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# Unified Communications FOR DUMMIES®

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Reduce costs and  
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Lawrence Miller, CISSP



***Unified  
Communications***  
FOR  
**DUMMIES®**  
AVAYA 2ND CUSTOM EDITION

**by Lawrence Miller, CISSP**



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## Unified Communications For Dummies®, Avaya 2nd Custom Edition

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# Introduction

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**T**oday's tough global economy is forcing companies everywhere to look for innovative new solutions to help them reduce costs, increase productivity, and improve customer satisfaction and loyalty. Unified Communications (UC) is one such solution that integrates many various business communications technologies and applications. UC also empowers an increasingly mobile workforce in a virtual workplace, allowing large companies and enterprises to achieve their business objectives (and much more) from virtually anywhere.

## About This Book

*Unified Communications For Dummies*, Avaya 2nd Custom Edition, provides an overview of UC: what it is, what capabilities and benefits it can provide for your company, and how to implement it successfully. The book is written for nontechnical readers such as executives and key managers (CFOs, CIOs, line of business managers, operations managers) in medium to large enterprises (defined here as a business or organization with more than 250 employees).

Here's a brief synopsis of the chapters in this book.

**Chapter 1: Recognizing the Challenges of Today's Business Environment.** Although you are no doubt intimately familiar with the many business challenges confronting you today, I recommend starting here to help you frame these challenges within the context of business communications.

**Chapter 2: One Day in the Life of . . .** describes some of the pain points your customers and employees may be dealing with in their daily business lives and how UC can help.

**Chapter 3: Staying Connected with Unified Communications.** In this chapter, you get a look at (well, at least a description of) some of the features and capabilities that UC brings to your employees.

**Chapter 4: Exploring the Business Benefits of Unified Communications.** Here you discover the many business benefits of UC — and you read about a few companies that are already realizing those benefits.

**Chapter 5: Implementing Unified Communications in Your Organization.** Here, I help you prepare your organization for UC, then design and implement a UC solution.

**Chapter 6: Ten Reasons to Invest in Unified Communications Now.** And, as if everything else in this book weren't enough, here I give you ten great reasons to move forward with a UC solution now, rather than waiting for the economy to rebound — presented for your reading enjoyment in that familiar *For Dummies* style, the “Part of Tens.”

## Icons Used in This Book

You occasionally see special icons throughout this book that call attention to important information. No smiley faces winking at you here, but you'll no less want to take note.



This icon points out information or a concept that may well be worth remembering — in case you're ever on a trivia game show.



You won't find a map of the human genome or the secret to cold fusion here (or maybe you will, hmm), but if you seek to attain the seventh level of NERD-vana, perk up! This icon explains the letters behind the acronyms and so much more!



Like the “Tip of the Day,” the Tip (uhh, on any page) icon points out helpful suggestions and useful information that may just save you some time and headaches.

## Where to Go from Here

Confucius says, “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” Since you're not going a thousand miles (and if you are, you may want to put this book down anyway and grab a map), I recommend that you begin by turning the page.

# Chapter 1

---

# Recognizing the Challenges of Today's Business Environment

.....

## *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Coming to terms with global economic and business trends
  - ▶ Saving money, producing more, and keeping customers happy
  - ▶ Introducing a solution that helps you achieve your business goals
- .....

**A**s the saying goes, “when the going gets tough, the tough get going.” And the going has definitely gotten tough. With distressed financial markets, volatile energy costs, and intense downward spending pressures, today’s global economy is as tough a business environment as ever.

But just being “tough” isn’t enough — companies must also be smart. Today’s economic crisis is forcing companies everywhere to make drastic changes and rethink traditional ways of doing business. Smart companies must find innovative ways to significantly reduce costs, increase productivity, and ensure customer loyalty. And when companies don’t respond correctly to the harsh economic and business challenges ahead of them, the “tough” may end up going — away.

In this chapter, I describe some of these challenges and introduce you to a solution that can help you address many of these challenges and drive business transformation to achieve real benefits today.

## Exploring Global Trends

Governments, businesses, and individual consumers everywhere are reeling from a global recession that is unprecedented in its scope and magnitude. Spending and investment has dried up as confidence in the credit markets has collapsed under the strain of worldwide housing busts, complex securities derivatives (and other convoluted financial instruments), and multi-billion dollar corporate and individual scandals.

Under these current conditions, business opportunities for top-line growth (increasing market share and revenues) may be very limited. Instead, many companies will choose to focus on bottom-line growth (maximizing profits), by

- ✔ Using their people, processes, and technology more effectively and efficiently to improve productivity and reduce costs
- ✔ Keeping their customers happy (and therefore loyal) to maintain revenues

Ultimately, these efforts can also help you grow market share and increase revenues by establishing a reputation for outstanding execution, customer responsiveness, and service, thereby earning more business from your existing customers and attracting new business from new customers.

Other challenges for companies competing in our twenty-first century global economy — boom or bust — include

- ✔ Managing a diverse global workforce that is increasingly mobile and technologically savvy
- ✔ Developing business agility to rapidly adapt to ever-changing customer requirements and expectations
- ✔ Deploying new and evolving technologies that promote innovation without increasing complexity
- ✔ Attracting, retaining, and empowering top talent
- ✔ Embracing “green” policies and practices that help protect the environment

## *Doing More with Less*

Your customers expect greater value now more than ever. Simply put, they expect more for less — and will take their business elsewhere if you fail to deliver. You can create a win-win situation to help your company distinguish its value proposition and establish or maintain a competitive advantage. How? By reducing costs and increasing productivity, and by sharing those benefits with your customers.

### *Reducing costs*

Companies that aggressively and indiscriminately cut costs may cripple their ability to serve their customers effectively. Such disinvestment can create a negative top-line trend that will be difficult to reverse when the global economy begins to recover. The extremely high cost of reacquiring lost customers, if not impossible, will certainly eradicate any short-term cost savings you achieve. It may also adversely affect your company's long-term profitability and viability.

Reducing costs shouldn't mean lowering customer satisfaction, however. Imagine a solution that can help you significantly improve customer satisfaction by empowering your customers (and your employees who serve them) while simultaneously reducing significant costs. A solution with cost benefits that are real and immediate and can include savings in areas such as telecommunications services (up to 40 percent in trunking and calling costs), information technology infrastructure and support, facilities and equipment, travel and commuting expenses, and energy and environmental costs.

But we've only scratched the surface here. In Chapter 4, you find out more about the many ways you can reduce costs, not only in the areas mentioned here, but also through some truly innovative examples from other businesses that are enjoying those benefits today.

### *Increasing productivity*

Latency in key business processes and workflows is a productivity killer, and lost productivity = lost money! Virtually every business in every industry has key business processes that

rely heavily upon communications to function effectively and efficiently. These processes suffer, for example, when a

- ✔ Parts supplier must manually enter a replacement parts order received over the phone into an ordering system
- ✔ Call center operator places a frustrated customer on hold while looking for an available technician who can assist
- ✔ Sales opportunity is missed because a customer can't reach her traveling account representative
- ✔ Contract negotiation can't be approved because a key executive is in another meeting

Another cause of latency in business processes is the human element. Delays are inevitable, for example, when employees are either poorly trained or communications systems are too complex. Productivity also lags when employees are unable to communicate with each other while traveling, commuting, out of the office, or otherwise unavailable or ineffective, perhaps due to illness or for personal reasons.

