding, analyzing and explaining the impact of this technology on enterprise. Ed, thanks for coming.
Ed Brill:	Thanks Lane, good to be here.
Lane Cooper:	Ed, let me start by giving your big history here, which I think is going to provide tremendous context. Can you explain to us a little bit of how collaboration as a concept has evolved in the last 15 years or so, and where do we find ourselves today in terms of these key productivity imperatives that are tied to the current economic economy?
Ed Brill:	It's a very good place to start. So when we think about the history of using technology for collaboration, it was first introduced 20 years. You know, we created Lotus Notes and invented a category at the time we called Groupware and eventually has become known as Collaboration. We really had to convince organizations through cultural change that sharing information was a good idea. Most people in organizations thought at the time that their unique contribution to being a knowledge worker in an organization was

what they knew, and what was in their head, and how they were therefore sought out as a resource and a subject matter expert. So I think what's happened, especially with new generation entering the workforce that's grown up online and has become used to sharing through instant messages and text messages and Facebook updates and the like that the cultural change has finally come to where collaboration is not only seen as a natural, but it's actually seen as a way of improving the organizational effort in almost any kind of organization, that people want to share what they know instead of want to protect what they know.

Lane Cooper: You know, that's interesting. I guess I'd like to get your take also, is it a generational thing? Are you finding that there's a significant difference between how, you know, more mature workers like you and I, for instance, are collaborating compared to say, the millenials and those younger folks that are coming into the workforce?

Ed Brill: I think there's a drag of technology from the younger generation up into a lot of workforces, but I don't see as much resistance as I used to in terms of adopting that technology when it comes into the workplace. But there's this clear consumerization trend in information technology today where employees in an organization are less likely to be satisfied if they aren't being provided with similar tools in a business context that they have access to in their home life. So I know that if I can communicate with people through blogs and through Twitter and Facebook in my personal world that I want to really have the same kind of tools in the workplace to share and collaborate with the people that I'm working with, as well as customers, partners and suppliers. So if I can get technology through what my IT organization is really delivering, then that's great. And if not, I'm going to look for ways to do that even if it's not an organization surface.

Lane Cooper: You know, that's a really interesting point. You mentioned the whole consumerization of technology. And it seems to me that there's been a huge evolution in that corporate version of these technologies from what you called Groupware to what we're calling today Collaboration. Can you give us a sense of how that has evolved and what impact that's having in the ability of for instance, IT managers to not just open up the kimono and let everybody share with everybody but still impose some controls and some measure of management?

Ed Brill: Yeah, and I think that self-service is really the catchword that applies here. Employees want to be able to know that if I want to start a project space or have some way to find out about a new effort or community of people in my organization or in the market that I want to be part of, I don't want to have to go through a gatekeeper to get that. And so I think the job of IT today is very much to provide the tools for the users to create and manage the content on their own, and that that will then provide the needed impetus for people to want to share.

In our own organization at IBM, we have organizational profiles which have become a great place for looking for expertise and knowledge and people who know people and, you know, sort of the connectedness of the network. That is entirely a self-service application. The IT structure was put in place to make it available to all employees, but then IT got out of the way in terms of populating it, in terms of maintaining it. It's all about what do I as an individual want to advertise to my colleagues? And that then, you know, sort of gives IT the control of what's the application and where does the data live? On the other hand, I as the user can control what I want to say in that application.

Lane Cooper: That's interesting. And you know, you described a couple of different ways to implement. Maybe you can describe for us a little bit of the key elements in collaboration, and whether it's messaging, or you almost described like a Wiki sort of an environment, and of course, you know, the joint meetings – what are the key elements in your mind for collaboration?

Ed Brill: Lane, I think that there are a couple of things. I think, you know, e-mail is certainly the lowest common denominator form of collaboration. We really have kind of focused our efforts in the last couple of years to transform e-mail not so much into the blast out to everybody communication tool but the catalyst for productivity. We want everybody to start from the perspective of here's the alerts, the information, the things that are going to trigger what I need to get done during the workday, not what somebody else is asking me to get done during the workday, and use e-mail as that kind of a tool.

Instant messaging has certainly become in many organizations the most mission critical communication and collaboration tool available because of real time nature and the ability to mix mode between voice, video and typed data. And then you get into an element of collaboration around shared files, around human

information, what languages do I speak, what customers and clients do I work with, what projects have I worked on? Sharing that out to others in the organization, sharing that in communities of interest, authoring blogs on the topic, those are all part of the tool set of collaboration today. And I think that really the most important answer is that it's not a single tool that you put in and say okay, here's our answer to collaboration is this one tool. Users are going to need a multitude of things that have some linked value, and that provides the whole that's greater than the sum of the parts.

