The Top Business Drivers for Unified Communications

While data storage in the cloud gets most of the headlines, many enterprises today are also embracing cloud–based unified communications platforms as IT administrators and executives alike realize the value of these hosted communication platforms.

ARE YOU READY FOR A CHANGE?

But why is a cloud–based approach to Unified Communications so appealing to larger, dispersed companies? Regardless of what field you’re in, communication is essential to success and revenue growth, it provides employees with the tools they need to work efficiently – while also empowering them to communicate, collaborate and securely access applications wherever and whenever they need.

But how does an enterprise know if it is ready for cloud–based Unified Communications? While no two companies are identical, the transition to a cloud–based unified communications approach typically makes the most economic and operational sense if a company is experiencing one or more of the following business events:

1. **Staffing shortages**
   The recession took a toll on many companies and we’re still slowly rebounding. Staff cuts, attrition and skills gaps are having a profound impact on an enterprise’s ability to maintain quality of service through voice, data and video when a company is struggling to maintain multiple technology platforms, manage multiple vendors and deploy disparate communications services, the move to cloud–based Unified Communications can make sense by providing highly elastic, expert capacity on an as–needed basis to supplement the in–house team.

2. **Adding or changing office locations or experiencing a merger**
   Opening a new location or moving into new offices often creates a perfect opportunity to step back and take a closer look at the existing communications infrastructure. With the right cloud–based Unified Communications solution, enterprises can avoid potential expenses, like interoffice communication charges, while delivering a consistent set of services across the enterprise.

3. **Hiring or moving staff**
   As the economy rebounds and enterprises begin to hire new associates, IT teams are being tasked with administrative duties related to the communications system – duties known as moves, adds and changes (MACs). These can be costly and quickly add up, but cloud–based Unified Communications allows the provider to handle these duties quickly and reliably, often at no additional charge.

4. **Need for enhanced call management tools to deliver excellent customer service**
   Whether billing on a contingency fee basis or at an hourly rate, all expenses and revenue generating opportunities must be tracked. Records of telephone calls and billable time can be lost due to complex and inefficient tracking and accounting procedures. Cloud–based Unified Communications providers can empower firms with transparent call management platforms that give complete visibility into call traffic and can also integrate with a firm’s CRM and tracking systems.
5. **Trouble managing heavy call volume**
   Organizations that maintain contact centers are often hindered by the limitations of traditional communications technology – their call volume is capped, their abandon rate is high and their bottom line is affected. The capabilities provided by a cloud-based communication solution provide a scalable, powerful infrastructure that removes those limitations. Look for a contact center application that intelligently routes calls to reduce holding times and provides levels of monitoring, recording and analysis unavailable in traditional systems.

6. **Multiple service provider contracts**
   Managing and maintaining multiple service provider contracts can be a drain on IT resources. When one or more contracts are due to expire – or you wish to simplify your carrier relationships – it’s a perfect time to make the move to cloud-based Unified Communications. This move will provide great cost savings by consolidating local, long distance, and even internet access costs into a single monthly charge.

7. **Offices and clients spread across the country**
   Some enterprises find that they desire a cloud-based Unified Communications solution, but struggle to find a single carrier that can connect all of their remote business locations with customers spread across the country. This can lead to unnecessary corporate expenses and limited service at some locations. A cloud-based provider can help an enterprise to bring together the top networks in the country so that no remote location is too remote.

8. **A business continuity and disaster recovery plan**
   Cloud-based Unified Communications provides redundancy and failover capabilities unavailable in traditional on-site PBX systems. Enterprises should work with providers to create a solid business continuity/disaster recovery plan, which can restore and protect critical enterprise communications capability should a disaster occur.

No longer do enterprises have to burden valuable IT resources with the responsibility of managing complex communications infrastructures and applications. These organizations are able to reduce the costs of their basic communication services, while also improving the quality of the performance of their critical business applications. The availability of scalable, on-demand services enables even the fastest-growing companies to dial up services when needed, and scale them back when they are not – eliminating a lot of the cost and risk that comes along with installed, on premise communications infrastructure along the way.