Although communications technology can be a part of the solution to increase productivity, people and processes are equally important. You need to understand how your employees are working and ensure they are doing the right things (effectiveness) and doing things right (efficiency). You will also need to revisit your key business processes to identify opportunities for process redesign and improvement. With people, processes, and technology properly aligned, you can drive your business on the road to success.

## *Improving customer satisfaction*

Companies can keep customers loyal by keeping them happy. Although there are many facets to customer satisfaction, you'll never hear customers complain that your company exceeded their expectations or that your employees are too responsive or too helpful! Defining clear interaction processes and aligning the right tools to enable your employees to quickly and effectively communicate with each other and with customers — in order to conduct day-to-day business or resolve problems when they arise — is crucial to improving customer satisfaction.

When a customer has a problem, trying to figure out the best way to reach you can be frustrating and costly. For example, a customer urgently trying to contact you may leave a voice-mail on your office phone, send you an e-mail, and send a text message before finally reaching you on your cell phone — assuming, of course, that she had your office phone number, your e-mail address, and your cell phone number all readily available — and the time and patience to try them all!

With so many options today for communicating with each other, we often have a harder time getting through to anyone. Ironically, in our quest to make it convenient for anyone to reach us anywhere, anytime, and any way, it has actually become more difficult to simply communicate with each other.

Imagine a solution that enables your employees to use the right device, at the right time and in the right place, making it easy for them to reach others and for others to reach them. Everything works together (no matter where you are) to make reaching your customers, partners, and suppliers — and letting them know how to reach you — easy to do.

## ***And This Is Unified Communications!***

If the title of the book didn't already give it away, you may have guessed (correctly) that the solution I'm talking about here is Unified Communications!

Unified Communications (UC) brings together the many disparate communications technologies that exist in business environments today and enables a new era in business communications. Simply put, UC is defined as:

The convergence of communication applications that helps businesses significantly cut costs, advance their communications beyond voice, radically simplify their communications architecture, deliver business agility, and build customer loyalty.

These applications include voice and video telephony, presence, conferencing, collaboration, voice and video mail, instant messaging, e-mail, calendaring, and contacts.

Although these applications exist in many businesses today, they function as separate technologies, largely unaware of each other and therefore unable to take advantage of each other's capabilities. With UC, the boundaries between these once separate modes of communication are blurring, both technically and functionally.

When properly aligned with clearly defined key business processes, a UC solution can provide many significant benefits for your business. I discuss some of these business benefits in the chapters that follow.



Unified Communications (UC) is the convergence of communication applications that helps businesses significantly cut costs, advance their communications beyond voice, radically simplify their communications architecture, deliver business agility, and build customer loyalty.

## Chapter 2

# One Day in the Life of . . .

.....

### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Seeing the world through the eyes of your customers
  - ▶ Hitting the road with your sales force
  - ▶ Being on top of the world as the IT director
  - ▶ Getting things done in the trenches as an information worker
- .....

**R**elax. You didn't just jump from a *For Dummies* book to a Solzhenitsyn novel! But to help you understand how UC can help you reduce costs, increase productivity, and improve customer satisfaction, I thought I'd give you a glimpse into the worlds of some of the people who will be using your UC solution to help you achieve your business goals.

And because your customer is always first, I begin with one day in the life of your customer. I then take you on a journey in which you leave your role as a manager or executive in your organization and morph into a mobile sales executive. You then quickly duck into a phone booth to become . . . an IT director. And although an IT director may not be Superman, you end your day in the life of as an information worker — the Clark Kent of our modern workforce — quiet and unassuming, but always “in the know.” At the end of your journey (and your day in the life of), you have a much better understanding of some of the day-to-day communications challenges of the people you interact with most in your organization.

## *Walking Your Customer's Walk*

Put yourself in your customers' shoes and ask yourself “what are some of my biggest pain points?” Perhaps you're always wondering about the status of crucial deliveries in a just-in-time supply chain. Or long wait times that impact production

schedules. Or the day-to-day frustration of dealing with call center agents that just can't seem to ever provide you with the answers you need, when you need them.

As a customer, these are real issues that affect your overall satisfaction and ultimately your loyalty to a given company. If a company wants to keep you satisfied (and coming back), they need to maximize your positive experiences with them and minimize negative or fruitless interactions with their employees.

Now, put yourself back in your own shoes as the manager of a business or line of business — but with UC helping you keep your customers happy and loyal. Here are a few of the many ways that UC can help your company stand out from the crowd:

- ✔ **Increase availability of associates.** Simultaneous ringing of a business line and cell phone and find-me/follow-me services increase the probability that your customer will reach the right person on the first attempt.
- ✔ **Provide automated notifications.** Customers can receive automated product notifications and updates as often as they need them without ever having to place a call.
- ✔ **Resolve problems with a single call.** Customer responsiveness is drastically improved. Customer service agents can have instant access to a customers' interaction history and to internal experts and other resources. This access helps them answer even the most specialized or complex issues.
- ✔ **Reduce wait times with multiple contact options.** These features include priority handling, call-back, and Web chat options that reduce queue lengths.

## *Planes, Trains, and Automobiles: A Mobile Sales Executive*

You're traveling through another dimension, a dimension not only of sight and sound, but also of mind. That's the signpost up ahead — your next stop, the Twilight Zone! And now, you've just emerged as a mobile sales executive — someone who knows a bit about traveling.

As a mobile sales executive, you spend the majority of your time away from the office — either traveling to meet with customers and prospective customers, or working from a home office. Typical pain points for you might include

- ✔ Lack of productivity while you're away from the office
- ✔ Lost time and missed sales opportunities while you're out
- ✔ Obstacles in advancing sales opportunities, also because you're out

But what if you could alleviate some of that pain for you and your customers with a UC solution? For example, you could

- ✔ **Recover commute time to generate revenue.** Instead of starting and ending your busy day sitting in traffic, you could replicate your work environment at home. With UC you can conduct professional customer meetings from anywhere, organize your communications conveniently and securely on the device (such as a desk phone, cell phone, or desktop PC) of your choice, effortlessly access your office desk phone functions, and experience the same quality communications you get in your office — regardless of your bandwidth.
- ✔ **Never miss an opportunity.** UC provides the capabilities for you to stay connected virtually anywhere. For example, you can
  - Seamlessly move calls between your office phone and mobile phone
  - Simplify interactions with your customers by providing them with a single “phone” number to reach you on any of your communications devices
  - Read important voicemails (when you can't listen to a voice mail, for example, during a conference call) or listen to important e-mails (when you can't read them, for example, while driving) for quick response
  - Receive priority calls through intelligent routing that lets you create custom call-handling rules for specific callers
  - Capture missed calls even when your mobile phone is off

- ✔ **Drive business forward while remote.** With UC, you can cultivate promising sales opportunities with customers even while you're "on the road," easily access other associates to help you quickly resolve important customer issues, and prepare for your next day's busy agenda with relevant content delivered to your devices from a recorded multimedia conference, for example.

