



Drive Workforce Productivity and Organizational Agility
with Unified Communications

Executive Summary

It's easy to relegate your organization's communication system into the category of basic infrastructure. But the reality is that it can either be an enabler or hindrance to company agility. Rather than view communications systems as a checklist item, you should consider how your organization can harness these tools to enable its dispersed – and increasingly younger – workforce to work as efficiently and effectively as possible.

If your organization is like many, disconnected and disjointed communications tools – such as those used for telephony, instant messaging, video conferencing, web collaboration, and content sharing – actually impede productivity. This puts undue stress on your business users, the IT group, and department managers...and results in less-than-optimal collaboration among employees and customers. In total, this equates to a general lack of agility across your organization.

Forward-thinking IT leaders are equipping their employees with the means to collaborate easily from any location and any device with cloud-based, unified communications. By doing so, they become the business enabler and hero within their organizations. Read on to find out how you can join their ranks.



Make YOU the center of YOUNified communications

Communication in the workplace has been missing an integral component – a key player in what makes communication work. **It's you – the modern employee. The fearless leader. The team champion. The creative collaborator.** And Fuze provides technology that works for YOU, adapting to every person and every business, reimagining and simplifying business communications and collaboration.

“Collaboration has a) become central to the high-functioning knowledge worker of today (the worker that usually creates most of the bottom-line value in companies today), and b) continues to evolve as the arrival of new collaborative models is found to create high levels of differentiation and leverage to business operations.” ¹

¹ ZDNet, How digital collaboration will evolve in 2015, January 25, 2015

Suffering from Tool Overload

In spite of the abundance of tools available today, many organizations still struggle to achieve optimal levels of employee productivity. The makeup of many enterprises – and even SMBs – often includes multiple offices and remote employees. And each location often uses several communication tools – such as chat, instant message, screen-sharing, web conferencing – selected in an ad hoc manner across different departments and divisions. In other words, these separate communication systems have been adopted at random. To complicate matters, in many cases, they are not adequately connected to critical systems, such as CRM and customer service platforms.

Analyst firm Forrester defines a “social business” as “an organization that removes barriers between individuals and information while making it easy for people to find and engage with those who can help them solve customer and business problems.”²

If this describes your organization, your employees and customers likely experience inconsistencies when communicating with each other or with different departments. For instance, in many organizations, departments and business units use different phone systems. As a result, an employee in one location might need to ask customers to call back using another phone number to reach someone in another department or business unit. Plus, employees often lack important context when they are communicating with customers and partners due to non-integrated communication tools and systems of record.

How Disjointed Systems Hinder Productivity

In many cases, a lack of integration between communication tools and other systems forces users to toggle back and forth to manage different apps and experiences. This is counterintuitive to the productivity these tools are actually meant to enable. As a result, employees must frequently resort to complex, inefficient, manual workflows as they try to navigate an environment of different tools and ways of working.



Take the example of IM chat tools. While these make it easy to reach those in the contact database, they're of no value without that contact information – often stored in a separate system.

Or consider all the document storage options today. Users can choose from Google Drive, SharePoint, Dropbox, and that's just a short list. Now imagine the confusion when different departments or business units using different storage tools want to share documents.

² Forrester, TJ Keitt's Blog, Is Your Business Social Enough To Create Great Customer Experiences?, October 9, 2015

A further example is a sales rep on a phone call with a prospect. If your company has had previous interactions with the prospect, the rep will need to look up those details in the CRM system. While on the call, the rep might take notes in a Microsoft Word document or other app on her computer. She may even jot down handwritten notes. Either way, the notes will need to be transferred to the CRM system. And if she forgets to save the file with her notes, the call history will be lost. Once she finishes the call, she may want to schedule a follow-up call, for which she'll need to visit her email and calendaring apps. That's a lot of navigating and transferring to handle a pretty basic task.

Even sophisticated communication systems do not always boost productivity. Consider room-based business communication systems that combine both high-end video conferencing and desktop. They are designed to streamline communications and collaboration across geographies, regions, and time zones. Yet, organizations often need to involve IT staff to use the equipment because it is so complex to operate. Arranging and waiting for IT to get equipment running often cuts into time that was set aside for meetings. This is a productivity loss for both business users and the IT group. In fact, IT wastes a lot of time in general managing numerous different communication systems, each characterized by different operating systems, features, and technologies.



