



Arkadin: Global Unified Communications & Collaboration Champion in a Dynamic Digital Workplace

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Abstract

Arkadin is one of the largest and fastest growing communications and collaboration service providers in the world. With a vision rooted in the belief that progress emerges from people's desire to share, Arkadin offers a complete range of integrated audio, web, video, and unified communications solutions. This article introduces the company's operations, strategies, and potential future as an NTT Communications Group company.

Keywords: audio/web/video conferencing, cloud, digital workplace

1. Introduction

In a global workplace that is becoming increasingly digital and connected, enterprises must become more agile to compete and succeed. Rapid and seamless communications through any device is essential at every level of the organization, whether between departments, divisions, or countries, anywhere in the globe. The net result is a new importance on workforce engagement. Having the right mix of collaborative technologies is essential for driving productivity, improving employee wellbeing, and retaining top talent.

At Arkadin, we have a collection of market-leading audio/web/video conferencing and unified communications solutions that are essential for success in our digitally connected global workplace. All services are delivered in the cloud and are backed by a cutting-edge infrastructure for premium service quality.

Our business model is based on deploying services that are administered locally by highly trained Arka-

din professionals who are geographically and culturally close to our clients. As entrepreneurs, we began with this innovative local approach to customer service from our start in 2001, and it remains a key pillar of our success.

Arkadin is one of the largest and fastest growing providers of unified communications and collaboration (UC&C) services in the world. We have operations in over 30 countries, with 56 offices spread throughout the Americas, EMEA (Europe, the Middle East, and Africa) and CEMEA (Central and Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Africa), and in the Asia Pacific region, including China, which serve over 50,000 clients from a vast range of industries (**Fig. 1**).

Our mission is to lead companies to increased growth and success by delivering positive collaboration experiences. We are driven by the idea that progress emerges from people's desire to share and work together. As such, our vision is to be at the forefront in meeting growing demand for cloud-based UC&C services by providing organizations with the best



Fig. 1. Global service coverage.



Fig. 2. Expertise in collaboration technologies.

solutions for enhancing their business (Fig. 2).

2. Strong performance positions Arkadin as #1 cloud collaboration service provider

Arkadin is profitable and has gained a 21% compound annual growth rate over the past five years, which is very healthy. We hosted just over 30 million meetings in 2015, with 119 million participants clocking 82 million hours in total, as well as 40,000

events, of which 3000 were webcasts. Our strong performance has made us the fastest growing cloud collaboration provider in the industry (Fig. 3).

3. Arkadin values are significant competitive differentiators

Values run through everything we do, both from a cultural and business perspective, and we are convinced they set us apart in the marketplace. Our

Arkadin is the fastest growing collaboration service provider in the industry.

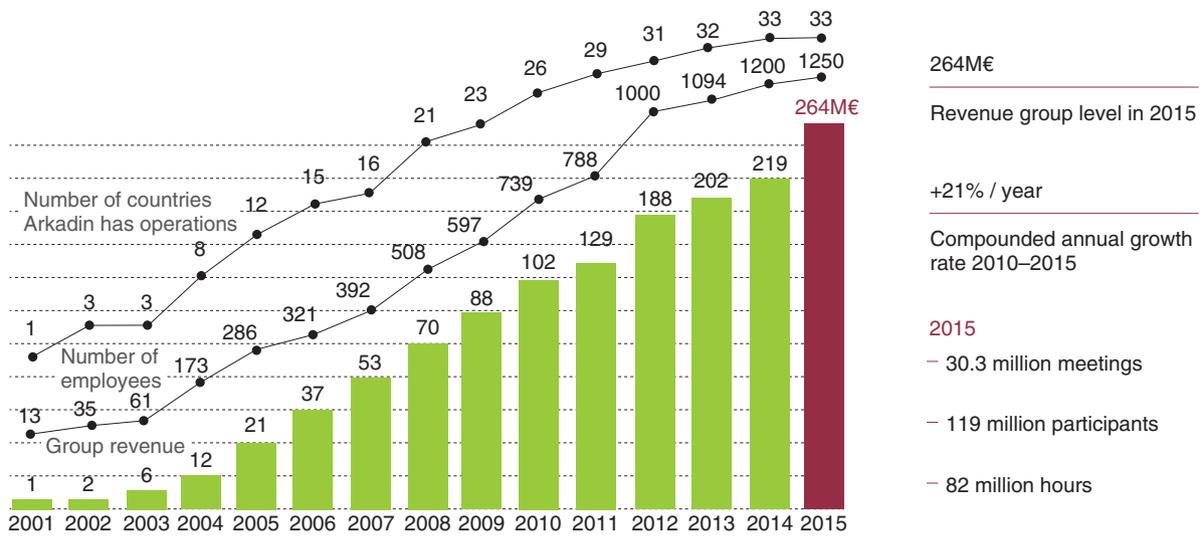


Fig. 3. Achieving strong growth.

cultural values are based on respect, working together, entrepreneurial spirit, and workplace enjoyment, while our business values are centered on creating and sustaining a premium customer experience. They are inextricably linked. A premium customer experience begins with a strong culture within Arkadin. We know that a happy workforce makes for happy customers. This idea is central to our business, and we believe it gives us a significant advantage. We are so passionate about our values that we recently launched a new website to showcase how they apply across all aspects of our organization [1].