## Stepping into an IT Director's Role

As an IT director, your perspective is unique because your challenges include not only dealing with communications issues in support of business objectives, but also support of the communications technologies and applications. Typical issues for you might include

- ✔ **Overwhelmed staff.** IT personnel are constantly challenged to keep up with rapidly changing technology and new systems and applications. Over time, the entire organization suffers as IT resources are unable to adequately support everything and be "all things for all people."
- ✔ **No time or money for strategic initiatives.** With IT staff struggling to keep up with the day-to-day grind and tight budgets throughout the company, there's very little opportunity to implement strategic IT initiatives in support of business objectives. Return on investment (ROI) for many IT projects is often "soft" or never actually realized, making it even tougher to get support for these initiatives.
- ✔ **Slow to respond to business requests.** As a result of these limited resources and constraints, other business requests also suffer. Your IT staff never seems to be able to deploy new systems and applications quickly enough for other business units — and once deployed, IT must be able to fully support this new technology from day one (see first bullet about having an overwhelmed staff — a self-perpetuating problem for you).

But, there is an answer. Fully integrated solutions are far easier to support than in-house solutions that are hastily duct-taped together and implemented. Some examples of the

ways that IT organizations can become more effective with UC include the following:

- ✔ **Streamlined management simplifies tasks and reduces outages.** All of your UC systems can be managed centrally with one enterprise dial plan; increased global visibility of all elements in your UC solution helps your IT staff respond quickly to status changes. Automated software updates, audits, and alerts save valuable time; failover capabilities help ensure 24x7 reliability. With centralized management and automated tasks, your IT staff can recover valuable time in their busy days, allowing them to more proactively address other IT issues.
- ✔ **Cost and time savings immediately applied to strategic initiatives.** Cost savings are real and can be realized immediately with enterprise-wide on-net calling, global least-cost routing, calling from the best location or country (“hop off”), fewer shared SIP (Session Initiation Protocol) trunks, and reduced location-specific trunking. UC easily integrates with multi-vendor legacy systems using SIP gateways, and systems can be upgraded incrementally by linking legacy systems to central applications and moving people to the core one-by-one.
- ✔ **Increased business agility.** The use of a service-oriented architecture (SOA) gives the IT environment greater agility and provides more opportunities for reuse. For example:
  - Users can be mapped to communications applications with a centralized profile
  - Users have the same applications and number wherever they go — worldwide
  - IT staff can easily deploy the right capabilities to the right people and quickly add different features for different people
  - Centralized applications can be shared, and existing applications can be extended without changing them (“sequencing”)

Further advantages of UC for your IT department and your business include automated provisioning to save time and reduce errors, leveraging multivendor environments to maximize your infrastructure and technology investments, and recapturing IT’s ability to easily accommodate new business requirements.

## Getting to Know the Info Worker

As an information (or knowledge) worker in today's workforce, you deal with many different challenges associated with getting access to the right information and the right people. Your typical pain points could include project delays across global teams, inconsistent channel positioning, or disconnected customer feedback.

With UC, you could improve time to market for important projects by conducting more effective team meetings across different locations and time zones, for example by:

- ✓ Extending the day into your home office with no additional cost to your company or other team members
- ✓ Building diverse, high-performance teams outside the immediate work group
- ✓ Eliminating idle "gathering time" waiting for others to join a call by instead dialing out for missing participants
- ✓ Improving "reachability" thereby allowing team members to get in touch with the right person, at the right time, no matter where they are located

You could also deliver a more consistent channel message through enhanced collaboration to

- ✓ Simplify training on new products and services
- ✓ Reduce repetition with recordable multi-party audio, video, and Web conferences
- ✓ Increase content quality and absorption through interactive media and easy-to-use video that seamlessly transfers between desk phones and mobile phones

Finally, you could improve customer satisfaction and loyalty with customer feedback loops that give you the ability to

- ✓ Proactively respond to customer issues through priority notifications from your call center
- ✓ Improve competitive feature sets and quality with 360-degree feedback from your customers
- ✓ Stay in touch with market realities via ongoing virtual focus groups

## Chapter 3

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# Staying Connected with Unified Communications

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### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Using one number for everything
  - ▶ Reaching out with presence and availability
  - ▶ Going mobile and collaborating with conferencing capabilities
- .....

**U**nified Communications (UC) is all about staying connected — with your customers, your suppliers, your employees — anyone you need to connect with in order to conduct your business effectively. It's important to understand the different features that are available in UC to help you stay connected and how those features will help you reduce costs, increase productivity, and improve customer service and responsiveness.

In this chapter, I give you a tour of UC's many features. As an end-user of various communications devices and applications (like phones and e-mail) yourself, you'll no doubt quickly see how UC can benefit you, your employees, and your customers.

## *Keeping It Simple with One Number for Everything*

With UC, contacting you becomes simple because all of your contact numbers become one with:

- ✔ **Single Number Reachability:** Whether someone wants to talk to you, leave you a voicemail, or send you a fax or a text message, the person only needs to know a single phone number to reach you on any of your UC-enabled communications devices. These devices can include your desk phone, home office phone, mobile phone, PC soft-phone, and many others.
- ✔ **Single Outbound Identity:** Make all your calls from a single “calling” number, regardless of whether you’re calling from your desk phone, home office phone, mobile phone, or another device or application.

## Letting Others Know How and When to Reach You

If you’re using instant messaging (IM) or *FaceBook*, you’re probably already familiar with *presence and availability* (or simply *presence*), which lets you “update your status,” letting others know how and when they can reach you. With UC, you can bring the power of *presence* to all of your communications devices and applications. Imagine being able to specify your communications preferences and availability, letting customers and employees know, in real-time, when you’re available and how they can reach you — before they even try to do so. Now, stop imagining and open your eyes to the world of UC!

Presence makes it easier for a caller to reach a person who’s available and willing to be called by enabling people to inform others of their status, their availability, and how they can be contacted before a communication session even begins. This capability helps increase productivity by making it easier for people to reach each other more efficiently. By enabling faster responsiveness and making it easier for others to reach you, presence can also increase customer satisfaction and decrease customer frustration.

Many UC-enabled devices can broadcast presence information, which is particularly powerful when integrated across all of your communication devices, such as IP desk phones and software applications (IM and IP softphones).



Presence is not limited to a single person; it can also apply to a group of people, for example “Sales” or “Finance.”

## Getting Everyone Together with Conference Calling

Audio, Web, and video conferences are fairly common in today’s business environment, but most companies still pay for a third-party vendor for very expensive per-minute conferencing services. UC brings new capabilities to audio, Web, and video conferencing and enables you to host conferences on your own network, which saves you a lot of money! (See Chapter 4 for more about reducing expenses with a UC conferencing solution.)

