

WHITE PAPER

Top Reasons for CEOs to Choose Unified Communications: Bringing Benefits to Users, Business Decision Makers and IT Pros

Table of Contents

- 1. Introduction 3
- 2. Users 3
- 3. Business Executives 6
- 4. IT Professionals 7

1. Introduction

A simple unified communications solution can address communication challenges organizations face on a daily basis and enhance overall operations. Because of this, convincing a CEO to adopt a UC solution should not be difficult. The CEO of an organization looking to remain competitive and offer exceptional service will want to adopt UC because of its effect on the enterprise as a whole - the system will please everyday users, IT professionals and business decision makers.

2. Users

Challenge: Employees having difficulty communicating and collaborating with each other

Employees' productivity and morale will suffer if they struggle to get in touch with their coworkers to share information, collaborate on a project, ask questions to complete a task or even route a customer or client to the representative who will best serve them. This process of phone tag can create an annoyance in the work day, and also divert energy from important tasks and decrease productivity in an organization.

A study completed this year showed the dramatic negative effects this type of disruption can have on a business. The survey of knowledge workers in organizations of more than 500 employees by Webtorials Editorial and Analytic Division showed that employees waste hours every day trying to communicate with the right coworker or client.

- On average, the participants in the Webstorials survey spent 1.4 hours trying to contact customers, partners and coworkers.
- Additionally, respondents spent 0.85 hours each day scheduling meetings and conferences with their colleagues and clients.

When they did reach the right person in their organization, many respondents reported, they had duplicated communications over multiple channels (email, phone), and spent about 0.8 hours each day doing so. Participants also wasted nearly 0.6 hours every day dealing with wrongly routed calls and unwanted communication because systems were not in place to properly manage this.

Solution: A simplified unified communication system rich with collaboration features that make it easy for coworkers to share information

CEOs will want to prevent employees spending hours struggling to properly communicate, wasting time trying to get in touch with the right person to complete tasks. Unified communication systems are rich with features that enhance collaboration

internally and externally, making it easy for employees to get in touch with the right person or client, saving time and saving the business money.

The Webtorials study showed that many of the communication problems contributing to a lack of productivity are eliminated when a UC system is implemented.

- The study revealed that the time employees spent trying to contact customers, partners and colleagues decreased 26 percent when a unified communications solution was implemented.
- Additionally, 15 percent of the employees saved time by cutting out communications such as spam emails or unwanted calls.
- Businesses also reported the amount of time employees spent duplicating communications through different channels decreased by 28 percent and the amount of time spent scheduling meetings falls by 27 percent.

The study offered a clear indication of the extent to which UC can contribute to a more efficient and productive workforce, making it hard for CEOs to say no to implementing a UC system that includes the key tools for boosting productivity, such as presence, instant messaging and mobile features.

Presence: These tools allow employees to set their availability status, which let their colleagues know the best time to make contact. This can eliminate some of the common phone tag challenges enterprises experience, cutting down on wasted time each day. Presence features can also direct calls or messages to the employee on the most appropriate device, as some employees may be working on a PC while others need to be reached on a telephone or even a mobile phone if they are working outside the office. An industry report by Forrester Consulting confirmed that presence is an essential feature of unified communications, creating speedier communications and shortening response time between employees.

Instant messaging: Another key component of unified communications, IM improves collaboration. Messaging makes the process of sharing information quick and easy, meaning employees can complete tasks faster.

A study of more than 900 full-time employees undertaken by the Ohio State University and the University of California-Irvine demonstrated how popular IM is and how it increases productivity in the workplace. According to the research, nearly 30 percent of respondents use instant messaging at work to communicate with both coworkers and clients. Managers welcome this communication method, as they see it as a means of conveying timely, critical information, enabling more informed decisions, according to the study. Employees appreciate IM, too, because it is a way to glean important task-relevant information with minimal disruptions to an employee's workflow, the study found. IM allows employees to ask clarifying questions to team members or colleagues without the expectation of engaging in a longer conversation, keeping disruptions down and productivity high.

According to the research, nearly 30 percent of respondents use instant messaging at work to communicate with both coworkers and clients.