4. Strategic acquisitions to propel agile global growth

Acquisitions of organizations with stellar track records, advanced technologies, and trusted reputations allow us to expand our global footprint and market share. Our most recent example is our purchase of T-Uno last year, which enabled us to enter Colombia with the market leader in the region. We also acquired AT Conference [2] in 2015, a New York-based audio and web conferencing provider, which is helping us to increase our customer base and market share in the North American collaboration market. Arkadin will be keeping the AT Conference brand and Information Systems to leverage their strength in the small- and medium-sized businesses

(SMB) sector. Their service and support complement our existing capabilities, while our full suite of UC&C solutions are a great fit for their customers.

We also target potential technologies for acquisition that will enhance our customer value proposition and provide cutting-edge UC&C solutions for meeting all communications requirements.

Our 2014 acquisition of implement.com [3], a key Microsoft partner with a stellar track record in enabling service providers to leverage hosted voice and Microsoft technologies, has allowed us to extend our UC-as-a-Service (UCaaS) offerings so that businesses can harness the full power of UC for greater workplace productivity. Arkadin has benefited from their honed UC expertise and advanced collaboration service platform. The acquisition has been instrumental in giving us the most advanced business productivity tools, plus all telephony capabilities, in a convenient, cost-efficient cloud-based offer in Arkadin Total Connect.

In the video category, our acquisition of French video specialist Novasight [4] in 2012 gave us a leg up in video managed services, an important long-term growth market.

The synergies from these acquisitions are significant. Together with NTT Communications, we offer the complete package: the most advanced UC&C technologies and global infrastructure plus comprehensive, locally administered support services, resulting

in a tremendous competitive advantage on a worldwide basis and a win-win for our customers.

5. Product and marketing strategies driven by a digitally transformed workplace

We are in a hyper-connected world where anytime, anywhere, any-device communication is the expectation. Trends driven by the cloud, social communities, and a mobile workforce are driving dramatic changes in global workplaces, and they will only intensify as millennials become more dominant and achieve leadership positions. Workers' expectations are changing fast, and collaboration technology is a vital enabler. There is a new importance placed on the engagement of people and a flatter work structure. Workers are expected to access their information from anywhere—even their corporate intranets. Teams need to collaborate virtually across geographical barriers and time zones to be effective and competitive. And flexible work policies are no longer just something nice to have, but are essential for driving productivity, retaining top talent, and reigning in costs for unnecessary business travel. In short, collaboration technologies are vital enablers.

All of these trends and developments translate to a very dynamic market for our services, and we are extremely well positioned to profit. We have the ambition and an aggressive plan to capture a sizable share of the market. Our strategy is centered on three strategic pillars, which are explained in the following subsections.

5.1 Best UC&C solutions in the cloud

There is no future without great products. Arkadin has a two-pronged product strategy that has fueled our strong growth. We have our own branded Arkadin-Anytime audio conferencing and ArkadinAnywhere web conferencing, with the most digitally advanced cloud collaboration platform [5].

We also maintain partnerships with leading technology companies including Microsoft, ON24, Adobe, Vidyo, Cisco, Blue Jeans Network, and IBM for best-in-class cloud solutions that are rich in features, intuitive, and integrated with our premium audio conferencing for an exceptional user experience. Each of our partners has a different set of capabilities that enable us to be a true one-stop shop for UC&C services.

5.1.1 UC—a key enabler of digital workplace transformation

In the UC sector, Arkadin offers a suite of market-

leading solutions from Microsoft Skype^{*1} for Business and Cisco Jabber^{*2} combined with WebEx^{*2}. Delivered in the cloud for fast international deployment offering a high return on investment (ROI), the services are integrated with Arkadin's stable, crystal-clear audio conferencing and combined with our comprehensive support services.

The center of our UC strategy is Arkadin Total Connect, a Microsoft Skype for Business hosted service. Integrated into Arkadin 'as a Service,' Arkadin Total Connect offers voice, contact center, and conferencing services to Office 365^{*3}, all under a 'single pane of glass,' which frees up information technology (IT) teams to focus on other strategic projects. The voice-enabled Office 365 deployment seamlessly integrates with Exchange Online (within Office 365) for unified messaging that drives efficiencies while reducing costs associated with traditional PBX (private branch exchange) and third-party conferencing services.