UC conferencing features include

- ✔ **Click-to-call, click-to-conference:** Allows participants to dial a number or join a conference directly from a Web browser or e-mail message.
- ✔ **Conference call-out:** Get your meetings started on time by having your conferencing system call out to the meeting host and participants, instead of waiting for everyone to dial in. And no more searching for dial-in numbers and access codes — just answer the phone when it rings.
- ✔ **Device independence:** Participants can join a conference using a variety of devices, such as a cell phone, smart-phone, wireless device, or PC Web portal.
- ✔ **Integrated scheduling:** Send conference information to all the participants in an e-mail invitation and automatically update everyone’s calendars whenever an invitee accepts, rejects, or cancels the appointment.
- ✔ **Visual/audio conference control:** Control video and audio aspects of a conference in real-time and get only the content that your device and network can support. Participants with rich media capabilities can see the video, the audio, the application sharing, and so on, while participants on less capable devices or a slower connection, such as a cell phone, receive only the content that is appropriate for their device.

## Cutting the Cord and Going Mobile

Today your mobile phone can take pictures, record and play video, entertain you with music and games, send and receive e-mail and text messages, wake you up, surf the Internet, and keep you from getting lost — oh, it can also make and receive phone calls! How cool is that?

With all of these cool features on your mobile phone, it's hard to imagine that there are still important capabilities on your desk phone that you can't access when you're out of the office. These can include 4- or 5-digit extension dialing, multiple line access, and intelligent call routing (having your phone ring twice at your desk, then twice at your assistant's desk, then roll over to voicemail). UC lets you take your desk or home office phone with you, by extending many of these capabilities to your mobile phone.

But UC does much more for your mobile phone than just allow you to take your desk phone with you. For example:

- ✔ **Dual persona.** Choose which number you want to use when you make a call from your mobile phone — your mobile number (provided by your cellular carrier) for personal calls or your office number (the same as your desk phone) for business calls.
- ✔ **Visual voicemail.** You can manage your voicemail messages just like you do your e-mail. You can see who your messages are from (and how long they are) before listening to them, and skip to the most important ones first rather than listening to them in the order they were received.
- ✔ **Least-cost routing.** Intelligently and automatically route your local, long distance, and international mobile phone calls over the least expensive network available — whether that's through your corporate phone switch or over your cellular provider network.
- ✔ **Seamless roaming.** Roam between your cellular provider network and WiFi networks without dropping your call to take advantage of the most optimal and economical network — carrier signal strength may be weak in many

buildings and WiFi calls are far less expensive (sometimes even free) than cellular minutes.

- ✓ **Simultaneous ringing.** Have calls ring on your desk phone and mobile phone at the same time, so that you can answer the one that is most convenient for you at that time.

## *Routing Calls Intelligently with Call Coverage*

*Call coverage* enables you to set up simple rules for how you want to route your incoming calls. For example, you can send calls directly to voicemail or to an assistant or receptionist.

Maybe it depends on who is calling or the time of day. After hours? Send them to the call center. Calls from your CEO? Send them to voicemail (just kidding). What's neat is that you can ring all of your devices simultaneously. With UC, you can define rules that handle calls differently based on who is calling, the number of rings, the time of day, whether the call is internal or external, whether your phone is busy, or any number of other custom-defined variables.

Unlike call forwarding, which simply redirects a call to another phone number or extension, call coverage gives you the power and flexibility to simply and intelligently handle calls based on a wide range of criteria.

## *Sending (And Receiving) the Right Message*

How much time do you spend every day “managing” your voicemail? These days you no doubt have multiple voicemail boxes; for every mailbox you manage, there's the need to set up and regularly update your greeting, check for new voicemail messages, and on top of all that, remember the different methods for accessing each and every one of them. And, that's the easy part! What about transferring, forwarding, and replying to voicemail messages on each system? Have

you ever accidentally *deleted* an important voicemail on your mobile phone because you pressed '6', which is *save* on your office voicemail system?

All of this can be confusing and frustrating, and you have more important things to be spending your time on. Ultimately, your productivity is affected and your ability to respond to calls in a timely manner is negatively impacted — which can lead to some very unhappy customers.

With UC, you can regain control of your messaging by using capabilities such as:

- ✔ **Single voicemail:** Instead of having to maintain numerous voicemail systems, you have a single voicemail system that you can access anywhere. Voicemail notifications can be sent to your office *and* cell phone, as well as desk-top applications such as e-mail.
- ✔ **Unified messaging:** You get e-mail, voicemail, and faxes in a single mailbox. And with text-to-speech capabilities, you can have your e-mail messages read to you while accessing your voice messages.
- ✔ **Speech to Text:** Your voicemail messages are converted to text and delivered to your inbox. This allows information workers to remain fully functional while in meetings or out of the office. Speech to Text converts voicemail retrieval time into productive uptime.
- ✔ **Cross-media reply:** A single communications infrastructure supports all messaging and can reply in various media formats, including voicemail responses to e-mail, and e-mail or text responses to voicemail.
- ✔ **Federated instant messaging:** Instant messaging between organizations and carriers permits you to reach others, regardless of their application or service provider.

## Chapter 4

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# Exploring the Business Benefits of Unified Communications

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### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Increasing your bottom line by decreasing costs
  - ▶ Improving efficiency in your people and processes
  - ▶ Putting your customers first with responsiveness and personalized service
- 

**I**nvesting in technology simply for technology's sake doesn't make much sense. Come to think of it, it doesn't make any sense at all — particularly in today's tough economy! If a technology doesn't support your business objectives and ultimately produce tangible business benefits, it simply isn't worth the investment.

In this chapter, I describe some of the many business benefits of Unified Communications (UC).

## *Reducing Costs*

In today's challenging global economy, companies must find innovative ways to aggressively cut costs without negatively impacting their ability to serve their customers. UC helps companies reduce costs by lowering telecommunications and conferencing costs, leveraging existing infrastructure, trimming facilities and equipment needs, and cutting travel and commuting expenses (which also helps the environment).

## *Lowering telco costs*

Telecommunications costs (including voice and data circuits, local and long distance toll charges, cellular minutes, conferencing services, phone system maintenance and support contracts, and Internet access) are all significant expenses for any company operating in today's global business environment. A UC solution can help companies reduce these expenses in a number of ways, such as:

- ✔ Converging separate voice and data networks with voice-over-IP (VoIP) to reduce the number of required circuits
- ✔ Reducing the number of SIP trunks required in a mixed network that includes legacy phone systems and SIP-enabled VoIP phones
- ✔ Making local and long-distance calls practically free (on a per-call basis) across your own network
- ✔ Enabling seamless roaming of mobile phones from cellular networks to WiFi networks to reduce the use of pooled minutes on expensive carrier networks
- ✔ Replacing expensive per-minute third-party conferencing services with an in-house solution
- ✔ Eliminating the need for expensive maintenance and support contracts on aging and complex legacy phone switches, which can be replaced with simpler, more reliable systems that are easily supported by IT staff



Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) is an open signaling protocol standard used to set up, manage, and terminate real-time communications over large networks, such as the Internet.

