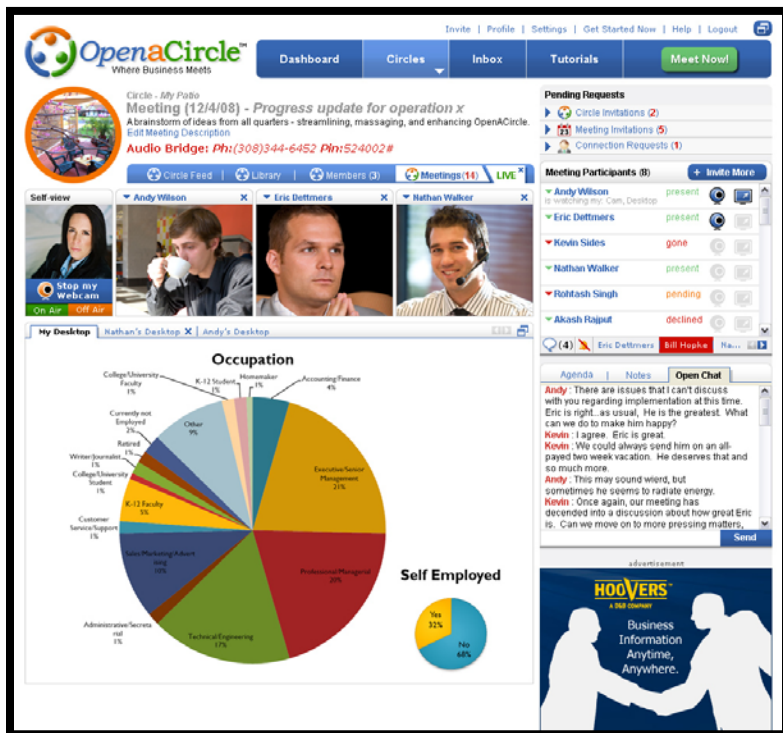


Solution in Spotlight: OpenACircle

Go-to-Market Premise: OpenACircle weaves together an array of Web capabilities under a single interface, allowing users to create private, tailored hubs that marry the best features of social media and online collaboration. The result is an application that puts social media to work, streamlining the way business executives can share documents and communicate on the fly.

Key Features & Capabilities: No single technology integrated into the OpenACircle platform is revolutionary. Rather, the secret sauce of the solution comes in how online technologies are blended together to create a unique communications environment.



The user experience is based on an interface metaphor called “Circles.” Each of these “circles” is a hosted, browser-based window featuring a range of communications assets, such as archives of online articles, downloadable documents and calendar features. Only users invited to participate in a circle can access its content, and each member of a circle is kept abreast of activity through the use of social multimedia capabilities baked into the platform.

Each user, for instance, has access to a directory of acquaintances participating in their circles – a list reminiscent of contact management services like Plaxo or LinkedIn. The directory, in turn, supports

a private instant messaging system that lets users detect the presence of individuals and share text messages with them in real-time or via e-mail style inboxes. The directory structure also is central to a feature that allows users to broadcast short, bursty Twitter-like messages to their contacts, notifying them of their current work activity. Users also can leverage the directory system to set up a collaborative meeting that incorporates Webcam video, desktop application sharing and conference calling capabilities. On-screen tools aid participants in taking notes on meetings that can be shared with other members of the circle.

The OpenACircle application, which users can access at www.OpenACircle.com, also embraces video communications. Collaborative meetings can easily incorporate multiple video feeds from Webcams. Users also can use their Webcams to record videos that can be posted for circle participants to watch on an on-demand basis. Ample storage space makes it possible for users to upload and share video files, as well.

Potential Target Markets: The net result of the technology integration is a platform that extends beyond the typically frivolous nature of popular consumer social media applications. OpenACircle is designed definitively from the outset to serve as a business productivity environment. The screen welcoming users as they sign into OpenACircle, for instance, serves up a summary of directory-driven notifications that list the activity taking place in each of a user's circles. This feature enables a user to keep tabs on multiple team projects simultaneously and streamlines the process of scheduling and participating in communications events designed to review and enhance newly posted project work. The most obvious target market for OpenACircle capabilities are information professionals involved with the drafting and revision of documents with multiple parties.



Lawyers, for instance, could use the system to share and archive drafts of contracts developed on a client's behalf. Engineers and architects could use OpenACircle to distribute and review schematic drawings with relevant stakeholders. Advertising agencies and public relations firms, likewise, could leverage the system for the client review and approval of proposed marketing assets.

IMS First Look Bottom Line: OpenACircle is social media with a purpose. Through its creative integration of Web technologies, the platform holds the promise for fostering a new breed of online communications activity structured around a project-oriented or team-based metaphor. At its core, the solution helps executives create a tailored online repository for archived content related to a specific work task. Social media technologies make it possible to create an active "work community" around these document archives.

The challenge for the OpenACircle solution will come in describing the value of the integrated communications experience to a set of prospective users who are largely accustomed to using these Web capabilities on an a la carte basis. The team-based orientation of the product, however, could lend the solution a highly viral attribute that could lead to significant user-to-user introduction of the OpenACircle service.