Isolated by Islands of Communication

A lack of integration between communication systems and existing tools such as CRM leads to problems of the sort just described. But even a lack of integration between various communication and collaboration tools – such as chat and telepresence – means your organization is not taking full advantage of all its technology investments. Just as importantly, it makes it impossible to ensure a consistent experience for all users in all locations on every device and operating system.

The negative impact of disparate, disconnected communications tools

- Difficult to determine employee productivity
- Limited modes of customer communications
- Uninformed business decisions
- Inefficient and costly delivery of business initiatives

³TechTarget, Four ways unified communications benefits productivity

Management Lacks Visibility into Productivity and Interactions

These disparate, disconnected systems also complicate matters for managers and executives who need to track and analyze performance across teams, departments, and divisions. Consider the example above where the sales rep must switch between different apps while on a call with a prospect. Unless the rep's manager has access to these various tools and files, he won't have any insight into the situation with the prospect. This is amplified across reps. At an aggregate level, the manager lacks visibility into how many times reps talk to prospects before closing a deal, how many calls they make, how much time they spend on the phone, and other important performance-related details.

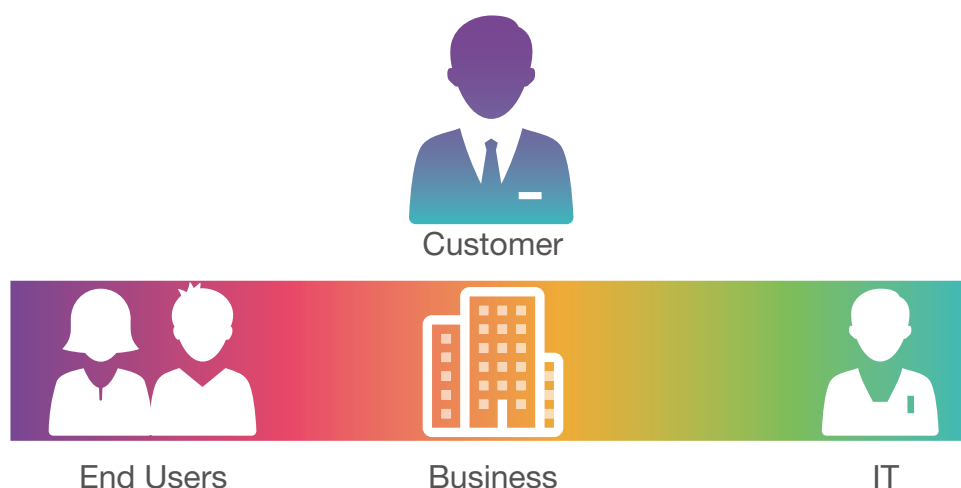
Survey says...distributed teams are the norm

- 87% of those surveyed do some percentage of work with a distributed or hybrid team
- Regardless of org size or individual role, most people are on three to five distributed teams
- 78% work on an average of five projects simultaneously
- 40% of employees work on projects with distributed/hybrid teams over 66% of the time
- 52% think their tools and infrastructure do not support distributed work

Source: Survey, Collaborative Strategies, December 2014

Satisfying the Spectrum of Users

With so many tools and apps to choose from, many organizations are challenged to create a simplified communication and collaboration environment. After all, the goal is to provide one that satisfies the needs of all employees and managers, eliminates busy work for IT, and delivers a more satisfactory experience for customers.



Business users – such as line-of-business managers – want their teams to work in the most efficient and effective way possible. But in many organizations, this is an uphill battle.

People want fluid, intuitive tools that are accessible from a single device, such as a smartphone. Remember, the remote workforce is a more distributed, younger generation accustomed to working from wherever, whenever. Your organization must accommodate the always-connected style of collaboration sought by these workers who are used to engaging via social networks and mobile devices. At the same time, it must satisfy expectations for easy collaboration. Today's generation is used to rich communication in their personal lives but often frustrated at being forced to use outdated and multiple technologies at work. In fact, many refuse to work at companies that don't let them use the tools of their choosing. According to research by PwC, "Millennials will expect a workplace technology ecosystem that includes social networking, instant messaging, video-on-demand, blogs, and wikis."⁴



Give workers what they want

"Millennials...expect to have access to the best tools for collaboration and execution."