## *Leveraging existing equipment*

A key advantage of UC is its interoperability with other systems. After all, that's what UC is all about — unifying disparate communications systems and applications. These include phone systems, mobile phones, voicemail, e-mail, conferencing, instant messaging, and various custom business applications. Keep in mind, UC is a modular solution, so you don't have to "rip and replace" all of your existing communications systems. UC will play nicely with all your legacy systems long after they've outlived their useful lives!

## Continental Airlines lands significant savings with Avaya Meeting Exchange

U.S.-based Continental Airlines ([www.continental.com](http://www.continental.com)) is a global organization (the sixth largest airline in the world) that relies heavily on technology to harmonize all aspects of its business operations.

### The Challenge

Teleconferences are a vital method for enabling dispersed departments, crews, and management to do their jobs effectively. Maintenance issues, staff coordination, aircraft substitutions, flight scheduling, and weather-related impacts are all discussed regularly — sometimes daily — via teleconferencing.

In early 2001, Continental was using about 250,000 conferencing minutes and spending about \$40,000/month on outsourced conferencing services. The airline implemented numerous cost-cutting initiatives that included a goal to reduce conferencing expenses by 40 percent.

### The Solution

Continental deployed Avaya Meeting Exchange and realized an ROI in just two months. The Avaya solution currently handles more than 100 daily conferences for Continental's 41,000 employees. Specific results include the following:

- ✔ Continental reduced conferencing-related expenses by 50 percent.
- ✔ In 2003, cumulative conferencing-related savings totaled more than \$740,000.
- ✔ Continental achieved a significant reduction in operating costs, particularly for on-network users (no toll charges).

Avaya Meeting Exchange is an advanced conferencing solution combining features like reservation-less, scheduled meet-me, Web conferencing, and streaming video to all conference participants. With a variety of user and administrative features, as well as a range of deployment options, Meeting Exchange enables enterprises to integrate and customize conferencing solutions to complement existing business processes and enhance productivity.

To learn more, visit [www.avaya.com](http://www.avaya.com).

By leveraging existing network and server infrastructure, UC also helps companies control implementation and ongoing operational costs. For example, UC support does not require your IT staff to drastically redesign the network or learn complex new system administration functions.

## *Doing more with less (space)*

As companies grow, their facilities and equipment costs typically grow with them — and these costs can quickly add up. Avaya estimates, for example, that facilities costs for a small enterprise are about \$5,000 per employee, per year.

At some point, a company's growth may exceed the physical capacity of its existing facilities. Building or leasing new facilities can be an extremely expensive proposition. Beyond the real estate costs themselves, moving expenses — both direct and indirect (disruptions to your day-to-day operations) — can be significant.

But there is an innovative solution to this problem (albeit, growth is a good problem to have): you guessed it — UC! By enabling employees to work from virtually anywhere with UC and a teleworking program, companies can reduce many of their existing facilities and equipment needs (and hence, costs) and may be able to forgo, or at least defer, future expansion needs even as they continue to grow.

## *Going green!*

Responsibility for the environment is an increasingly important issue for businesses, governments, customers, employees, and the planet in general. And although Kermit the Frog says “It isn't easy being green!” Kermit doesn't have UC. So how can UC contribute to your company's green (both environmental and cost reduction) initiatives? By helping to significantly reduce travel and commuting requirements — and expenses — for your business.

When executives and employees don't need to fly across the country or drive across town to attend meetings or visit client sites, the environment benefits from reduced fuel consumption, pollution, and smog — and your company and employees benefit still more by saving time and travel expenses. This is possible with high-definition multimedia UC tools such as Avaya Meeting Exchange and Avaya Video Collaboration that enable a rich collaborative communications experience that can be just as effective — if not more effective — as being there in person.

Telecommuting has obvious benefits for the environment, and UC is an important enabling technology for any telecommuting program.

Consider the following:

- ✔ The average daily round-trip commute in the U.S. is 29 miles according to the U.S. Department of Transportation.
- ✔ The average fuel economy in the U.S. is 19.7 miles per gallon.
- ✔ Almost 20 pounds of carbon dioxide are emitted for each gallon of gas a vehicle consumes.

So, do the math! Okay, I'll do it for you. The average American commuter uses almost 400 gallons of gasoline and is responsible for emitting more than 7,000 pounds of carbon dioxide *every year* (and if you drive an SUV, you're above average)! To put that in context, you would need to plant 17 trees a year to offset 7,000 pounds of carbon emissions in the environment.

Permitting your employees to work remotely, even one day a week, can save up to 78 gallons of gas per year, per employee, and reduce carbon emissions by more than 1,000 pounds.

Finally, companies such as Hewlett-Packard and eBay are boasting about the environmental benefits of their work-at-home programs. And they get plenty of welcome attention from the news media for their "green stories." Perhaps not coincidentally, both of these companies were profiled in *Fortune* magazine's 2008 "100 Best Companies To Work For."

## *Increasing Productivity*

UC provides many opportunities for companies to increase both user and business-process productivity. Examples include reducing human latency, providing mobility and flexibility for employees to work anywhere and anytime, expanding creativity with a diverse talent pool, and ensuring business continuity during and after a disaster.

## Avaya UC helps Broad and Cassel's rainmakers stay productive and mobile — even when hurricanes are making rain

Broad and Cassel ([www.broadandcassel.com](http://www.broadandcassel.com)), a leading law firm with 175 attorneys and approximately 220 staff members in eight offices (all located in the heart of Florida's "hurricane alley") needed a communications solution that would provide mobility options for their attorneys and staff and enable them to stay in close contact with their clients and each other, regardless of location. The experience of three major hurricanes in two years also demonstrated the need for a robust communications system that can provide business continuity and disaster recovery capabilities when businesses need it most.

Broad and Cassel chose Avaya Aura™ Communication Manager and Modular Messaging, which enabled

- ✔ Mobility and home office options that provide flexibility to maintain seamless, full-featured communications capabilities, regardless of location
- ✔ Retention of valued employees who relocate outside of Broad and Cassel office locations, but can transition successfully to home office work
- ✔ User productivity enhancements based on ease-of-use features and seamless mobility options
- ✔ Ease of management and operational efficiencies that allow the IT team to take on support responsibilities for eight offices
- ✔ Survivability features that allow each location to operate independently if connectivity with the main office is lost, and allows the firm to achieve business continuity during and after severe weather
- ✔ Enterprise-wide cost savings via an estimated 45 to 50 percent reduction in toll calls and a 20 percent reduction in TCO over five years
- ✔ Improved client service and enhanced connectivity across the business

Communication Manager is the open, highly-reliable and extensible IP telephony software foundation on which Avaya delivers Unified Communications to enterprises large and small. Communication Manager effectively scales from less than 100 users to as many as 36,000 users on a single system and to more than one million users on a single network.

To learn more about Communication Manager, visit [www.avaya.com](http://www.avaya.com).

## *Reducing latency*

Improving business process productivity with UC is usually based on using new or better communications functionality to change or redefine business steps or methods so that the processes are far more efficient. This new UC functionality enables automation of communication steps, uses information or rules to select communication methods, redirects communication to available resources to avoid delays, and even eliminates the communication steps altogether when the purpose was simply to transmit known information.

