Avaya Engages – Silicon Valley
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Introduction

Avaya held a half-day morning event announcing its **Avaya Engagement Solutions** initiative, followed by products demo sessions in the afternoon. Headquartered in Santa Clara, CA, Avaya is a $4.3 billion (FY2014 revenue), privately held company tracing its roots to Lucent, AT&T, and Western Electric.

The event was well-organized, with brief executive presentations and relevant content, no never-ending PowerPoint slides, and no sales pitches, but inviting Avaya's customers and partners, followed by useful demos after lunch.

Highlights

While everyone is talking about *Consumerization of IT*, Avaya in some ways talked about *Enterprisation of the Consumer* (we used to call it *ITization of the Consumer*), meaning bringing enterprise security, availability, manageability, and scalability to the consumer. We've previously suggested bringing consumer software development *agility* to the enterprise and enterprise software development *discipline* to the consumer. This essentially turns the consumer into an enterprise advocate.

Apple launched its App Store in July 2008 when it had 800 apps. Today, it has over 1.3 million, albeit not all were developed by Apple. This is agility. How many apps can a typical IT shop develop in six years, granted enterprises don't need so many apps? Sure, whenever an enterprise launches deploys a new app, it has to ensure it doesn't break any of the other backend apps. How was Apple able to have so many apps in just 6 years? Because, it exposed its APIs. Avaya believes a similar phenomenon will occur in enterprise communications which, for the most part today, are proprietary since many of them are tied to the underlying hardware they run on. This will be made possible by 'openness' and the necessary plug-ins or, what Avaya calls, Snap-ins.

Avaya painted a picture where all forms of collaborative communications will be fully integrated. For instance, a patient in trauma being raced to a hospital in an ambulance must have all her injuries, medical history, X-Rays, CAT and MRI scans, allergy conditions, and other crucial information readily available to the ER physicians even before she reaches the hospital. In addition, the ER should know in advance the kind of specialty doctors—ER physician, cardiologist, radiologist, orthopedic surgeon—that should be waiting for the patient's arrival. Most of the tools to affect this are available today, but many hospitals seem to be slow and reluctant to deploy these. Why? Because of costs, and many of them are still stuck in the old-fashioned paper-and-fax era of the 20th century.

Avaya also announced Contact Center agent for Chrome developed in partnership with Google. A WebRTC-based browser application version of Avaya's contact center software, it can be deployed via Chrome management with no additional software required. The Chrome agent connects to Avaya systems set up in the cloud or on-premise. Avaya claimed the entire package deal can be installed within minutes.

The company executives also emphasized the need to pay attention to social media like Facebook *likes* and *dislikes* and twitter feeds because social is all about feelings and sentiments and negative comments could have devastating effects on a company's image.

Perhaps the best talk of the entire day was the one by Daniel Pink, *New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal* bestselling author.

Dan is an extremely energetic, spirited, humorous, and motivational speaker. His secret to deliver an effective presentation? Brevity, levity, repetition. We repeat: Brevity, levity, repetition.

Some of his points were how corporations today are still stuck in the past and the remedies:
- A 30-yearold, used to smartphones, phablets, Facebook, Instagram, and twitter, and who can find, for instance, Belarus's GDP in 20 seconds using Google, of course, joins your company. It takes almost a week for your IT to get her a laptop (yes, a laptop) and provision her. And then, she is *told* what to do, instead of discovering what she *can* do.
- Worthless once-a-year performance reviews, useless weekly one-on-ones with your boss…
- Hold meetings standing up, not sitting down; they will be shorter and more effective.
- Turn weekly one-half hour or an hour-long one-on-ones to 10-minute love-and-loath sessions. "Tell me what you love about your job, what you are loath about your job, and how I can help you."