



**Simplicity**  
VoIP

## Mastering VoIP

6 Advantages to Unified Communications



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**T**he premise of unified communications (UC) technology is simple. Businesses can consolidate multiple communications functionalities into a single tool, to create an essential platform for critical business processes. This enables seamless real-time communications across channels—inside as well as outside of an organization. This translates to a multitude of business benefits, ranging anywhere from baseline productivity to attracting millennial talent to your workforce.

UC brings together various features into a single interface this includes voice calls, texting, instant messaging, email, conferencing, video calls and even faxing. The experience remains consistent across employees, regardless of what feature or screen they're using, or where they're using it from. The result is better operational agility, customer engagement, and seamless connectivity – all strategic business goals that significantly differentiate a company from its competition.

**According to Grand View Research, the global UC market size is expected to reach \$143.49 billion by 2024. While impressive, businesses still may not realize all of the benefits that UC can truly provide. Many perceive the cost savings that come from having siloed communications functions, or replacing costly conferencing platforms, as the main advantage. We want to make you aware of six more advantages to be gained in moving to a business UC system.**



# 1

## Concurrent, Multichannel Communications

UC optimizes how businesses communicate, making it faster and easier for employees to converse. It also makes their interactions more productive when they do. Rather than let standing department meetings and conference calls gobble up valuable work time, UC enables users to make informed choices about how to interact with each other.

To put this into perspective, an employee can send a chat to a coworker using an UC interface— asking a question about a company policy. The two can instant message (IM) back and forth—but if the conversation becomes more complex, that communication can be escalated to a voice call with a simple click of the mouse. And, if one party needs to leave their desk, they can seamlessly continue the conversation using a different mobile device.

At the heart of this is the “presence” function, which shows the status of everyone on the system and whether they’re available, along with their preferred form of contact. By selecting a name, it’s possible to initiate an IM, text, voice call, or add the user to a conference. UC delivers a consistent user experience, meaning employees can work the same way regardless of the endpoint, operating system, or network used to access the platform. This streamlines how workers collaborate, eliminating phone tag and improving efficiency.

**“UC delivers a consistent user experience... regardless of the endpoint, operating system, or network.”**

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# 1

## Concurrent, Multichannel Communications

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Another key advantage is concurrence. Many businesses use advanced communications techniques like intra-office chat, but according to an analyst for J. Arnold & Associates, “UC allows applications to be used concurrently, creating multichannel sessions so employees can collaborate more effectively. UC’s value is ultimately reflected in employee performance. For businesses that see a direct connection between communication and workflow outcomes, these cases provide a solid foundation for making a decision that will serve management and IT equally well.”

Chadwick Martin Bailey research firm quantified just how much this multichannel aspect of UC improves efficiency in a recent survey. 49% of organizations saved 20 minutes per employee daily because workers were able to reach each other on the first try thanks to the presence function; and 54% saved that time daily by escalating IM chats into phone calls, thus answering questions and resolving issues more quickly.

**“The multichannel aspect of UC improves efficiency.”**



# 2

## Eliminating the Messaging Chaos

Anyone who works in a business environment is familiar with the phenomenon of messaging overload. With so many ways to communicate, it almost becomes a full-time job to keep up with emails, texts, voicemails and social media interactions. All too often, workers find themselves in siloed workspaces—spending hours or two replying to email, listening to voicemails, and becoming distracted responding to social direct messages. Even having mobile access to the different mailboxes doesn't solve the problem because it still requires separate log-ins and interfaces to access all the communications.

UC offers a business enhancement benefit by consolidating messages into one mailbox. Rather than deal with disjointed messaging repositories, users can go to one unified mailbox to retrieve their voicemails (transcribed into a visual format for reading), emails, fax messages, IMs, texts, and more. These also can be organized by contact so one can see the communications across all channels from a given person.

Quotably, Chadwick Martin Bailey, found that half of the organizations that use UC have saved as much as 20 minutes per employee, per day, due to more efficient message management.