Examples include using

- ✔ UC presence and directories to find available people and resources when needed (even resources not known by the requester) to get immediate action, rather than waiting for a specific person to become available.
- ✔ UC software assistance features to allow customers to be served on the first call nearly every time, rather than having to leave a message and wait for a reply or make a second call or find-me attempt in order to be served.
- ✔ An automated software package to do communications work that people currently spend time doing, ranging from notifying others of routine events, to scheduling meetings, sharing information, and more.
- ✔ UC collaborative workspaces, file sharing, blogs, and wikis to make updated information available to all members of a team rather than having to send information via e-mail for repetitive local filing or searching.

All of these examples have a common thread — they all reduce or eliminate areas where communication actions are creating delays, errors, or waste through duplication and rework, thereby increasing productivity.

## *Escaping the cube*

With more than one billion Internet users, the virtual office has become a commonplace reality for the modern workforce. And with more than 2.7 billion global cell phone users, today's workforce is also more mobile than ever. Ensuring that your

employees have the communications tools to be as productive as possible anywhere and at any time is important for any business. With UC and a teleworking program, companies can ensure that their employees remain as productive and responsive as possible, whether they're in the office, at home, or on the road.



According to an In-Stat ([www.marketresearch.com](http://www.marketresearch.com)) report, more than 25 percent of workers report being mobile from 11 to 20 hours each week and more than 15 percent are mobile 21 to 30 hours weekly.

Finally, UC and teleworking helps companies recruit and retain valuable employees by providing them with the flexibility to achieve a healthy life-work balance, while also improving individual productivity and customer service. In a recent Avaya study, 65 percent of employees ranked flexible schedules as a more important benefit than compensation. Such a benefit also saves commuting costs, dry cleaning bills, and restaurant meals. That's a nice perk to offer your employees — particularly when tough economic conditions make it more difficult to give pay increases and bonuses.

## *Going global!*

Diversity drives creativity and innovation in the workplace, thereby increasing productivity and creating a competitive edge for businesses. Like “green” initiatives, many of your customers and potential customers will specifically do business with companies that demonstrate a strong commitment to a diverse workforce.

With UC and telecommuting, companies can recruit and manage a geographically dispersed — perhaps even global — workforce so that your business is no longer limited by “location, location, location!”

## *Ensuring business continuity*

Maintaining or restoring communications is a major priority for companies during and after a disaster or other major event that interrupts normal business operations. After the initial emergency passes, letting your customers, suppliers,

and partners know your status or situation is crucial to minimizing the cost and impact of any interruption and restoring normal operations. It's also an important signal to send to your customers, in order to maintain or restore their confidence in your ability to serve their needs, no matter what the situation.

A UC solution with survivability, such as Avaya Aura™ Communication Manager, is one such feature that will help ensure not only the survivability of your communications but also your business operations.

Companies that have a workforce that's already familiar with UC and teleworking when disaster strikes will be better prepared to continue business as usual. With a geographically dispersed workforce, it is also less likely that your company will suffer mass casualties in the event of a building fire, for example. And with UC tools that enable them to work from anywhere, your employees will be able to continue serving your customers even if your main office has been severely damaged or is otherwise inaccessible — your customers never even need to know. That way, a snowstorm in Chicago doesn't negatively impact your customer in southern Italy.

## *Improving Customer Service and Satisfaction*

Reducing costs and increasing productivity are important goals for any business, but without customers a business isn't much of a business. In order to stay competitive, ensure customer loyalty, and attract and retain customers, businesses must continually work to improve customer service and satisfaction.

### *Being responsive*

Perhaps nothing is more frustrating to a customer than not being able to get ahold of someone when there's a problem. Except perhaps, not being able to get in touch with the right person who can actually help resolve the problem.

UC helps your employees to help your customers, by ensuring your customers can get in touch with your employees when they need them most. With UC features and capabilities like mobility, presence, single number reachability, and find-me/follow-me, your employees can be available to your customers anywhere, and at any time. These same features will help ensure your employees can always find the right person within your organization if they can't help your customer themselves — without ever having to place anyone on hold!

### *They know me, they really know me!*

Customers appreciate personalized attention. With UC, any employee that interacts with your customers can get immediate access to important information that helps provide the best possible service to every customer, every time. This might include a complete transaction history for that customer with preference information and direct routing to the most appropriate expert within your company to save your customer time and frustration.

## Chapter 5

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# Implementing Unified Communications in Your Organization

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### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Assessing your business needs
  - ▶ Aligning your people, processes, and technology to provide business benefits
  - ▶ Ensuring your UC solution properly addresses your business needs
- .....

**U**nified Communications (UC) can deliver consistent, positive results that will have a significant and measurable business impact in almost any organization. However, the key to a successful UC implementation is to approach it as a business transformation, rather than as a science project, and to focus on the business issues at hand and the design of your communication processes — *not the technologies*.

In this chapter, I walk you through the steps to a successful UC deployment for your organization including planning, design, and implementation.

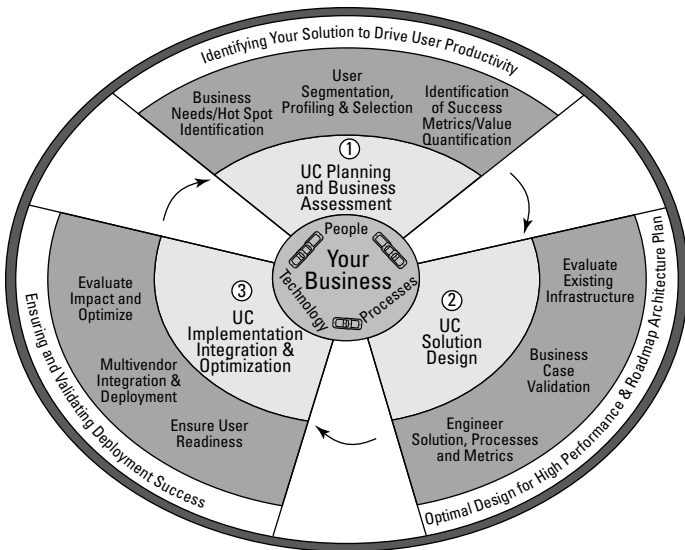
## *Choosing a Partner for Your UC Deployment*

Choosing the right partner for your UC implementation and deployment is a crucial first step. Although many organizations are able to successfully implement new technologies

without outside resources, to gain the maximum business benefit from your UC solution you should work with a trusted partner (such as Avaya Professional Services or a Business Partner) who will help you navigate the implementation, deployment, and integration steps of your UC project.

Avaya Professional Services has developed a best practices methodology for UC deployment and optimization consisting of the following three phases (see Figure 5-1):

- **UC Planning and Business Assessment.** Identifying your solution to drive user productivity.
- **UC Solution Design.** Creating an optimal design for high performance and a roadmap architecture plan.
- **UC Implementation, Integration, and Optimization.** Ensuring and validating deployment success.



**Figure 5-1:** Avaya Best Practices model for UC deployment optimization.

At the center of this model is the unique combination of people, processes, and technology that are the heart of your business and are critical to the successful deployment of UC in your organization. Moving from the center, the different

phases of UC deployment and optimization are identified, then the specific tasks within each phase. I discuss each phase and its associated tasks in greater detail in the following sections.

