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Mitel Next Summer 2017

June 2017, Dave Michels

1. Overview

1. Mitel Elite (as well as Mitel Next and the Mitel User Group) took place in San Antonio May 30-June 1, 2017. The event included customers, top dealers, analysts and consultants.
2. Things are very busy at Mitel including an expanded global cloud, several upcoming products, new sales leadership, and the Toshiba base (dealers and customers) integration.
3. CEO McBee stated Mitel's vision is to make communications and collaboration **seamless**. Three key elements to the strategy are: Expand and enable the base, provide them a path to the future (cloud), and assist with digital transformation.

2. CloudLink

1. Mitel was more forthcoming than usual about its roadmap, in part because it is seeing shorter development cycles.
2. CloudLink is a new middleware solution expected later this year. The promise is to enable customers to link to the cloud on their terms with their existing products. Effectively it commoditizes premises-based PBX functionality so a single integration applies to all of the systems.
3. CloudLink will initially be delivered as a premises-based solution, but could potentially be moved to the cloud. The first release is focused on PBX integrations, but it will expand into IoT solutions and contact center services.
4. CloudLink applications will initially be targeted at "the underserved" SMB users, especially mobile-workers. The intent is to easily customize workflows with richer collaboration.

3. Internet of Things (IoT)

1. IoT was a recurring theme at Elite as it can be key to digital transformation initiatives.
2. Mitel shared five concurrent IoT strategies: Mitel Mass Notification (MMN), Mitel Contact Center (MiCC), phone buttons, CloudLink, and iLink for hospitality.
 - A. MMN is the most mature of the IoT initiatives as it was initially designed to send notifications based on a trigger event. Mitel has expanded the triggers to various things such as door sensors, Amazon Alexa, and is also testing LoRa connected devices. A triggered event can cause MMN to initiate text, audio, and/or conferencing services.
 - B. Within MiCC is a routing engine that is being upgraded to route open media in addition to traditional sessions. Mitel demonstrated a help/panic button situation that connected a person needing assistance to assistants via audio and video.
 - C. Mitel phones feature programmable buttons that can be lines, speed-dials, or features. Now a button can be an IoT trigger. It's simple today, but a planned XML toolkit will expand button capabilities. The buttons can also allow a user to acknowledge a message.
 - D. Cloudlink is a server based gateway that will likely expand to integrate with other premises-based solutions. For example, a door buzzer/unlock integration with the PBX.



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- E. iLink (previously known as TigerTMS) is positioned as a hub for hospitality systems, devices, and applications. iLink offers advantages over the traditional approach of using the property management system as a hub.

4. Mitel UC and Contact Center

1. Mitel has re-affirmed its commitment to Vidyo and intends to release several new video related solutions later this year. The expanded agreement now includes Vidyo Cloud and Vidyo.io. Expect announcements regarding new equipment and services.
2. Mitel gave no keynote attention to its MiTeam solution for workstream collaboration. This was odd for several reasons: It's a highly competitive, next generation offering for Mitel and UC in general, and the event's theme was digital transformation which is a central aspect of workstream messaging solutions. MiTeam is provided from an OEM partner.
3. Mitel intends to release a major upgrade (Release 9) to its contact center MiCC this fall. The upgrade has four major objectives: HA, Open Media Routing, Omnichannel, and single stream software.

5. Opinion

1. CloudLink is a powerful concept. That is, if Mitel can truly commoditize or "abstract" its large collection of Key and PBX systems. This will be accomplished via several system protocols including CSTA, MITAI, and OAI. The cloud components of CloudLink will run in AWS. New apps will include services such as 2FA, chatbots, G-Maps integrations, and analytics.
2. Mitel packed its two-day conference with a lot of information and innovation. It is impressive how much Mitel is doing. However, very little (or no) attention was given to workstream messaging (MiTeam), CPaaS (no offer), and video (MiCollab updates coming). None of these strategic areas got more than passing keynote attention.
3. Mitel is selling "digital transformation." That's a reasonable lure, but realistically digital transformation is not something that an enterprise purchases. Mitel does offer some powerful tools that support integration and automation. However, incremental process improvements would be a more accurate promise.
4. While most UC competitors are quickly expanding their value prop away from UC, Mitel seems to be doubling down on it. Central to CloudLink is integration with premises-based key/UC systems. The Toshiba deal expands its base of voice-centric, premises-based users. Its new sales leader brings UC experience from premises-era Avaya and Nortel.
5. McBee states that Mitel's singular focus on communications sets it apart from its (distracted) competitors (namely Microsoft and Cisco). However, enterprise communications cannot be accomplished in isolation. Services must be backed with strong APIs and integrations into workflow and mobility.
6. With CloudLink, Mitel believes the development cost of new apps becomes so low that Mitel can create "a lot of apps" targeted to micro-segments.
7. Mitel believes that SMB users are underserved and cited low UC attach rates. For Mitel it validates a wide-open market, for others it confirms that SMB organizations don't embrace modern apps.