

## **Extend Your IT Investments and Create Business Value with Lotus Foundations Branch Office**

**Speakers:**     **Caleb Barlow, Integration Executive – Net Integration Technologies, Lotus Foundations**  
                      **Stephanie Falzon, Marketing Manager, Lotus Foundations**

**Stephanie:**

Hello and welcome to the podcast Extend Your IT Investments and Create Business Value with IBM Lotus Foundation Branch Office. My name is Stephanie Falzon. I am the Worldwide Marketing Manager for Lotus Foundations. Today we will be speaking with Caleb Barlow who is the Business Line Executive for Lotus Foundation.

Hello Caleb.

**Caleb:**

Hi Stephanie.

**Stephanie:**

So let's get started. Today let's talk about Lotus Foundation Branch Office. The way people work it's dramatically changes. Especially during these tough economic times businesses are attempting to find ways to make the most with fewer resources, simplified processes, find new efficiency and choosing the right collaboration tools and technology and the right delivery model is critical for businesses to differentiate and innovate in this down economy. In this podcast we will discuss Lotus Foundation Branch Office, a complete on premise solution designed to help businesses reduce the cost and complexities associated with administrating and maintaining technology by leveraging existing IT investments at the head office when extending their IT infrastructure into branch offices.

So Caleb, what can you tell us Lotus Foundation Branch Office actually is and how would it provide value to a business?

**Caleb:**

So Stephanie Lotus Foundation at its core is a software appliance that provides all the key essentials a business needs. If the file server, web server, mail server, application environments, it provides office productivity tools and it's basically an equivalent Microsoft Office using Lotus Symphony, a firewall, a VPN and of course anti-virus and anti-spam. The product Lotus Foundations Start which you may have heard of is predominately designed for small businesses. Lotus Foundations Branch Office is a variant of the Lotus Foundations appliance that is specifically designed for a remote branch office of a larger enterprise. The idea is being that we

provide all the capabilities that people are familiar with and know in the Lotus Foundations' product line but deliver them in a package designed uniquely for that enterprise branch office.

So the idea here Stephanie is that although back at the corporate headquarters the enterprise probably has an IT department out in that remote branch office which could be a remote store location, it could be a well head of an oil company, it could be a franchise of a large insurance company. There is not necessarily on site IT assistance. So by providing those IT services on an appliance they get access to all the same information and tools that they have if they were connected directly with corporate infrastructure but they can do that in a remote location where maybe they don't have the bandwidth or the skills on-site to help them out.

**Stephanie:**

You mentioned Lotus Foundation Branch Office has all of these capabilities. For example anti-spam, antivirus and e-mail, can you give us an idea of what the core capabilities of the solution are?

**Caleb:**

I don't want to go through that whole laundry list again but certainly the file server, mail server, print server, e-mail can run applications. You can even run Windows applications on this appliance using an included VM hypervisor. The appliance is built on top of a highly customize variance of Novell SLES 10, so it's Linux although you don't have to know anything about Linux in order to run it or administer it. The mail server is provided by Domino and for those of you that are familiar with Domino the great thing about this is your Domino admin will see Lotus Foundation Branch Office as another Domino server and in the field. The OS administrator however just sees it as a black box that they don't have to worry about. In fact to install, configure and set up the appliance it takes less than 30 minutes and you don't have to know anything about Domino or anything about Linux and order to do it.

**Stephanie:**

That's pretty cool. You also mentioned notes and Domino and now and the ability to run a Microsoft Office tools. You will to win over the fact that there is a whole productivity suite in the package itself. Can you talk a little bit about why collaboration tools in particular are so critical in business today?

**Caleb:**

Well collaboration is needed for a whole variety of reasons. Everything from its mail, its instant messaging, it's having places to store documents and I think one of the underserved needs here is that corporate enterprises environments, everyone is used to having access to these tools. What do you do with that remote franchise of the insurance company or literally that wellhead out in the field with the oil company or retail store location where they want to be part of the corporate infrastructure and you want to provide the same level of tooling and capability but it's really hard

to do that over what may be a low bandwidth connection and without having technical skill in those remote locations.

