

REPORT REPRINT

Redbooth aims to drive a wave of process-integrated collaboration

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With an aggressive partnering strategy, Redbooth looks to shift the perception of project management from niche collaboration service to a standard component of any social platform.

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When we last touched base with project management and collaboration vendor Redbooth, it was actively pursuing relationships within the unified communications community. Now the company is focused on deepening relationships in the collaboration space, stressing the value of project management partnerships and process-driven platforms. Despite feature overlap, Redbooth hopes this will elevate its status as a recognized service of value above and beyond general collaboration. In addition to some new features, including a Gantt chart timeline view and workflow templates, Redbooth has announced an integration with Cisco Spark, suggesting that process-integrated workflows may be something to increasingly expect of standard collaboration platforms.

THE 451 TAKE

There is no shortage of collaboration products in today's market, but few are as neatly positioned as Redbooth to take advantage of one of the biggest waves in business applications: the convergence of unified communications and collaboration. The company has been vocal about its enthusiasm for partnerships on both sides, viewing project and task management as a strong foundation for the bridge between communication and productivity applications. With some frustration budding toward 'chattier' applications that can be as disruptive as they are useful, Redbooth's purposeful, workflow-oriented structure should provide an important competitive edge.

CONTEXT

Redbooth was founded in Barcelona circa 2009. Originally named Teambox, the product supported collaboration and project management as it does today, but the vendor and platform were rebranded to stay the misconception that it catered solely to small teams. Since then total staff has risen to 70, the majority of which are located in the Redwood City, California headquarters. The original Spanish office has been converted to an R&D center. Redbooth has completed six rounds of funding – totaling \$19.75m – and today supports 979,000 users between trialists and its 3,000 paid accounts. 451 Research estimates annual revenue to be \$7m-10m.

PRODUCTS

The Redbooth platform provides project management software and communication features designed to build context between existing collaborative processes. In practical terms, the features provide full transparency into teams' work streams, enable asynchronous and real-time cooperation, and identify hindrances to productivity. The product has been positioned as a tool to fill the gaps between disjointed workflow processes – enhancing rather than replacing existing communication systems. Features include task management, team calendars, HD videoconferencing, notes, team chat and file share.

A Gantt timeline, recently added to the feature set, permits users to visualize teammates' workloads, track team progress and manage dependencies. The company has also built out a library of use-case templates that showcases the breadth of business processes it serves, from employee onboarding and press release management to venture financing management.

The Redbooth platform is grounded in the theory that measurable accountability keeps teams focused and productive. As such, it lends itself as an effective management tool. Performance metrics, reports and continuous status updates provide a basis for supervisors to manage workloads, monitor project progress and easily provide feedback. This is a fine line to toe since employee monitoring on the whole tends to generate resistance from users, but the Redbooth design is billed as lightweight and unobtrusive. Collaboration applications overall are making productivity and team contribution more quantifiable. Redbooth has made a point to harness this transparency in a way that is as valuable for the user as it is for management.

Although the company and most of its clients favor a cloud implementation, Redbooth has designed an on-premises version for security-sensitive clients, which roughly 10% of today's customers have chosen to employ. Redbooth does not foresee the need to provide a hybrid option. Given that the majority of collaboration providers do enable hybrid capabilities, this makes Redbooth's approach somewhat of an anomaly.

PARTNER STRATEGY

As discussed in our last report on Redbooth, the company gambled early on in the growing ecosystem between collaboration and unified communications. Redbooth positioned itself as a willing partner when many UC platforms were in need of a refresh. The resulting pool of resellers and partners has been a critical source of exposure for Redbooth, and it will continue to focus its energies on maintaining and growing the channel. Most recently, cloud-based UC provider BroadSoft selected Redbooth as a partner in its Project Tempo initiative, which is aimed at enabling contextualized unified communications for its existing telecom customers.

Redbooth recently announced a new integration with Cisco Spark, uniting Spark's communication features with Redbooth's task management. As with many of the other built-in connections, including those for Slack and Box, there is some duplication of Redbooth's own collaboration features, but the project management backbone is proving to be an attractive point of partnership for general collaboration vendors. The process-oriented structure of Redbooth's platform looks especially attractive as the industry experiences a degree of backlash against communications platforms that can be more distracting than useful in practice. For this reason, we expect niche collaboration vendors to consider project management as a potential point of partnership or in-house feature development as they expand.

COMPETITION

It has been said repeatedly: The collaboration space is a crowded one, and interest is growing from tangential markets. UC titans Microsoft and Cisco have been bulking up their collaboration products – Skype and Spark, in particular – and have become formidable competitors in this space. RingCentral, Moxtra and Dialpad (formerly Switch.co) have also invested in collaboration, with RingCentral's acquisition of EFSS vendor Glip and Dialpad's partnership with Google Apps for Work. Redbooth has been wise to establish itself early as a willing partner to UC vendors, but will be fighting for attention against smaller acquisition targets and development of native collaboration capabilities. In terms of project management capabilities, Redbooth competes with the likes of Wrike, Asana, Microsoft Project, Smartsheet, Clarizen, Wunderlist and Talygen.

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

Redbooth provides structure and process to team work flows that many communications and collaboration vendors lack. It has also been incredibly active in pursuing partnerships, allowing it to piggyback existing customer ecosystems.

WEAKNESSES

Redbooth's deployment options are more limited than other collaboration providers.

OPPORTUNITIES

Redbooth has strategically partnered with today's hottest collaboration vendors, and hopes it will be able to ride their momentum as a preferred partner in the task management space.

THREATS

Many UC vendors have begun to build out or acquire collaboration platforms of their own, which may begin to jeopardize Redbooth's partnerships and potential revenue.