

# Scenarios for Unified Communications

Communication is at the core of every business decision. It's the essential foundation for collaborative work teams and future innovation, and is often enabled through technology. The use of technology introduces new possibilities and challenges, such as obtaining access from the office, home or remote locations. Simply having access to technology will not improve communications. Workers also need collaborative tools so they can have a rich, productive connection with colleagues, customers and partners alike.

Unified Communications (UC) is a way to address these needs by integrating the tools of voice, email, messaging and conferencing. It's a concept that can improve business processes and productivity, increase operational efficiency, and reduce costs and an organization's carbon footprint.

UC can help companies realize savings by reducing the need for travel, increasing the productivity of teams and improving availability and flexibility. Due to its ready scalability, it can also offer "opportunistic" advantages without a company-wide deployment by helping to solve communications problems. By addressing human latency, or "telephone tag," it can help people make more informed decisions quickly. With that in mind, this paper considers a number of scenarios explaining how UC might improve particular business processes.

## Help Desk Support for Customer Servicing

Unified Communications can vastly improve the quality of support and the operational efficiency of technical help desks. Customers can use tools embedded in a vendor's website to click-to-chat or click-to-call, something that generally delivers a more positive user experience than navigating a traditional call directory. Inside the help desk, click-to-escalate options can reduce the total time customers spend on hold. Remote desktop sharing can bring troubleshooting to a whole new level, increasing customer satisfaction and reducing the time required for problem resolution. In addition, subject matter experts can be brought in remotely from anywhere in the world to promptly resolve complicated issues.

UC can also help improve customer service for enterprises relying on online sales. Surveys show that consumers generally like the experience of shopping on the Web, but may also need some human contact before making a purchase decision. Click-to-chat options can also be used to help find the right knowledge worker at the moment a customer is considering a purchase. By providing immediate responses to questions, enterprises receive a quality experience and may be more likely to make a purchase.

As an indirect benefit, UC can also provide a way for help desks to improve training and quality management. UC sessions can be recorded, capturing key strokes and audio associated with any recognizably repeatable process. The resulting collection of previous sessions can let help desks build their own knowledge base of support examples. The recordings in the knowledge base can be reviewed, edited, tagged and archived, so they can be recalled for training new technicians and conducting refresher courses.

## Project Management for Research and Development

A corporate research and development group often relies on a mix of employees and outside vendors to research ideas, conduct trials and create solutions. A UC environment can improve efficiency and reduce delivery times across the board. From initial brainstorming sessions to project and task tracking, UC can deliver near real-time communications for all project stakeholders internal or external to the research department. When coupled with an application such as Microsoft® SharePoint™ to store shared files and work-in-progress, UC can help companies build a valuable knowledge base for estimation and re-use.

In a multi-vendor environment, UC can offer an alternative to establishing VPN access for contractors while providing many of the same benefits. Shared address books, instant messaging clients and integrated VoIP options can enable improved productivity for a virtual, mixed delivery team. Rich communications options can enable the creative exchange of ideas and build better working relationships. UC-enabled processes can also help to facilitate content review and approval, reducing human latency and leading to dramatic improvements in cycle times.



### Increasing Leads for Marketing

Forward-thinking marketing departments are utilizing conferencing and collaboration solutions to reduce marketing cycles, create more consistent collateral, collaborate more effectively and unify marketing initiatives, all at a lower cost than in-person meetings. Online meetings can be used to deliver and collaborate on presentations, copy, ads and other creative content. Desktop applications like Word®, Quark® and Photoshop® can be shared to create a single, seamless set of marketing collateral.

Beyond the advantages of internal collaboration, marketers are seizing upon UC for externally-focused efforts as well. Virtual seminars can be hosted, product launches coordinated, and Web tours can be conducted all while capturing polling and survey results from the audience real-time, enabling more people to be reached and communicated with on a personal level.

### Working Meeting Applications



This picture illustrates the diverse functional areas UC can impact within an enterprise.

