Company of the Month:

Martin Wolfram, CEO, Inviso Corporation

Microsoft 2.0
Mobile First
Cloud First

Satya Nadella,
CEO, Microsoft

Microsoft Solutions: Driving Efficiency and Productivity Gains

By Kevin Haskew, SVP & CIO, ON Semiconductor

Like many companies, ON Semiconductor is an established Microsoft customer that utilizes the following tools: Exchange, Communicator, Explorer, SharePoint, SCCM, Windows Server, and Windows desktop and mobile, SQL and Surface. These products are essential to our enterprise systems and have become even more important when we talk about the mobility and collaboration space.

Microsoft has developed a portfolio of tools that are very appealing to a CIO of a large global enterprise such as me. Of course, many of the Microsoft services offered are delivered directly to the end user, but to do this properly and securely in a large scope operation requires that very robust, centralized, core systems are running the backend. I see this as a hidden strength of Microsoft. Overlooking this fundamental need and valuable long-term investment is, in my opinion, where many companies in the end-user computing space fail.

The investment by Microsoft in this business model, which includes end-user software and global backend systems, has been built up over many years. Only now do I see the broader IT community recognizing the innate benefits of creating a global enterprise solution configured for their company but built around Microsoft products.
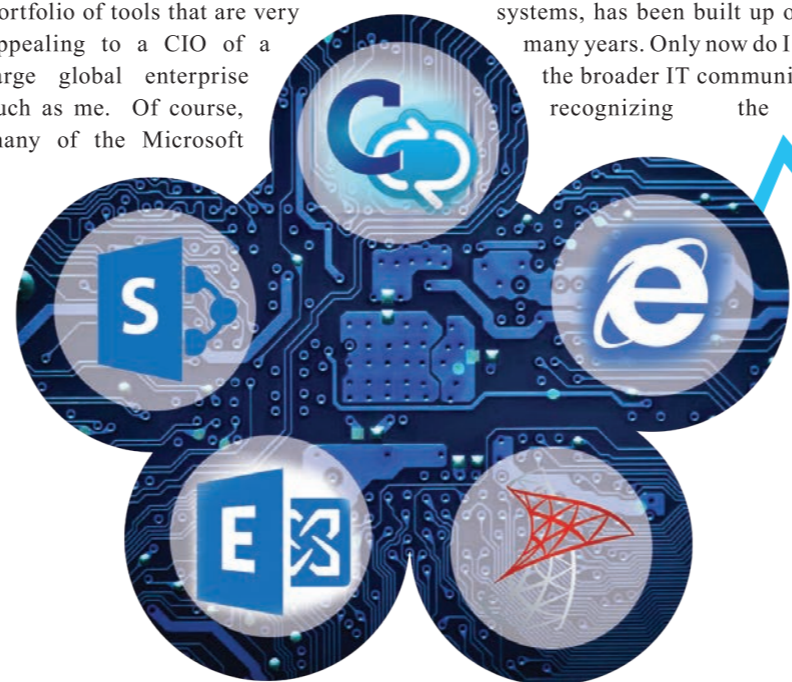
For me, a key benefit of this IT approach has been one of integration—and to be clear, this is a very powerful benefit for a company such as ON Semiconductor that has completed a dozen business acquisitions during the past decade and expanded its employee base to more than 24,000. Today the broadly adopted Microsoft solutions enable end users and customers to easily share and collaborate around complex tasks in real time. This has reduced overhead for us, enabling simplicity and ease of use on a common core platform. It has also served to increase employee productivity and inter-business unit cooperation.

Of course this journey we have taken with Microsoft to employ an enterprise solution for our worldwide operations has not been without potholes and hurdles. Many of the features that became available could not always be taken full advantage of; the reasons for this are varied. The execution strategy from Microsoft was not always consistent; not all the products introduced could be as seamlessly integrated as is the case today; and Microsoft did not always effectively push their case. For example, our experience was that Microsoft sold too vertically and did not always have global account representatives with the expertise to combine all of the products.

With the Microsoft enterprise system in place, keeping current remains one of the most daunting underlying challenges we face as we
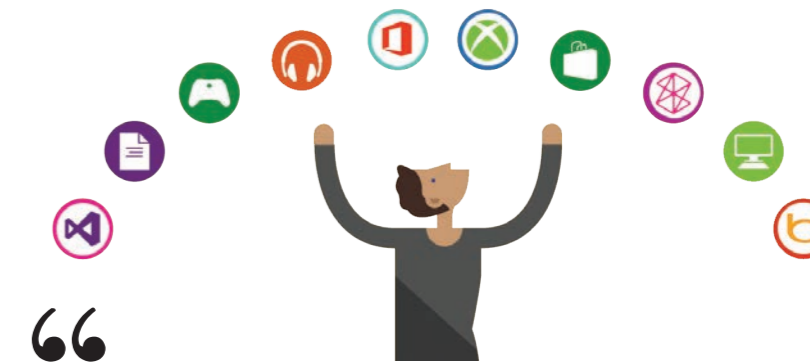
> Only now do I see the broader IT community recognizing the innate benefits of creating a global enterprise solution configured for their company but built around Microsoft products

move forward. For ON Semiconductor, trying to keep approximately 20,000 devices scattered across the globe up-to-date and current with different software products and operating systems is not an easy task. And, if we do not stay current we cannot take advantage of the new software features as they come online, even if we might be paying for them with software assurance. One example is that companies can be licensed to Windows 7 (and now Windows 10), but many still need to utilize Windows XP for which mainline support has been withdrawn. Also, companies have internally developed applications that will only run on the older versions of Microsoft software (e.g. Windows XP or Internet Explorer 8) which again limits the speed and ease of upgrading.

To their credit, Microsoft products are continually being improved with even more integration options. While this is a benefit from one perspective, these ever-better accessibility features do make companies more vulnerable to security issues. For example, patching is problematic as both virus and malware threats increase. Also, software packages are becoming more complex which provides loopholes for vulnerabilities.

Other challenges we face with use of an enterprise solution built on a single source (Microsoft or any other solution) platform is the need for standardization. This is something which is critical to minimize IT support and overhead while providing a system that can be accessed and leveraged by everybody within the company. I think Microsoft is going to grow its product offerings and support within the global enterprise space. Integration of products from desktop to back-end is crucial in a global organization. The marriage of Azure (Microsoft cloud), desktop applications (Office and Exchange) and unified communications (Lync) really enables a company to improve its global collaboration.

Kevin Haskew