



Unlocking the Value of Unified Communications is Easier than Ever

A Frost & Sullivan White Paper

UNLOCKING THE VALUE OF UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS IS EASIER THAN EVER

Now is the time to choose a Unified Communications (UC) solution that moves your business forward. Many businesses are at a crossroads with their communications systems. Business phone systems that are more than seven years old commonly suffer from outdated functionality, limited integration and lack of interoperability with third-party software to enable new capabilities. In addition, owners of legacy phone systems contend with reliability concerns, expensive maintenance, and the threat of end of sales and support from the phone system's vendor. Compounding these issues, aged systems often have no straightforward upgrade path to contemporary IP-based solutions.

Educated buyers are looking to next-generation UC solutions that resolve the problems associated with legacy platforms. Modern UC features bring more value to their business and workforce, including:



Increasing business efficiencies, process accuracy and employee productivity through integration of communications with business applications and databases (i.e., CRM, email, calendars, scheduling, industry-specific software, etc.)



Utilizing mobility to provide on-site, in-office, remote-site, campus-wide, and road-warrior employee access to a full range of business communications functionality (i.e., single-number reach, IM/presence, extension dialing, conferencing, etc.)



Optimizing customer experiences through advanced information-based call flows that provide caller self-service and route calls to experts who answer questions quickly and completely (i.e., location-based services, availability status, IVR, CRM integration, database look-ups, etc.)



Avoiding upfront CapEx and ongoing maintenance costs, aided by rapid implementation and outsourced operation through subscription UC services, which allow IT staff to focus on the core business



Improving business agility and responsiveness through faster, more informed decisions that are empowered by connecting people to people and people to information at the right time (i.e., conferencing, mobility, WebRTC, business apps integration, etc.)

Today there are a number of options available to guide your business toward realizing these benefits. Alongside sophisticated functionality advancements, great strides have been made in recent years to reduce the complexities of advanced communications technology and make UC solutions both more user-friendly and accessible to small and mid-size companies with limited or no IT resources. Many UC developers now propose further alleviating complexity and enhancing flexibility by providing a single software stream for on-premises, cloud, and virtualized UC platforms for deployment in any IT environment or data center. However, significant differences exist among vendor offerings in terms of overall cost, complexity and flexibility that must be recognized.

Business decision makers face fear, uncertainty, and doubt on how today's IT purchases will satisfy tomorrow's requirements. To minimize those concerns and maximize the benefits of a new UC system, the following criteria must be met when choosing your next communications solution:

- **End-to-end Adoption:** Complete UC solution implementation throughout the entire organization is paramount to eliminate communication gaps that would otherwise diminish the connections and information sharing across users, teams, and sites. Ensuring that licensing is simple, scalable and affordable helps to promote complete, company-wide implementation.
- **Workforce Modernization:** Solutions need to provide full-stack UC functionality with robust features to support modern work styles. Features should include multi-site dialing, mobility, operator/receptionist consoles, contact center and call queuing, conferencing and IM/presence. These features allow your employees to work anywhere, anytime, over any device and allow them to address increased customer demands for rapid, comprehensive response.
- **Deployment Versatility:** Solutions must meet your premises-based (appliance, server, virtual), cloud service or hybrid premises/cloud requirements. Business admins, not just the provider, should be able to provision features for specific lines of business, sites and user roles to promptly address rapidly changing business and UC solution requirements.



- **Future Proof:** Rather than evaluating a solution based on your company's current performance and system feature requirements, an effective long-term UC solution that offers the best ROI is one that transitions with and adapts to organizational growth without additional, substantial investments. A standards-based solution with all-inclusive features gives you access to added functionality, even if you don't need it immediately, without incurring additional costs. This can be critical for seasonal businesses or call centers with fluctuating call volumes and fluid functional requirements.
- **Flexible Migration Planning:** The selected solution should provide migration from legacy to IP-based UC solutions that protects existing investments, such as phones and gateways. The same solution should support on-premises to cloud migration, as well as seamless and cost-effective migration from one to the other as your business grows and changes.
- **Customization:** An effective UC solution platform supports communications integration with business applications and workflows to create efficiency, allowing your business to enhance customer service, time to market and other key business attributes. The platform should integrate with today's business apps and databases, as well as those your organization will deploy in the future to give your company a competitive advantage.

CONCLUSION

The easiest approach, or so it would seem, would be to purchase the most expensive system with all the bells and whistles you may need in the future, regardless of whether or not the features are actually needed at the time of the initial implementation. However, that is not the most effective long-term solution. A pragmatic approach is required. Leading UC solution providers put customer requirements first to eliminate unnecessary compromises with respect to cost, complexity, deployment flexibility, and functionality. When evaluating UC solutions, it's imperative to map prospective providers' capabilities to your criteria, rather than compromise in order to be served by a certain provider. Recognized as a vendor that understands the requirements of its SMB customers and for making your requirements the priority, Digium's Switchvox unified communications solutions merit close evaluation, and are likely to remain at the top of your short list after evaluating alternative options.

NEXT STEPS 

Schedule a meeting with our global team to experience our thought leadership and to integrate your ideas, opportunities and challenges into the discussion.



Interested in learning more about the topics covered in this white paper? Call us at 877.GoFrost and reference the paper you're interested in. We'll have an analyst get in touch with you.



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