Ascertaining Unified Communications:

Benefits, Technology, and Implementation

Introduction

The need for unified communications and the flexibility, agility, and continuity that it provides has grown in significance as organizations continue to operate under a split of work from home and in-office models.

Unified communications provide a host of benefits that can help accelerate digital transformation in your business. It can improve operations, client communication, and the employee experience. Most unified communications platforms also offer a host of essential tools that give you an all-in-one solution without having to pay extra for things like meeting software or instant messaging. Since all of your communications will be housed on one convenient platform, scaling and maintaining your system becomes much more manageable.

In this guide, we'll explore the benefits of unifying your communications, the technology needed to do so, and a brief overview of the simplistic implementation process.

Drawbacks Of Fractured Communications

Loss of Productivity – Communication between teams, departments, and clients needs to be seamless in order to maintain a productive workforce.

Fractured Workforce – A lack of communication will cause team members to become isolated and prevent them from accessing the information needed to do their work.

Lack of Agility – On-premise PBX systems can be costly to upgrade and scale, making it challenging to grow your business without absorbing exorbitant costs.

System Outages and Downtime – Traditional PBX systems can experience frequent outages and downtime that can last for days. This can lead to reduced productivity and increased maintenance costs.

Multiple Carriers and Vendors – In many cases, you will need to work with multiple vendors in order to maintain your systems. This costs your organization both time and money that could be used to grow your business.

Lack of Specialized In-House Expertise – As on-premise PBX systems become more outdated, the people needed to maintain them are becoming harder to find and costlier to retain.

Difficulty Sourcing Replacement Parts and Hardware – Simply trying to find replacement parts for a PBX system can be an arduous and costly venture, not to mention the price of the equipment. This is not the case with cloud-based systems.

Benefits Of Unified Communications

Simplicity – Deploying, maintaining, and managing a unified communications platform is far faster and easier than traditional PBX systems and replaces far more than just your phone system.

Reduced Costs – Since you don't need to buy physical equipment and can scale up or down with ease, there are significant savings involved with a unified communications platform. The cost per seat is often far less with platforms such as RingCentral.

Business Agility: Creating an agile business model is essential to remain competitive in an ever-changing business landscape. Organizations need to be able to scale at will and work from anywhere. Cloud-based UC platforms offer just that.

Reduced Risk – Continual updates are one of the major differentiators that UC platforms hold over traditional systems. With the latest features and updates being done automatically without additional cost, operations will remain efficient and secure.

Global Reach – Companies that operate on a global scale with locations and remote workers across the globe are still able to manage operations from a centralized platform that only requires an internet connection.

Benefits Of Unified Communications (Continued)

Business Continuity – The year 2020 put every organization's business continuity plan to the test, with many realizing their plans were not comprehensive enough. A UC platform allows workers to maintain business as usual from anywhere in the world.

Mobility – With the option of using a mobile app for phone calls, texts, chat, document sharing, and more, the increasing demand for mobile-first technology is more than addressed with a UC platform.

Advanced Capabilities – UC platforms come along with a host of features not available through a traditional PBX system. This includes video conferencing, chat, content sharing, and other functionality vital in today's business world.

Integrations – By leveraging APIs and integrations, cloud-based UC platforms allow for seamless connections with a wide array of applications, allowing your team to continue to work with their preferred software while still maintaining a unified front.

Flexibility – New functionality can be added to a UC platform in minutes. With continual updates, you won't have to worry about replacing or upgrading your communications every few years as with a traditional PBX.

Technology Involved In Unified Communications

VoIP – A cloud-based VoIP platform allows your team to maintain communications throughout the world. RingCentral boasts an industry-leading 5 9's uptime, ensuring your employees and clients will remain connected regardless of outside factors.

Mobile App – The ability to leverage a mobile app and connect a cell phone directly to your UC platform is a major advantage over a PBX. Staying connected to both employees and clients at any time, in any place, is vital to many businesses.

Meeting Software – Meeting software has become an essential tool, and most UC platforms come with it included. There can be a substantial cost saving as you will not need to pay for this essential technology separately.

APIs – Seamless integrations allow UC platforms to connect with other essential applications that may not be offered through a UCaaS provider. This ensures your team can work with their preferred tools while remaining unified.

Text Messaging – Text messaging has become increasingly prevalent for internal and client communications. This feature is something traditional PBX systems lack and most certainly a needed feature for growing businesses.

Chat – Many prospects and clients will prefer to communicate directly with you through your website versus email or phone. UC platforms allow you to better track and direct these messages, enabling faster response time and fewer missed conversations.

Collaboration Tools – Instant messaging, document sharing, and project management tools allow for greater collaboration and tracking of individual projects, all from one centralized platform.

Implementing Unified Communications

Evaluation – Determining the number of lines you'll need, features you'll be using, and overall phone usage will dictate the cost of unifying your communications. In nearly every case, a UC platform will provide significant savings to your organization.

Activation – Activation is straightforward, as it mainly requires clicking on a link and setting up your preferences. Setting up call queue groups, extensions, and your softphone is often all that is needed to activate your service.

Set Up – Setting up your phones is simple and easy, and your number of lines can be adjusted as you scale up or down. Physical VoIP phones can be connected, or you can use a softphone on your desktop.

Customization – Voice mail greetings, settings, and call handling rules for assigned users can all be adjusted by a simple point, click and type. Platforms like RingCentral include video tutorials to make this process as smooth as possible.

Conclusion

Through our strategic partnerships with RingCentral and Amazon Web Services, Alto9 is able to leverage our expertise in the cloud to help your organization lose its dependency on physical phones and servers. Unified communications is no longer a simple "nice to have" and has become an integral part of daily operations and business continuity. Contact us today for a free consultation.