## ***UC Planning and Business Assessment***

This phase begins with a business needs assessment to help you identify communications *hot spots* — the communications-intensive operations and processes where UC can have the greatest impact. Next, you need to segment and profile your workers to determine which groups are most affected by these communications “hot spots.” Finally, before moving on to the solution design phase, you need to set some appropriate goals for your UC solution based on your business objectives — it’s important to not only know where you’re going, but also when you get there!

### ***Conducting a business needs assessment***

In order to deliver a return on investment (ROI) from any project, *something* has to change. A *business needs assessment* will help you define exactly what needs to be changed and how making that change will help you achieve your business objectives.

To improve user productivity, you need to consider how your employees communicate, who they communicate with, and where they perform their work activities.

Next, you want to take a look at key communications-enabled or communications-dependent business processes and identify where latency or inefficiencies exist.

Finally, as you conduct your business assessment, start thinking about what changes might help reduce costs, increase productivity, improve reliability, reduce errors or mistakes, and minimize disruptions.

## *Creating user profiles*

Understanding how and where your employees work — and what their business needs are — is essential to the success of your UC deployment. With more than one billion Internet users and nearly three billion global cell phone users, it is evident that people everywhere have embraced the technologies that enable the modern virtual workforce. People everywhere have “escaped the cube” and now work from just about anywhere — a home office, a hotel lobby, or even a corner bistro.

Three basic user profiles to consider are office workers, mobile workers, and teleworkers. Keep in mind that few businesses have “pure” profiles — instead, some blend of the three basic profiles is probably the norm for your company.

Document the communications needs, challenges, and opportunities for each of the user profiles and the unique combinations of profiles that exist within your organization. Then develop use cases for each of them and engage the various groups and cross-functional teams to fully understand their processes and communications needs.



A use case identifies who can do what in a given set of business scenarios. It helps you define the functional requirements of your UC solution in the context of actual business situations.

### *Office workers*

This is your most traditional profile with users working primarily in the office at a desk or in a cubicle. Office workers usually have access to a full range of communications technologies and capabilities through their desk phones and PCs (such as voicemail, e-mail, calendars, contacts, and phone/Web/video conferencing).

But without UC, all of these systems and applications operate independently of each other, and therefore their effectiveness is somewhat limited. There are many opportunities to increase productivity and collaboration, reduce cycle times, and improve business agility for office workers with UC. I discuss some of these in Chapter 4.

### *Mobile workers*

Mobile workers use a variety of devices, each with the means to provide a variety of capabilities. Mobile devices include cell phones, smartphones, wireless devices such as BlackBerries, PDAs, laptops, and practically any computer with access to the Internet.

UC provides mobile workers with the same capabilities as other workers, as well as some additional functions that are unique to the mobile environment, such as:

- ✓ Single number reachability
- ✓ Speech commands and speech-to-text or text-to-speech applications
- ✓ Find-me/follow-me services (route calls to a mobile device or remote phone)
- ✓ Integrated e-mail and voicemail
- ✓ Profiling (call-routing management)
- ✓ Seamless roaming (roaming from WiFi-to-cellular and cellular-to-WiFi using a dual-mode phone)

### *Teleworkers*

Teleworkers work remotely from virtual offices (such as a home office). Communications systems for teleworkers need to provide the same level of accessibility as other workers, so that coworkers can communicate with each other seamlessly.

Your customers also expect the same level of service and support, regardless of where your employees are actually located. With UC, your customers should never have any idea that your employees may be assisting them from a virtual office (unless the dog needs a walk and won't stop barking)! In order to deliver that level of service and support, your employees need to be able to easily access various resources, whether working from home or in the cubicle next door.

## *Defining success metrics*

It's certainly true that "if you can't measure it, you can't manage it." But what exactly do you need to measure? The answer, of course, depends on how you define success for your UC implementation. Perhaps success means

- a) Reducing expenses by cutting telecommunications and travel costs by 30 percent.
- b) Increasing productivity by reducing the cycle time for a given business process by three days.
- c) Improving customer satisfaction by increasing your call center's first-call resolution rate to 90 percent and wait times to less than 60 seconds.
- d) All of the above!

Whatever your criteria for success, it's important to know your goals when you begin so that you can assure the required payback and justify your UC investment.

## ***UC Solution Design***

After you have a clear understanding of your business and user needs, you're ready to begin the second phase — designing your UC solution. This phase includes evaluating your existing environment, validating your business case, and engineering your UC solution.

### ***Evaluating your existing environment***

You begin by taking stock of what you already have in order to understand what elements in your current environment will change, what will remain the same, and what will be integrated with your UC solution. This assessment includes not only the technology elements in your environment, but also the people and processes.



The core of every business in every industry is its unique combination of people, processes, and technology.

#### ***People***

Incorporating the individual requirements and preferences of your different work groups into the UC solution design is absolutely essential to ensuring end-user acceptance.



Although your UC strategy should be flexible enough to accommodate individual requirements, it should also strike a delicate balance with your support capabilities. Whenever possible, you should implement standardized software, hardware, and design configurations.

Users will also need assistance installing, configuring, operating, maintaining, and troubleshooting the hardware, software, and various end-user devices of a UC solution. You need to identify the specific training needs of not only your users, but also your IT help desk and other technicians that will support your users.

### *Processes*

Be sure to carefully document all active communications-dependent business processes as they currently exist, as well as how they will change. You can implement and integrate your UC solution incrementally to ensure that the transition is smooth and does not negatively impact workflows.

### *Technology*

You need to perform an in-depth evaluation of your existing communications and technology environment, to include

- ✔ **Network architectures.** Document connectivity (local, campus, wide-area), determine scalability, then baseline your network's performance.
- ✔ **Embedded systems and infrastructure.** These include legacy phone switches, servers, and other components, devices, and applications.
- ✔ **Security and accessibility.** Determine what remote access is currently permitted and enabled. What regulatory compliance and business continuity requirements exist?
- ✔ **Physical capacity.** Ensure that you have adequate power, cooling, and ventilation, as well as equipment space.

A UC solution can integrate with and/or replace many technologies you currently use, such as voicemail, e-mail, fax, IM, and conferencing. Remember, UC is a uniter — not a divider!

## *Validating your business case*

Validating your business case helps you stay focused on your business objectives. You should carefully map specific UC features and capabilities to your business requirements.

You also need to perform ROI modeling in this phase, once you've identified the specific design elements of your UC solution.



Avaya provides a “business value calculator” that can help you validate your business case. Check it out at [www.estimatebusinessvalue.com/avaya/uc/](http://www.estimatebusinessvalue.com/avaya/uc/).

Feasibility studies can help you examine the implications and impact of implementing different applications before committing to a final solution. Feasibility studies allow you to assess end-user communication “what-if” scenarios in a risk-free way.