So what makes Lotus foundation's product very unique is the ability to handle this is that it's truly an appliance. So there is no monitor, there is no keyboard, there's not even a mouse attached to this. Literally it something you plug it in and turn it on and everything gets managed remotely. Even though that branch office maybe remote from the corporate headquarters that doesn't mean that the work environment is any less complex or interactions happen any less frequently. In fact the fact that it's remote means that collaboration tools are probably even more important because you can't meet these folks face-to-face because they are remote. So the idea of Foundations Branch Office is to provide all the capability that you're familiar with but also do it all remotely.

The other big story here is really a cost-saving story as well because along with all the collaboration tools and the ability to run Windows apps you get with Foundations you also get Lotus Symphony included support for free with Foundations. So the other great piece of news here for enterprises like branch offices issue don't really need to go out and buy Microsoft Office for all those remote locations, you can just use Lotus Symphony and frankly use that as a cost savings for something else in your enterprise.

**Stephanie:**

You also mentioned that the product can be remotely managed. So I guess for the IT administrator, the Domino admin at head office, this is going to save a lot of time and a lot of effort in managing all of the remote locations and getting all of the employees up to speed on a quick basis.

**Caleb:**

Well I think there is a unique challenge here for the Domino admin definitely. I'm really glad you brought that up because on one hand the Domino admin back in the corporate office, they want to have control over what's going on in the Domino today and if there is a server out there if they want to manage it like every other server that they've got in the Domino infrastructure. The testy challenge is that yes they want to manage it at the Domino layer but no Domino admin wants to be dealing with an OS level problem out in the field at a remote location. So the great thing about foundations is that we give them the best of both worlds with branch office. So for the Domino administrator user see he or she sees the Foundations Branch Office Appliance as just another Domino server out there in the domain. From an OS perspective it's just a black box and they don't need to think about manage, or worry about fixing or patching because all of those functions happen remotely with no skill and even major upgrades and patches can happen over the wire without having someone go on site.

**Stephanie:**

So there's no real experience change for the IT admin be it the Domino admin. How about for the average Joe worker, are they going to see any changes as this infrastructure is brought into the branch offices?

**Caleb:**

They may. I suspect that where they may is that they probably don't have access to this type of infrastructure today. What we find in branch offices is usually one of two scenarios that are out there today. Either they are completely underserved or they've got a server on-site that's tough to manage and every time it breaks they have to bring somebody in or I guess lastly they connected back to the corporate office and may have some trouble with network connections, bandwidth and latency. Stephanie I have heard horror stories and I will give you one example from some of our friends in the petroleum industry where they'll have a Windows server and wellhead and that Windows server crashes and they've got to take somebody on a helicopter to fly out there and figure out what went wrong. Once they get up there they diagnose it and maybe they need some parts. They've got to fly back and go back again to reinstall it and restore it from backup.

With Foundations there are a couple of unique things that they get. First of all there is no concept of going on-site and doing upgrades with DVDs or CDs and in fact there is no DVD or CD drive in the appliance. Everything comes down remotely and everything can be managed over the wire. So the first thing is there is nothing they have to go on-site for. The second thing is even in the event of a catastrophic failure, so let's say you blow a hard drive for example. Foundations actually doesn't stop working because Foundations of not only has this operating system on every drive in the appliance but we even imbed the operating system in the chipset on the device.

Lastly when it comes time to upgrade or manage and upgrade its one click away remotely and you are deploying known software on known hardware. So the odds are pretty good it's going to work. Even if it doesn't we've got another safeguard in there. If even during an upgrade of ROS there's a problem Foundations if that new upgrade isn't accepted will automatically refer it back to its old OS and keep right on running. So you get a lot of flexibility here as an IT admin to have this capability out in the field and not have to worry that you're going to have to roll a truck every time there's a minor problem.

You also asked me about the end-user. Well end-users really aren't going to see any change in their clients or any change in the way they interact with collaboration other than maybe some new capability that they might get a Notes and Domino 8 that they don't have with their existing systems.

