

EXECUTIVE BRIEF

# UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS: MANAGING CHANGE AND GROWTH IN YOUR ORGANIZATION

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Underwritten by:



**8x8, Inc.**

THIS EXECUTIVE BRIEF IS A SUMMARY OF THE EBOOK:

## Organizations Turn to Powerful Unified Communications to Handle Change and Growth

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### INTRODUCTION

- Today's business communications are evolving at a pace not seen since the 1990s, requiring businesses to adapt and change with them.
- Unified Communications (UC) takes both real time and non-real time communications with business processes and requirements and presents a single user interface across multiple devices, applications and in different geographies.
- UC provides enhanced communication, allowing for real time responses for items that used to take hours or days.

### IMPORTANT DATA

- Contact centers are not just phone call centers, but also messaging, email and social media. Every customer interaction has potential so every company needs to think strategically about how to maintain positive customer contact.
- There are significant customer communication benefits to UC because agents - a supervisor or subject matter expert - can instant message other personnel to assist in a problem. They can also utilize the experience and knowledge of other agents by being able to ask and answer inquiries in real time while a customer is on the phone.
- There are many choices available today for UCaaS (unified communications as a service) other than PBX equipment sitting in the home office location, although that is still an option.
- Premises based solutions have a significant upfront cost in equipment, installation, training and upgrades over the life of system. This means more money and more headaches for managers but if your organization likes the control, is still an option.



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**IMPORTANT DATA (CONT)**

- The biggest complaint about UCaaS solutions is the lack of control by the company. Generally clients have to rely on the host to make any changes that they may require. While this lessens the work on company staff, the company has no control on when needed changes are made, leading to potential delays.
- Another concern is that the cloud service meets industry regulatory requirements for security and privacy of the company's communications.
- Security concerns can be alleviated by using a provider with the necessary certifications and security controls in place so research a reputable solution.
- Companies of any size can benefit from cloud services as small companies get better features for their dollars and large companies can connect offices globally.
- Midsize companies can upgrade their current solutions and provide themselves with the enhanced productivity and connectivity features that will allow them to grow and compete with large companies.

**KEY POINTS**

- Businesses want to replace aging systems with enhanced capabilities instead of newer systems providing similar functions. They are looking for unified communications (UC), collaboration and mobility in cloud-based solutions that can also meet their contact center communication needs.
- Elements of UC are: call control via VoIP, availability status, messaging, conferencing and collaboration, mobility, client access and business process or application integration.
- UCaaS solutions are hosted by a cloud service vendor. They monitor and maintain the system for quality and offer all of the same features and benefits and are a more cost effective being price based on a pay-as-you-go system. This means you pay only for the users using the system for as much as they use it.
- UCaaS makes middle size companies look and operate like large companies with collaborative tools that level the playing field.
- Some vendors use existing platforms like Microsoft or Broadsoft. Others create their own, like 8x8 and RingCentral. Those that develop and manage their own software and network structure have more control over the quality and uptime of their systems.

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**KEY POINTS**  
(CONT)

- You can measure quality of a vendor through their security and compliance practices and capabilities. They should at a minimum insist on strong passwords and know all applicable regulations like HIPAA, FISMA, FIPS 140-2 and HITECH Final Omnibus Rule.

**TAKEAWAYS**

- Communication is success - between you and your employees, you and your customers, and your customers and your employees.
- Benefits to UC solutions include: improved productivity, improved customer service, higher customer loyalty, higher customer retention and faster problem resolution. They also provide better communication with partners, suppliers and customers while enabling shorter product development cycles leading to faster time to market.
- Contact centers consist of the following elements: automatic call distribution, a universal queue for all media types, enhanced routing, interactive voice response, customer telephony integration, historical and real-time statistics, call recording and logging, real-time monitoring, dashboards and forecasting and scheduling tools.
- Optional components like quality and performance management, workforce management and optimization, analytics and an outbound dialer ensure that customers get to the right person the first time, across all channels and employees can access relevant customer information easily to help them better.
- Benefits of UCaaS are simplicity, speed of deployment, business continuity, staffing efficiency, ability to stay current, reduced risk, reduced cost, location independence, and IT focus on more complex IT needs.
- While large companies might struggle to find cloud service solutions with specific bells and whistles, small and midsize companies can benefit from enhanced features normally cost prohibitive on PBX system.

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**TAKEAWAYS**  
(CONT)

- By deploying a multi-channel contact center platform, providing single queuing and routing, a single integrated view of the customer and a single reporting system, companies can reduce costs while enhancing customer service and support.
- Cloud based centers also give your company access to an increased agent talent pool while reducing agent churn and real estate costs while increasing flexibility and your ability to meet changing volume. This means business continuity, regardless of time and location.
- When selecting a vendor, don't assume to know their core features. Verify they provide the most basic of services within their initial fee, such as call forwarding, faxing, do-not-disturb, voicemail and call recording, just to name a few.
- Vendors differ the most in the enhanced capabilities, so ask questions directly relevant to the services you consider priority and important for your organization and industry.
- Deployment is the process of activating the cloud service. Small companies can be online in as little as a day while mid and large companies will have to provide more resources and have a staged deployment. Make sure this process includes training for your staff.
- Other differences between vendors will be their service and support plans, pricing and packaging and user interface. Choose the combination that addresses all of your current needs while leaving room to grow for future development.
- Be sure you ask vendors and service providers about their security and compliance, reliability, service and support, training and deployment and implementation. With the right information, you will make the right choice.

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**8x8, Inc.**

At 8x8, we're big on collaboration. Our customers are, too. They rely on our cloud communications to move with speed, agility and ease in a highly competitive, non-stop world. Their astonishing success is the reason behind our continued growth and profitability as a company. Our enterprise-ready solutions enable mobility and global connectivity. They empower people to do their best work wherever they need to be. Collaborate effortlessly across distributed locations and offices. And build more rewarding relationships with customers, co-workers and partners.



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