



**Enterprise 2.0**

The Collaborative Technologies Conference

# ProdexNet

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# About Prodex

- Ten year old Services / Product Business headquartered in Silicon Valley
- Clients include Fortune 1000 companies
- Offshore operation in Chennai, India
- Almost all R&D done in Indian operation



# Situation

- At least three entities need to collaborate
  - Prodex USA, Prodex India, Customer
- Challenges:
  - Cultural
  - Time zone differences
  - Everyone not on same page – the why's, what's, how's, when's etc.
- Needed to adopt technologies & processes to allow full scale collaboration between all entities



# Technologies Used

- Email
  - When audit trail, documentation needed
  - Customer and HR interaction
- Message Boards/Wikis
  - For individual projects
  - Technical details
- Online Chat – quick clarifications, real time collaboration
- Web Conferencing/Desktop sharing – Formal meetings, Real time collaboration, UI discussions, Debugging, Tech support



# Processes Used

- Regularly scheduled meetings – formal announcements, status updates
- Smaller team sizes – fewer links of communication. Big teams are broken up into smaller teams
- Encourage informal phone conversations – praise/concerns, increases personal touch
- Flexible timings – allow for time overlap to encourage real time collaboration
- Non bureaucratic open loop communication structure – upper management can communicate directly with engineers, product managers etc.



## Case Study – NetAge Inc.

- Project – specification, prototyping, alpha and beta testing a new product
- New technologies incorporated in product
- Client very happy with project results!
- Two organizations in USA and team in India interacted during 19 month old project
  - So far, no face-to-face interaction!
  - First phone conversation after 18 months!



# NetAge Inc. – Success Factors

- Client's exceptional written communication skills
- Tools adopted
  - Message board (Basecamp) for technical interactions
  - Use of online chat for ironing out development/debugging details
  - Client / India team's willingness to use tools for communicating
  - No bureaucracy/protocol to impede communications



# For successful collaboration

– Bottom line – human interaction/attitude is key:

Willingness to take time and effort to communicate, written or verbal

Willingness to be flexible with work hours to allow for time overlap

Willingness to travel (sometimes) to allow for face-to-face interactions

Willingness to use the right tools at the right time