



IMPROVING COMMUNICATION THROUGH A UC CULTURE

A BEST PRACTICE GUIDE TO IT



INTRODUCTION

Customer success, competitive advantage and operational efficiency are not the result of any single initiative or process. In a globally connected environment, the state of technology, the competitive landscape and the expectations of customers and employees alike are in a state of constant flux.

It is the agile organisation that is best placed to meet these challenges. It is the ability to communicate effectively and scale effortlessly that allows these agile organisations to make rapid decisions, minimise risk and exploit new opportunities as they arise.

Effective communication is essential in all aspects of life. Failure to communicate exposes individuals and organisations alike to the risks associated with siloes of knowledge, a lack of understanding, time wasting, unnecessary conflict and the loss of influence.

As the landscape for communication continues to evolve, organisations are challenged to adapt to changing customer and employee behaviour; to address an increasingly mobile workforce and to embrace a cultural change that facilitates improvements in the gathering, storage and sharing of information.

Technology is frequently touted as the solution to all that ails modern organisations. However, in some cases, it has contributed to the problem. It is impossible to deny the influence that “anytime” media such as voicemail and email have had on the way we communicate, but the very fact that they lack a sense of immediacy means they can result in miscommunication and delays to the decision-making process.

“ Unified Communications is probably the most important thing to happen to the office worker since the PC came along. ” *Bill Gates*



THE BUSINESS CASE FOR UC

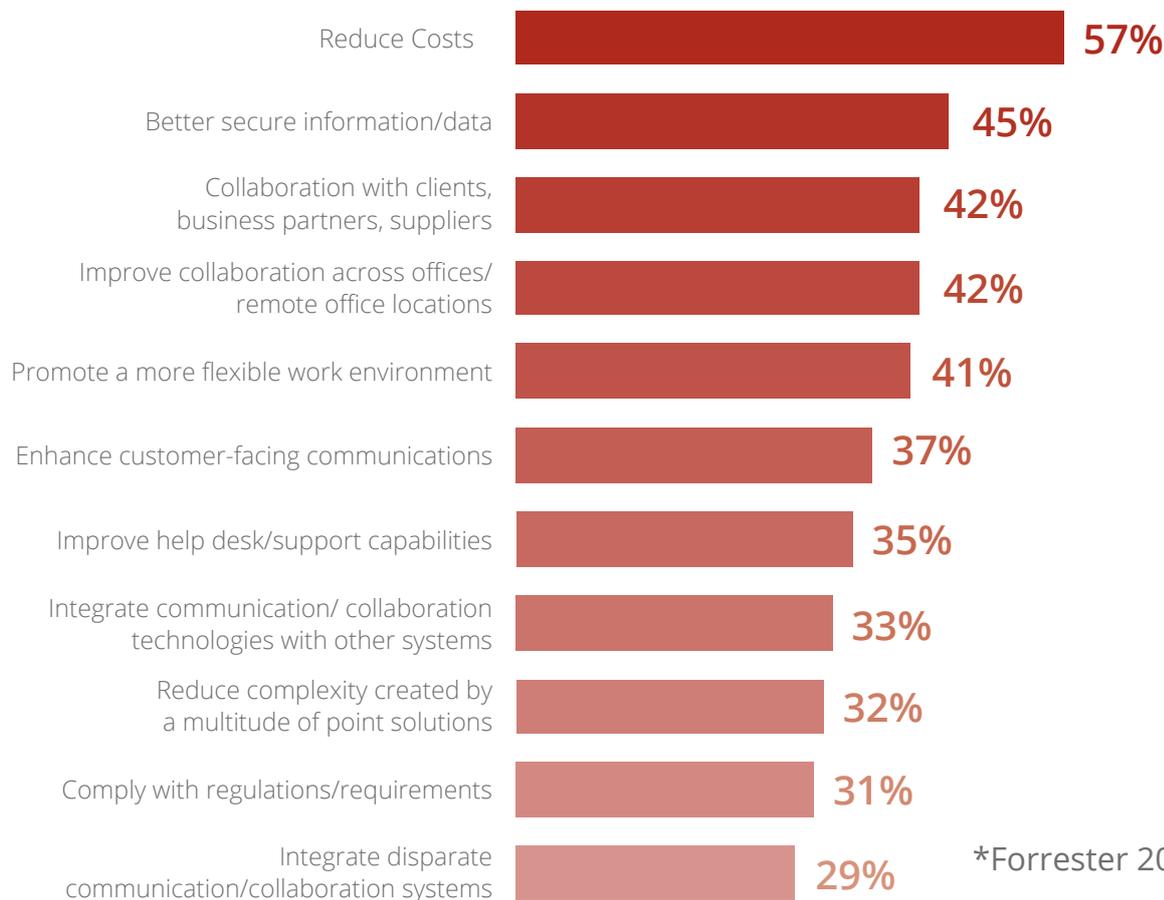
Unifying business communications technology is the logical evolution of our fascination with convergence. Convenience aside, organisations need to keep abreast of the latest trends in mobility, virtualisation and globalisation to compete effectively in markets that are “always on” and where customers expect their needs and preferences to be at the heart of business communications.

