



The Secret to Ensuring
Company-wide

Adoption

of Unified Communications

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Examples of different and overlapping tools that often co-exist in the same enterprise environments:

Voice



Email



Messaging



Video / Web collaboration:



Documents and content



The barrier to adoption for collaboration tools such as FaceTime, iMessage, WhatsApp, and Google Hangouts is so low that their use in enterprise environments is rampant, even if they are not authorized by IT. The practice of employees opting out of company's IT systems by installing apps on their own via the cloud is referred to as "shadow IT," and has led to a loss of control around enterprise security. To the extent that employee communications – either with other employees, partners, or customers – include confidential/sensitive information, the technology/security team doesn't have a handle on how it's being used or where.

Even enterprise-sanctioned tools are proliferating as IT is charged with serving multiple offices and remote employees. In fact, many enterprise environments feature numerous communications tools selected in an ad hoc method across different departments, divisions, and locations. In other words, disjointed communications systems that have grown separately and randomly. Unfortunately, this triggers a host of problems, including the fact that tools are purchased and deployed but not used as effectively as possible – if at all.

The Role – and Decline – of the User Experience

One of the key drivers of the consumerization of the enterprise (or app-ification of everything) is the superior user experience offered by these tools. These app interfaces are so well designed they are fun to use for often-critical tasks at work. Simply put, these apps provide the look and feel, sounds, ease of use, and navigability that lend to a standout experience.

However, as more and more of these sanctioned and unsanctioned tools are used in the enterprise, the overall end-user experience declines. That's because there is no common collaboration ground for those using the tools. As workers spend more time collaborating with colleagues and customers, they sometimes end up wasting time trying to figure out which collaboration tool to use. Simply put, they must multi-task across more and more applications to get their jobs done.

Moreover, lack of integration between communications tools and other systems forces people to toggle back and forth trying to manage different apps and experiences. In many cases, employees must resort to complex, inefficient, manual workflows as they try to navigate an environment of different tools and ways of working. This is counterintuitive to the productivity promised by these tools, creating frustration with remote, mobile, and global communications. The following are two examples of this frustration.

- **IM or chat tools**

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

- **All the document storage options today**

Workers can often choose from Google Drive, SharePoint, Dropbox, and more. This complicates matters when different departments or business units use different storage tools but want to share documents.

The micro-inefficiencies of constantly switching quickly add up. In fact, switching costs is one of the biggest productivity killers. Each time someone has to toggle between different tools to perform even simple tasks, it can cost up to 10 IQ points.⁴

“Since these [communications] apps are typically used in a standalone fashion, there is a lot of inefficiency, duplicated effort, and wasted time. Not only does this lower workplace productivity, it also reduces the return on investment (ROI) for the underlying technologies.”

-Jon Arnold, J Arnold & Associates

UCaaS Satisfies Employee Expectations

In spite of the drawbacks, modern workers now expect a well-designed enterprise app that enables a stellar experience or they'll revert to something that meets their expectations.

The ultimate enterprise communications app is one featuring multiple modes of interaction.

Significant consolidation of technologies is enabling this in the form of unified communications, which is a fusion of voice, text, data, and video. Forward-thinking IT leaders are following the lead of their employees by building a strategy around Unified Communications as a Service (or UCaaS). These are apps that enable communications and collaboration in the cloud.

Modern UCaaS solutions address end-user priorities directly with streamlined access to multiple modes of communication. By adopting a UCaaS solution that marries global voice, video, and collaboration, IT leaders can more strategically meet the communications needs of their current workforce and future recruits. Simply put, UCaaS empowers distributed organizations to ditch the communications silos that limit the quality of employee engagement.

The more modes of communication that are accessible via a single platform, the greater the chance that inter-tool boundaries won't get in the way of the end-user experience.

⁴Daniel J. Levitin, *The Organized Mind: Thinking Straight in the Age of Information Overload*, published by Viking
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Unified communications tools offer new ways to give connected workers the control to extend their physical office and support ad hoc conversations, meetings, brainstorming, and work-share preferences, however and whenever it's most convenient. What's more, many UC tools include analytics that help IT leaders track usage and determine effective use. Hand in hand with this, using tools that speak the language of employees enables IT to reduce costs while improving collaboration across teams.

User Experience (UX) is top priority

A quality user experience is the difference between technology that adds value to the way people work and technology that sucks the life out of everyone required to use it.

The First Element of a UCaaS Adoption Strategy: The Right Solution

Change is hard. Most people tend to resist any perceived disruptions to their daily work routines, and UC deployments undoubtedly represent such a development. Because the introduction of UCaaS requires people to change the way they currently work, it's critical to develop a plan that increases the likelihood of adoption. Otherwise the investment will go to waste and IT's reputation will be at stake.

The first step is to understand the day-in-the-life of employees:

- What tools and apps do they use and how? Which apps do they prefer for which modality (video, text, voice, meetings)? Document their workflows and how they use communications tools to collaborate in common scenarios.
- What line-of-business systems do those tools connect to? IT must understand how to fit UCaaS into existing processes to satisfy worker priorities.
- Who is responsible for rolling out tools across teams? In an enterprise, the implementer is often not a single person but a cross-functional group. IT must be able to support these implementers.



The next step is to select a UCaaS solution that satisfies end-user requirements and will enable a superior user experience. The impact of a better user experience is twofold:

- For workers, it means the tool meets their needs, which excites them about using it; if it doesn't, they'll find something that will.
- For IT, higher rates of adoption reduce time to value for the investment, minimizing the risk introduced when people circumvent existing platforms.