### Sales Force Support

UC can help streamline customer interactions, increase the number of qualified opportunities and shorten sales cycles. When used during a customer visit, UC can immediately connect reps with corporate or field experts to provide instant responses to questions or concerns. With collaboration tools such as web conferencing, communications with customers are improved using demonstrations and presentations. In addition, these tools can be used to accelerate installation projects or to better manage customer programs. Applications can be shared right from the desktop enabling sales to demonstrate new products to larger groups of customers, and results can be measured during the demonstration with online surveys. Contracts can be edited in real-time, shortening the sales cycle and improving implementation time frames.

UC also allows enterprises to provide effective and timely training without requiring reps to leave the field, and can speed up professional development and certification processes.

### UC at AT&T Consulting

**AT&T Consulting helps enterprises develop solutions that use a best-in-class network, delivering optimized performance, integrated applications and end-to-end security. Engagements usually begin with a Statement of Work, or SOW, to clarify expectations, timelines and deliverables. Traditionally, AT&T Consulting has developed SOWs collaboratively, circulating documents via email for review and approval by technical experts, managers and legal. With email as the primary means of communication and information sharing, developing a SOW took days, even if everything went smoothly.**

The consulting group recognized the time-saving potential of Unified Communications, and a small team worked across the organization to identify the capabilities needed. After a successful pilot project, the whole consulting group was equipped with VoIP handsets and laptops that deliver rich-presence capabilities. The new UC environment has brought dramatic reductions in telephone costs, as well as tangible productivity improvements, especially in the area of SOW development. An effort that formerly took days can now be completed in hours.

This improved ability to develop SOWs more quickly has had a collateral benefit for sales. Customers react positively to this capability, perceiving it as evidence that AT&T understands the technology and knows how to make it work. AT&T Consulting’s UC environment is also federated with some of our large customers and business associates. Federation of different systems allows rich-presence awareness in both directions, so workers can find the people they need, quickly and easily. AT&T customers therefore have immediate, on-demand access to support from their counterparts at AT&T, improving both response time and customer satisfaction. Plus, AT&T’s experts have access to the most current information and technical expertise of our business partners, as well as a “hands on” appreciation of UC features.

### Improving Production for Manufacturing

When production line machinery fails, the cost of down time can be huge. Every minute counts. Instead of the traditional contact list of pager numbers, a rich-presence UC environment can instantly identify the repair technicians who are both available and qualified to address the problem. Contact lists can be categorized by skill set for ease of reference, and presence capabilities can show current locations. UC can even help technicians consult with each other, quickly tapping a company’s collective knowledge for maximum effect.

The integration of IM and email makes UC a particularly good platform for time-critical dispatch scenarios. When integrated with other applications, repair technicians can access additional details about the problem, such as repair histories and parts lists. With RFID-aware applications, UC could be integrated with automated alert messages for even greater efficiency, bringing together the right people, parts and expertise for time- and cost-saving results.

### Knowledge Sharing for Large Organizations

Large, global companies that rely heavily on local contractors always face a challenge keeping work teams on the same page. Contractors often use their own personal laptops, and the diversity of the hardware makes it difficult to manage in a traditional VPN environment. With a UC platform, edge servers can provide access to web conferencing tools and shared address books. UC can thus offer a rich presence environment without the complexity of a VPN.

The application sharing potential of UC can also be a benefit for small satellite locations. As long as a location has a high-speed Internet connection, it can connect to centralized resources and contact information. The transition path is easier, since users are generally familiar with the basics of email, chat and phone. And by delivering functionality within a communications context, new contractors can be brought up to speed more quickly.

### Looking Forward

More and more companies are likely to move toward UC as awareness of the concept spreads. UC can start delivering significant savings on day one by reducing travel costs, telephone expenses and the cost of managing across multiple vendors. UC can also improve productivity and operational performance by reducing human latency in business processes.

However, deploying a UC environment remains a challenging exercise, since standards are still emerging and different vendors offer different solutions. It's not something to consider without a trusted partner in the mix that can help your company move forward successfully with a cost-effective, phased approach.

**For more information contact your AT&T Representative or visit us at [www.att.com/business](http://www.att.com/business).**

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