Businesses benefit from the convenience of a single all-in-one solution, which offers substantial cost savings from on-premises UC deployment, coupled with Arkadin's premium quality integration, networking expertise, and customer support.

In December 2015, Arkadin was named a launch partner for the new Skype for Business meetings and voice services in Office 365. Arkadin will be a key resource for driving the rollout of the new services. We are one of only a few service providers operating on a global scale that meet Microsoft's requirements and enable it to offer a fully integrated platform for meeting and voice services (Fig. 4).

Being named a launch partner is a testament to our eight-year history of success in hosting voice in the cloud for Microsoft UC services. As an NTT Communications' subsidiary, we can leverage the company's sophisticated global voice architecture and integration capabilities and help customers reduce the costs and complexity associated with voice deployments. Our professional end-user support, training, migration, and change management capabilities guarantee efficient rollouts. The net result is a single source for deploying Office 365 as a business-class phone system, contact center, and conferencing platform delivered in the cloud.

*1 Microsoft and Skype are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries.

*2 Cisco Jabber and WebEx are registered trademarks of Cisco Systems, Inc. and/or its affiliates in the United States and certain other countries.

*3 Office 365 is a registered trademark of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries.

Arkadin is bridging the gap in Microsoft Office 365.



*Excel Launch Icon 2012, Exchange Launch Icon 2013, Office with Office 2012 Design, OneNote Launch Icon 2012, Outlook Launch Icon 2012, PowerPoint Launch Icon 2012, Publisher Launch Icon 2012, Skype “S” Design, SharePoint, SharePoint Launch Icon 2012, and Word Launch Icon 2012 are registered trademarks or a trademark of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries.

Fig. 4. A key provider of Microsoft Skype for Business services and voice services in Office 365.

A good example of how we are helping clients to succeed with Office 365 is with a Texas-based IT services firm. ENTRUST Technology Consulting Services required a hosted UC solution that would have all collaboration features and mobility in one product, plus voice and a call center solution. Arkadin Total Connect for Office 365, integrated with Clarity Connect, provided everything they needed in a simple-to-manage hosted solution. It has transformed the way they think about their operations. The ENTRUST workforce is now empowered to operate from wherever they are, and is thus able to better service their customer base and expand their footprint since they are no longer dependent on any single location.

“Arkadin Total Connect for Office 365 enables our workforce to operate from anywhere they are. Working at home is no different than working from our office. It has transformed the way we think about our operations.”

Mitchell R. Sowards, President, ENTRUST

5.2 Premium customer experience

In this fast changing business environment that is driving tremendous change in global workplaces, it is more essential than ever to listen to customers and

adapt strategies when necessary for delivering on their requirements.

A premium client experience is in our DNA, and it is a key competitive differentiator. Our local yet global approach to customer service sets us apart in the industry and delights our clients since they deal with local teams who speak their language and understand their culture. Regional customer success teams take the time to understand our clients’ unique needs and challenges, whether they are a global conglomerate or an SMB, so that we can implement the tools that will deliver a high ROI. It is all about a complete 365-degree experience in the spirit of a true partnership for building customer loyalty.

Our service strategy is truly end-to-end and multi-layered, encompassing live assistance 24/7 in 19 languages, and user training that is live, onsite, and virtual. We offer sophisticated reporting tools and professional services complete with project managers, and technical pre-sales and service relationship managers for more complex collaboration and UC deployments. Our value-added capabilities also include professional services for concierge and end-point management, infrastructure monitoring, and billing services (Fig. 5).

Arkadin’s customer Hatch, one of the world’s



Fig. 5. Arkadin value proposition.

pre-eminent suppliers of technical and strategic services for the mining, metallurgical, and energy industries, with operations throughout North America, Europe, the Middle East, South America, Asia Pacific, and South Africa, relies on virtual meetings to communicate high level company information to its 10,000 global employees. Hatch recently experienced the value of our live, value-added global service strategy in conjunction with a large annual meeting in South Africa. We had the complete array of audio, video, and multimedia solutions, plus experienced engineers and support technicians in South Africa as well as their headquarters in Ontario, Canada, for pulling off the meeting. For the first time, Hatch had every aspect of the event covered by one provider. Following the success of the meeting, Arkadin now provides a cost-efficient, one-vendor approach for all of Hatch's large global meeting needs regardless of where their conferences are staged.

“Arkadin had the complete array of audio, video, and multimedia solutions, plus experienced engineers and support technicians in South Africa as well as Ontario, Canada, for pulling off our large general meeting. It was the complete package. For the first time we had every aspect of the event covered by one provider. The huge success of our meeting convinced us to use Arkadin for all of our large global meetings and webcasts regardless of where in the world they are located.”