The UCaaS solution should also be designed to accommodate specific scenarios that address common communications needs across the enterprise, and should include in-app communications about new features. This becomes a hook for adoption and drives virality throughout the enterprise once early adopters start inviting others to use the solution.

By selecting a UCaaS solution that supports third-party integrations (such as with CRM), organizations don't need to worry about rip-and-replace scenarios and can instead reap full value from existing systems. To that end, organizations may consider running side-by-side pilots of solutions under consideration, and including select employees to help vet the solution. Gaining worker buy-in at selection time facilitates wider, easier adoption.

Organizations should also partner with the vendor for a smooth implementation process. The vendor should facilitate the organization's current process for rolling out large software and tool initiatives. As part of that, the vendor should help identify the right people to be involved in implementation and determine what collateral and training is required.



The Second Element of a UCaaS Adoption Strategy: Communications and Training

Before deploying the solution, organizations can pave the way for acceptance and excitement. A coordinated, dedicated effort is essential. IT should work hand in hand with HR, training, marketing, and any other groups that are typically involved in driving enterprise-wide adoption of an initiative. Three critical areas to address:

- Help employees understand what unified communications is, how the chosen solution functions, and why these tools will positively impact employees' day-to-day job responsibilities.
- Emphasize the unified part of the experience: that the solution will work seamlessly on both desktop and mobile.
- Underscore the elegance and user friendliness of the solution's interface.

The next step is to deploy the solution and train the workforce. The IT department should ensure that the UCaaS solution functions properly prior to rolling it out to the company at large. An effective approach is to train employees in the context of their common communication scenarios so they quickly grasp the value of the solution.

It's also helpful to develop guides that employees can refer to as they are using the tools in the context of their daily work. Some solution vendors offer knowledge bases that can provide useful, relevant content for these guides.

IT can team with HR to recruit a group of evangelists who represent a cross-section of the organization and are adept at communicating and networking – this will help build up a groundswell of adoption. At the same time, IT can work with marketing to publicize both individual gains and company success to further help build the case for adoption.

IT should continue with a post-training awareness campaign that makes it clear the new solution is a core technology for how the enterprise gets work done while helping everyone understand how to make the most effective use of it.

10 key steps to adoption

1. Understand what employees need from UC tools
2. Select a UCaaS solution that satisfies requirements across the different departments within the organization and enables a superior user experience
3. Consider running side-by-side pilots and include select employees to help assess solutions
4. Partner with a vendor that can enable a smooth implementation process
5. Pave the way for employee acceptance and excitement
6. Validate the solution functions properly prior to deployment
7. Deploy the solution enterprise-wide and train the workforce
8. Recruit a group of evangelists to build a groundswell of support
9. Publicize individual gains and company success
10. Continue with a post-training awareness campaign

Common reasons for failed deployments

- Personnel do not receive adequate training
- Employees are unaware of the existence of the company's UC apps
- IT treats end-user training and education around UC as a one-and-done exercise

How to Assess Adoption Success

Once the UCaaS solution has been rolled out, IT should track and measure the success or failure of the deployment. Ideally the UCaaS solution will include analytics that help track relevant metrics. Regularly check call volume, application downloads, number of logins, and minutes spent within the application. Then periodically review usage patterns with the vendor to figure out why and how to improve engagement and uptake.

Successful adoption paves the way for a host of positive business outcomes and benefits, including:

- Reduced Total Cost of Ownership due to tool consolidation, lower management overhead and maintenance, and fewer contracts and hardware to maintain
- More collaboration due to ease of use and the ability to use the same platform anywhere in the world
- Lower travel costs because of the ability to effectively collaborate from any location
- Higher productivity among employees due to frictionless communications, including from an airplane or other seemingly out-of-reach locations
- Better allocation of IT resources on high-value activities rather than simply “keeping the lights on”

The path toward widespread UCaaS adoption lies in a company’s commitment to tracking analytics over time to understand which aspects of a given platform resonate best. This is how data analytics can help the enterprise understand where it needs to invest in more training and education to reach 100% adoption.

CONCLUSION: ENSURE ENTERPRISE-WIDE ADOPTION

Today's CIOs, workers, and business managers want the same usability and productivity they've come to expect with their personal technology decisions. The first step is selecting a solution that addresses employees' communication and collaboration needs in the context of their daily work. This is ideally one that infuses the spirit of consumer apps into a business application backed by the promise of an easy-to-use, shared platform.

But purchasing and deploying a solution is only the first step. The most successful products are the ones that get bought, deployed, and used. To that end, it's equally important to ensure an outstanding user experience. In some ways, the user experience – including support for mobility – is more important than the solution's actual functionality.

Ensuring people can easily navigate the user interface or will be pleased with the solution's ergonomics is essential to adoption. Finally, a solid plan for encouraging and driving adoption can go a long way toward helping enterprises make UCaaS an accepted part of the way work gets done.

Learn more about our successful deployments on our Customer page: www.fuze.com/customers.

About Fuze

Fuze is a global, cloud-based unified communications platform. Designed for the way people work, Fuze powers business conversations and insights across the modern enterprise. With a single unified voice, video, and messaging application, people can now communicate anytime, anywhere, across any device.

Learn more at www.fuze.com