Case Study: The Burr & Forman law firm, comprising close to 250 attorneys and several hundred additional staff members spread out between offices in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi and Tennessee, was interested in implementing UC tools in line with the employees' needs - more effective communication channels to share information across the numerous offices, with simple tools for older workers used to traditional phone communication as well as younger workers accustomed to instant messaging and softphones. The firm adopted a unified communication system with both click-and-dial and IM capabilities. The results: improved productivity and worker satisfaction, as well as quickly realized return on investment thanks to effects such as an 80 percent cost savings on long-distance bills.

- "We were looking for greater efficiencies, for seamless and flexible communications, and a newer, fresher way to collaborate for better results," said Burr & Forman Chief Information Officer David Michel. "We've expanded our capabilities for reducing workloads while saving money."

Mobility: A UC system can be extended outside the enterprise's walls to mobile or remote employees operating from home or on the road.

Smartphone and tablet adoption worldwide is creating new demands for businesses - more people are adopting mobile devices and more employees want to use them for work functions. According to Infonetics Research, more than 6 billion people are mobile phone subscribers as of 2012. Smartphone and tablet use will continue to increase, according to Infonetics, with about 7 billion subscribers by 2016. The research also determined that in some countries, mobile use is so popular, the number of mobile subscribers surpasses the population. This is seen in Finland, where many people have both personal and work phones. As employees become more mobile, the reliance on traditional phone service will decrease. Infonetics expects more than 200 million traditional voice access lines will be dropped over the next five years as more people switch to mobile-only communications.



Additional research by Infonetics shows that smartphones and tablets will be the two most widely used devices in 2013, becoming more popular than traditional work computers. Given these statistics, it makes sense that many companies have found implementing UC solutions that extend to employees' mobile devices can be a huge benefit. A survey Infonetics conducted found that 71 percent of participants believe

mobile device integration is very important for their enterprise and the top reasons enterprises are implementing mobile UC solutions are to improve employee response time, offer more flexibility and increase worker productivity.

Case Study: Silicon Valley's largest engineering firm, BKF Engineers, is based in Redwood City, California, but operates out of three additional offices in the state. It needed a communication solution to link its separate locations but also enable employees working off-site with clients to keep in contact with coworkers and business executives. Through a unified communication system including call managing and mobile services, remote workers are now able to make and receive calls on their mobile phones as easily as if they were at their desks.

- "Calls can be pushed to and from the operators in the other three offices as if everyone were in one building," said Derrick Crandell, Director of Information Technology, BKF.

3. Business Executives

Challenge: High total cost of ownership (TCO) on current phone system, yet not seeing a return on the investment (ROI)

CEOs and their executive teams are always trying to find ways to cut costs and run a business more efficiently. These business leaders need to evaluate how their current phone system can be improved to offer better service to the company and its clients and save the organization money. Many enterprises spend too much on infrastructure and phone service without seeing a meaningful ROI.

Solution: UC system that lowers TCO, increases ROI

The overall TCO of UC systems is substantially lower than other phone services.

- According to Sage Research, organizations that use a single vendor to provide a unified service have a 43 percent lower network TCO than companies that use multiple vendors to provide communication services.

These savings come from lower network deployment and maintenance costs, as well as network performance improvement and benefits for both IT and end users. Another study conducted in 2012 found IP-based communications save companies more than 40 percent annually compared to PBX systems. UC also reduces money spent on transporting employees for meetings. By using a UC system that includes VoIP features and video and web conferencing, employees will have a variety of channels to communicate with clients and business partners. A Wainhouse Research report said UC has the potential to cut up to 30 percent of travel costs for both large and small businesses. The study found that with the use of video conferencing, 71 percent of the enterprises said they could improve teamwork, 61 percent said they were able to maintain communication with partners, and 44 percent said communications with suppliers were kept intact.

Additional research has showed UC lowers TCO even for large organizations that require more infrastructure to provide service to all employees. A 2012 Aberdeen benchmarking report stated a UC system deployed at a large organization can save the company about \$8,000 just on electrical costs compared to other phone systems.

A recent survey of more than 350 business executives responsible for making the decision to switch to UC found ROI was a main reason for improving enterprise communications. The Frost & Sullivan study found that nearly 80 percent of participants expected ROI on their investment in UC within two years, and 25 percent expected it within 6 months. Forty-one percent of the executives reported seeing more collaboration among their staff and 36 said they had seen increased productivity.