**Stephanie:**

You mentioned some interesting use cases for the product. Is there a real ideal customer for the product or maybe you could talk specifically about target market for this product.

**Caleb:**

Sure. The target market here is pretty broad. The idea being that Branch Offices, first off Branch Office assumes that you do have an IT department. Unlike other parts of the Foundations' family branch office is designed for working with IT. The second assertion is that you have a corporate office where your IT people are and that you may have many branch offices and each branch office has anywhere from 1 to 500 employees. So the assertion there again is that you kind of got this centralized hub and then you could have lots of folks out there that may be serviced by an appliance. The typical target markets would be certainly retail where you have many distributed store locations, franchisees whether they are directly part of the corporate domain or are loosely connected and need to share tools. Anything from your auto dealership to your local insurance agent.

Lastly companies that may have a low number of employees per site and again under 500 but have sites scattered all over the place and don't want to have IT in all those locations. So another great target market for this would be law offices where maybe you've got offices in four or five cities but you want to centralize your IT to only one location.

**Stephanie:**

It sounds like it would be really good for businesses that have challenges in getting out to their own remote locations as well.

**Caleb:**

Well I think one of the key things here is that the core benefit and so let's ask the question a different way Stephanie. What's the benefit of foundations over just installing a regular old server with Domino for example? There are two big benefits. One is when you go to set up the entire setup process takes less than a half an hour. The only thing someone needs to do on-site is plug the power into the wall and plug in the network connection. Everything else can be done remotely. So you're saving not only the time that may be involved in going out on a regular basis to update or upgrade an appliance or server but you're also saving a lot on that setup time.

The other assertion here is there is a lot of special tooling in here to manage everything remotely. So let me give you an example Stephanie. If you had a window server and on a remote location and that thing blue screens, the only way to really figure out what's gone wrong is to go out there and look on the screen and read the error. With Foundations you're running a Windows server inside of our virtualization container and that Windows server crashes you can actually see the crash remotely. You can see the blue screen and you can restart that Windows server. So in fact although Windows may have crashed your Foundations appliance still hasn't gone down.

Now why do you need to run Windows at all? Well occasionally you may have some application that required that runs inside of the Windows shell otherwise pretty much all the core services you need are provided directly from Foundations.

**Stephanie:**

Some people may only be familiar with Lotus Foundations as a small-business offering because obviously when we launched the Lotus Foundations product line we started with Lotus Foundations Start which was a small-business offering. Can you tell us a little bit about why Branch Office really decided to launch Branch Office focusing on larger enterprises?

**Caleb:**

Well Stephanie this is actually a funny story. We didn't set out to do this. We started off with Lotus Foundations as a small-business play and we had multiple enterprise customers come to us and say we want this. We probably said no; go away this isn't for you. They kept calling and then they started expressing their use cases and the real business problem they had and again back to this I don't have an IT administrator in these remote locations and we really would love to solve that problem with appliance. For any of you that are familiar with Lotus Foundations Start the challenge with Lotus Foundations Start is that it assumes total control over an environment. It assumes there is really no IT administrator involved certainly on-site and things like Domino for examples because Lotus Foundations Start has total control over that environment there is no methodology for it to recognize that the appliance is part of a larger domain.

So essentially what Lotus Foundations Branch Office is, is a variant of Lotus Foundations Start where we turn off the autonomic management of some key capabilities and allow the appliance to be managed and to become part of a corporate domain. So for example in the case of Domino we allow the Lotus Foundations Branch Office Appliance to get its users from, Domino versus having them set up locally on the device. So that's just one example Stephanie but it's very analogous to the Lotus Foundation Start appliance; the primary difference being it recognizes that it's part of a larger corporate infrastructure.

**Stephanie:**

It sounds very much like there is really nothing out there in the marketplace like it.