Source: PwC, PwC's NextGen: A global generational study

Workers today want consistency across all devices (including their desk phones), so many are installing cloud-based, consumer-grade tools – without IT's approval. In turn, IT is continually trying to manage and control end users who are circumventing IT by installing these tools. And it's a losing battle.

Moreover, it creates a logistical nightmare for the IT department. What if more than one tool goes down? Which tool does IT prioritize? Which vendor does IT call?

The Move to Increasingly Integrated Business Applications

These are some of the key reasons that organizations of all sizes are adopting integrated business applications. According to Gartner, worldwide spending on enterprise application software will grow to more than \$201 billion in 2019. "The majority of spending is going towards modernizing, functionally expanding, or substituting long-standing business and office applications with cloud-based software-as-a-service," said Bianca Granetto, research director at Gartner.⁵

"Employees today work more hours and are nearly continuously connected to their jobs by pervasive mobile technologies. They work on demanding cross-functional teams that often bring new people together at a rapid rate. **Flexibility, empowerment, development, and mobility** all now play a big role in defining a company's culture."⁷

At the same time, savvy organizations grasp the importance of working mobile into the equation. According to Gartner research director Jeff Mann, "The risks of not embracing IT consumerization and mobile collaboration are twofold. On the one hand, a business that enables its workforce to collaborate better will have an efficiency and innovation advantage over one that does not. But on the other hand, levels of collaboration can actively deteriorate in organizations that make poor attempts to modernize their systems. Collaboration tools without effective mobile components seem obsolete to modern users and may fall into disuse, while employees without mobile devices or the wrong device can get excluded from important interchanges."⁶

⁵ PwC, Millennials at work: reshaping the workplace, 2011

⁶ Gartner, Gartner Says Modernization and Digital Transformation Projects Are Behind Growth in Enterprise Application Software Market, August 27, 2015

⁷ ComputerWeekly, Gartner: Benefits of mobile collaboration

Align the Business by Unifying Communications

In nearly all areas, employees are opting out of companies' IT systems by installing cloud-based apps on their own. Forward-thinking IT leaders are falling in line by building a strategy around apps that enable communication and collaboration in the cloud. Significant consolidation of technologies is making this vision a reality via unified communications, which is a fusion of voice, text, content, and video. When all of this is delivered through the cloud, it is called Unified Communications as a Service, or UCaaS.

UCaaS satisfies IT because it is simple to set up, manage, and report on, and IT can easily enable permissions for various users. Plus UCaaS satisfies business users and managers by enabling unprecedented levels of collaboration and productivity.

Unified communications improves collaboration for individuals and teams. With all employees using the same easy-to-access, always available tools, collaboration happens more readily and frequently. This in turn eliminates the non-stop IT struggle of trying to control and manage disparate tools. It also helps elevate the IT group's role by making IT a contributor to and enabler of organizational agility.

By selecting a UCaaS solution that supports third-party integrations, organizations can avoid rip-and-replace scenarios and enable users to collaborate within familiar tools. This allows them to increase end-user adoption and reap full value from existing systems.

Select a True UCaaS Solution

That said, not all cloud-based unified communications solutions are created equal. Many new cloud vendors focus on a narrow solution, such as team collaboration. Even traditional telephony providers are jumping into the fray by offering web/video conferencing.

While each vendor specializes, it's rare to find one that addresses all communication and collaboration needs with a single cloud-based tool. Even those expanding the capabilities of their single-focus tools lack the history of providing high-quality voice communications.

Moreover, many of these incumbent vendors offer solutions that were not built as true SaaS solutions. Instead they are simply hosting their on-premise solutions and exposing them through the cloud. As a result, these vendors can't provide the elasticity, scalability, reliability, and continuous upgrades you get through true multi-tenant UCaaS.