Stephen Goodger, ICT Lead – Operational Management, Hatch

To ensure we continue to deliver the best experi-

ence for our clients, we have instituted a three-pronged plan that addresses People Development, World Class Operations for delivering the most advanced infrastructure, and World Class Digital Customer Experiences. As an example of our commitment to customers, we implemented a new Customer Lifecycle Program for an improved, globally consistent onboarding process for all new Arkadin-Anytime and ArkadinAnywhere users. It is part of a renewed focus on improving our customers' digital experience and reinforces our overall value proposition, while giving us a significant competitive advantage around the customer pain point of low new-user adoption.

We devised a personalized new-user nurture campaign to replace the original “one shot” welcome pack. It consists of three strong induction emails with reasons to activate the service and handy tools to make collaboration easier. The tools include: a Getting Started Guide, Mobility Apps, and a Productivity Toolbar. Taking advantage of Arkadin's newly refreshed brand, these communications are more visual and dynamic (**Fig. 6**). All new customers who still fail to activate after this first phase of induction are sent through a second ‘adoption’ nurture flow with additional motivational messages to encourage them to get started.

We rolled out the program in the second half of 2015, and it is now live in most Arkadin countries. To date, customer engagement has been extremely high, with adoption levels for new users averaging 59% compared to the previous global average of 43%. In addition to being added value for customers, it is also a high revenue generator for Arkadin, creating €2

We devised three strong induction emails for new users.



Fig. 6. New welcome emails.

million worth of net new revenue since its launch last year, and it will continue to build as new territories and products are added.

We have now made onboarding incredibly simple, and the results speak for themselves. In addition, we are proud to be a finalist in this year’s Oracle Markie Awards for “Best International Campaign 2015” based on the global impact of this customer-led initiative.

5.3 Expansion and profitable long-term growth as a member of NTT Group

In addition to having the best technology partners, Arkadin will continue to align with strategically positioned telecommunications companies, agents, resellers, and systems integrators who share our philosophy about the value of cloud-based UC&C services. At the center of this dynamic ecosystem are NTT Communications and fellow NTT Group subsidiary Dimension Data. We have programs in place that leverage each of their strengths, resulting in powerful synergies for our customers. For example:

- Arkadin is collaborating on NTT Communications’ Arcstar brand of collaboration services in Japan. We recently launched the Japan Platform in April 2015 as an Arcstar UCaaS Microsoft Type service utilizing Arkadin’s international platform.
- Reselling agreements are in place in North America, Europe, and Asia. Each market has a distinct platform, which is a tremendous competitive advantage, especially in selling to large global companies.
- Our partnership is not all about business. The

people side is equally important. Considering the very different cultural orientations and work styles between teams based in Japan and the West, we have instituted programs to accelerate mutual understanding and appreciation of our strengths and differences. One example is our employee exchange program that enables us to connect and share our knowledge, culture, and values. To date, approximately 10 employees from both companies have participated by leaving their home turf for offices in Paris and Montpellier, France, as well as in Hong Kong, Tokyo, and Singapore. We are confident programs like this will be enormously beneficial in building better teamwork and synergies between teams across the globe.

6. Bright and digital future with NTT Communications

Our opportunities for greater global growth and leadership are unlimited and are just beginning to be realized. Arkadin is well positioned within the larger NTT Group for enabling the organization and its subsidiary companies to achieve global leadership in cloud-based UC&C services. Together we offer customers the most sophisticated infrastructure, networking, and telecommunications capabilities. In the 30 months since NTT Communications acquired Arkadin, we have been working closely as a team to ensure we leverage our complementary strengths for providing the most comprehensive collection of the highest quality UC&C solutions available in the market.



Photo 1. Arkadin team.

Recently, NTT Communications launched *Vision 2020 – Transform. Transcend*, an innovative initiative that is perfectly placed to serve an ever-changing digital world [6]. Arkadin will work together with NTT Communications to continually assess market trends and provide customers with new state-of-the-art technologies that will not only bring business change, but will break boundaries and extend our imagination.

We believe our team of global entrepreneurs and our stellar portfolio of UC&C products, set within a

high-growth market, give us all the components we need for a bright and digital future (**Photo 1**).

References

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Didier Jaubert

Chief Executive Officer, Arkadin SAS.

Didier Jaubert brought 30 years of commercial and general management experience with IT and telecommunications multinationals to Arkadin. He had senior roles at Orange Business Services, where he was recognized for his expertise in outsourcing and system integration, and at IBM, where he held various management positions in sales and global services in France and the U.S. He has a degree in engineering from the Ecole Centrale Paris and an economics degree from Paris University. He has been Chief Executive Officer of Arkadin since October 2015.