## *Engineering your solution*

You're now ready to design your actual UC solution. Doing so involves developing the detailed, implementable solution that:

- ✓ Meets the functional and strategic needs of your business
- ✓ Conforms to required budgets and milestones
- ✓ Maximizes appropriate reuse of existing infrastructure
- ✓ Addresses security, compliance, and business continuity/disaster recovery requirements

# *UC Implementation, Integration, and Optimization*

After your users are trained and ready, it's time to roll out your UC solution, including any needed configuration, integration, and customization.



You should evaluate and optimize your UC solution on an ongoing basis to maximize the benefits to your business.

## *Ensuring user readiness*

Ensuring that your employees are ready for UC requires strong leadership, user involvement at all levels, clearly defined expectations (policies), and appropriate training.

You must make sure that user and system administration manuals and trained support personnel are readily accessible to your users when they need them.

You also need to ensure appropriate policies are in place before you roll out your UC solution, whether new or existing, updated, or no longer relevant (and therefore superseded). Important policies associated with UC may include

- ✓ Appropriate use of technology
- ✓ Remote access
- ✓ Security and privacy
- ✓ Teleworking

## *Deployment and multivendor integration*

Now, on to deployment — and beyond, which includes

- ✓ Specifying the deployment timeline and order by site, work group, and capability
- ✓ Addressing any “coexistence” requirements or considerations during the transition from legacy systems
- ✓ Optimizing the solution design and configuration for maximum performance, interoperability, and business impact
- ✓ Planning for the unexpected with detailed contingency plans

Keep in mind that organizations often propose timelines that are too aggressive for their users. Given the importance of a smooth transition and minimal disruption to workflows, be sure to allow enough flexibility in your timeline to ensure your milestones are realistic and attainable and your UC project is ultimately successful.



Avaya UC solutions are based on open standards and are designed to work with a large number and variety of vendors, business applications, and devices. This flexibility allows you to integrate communication applications today to take advantage of the immediate benefits of UC. And when your requirements change in the future — whether due to strategic changes, acquisitions, or the availability of new solutions — your UC solution will be able to adapt.

## *Evaluating and optimizing*

After you've implemented new business processes and achieved your business objectives with your UC solution (as determined by the metrics you defined earlier), you'll want to continue to evaluate and optimize your UC solution and business processes for continuous improvement opportunities. Technology is always changing — and so are your business requirements and your customers' needs.



Technology is only the enabler; process design is the key to a successful UC implementation.

## Chapter 6

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# Ten Reasons to Invest in Unified Communications Now

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### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Reducing costs
  - ▶ Increasing productivity
  - ▶ Improving customer satisfaction
- 

**Y**ou understand the potential business benefits of UC for your company, your employees, and your customers. But, just in case you're wondering why you should invest in UC now rather than wait until the economy rebounds, here are ten great reasons for you to move forward!

## *Minimize Real Estate Costs*

The average loaded real estate cost per corporate employee is \$14,000 USD per year — in major cities worldwide. This cost can be substantially reduced for organizations that introduce teleworking initiatives for their employees, allowing them to work from a home office or other remote locations.

## ***Eliminate Third-Party Conferencing Costs***

Outsourced third-party conferencing services are expensive and limit your control. With UC, you can bring all of your conferencing capabilities in-house, dramatically reducing costs and regaining full control of your conferencing needs.

Unified Web, audio, and conferencing solutions offer substantial savings over hosted services. Larger organizations that use conferencing services extensively have seen payback or return on investment in a UC solution in as little as six weeks. That means a business could absorb the acquisition costs and still reduce expenses within a single quarter!

## ***Reduce Travel Expenses***

With rich conferencing and multimedia communication capabilities, employees can be just as effective (or more effective) attending virtual meetings with coworkers, vendors, partners, and customers around the world, rather than traveling from city to city and living out of a suitcase. Not only can you significantly cut travel expenses, but you can also eliminate non-productive travel time and reduce wear and tear on your most valuable assets — your employees.

## ***Consolidate Infrastructure***

Avaya has long advocated a flatten, consolidate, and extend approach to enterprise communications architecture. This approach allows a business to reduce costs associated with managing communications equipment in multiple locations, provides the ability to reduce power consumption and HVAC costs in multiple locations, and helps leverage centralized SIP trunks.

## *Do More with Less*

Unfortunately, many companies will inevitably face layoffs and reductions in workforce as economic conditions continue to worsen and take their toll. The challenge for managers then becomes “how do I do more with less while keeping my customers happy and loyal?”

UC provides the tools to empower your employees to work from just about anywhere and under any circumstances, ensuring they always have access to the right people when they need them. And, your customers always have access to your employees — when *they* need them!

## *Boost Employee Productivity*

Study after study finds that home-based workers, whether permanent or even just a few days a week, are often more productive than office-based workers. With UC, it really does ring true that work is what you do rather than where you go.

Key capabilities like one-number access ensure that all employees are easily reachable through the corporate directory. Security and privacy concerns are addressed because UC-enabled home-based employees don't need to use their own home or mobile number to conduct business.

Video-enabled desktops mean that home workers can have rich, productive conversations with teams and individuals — as if they were in the same meeting room.

And rich, multi-modal presence information ensures that out of sight does not mean out of mind — because all employees can see the real-time status of their coworkers.

## *Rapidly Deploy New Applications*

UC solutions are based on standards and designed to operate in multivendor environments. By integrating your various e-mail, voicemail, instant messaging, mobile, video, and

conferencing systems, UC enables your business to rapidly deploy new applications and technologies that further advance your business objectives.

## ***Ensure Business Continuity***

When your workforce is more distributed and accustomed to working outside the office — for example, with UC and teleworking — the potential risk and damage to your business is significantly reduced when severe weather, emergencies, or natural or man-made disasters occur. Many employees can often continue working without ever missing a beat — and customer service doesn't have to suffer just because your employees can't get to the office!

## ***Improve Responsiveness***

One key to keeping your customers happy and loyal is to be as responsive as possible. Being able to reach the right people with the right answers, when your customers need them most, will help to create and maintain a positive lasting impression for your customers. In tough economic times, every business needs to do everything practical to retain its best customers — or they'll take their business elsewhere.

## ***Streamline Key Processes***

UC is much more than a technology solution. When properly implemented with the right partner, UC can help you reinvent and improve key business processes throughout your organization. By reducing human latency and delay in communication-enabled business processes and improving the efficiency of real-time business communications, UC can help you significantly increase productivity for your business.



Do more with less using  
**Unified Communications**

## Are your communication systems limiting your business effectiveness?

In today's tough economic environment, companies worldwide are struggling to find ways to maintain their bottom line, often with draconian cost-cutting measures and unrealistic productivity goals — all at the expense of customer satisfaction and loyalty. But there is a better solution. With Unified Communications, businesses can innovatively reduce costs and effectively increase productivity while simultaneously *improving* customer service and loyalty! This handy guide explains how your business can survive — and even thrive — in these most challenging economic times with Unified Communications!

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*"Get in, get out" information*  
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*Top ten lists*  
*A dash of humor and fun*

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*Reduce travel expenses and conferencing costs*

*Improve key processes and employee productivity*

*Keep your customers happy and loyal*

*Build your best business case for UC*

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