Case Study: Woods Equipment Company has more than 1,000 employees in 14 locations across the country, including two call centers, and needed a communication system that could link all locations and warehouses that were expected to open. As a result of implementing a UC system, the company saved about \$10,000 a year at just one of its sites, and \$3,000 at another location. The company had previously been spending \$30,000 a year on its phone system.

- “The new system paid for itself in just over a year,” said Jim Reeves, General Manager of IT, Woods Equipment Company.

Case Study: The Pacific Business Centers Group owns and operates 14 locations in California, and is the leading member of the CloudVO network of virtual offices with 200 locations across the country. To manage

communications across the entire enterprise, PBC implemented a UC system and saw a significant ROI within two years. With a lower TCO and enhanced services, the company saved \$360,000 annually on operating costs.

4. IT Professionals

Challenge: Maintaining communication services for employees scattered among numerous office locations or traveling

Many companies have multiple office locations. At the same time, enterprises are sending employees to meetings with clients, customers or colleagues. Maintaining contact among these employees in different locations poses a significant challenge for IT departments tasked with overseeing a communications solution. Devices including PCs, smartphones, tablets and desk phones are all being used, requiring IT to manage multiple channels.

Solution: A central communication system that is simple for workers to use and IT to manage

By linking enterprise communication through one UC system, IT personnel and executives will face far fewer complications in keeping employees productive. A Forrester report stated that the key to a successful UC deployment is being able to deliver benefits to end users and business units, not just saving money on infrastructure. This responsibility for delivering positive results to these stakeholders often falls on IT experts. With the distributed single-image architecture of a UC in place, not only with the employees and customers benefit, but IT departments will be able to avoid unnecessary complexity in managing enterprise communication technologies. For businesses with multiple locations, UC is ideal, as the system can be managed remotely, eliminating the need for disparate IT departments at every branch.

Case Study: Hitachi Consulting has multiple office locations and realized it needed to connect coworkers over a central system to improve services and collaboration. However, Hitachi also did not have an IT staff at every. With its old solution, the IT team was managing 12 different phone systems, each with different features. Mobile staff members were struggling to use the phones as they traveled among offices. By implementing UC, IT was able to manage communications over a single system. And, by using voice conferencing features - logging about 140,000 minutes a month - coworkers at different offices are now able to communicate at any moment, despite the distance between them.

- “We knew we weren’t going to have resident IT staff at each office, which we were used to, so remote administration was important. We didn’t want anyone to have to go onsite to do anything,” said Michael Shisko, IT Director, Hitachi Consulting.

Unified communications, a simple choice

After assessing all the benefits that come with UC, it will be hard for CEOs to say no to the communication service that benefits end users, business decision makers and IT, who will all appreciate the way UC simplifies operations and increases collaboration while lowering costs. CEOs frequently face difficult decisions, but choosing a UC system that is simple to deploy, manage and use should not be one of them. •

About ShoreTel

ShoreTel is a provider of business communication solutions whose brilliantly simply unified communications platforms, applications and mobile UC solutions promise a new rhythm of workforce engagement and collaboration. With costly complexity eliminated by design from its award winning, all-in-one IP phone system, UC and contact center solution, and its industry leading hosted business phone system, workers enjoy a freedom and self-reliance that other providers can't match. Users have full control to engage and collaborate, no matter the time, place or device, for the lowest cost and demand on IT resources in the industry. ShoreTel is headquartered in Sunnyvale, California, and has regional offices and partners worldwide. For more information, visit shoretel.com or shoretelsky.com

WORLD HEADQUARTERS	960 Stewart Drive, Sunnyvale, CA 94085 USA. shoretel.com and shoretelsky.com +1 (800) 425-9385 Toll Free +1 (408) 331-3300 Tel. +1 (408) 331-3333 Fax for ShoreTel +1 (646) 230-5000 Tel. +1 (646) 230-5001 Fax for ShoreTel Sky
EMEA	+800 408 33133 Freephone +44 (1628) 826300 Tel.
ASIA PACIFIC	+61 (0)2 9959 8000 Tel.