Lane Cooper: Interesting. So what is your key piece of advice to IT managers that are either A – designing new systems or revisiting, I'm sure they have some legacy environments in place they're sort of planning into the future and B – to really enable and empower users to take advantage of these key technologies? What is the best role that you think IT managers can play?

Ed Brill: I think IT managers have to balance the impulse of the market today, which is to follow the shiny new objects, with the need to provide tools that service the user as opposed to building an environment and then hoping that there will be use of it. You know, certainly a lot of what we've seen in collaboration, and it was true in the early days of Lotus Notes as well, is people would build this sort of pristine play lot and say come collaborate here, but if there's not a compelling reason to do it, users just aren't going to participate.

On the other hand, you know, just sort of running after the latest and greatest, whether it's this week's, you know, version of a corporate Twitter or something else, you still have a business problem that you need to identify and try to solve with technology rather than throw in some technology to that play lot and hope something happens. So I think IT, as always, is best served by understanding the requirements of their business users and then being the consultative experts on what's real and what's not yet, especially because in business, we often ultimately use different technologies than we use in that consumerization space, even if those technologies have been influenced by it.

Lane Cooper: Interesting. So what role is IBM playing or how is IBM working with the IT community to make tools available and perhaps you can offer some examples of how you're getting the most bang out of the collaboration buck.

Ed Brill: Right. So you know, our Lotus software brand represents all of our collaborative offerings and we have several different spaces that we offer solutions in, including sort of an integrative collaboration tool in Lotus Notes that invented the category in the first place, a set of unified communication tools around our product brand Lotus, Sametime, and then a set of collaborative tools both for document and team sharing as well as for social sharing that are Lotus Quicker and Lotus Connections products. You know, again, like I've said in the theme of this podcast that these are – these are technologies that are almost like a middleware layer in a lot of cases that an IT shop has a great opportunity to take and shape into what the needs are of their particular organization and deploy them, you know, really to competitive advantage. They're not going to look the same just from company to company just because you're using the IBM technology set. It's really the understanding of what's needed and how to best apply it in the organization that results in you know, in success in this space.

So we have thousands of business partners with solutions that have been built on top of all of those products that really, you know, span the gamut from how do I do things like real time microblogging, and how do I bring my customers and partners into it? We have a partner that's got a great crowd-sourcing application. You want to get ideas from your customers, have other customers indicate whether they like them or not and comment on them. You know, so there's a lot of different ways of applying the technology, based on the IBM solutions.

Lane Cooper: You know, I think that's one of the other perspectives I'd like to get from you, getting that greater ecosystem involved in collaboration. Especially when you don't have the power that you have internally of sort of at least, if not dictating, at least providing and limiting the tool set. How do you get people outside of your corporate boundaries involved in this game?

Ed Brill: Yeah, I think that that's – you know, that's actually been the most empowering part of the collaborative tools over the last several years. I've gone from a metaphor where when I wanted to find out what was going out in a market, I used to have to commission market research, wait six months for it to go through statistical analysis and translation to world market and things like that, and by the time the data came back, it was really, already somewhat out of date. Today, we have a much less rigid format, but we can put inquiries out to the customer base directly, through blogs,

through newsletters, through crowd sourcing applications. There's just a number of different technologies. We use one – there's a site called ideajam.net that helps us make decisions about product features and even some of our go to market strategy. So as long as there's a no-barrier way to communicate with a vendor, you'll find that that's quite common, even in the consumer space, probably even more common there. You see sites like mystarbucksidea.com, a similar notion. Anybody can go there and say here's an idea of a product or service you might want to offer at a Starbucks location and they use that to get all their customers and partners involved in the notion of how to make it a better organization.

Lane Cooper: Outstanding. Ed, we could go all day with this, but unfortunately we need to bring this to an end. I hope that we can get together again and dig into some of the particulars of this at future podcasts.

Ed Brill: That sounds great.

Lane Cooper: Well, that's another podcast come and gone. Please come back to www.ibm.com/ITsolutions to keep track of what is going on in the world of enterprise technologies and how they're helping IT managers do more with less. Until the next podcast, this is Lane Cooper and Lindsey, back to you.

Lindsey Green: Thanks Lane. Today's Biztech Report podcast is sponsored by IBM, where the big blue team is working with clients to develop new business designs and technical architectures that enable the flexibility required to compete in today's economy and global landscape. For Biztech Reports, this is Lindsey Green.