As the internet continues to revolutionise the way in which businesses communicate, the sheer variety of media available means organisations need to maintain a range of synchronous and asynchronous channels of communication.

Although challenging, the rewards for successfully managing a unified communications strategy can be significant. Improved productivity, lower operating costs and better customer service are just some of the benefits delivered by UC.

WHAT IS DRIVING THE UK'S INVESTMENT IN UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS?

What are the top drivers for your organisation's investment in unified communications?



*Forrester 2016.

ADDRESSING THE COMMUNICATIONS CHALLENGE

As the pace of business grows and our workforce becomes more mobile and more responsive, business communications needs to not just keep up, but set the pace for future development.

Developments in high speed connectivity, the pervasive nature of wireless LAN technology and the rapid adoption of business applications for instant messaging, WebEx and VoIP have driven a need for a joined-up approach to business communications.

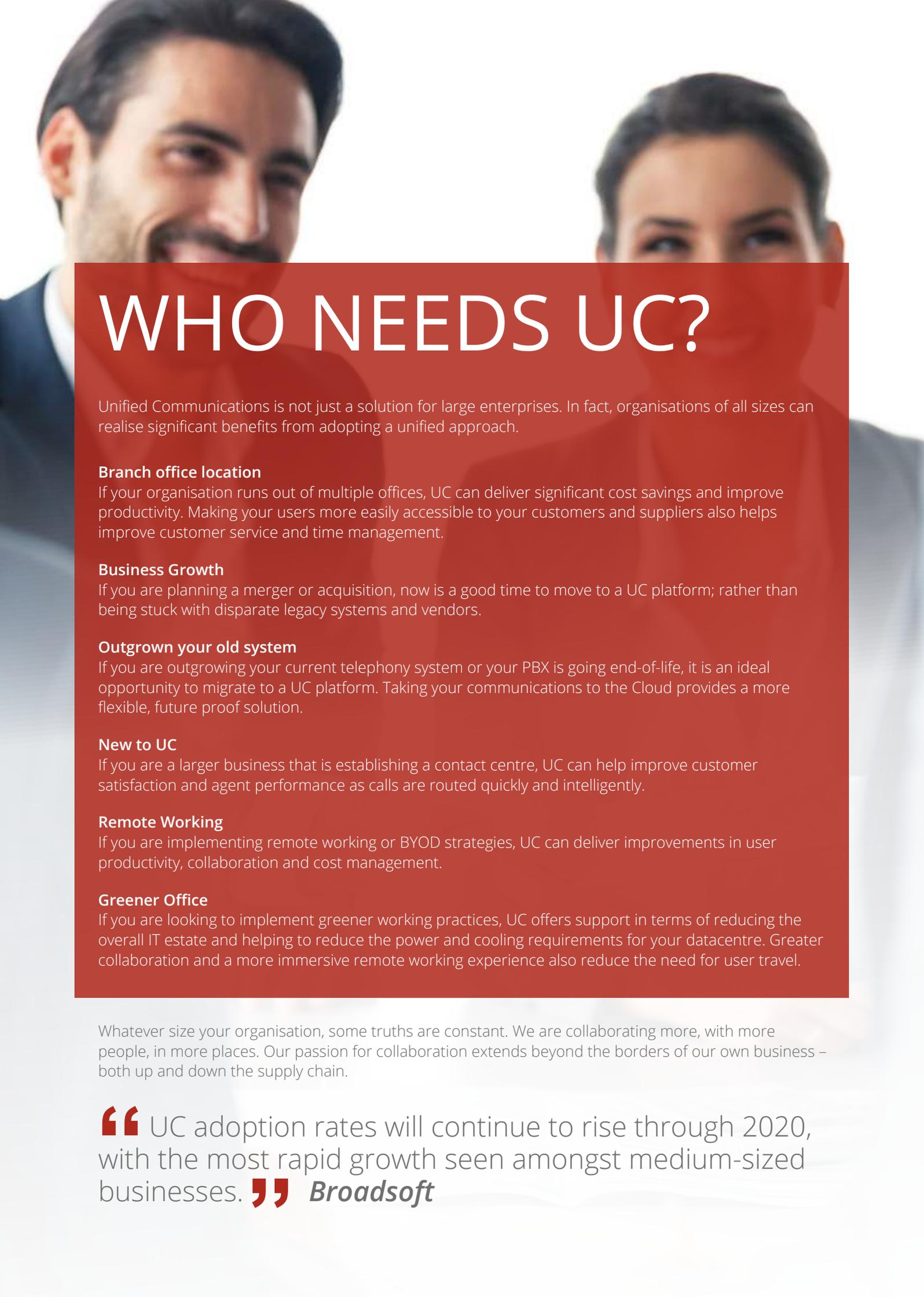
Employees, customers and suppliers are all looking for instant access to business-critical applications, systems and each other. Unified Communications provides the platform to address a wide variety of stakeholder requirements and leverages the benefits of a range of real-time and any-time technologies to deliver improvements in workforce productivity whilst reducing costs.