**Caleb:**

I don't think there's anything out in the market even remotely like it. The big question I get often is well Caleb that's interesting but why wouldn't I just use software as a service? I think that's a very viable question. Certainly in established geographies where you may have bandwidth both of the corporate office and to all of your remote locations, there's no need at all for branch office servers but the reality is and even in the United States there are many, many locations where either you don't have the bandwidth and latency may be an issue or you've got a

bigger challenge with the types of applications that you want to run and are really not geared or ready for deployment by software as a service.

So the foundation appliance gives you a little bit of the best of both worlds. It's managed just like software as a service in that there is a remote entity that you don't see face to face and it handles all the administration and maintenance and you don't see any of the middleware that's involved. On the other hand you have all the benefits of an on premise server in that your connectivity is a local area network speeds, it's very fast and there's no latency issues and you can run and deploy almost anything on it. So in many ways Foundations is that peace, that wedge that fits in the middle between the traditional server environment and the software as a service environment.

**Stephanie:**

Okay, so the bottom line is money. You touched a little bit on the value of the cost savings associated with leveraging Branch Office but how can Branch Office save businesses money in the long term?

**Caleb:**

There are a couple of ways you can save money with this. First and foremost this thing is not very expensive. In fact it's the depending on the type of solution you come up with and the number of users you have, this could be just a few thousand dollars to get one of these appliances. With Branch Office as well we recognize the user that you may already have purchased as part of Domino. For a lot of people out there this is just an extension of their existing investments. Obviously we then add the capabilities of Lotus Symphony which frankly are how many of our customers justify the success which is by being able to offset the cost of their existing office productivity applications.

But that's not the real story on cost savings. The real story on cost savings is the cost of managing and maintaining a traditional server in one of these remote locations. You not only need some kind of contract either with a local IT professional or service provider to be able to go out there where you send people out in "roll trucks" every time there is a problem to go fix this. You have to also think about the cost of downtime. One of the things that I found fascinating is some of the models in which our customers are looking at deploying Lotus Foundations Branch Office. One of the things many customers have realized is that first of all foundations is very robust in terms of its ability to stay running and heal itself even in the event of a problem. So if a disk fails it's going to keep on running even something like any RAID Array fails although it loses access to its data store it can at least boot so you can see what the problem is and diagnose the issue.

One of the great things about Foundations is even in the event of a catastrophic failure it's clearly easy to replace the foundations appliance because it all works off of something called intelligent disk backup. So there is a backup drive in every Foundations appliance that can be

pulled out in a tray. In the event of a catastrophic failure you can pull up that drive, stick it into an appliance and believe it or not there is a red restore button on the front of the appliance. In about 15 minutes all the core functions will be back up and running.

So what many of our customers are looking at doing is not only do they have to keep around a spare drive on site in case of a drive failure but if the entire appliance fails and something catastrophic goes wrong and for some reason they can't diagnose it remotely, many of our customers have told us that is actually less expensive for them to just send out a new appliance, have someone at the remote location like a store clerk, lawyer or were whoever it happens to be just plug in the new appliance. They can restore it over the wire, send the old one back and they'll diagnose it and recycle it later. It's fascinating for me that this thing is so easy to deploy remotely that again even in the event of a catastrophic failure of many of our customers are considering just sending out a new one because it's cheaper than the travel requirements of sending a person out there.

**Stephanie:**

I think that especially in this economic climate having that kind of assurance could be the saving grace for business.

**Caleb:**

Absolutely and I think that the last thing I would mention here Stephanie is hardware, software, what it runs on, this is all backed by IBM. So there is one place to go when there's a problem and depending on the geography and what type of support contract folks sign up for we even come on-site and fix these things in the event of a catastrophic failure.

**Stephanie:**

Excellence and I think on that note unfortunately that's all the time we have for today. So Caleb I would like to thank you so much for sharing a wealth of information on this great new product. I would like to thank the listeners for taking the time to tune into this complimentary IBM hosted podcast. If you would like to learn any more information about Lotus Foundations Branch Office please visit our website at [www.ibm.com/lotus/foundation](http://www.ibm.com/lotus/foundation) and then click the link to IBM Lotus Foundations Branch Office.