⁷ Deloitte University Press, Culture and engagement: The naked organization

Beware of “cloudwashing”

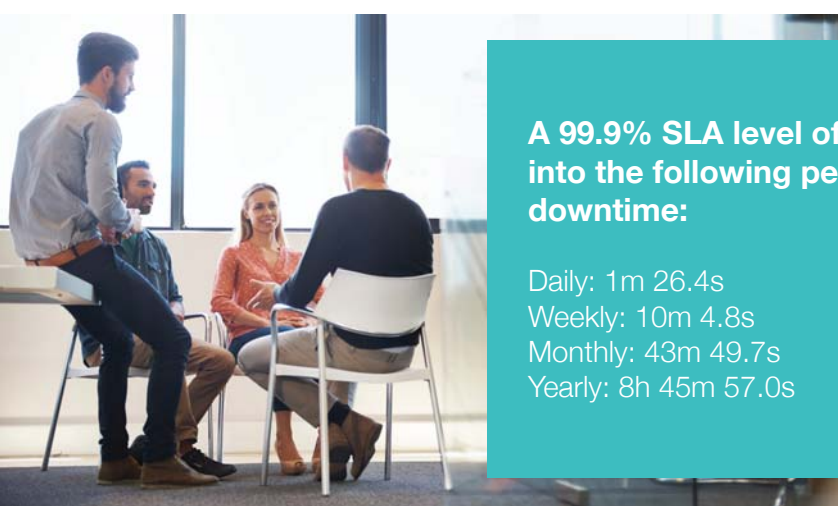
When a cloud solution is not designed for the cloud from the ground up, you’ll suffer in the following ways:

- Sluggish application access and performance
- Infrequent and painful upgrades
- Expensive, unwieldy integrations and customizations
- Downtime and end-user complaints

When deciding on a solution that will impact nearly everyone in your organization, it’s critical to partner with a vendor that has already solved the hardest problems. You want and need the quality that only comes with tools designed for the enterprise so there’s no chance of dropped calls, poor audio quality, or choppy video.

Here’s what to look for:


- A vendor whose heritage is in the unified communications space and guarantees the highest levels of security and quality. Find out what security measures the vendor calls upon and how it addresses network latency and congestion.
- A solution backed by a published, guaranteed SLA of five nines (99.999% uptime). Beware of vendors that hide their SLAs or only provide three or four nines. Outages can translate directly to lost sales or revenue.
- A solution designed to support regulatory and compliance requirements. Across industries, most organizations must comply with data and privacy standards and regulations. Determine how the solution satisfies your requirements now and how it will do so going forward.
- A vendor and solution proven to scale to support thousands of users without a hiccup. Ask to speak with customers whose use of the solution expanded over time.
- A solution that works seamlessly with your existing systems. Ensure the vendor offers options for integrating with third-party systems so you’re not forced to rip and replace what’s already working.
- A solution that works consistently across devices and geographies. Find out if the solution can support any and all devices and works equally well across an unlimited number of locations. Just as important, make sure the user experience is consistent across all communication modes (i.e., web conferencing, video conferencing, instant messaging).



A 99.9% SLA level of uptime translates into the following periods of potential downtime:

Daily: 1m 26.4s
Weekly: 10m 4.8s
Monthly: 43m 49.7s
Yearly: 8h 45m 57.0s

Conclusion: Tap into the Value of Connectedness



Unified communications systems can serve as **the connective tissue between other key business systems and the high value processes** these systems enable. And when IT takes steps to ensure end users adopt the technology, they become the heroes of the organization.

Today's CIOs, end users, and business managers want the same usability and productivity they've come to expect with their personal technology devices. To satisfy these demands, your organization needs a solution that infuses the spirit of consumer apps into a business application backed by the promise of an easy-to-use, shared platform. Such a solution ensures consistent, consumer-like experiences that enable better and more company-wide communications and collaboration. And when individual employees and teams are more productive, your organization as a whole achieves new levels of agility. By leveraging UCaaS, IT leaders such as you can help boost individual and team productivity, customer satisfaction, and revenues.

5 Ways to Justify Unified Communications

- Higher sales and customer service KPIs
- Better and more collaboration
- Fast data-driven devices
- Speedy project delivery
- Efficient remote work attracts talent

Ready to transform how work gets done across your organization? [Request a demo today.](#)