“ UC offers the ability to significantly improve how individuals, groups and companies interact and perform. ” **Gartner**

MEETING BUSINESS OBJECTIVES WITH UC

Business Objective	High Priority	UC Had Significant Impact
Improve operational efficiency	81%	73%
Grow revenue	78%	66%
Improve our product/services	76%	70%
Improve the experience of our customers	75%	66%
Address rising customer expectations	74%	68%
Reduce costs	71%	68%
Improve our ability to innovate	69%	64%

*Forrester 2016.



WHO NEEDS UC?

Unified Communications is not just a solution for large enterprises. In fact, organisations of all sizes can realise significant benefits from adopting a unified approach.

Branch office location

If your organisation runs out of multiple offices, UC can deliver significant cost savings and improve productivity. Making your users more easily accessible to your customers and suppliers also helps improve customer service and time management.

Business Growth

If you are planning a merger or acquisition, now is a good time to move to a UC platform; rather than being stuck with disparate legacy systems and vendors.

Outgrown your old system

If you are outgrowing your current telephony system or your PBX is going end-of-life, it is an ideal opportunity to migrate to a UC platform. Taking your communications to the Cloud provides a more flexible, future proof solution.

New to UC

If you are a larger business that is establishing a contact centre, UC can help improve customer satisfaction and agent performance as calls are routed quickly and intelligently.

Remote Working

If you are implementing remote working or BYOD strategies, UC can deliver improvements in user productivity, collaboration and cost management.

Greener Office

If you are looking to implement greener working practices, UC offers support in terms of reducing the overall IT estate and helping to reduce the power and cooling requirements for your datacentre. Greater collaboration and a more immersive remote working experience also reduce the need for user travel.

Whatever size your organisation, some truths are constant. We are collaborating more, with more people, in more places. Our passion for collaboration extends beyond the borders of our own business – both up and down the supply chain.

“ UC adoption rates will continue to rise through 2020, with the most rapid growth seen amongst medium-sized businesses. ” **Broadsoft**

WHAT WORKS FOR YOU?

One of the key components of modern communication is choice. There is no de-facto "best" way to communicate; rather a case of what works best for the individual. In a world where success is often determined by how well we have communicated, it is important for all stakeholders to have options.

The origin of simple, day-to-day workflows could come from any of a variety of media. You might receive a call into the customer service centre, get an email in your inbox, pick up a voicemail on your mobile or see a post in your news feed.

It is important to realise that modern users expect to be able to move seamlessly between communications media, without losing control over the conversation. When dealing with a customer enquiry, the medium of origin is not always the medium of resolution.

UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS COMPONENTS

Any-Time Technologies

- Voicemail
- Email
- SMS

Real-Time Technologies

- Telephony (IP, Fixed, Mobile)
- Instant Messaging (IM)
- Audio/Video Conferencing
- WebEx
- Presence
- Call Centre Services
- Collaboration Tools

PRESENCE

Presence is a key component of Unified Communications and is essential if organisations are to make the most of the technology. It enables users to identify contacts, locate them, view their status and choose the best method of communicating with them.

Whilst presence offers several benefits in terms of internal communication and collaboration, perhaps it has most to offer in the sphere of customer service. By leveraging multiple points of presence (MPOP) a UC system can determine if a contact is available or not, if they are at their desk, in a meeting or "roaming" and connect them appropriately

ADOPTING UC- as-a-CULTURE

Introducing new UC technology is not just about a change in process and policy, it is about affecting a change in communications culture. User adoption is the single biggest indicator of success; when you introduce a new technology, you must bring the users with you on the journey.

Engaging with users should be done from the very beginning. If stakeholders participate in the process, they are more likely to be happy with the outcome, more likely to get the most out of the new systems and will accelerate the return on your investment.

In the same way that adoption is the key to success, ease of use is the key to adoption. Many of today's phone systems come equipped with a wide range of features; but how many of them are being effectively exploited by users? If your users aren't getting the most out of something as essential as the telephone, you won't realise the expected benefits.

Encourage the development of evangelists and super-users to help deliver the message and demonstrate the value of the new system. Utilise a variety of training materials. Remember, not everyone learns in the same way, so try to offer visual, text and interactive versions of the training.

The last thing you want is to invest in a sophisticated UC solution, one that provides all the bells and whistles, and have your employees use it like a standard telephone.

The communications landscape is littered with UC implementation projects that met all the technology requirements but failed to deliver broader business value.

SUMMARY OF BENEFITS

Executed and adopted properly, a unified communications implementation can deliver a wide variety of benefits:

- Improved collaboration
- Greater workforce productivity
- Faster decision making
- Better customer service
- Lower total cost of ownership
- Improved business continuity
- Greater scalability and flexibility
- Consolidated supply chain
- Simplified infrastructure
- A greener approach to communications



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- Unified Communications



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