**“UC has saved as much as 20 minutes per employee, per day.”**



# 3

## Enabling the Mobile Office

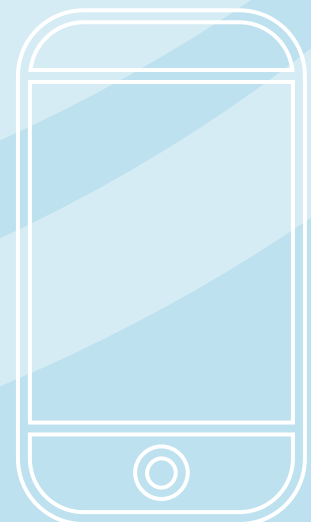
Businesses are changing in terms of how they work, to become more mobile, more cloud-based, and more app-centric. We live in an age of the borderless office with employees that work from home, from remote offices or on the road. Companies often have employees flung across geographies, and all teams may rarely or never meet in-person.

A Dropbox survey from earlier this year found that in the U.S., 40% of all surveyed employees said they could occasionally work from home or from a location other than the office.

The shift in workplace configuration is changing how companies approach their communications strategies. Businesses are looking for ways to allow people to better work together, regardless of where they are, to create value—and be happier doing it. This has led many sectors to be progressive in adopting flexible working practices and collaboration tools, because they understand the value they bring, especially in combination.

**“40% of all surveyed said they could occasionally work from home or from a location other than the office.”**

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# 3

## Enabling the Mobile Office

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Cloud-based options for UC support mobility and remote workers, by providing the same experience across laptop, tablet, and phone. Whether they're at HQ, their home office or a coffee shop your staff will stay connected. They can interact with other employees as if they were in the office, with access to the same productivity-enhancing options detailed in our first section. This speeds up decision-making processes across the board, offers more cohesion among scattered teams, and lets businesses more efficiently manage dynamic and fluid work schedules that come with working across different time zones and locations.

According to a recent survey from Broadsoft, 42% of respondents believe that half of UC interactions for businesses will occur via mobile devices by 2020, while one-third of small businesses will opt for mobile-only UC-as-a-service options, eliminating the need for desk phones altogether.

**“One-third of small businesses will opt for mobile-only UC-as-a-service options.”**



# 4

## The Millennial Connection

Such “flexible” companies are not only poised for business success, but will also attract and retain the best talent, broaden their diversity, and further a virtuous cycle.

Millennials now officially represent the largest share of the American workforce, surpassing both Gen Xers and Baby Boomers. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, millennials are expected to make up over half of the workforce by 2020. And as these millennial “digital natives” come to dominate the workplace, they will demand certain experiences as part of their employment terms. According to a study by Bentley University, 40% of millennials said that remote and virtual work made them more productive.

A survey from Dropbox found that more than a third of millennials aged 18 to 34 find using existing technology at work stressful, compared to only a quarter of those aged 55+. This seems counter-intuitive at first, but when one considers that “it just works” technologies like smartphones, social networking and so on have become completely ubiquitous in the personal lives of younger people, they expect that same standard of simplicity at work.

“Perhaps when millennials in the office are confronted with a messy array of technologies that do not function seamlessly, stress levels increase,” Dropbox noted. Businesses with solid UC platforms in place can eliminate that stress and more easily attract and retain millennial talent.

**“40% of millennials said that remote and virtual work made them more productive.”**





# 5

## Digital Transformation

Along with the rise in mobility, is the ongoing move to the cloud and IP communications. These digital transformation initiatives are already underway at nearly 70% of companies, according to Nemertes Research.

To facilitate this shift, companies must employ better customer service, better operations and increased employee enablement. These go hand in hand with the ability to benefit from data-driven decision-making, and the agility to pioneer innovative products and services, catering to changing business needs with speed. Moving to an app-based business model resting on IP is key to staying relevant and profitable.

Companies who are fully embracing digital transformation are 72% more likely to increase their spending on UC. There's a critical relationship between foundational technologies and enabling larger business goals through the cloud. As Nemertes points out, when separate teams cannot quickly and effectively collaborate using the most feature-rich apps, or when aging PBXs cause regular outages, digital transformation initiatives suffer.

A UC system when coupled with an IT-ready hosted PBX platform, is a solid foundation for enabling digital transformation. Cloud-based apps can integrate with UC systems, for fully connected, anywhere, anytime, seamless work experiences that support business objectives in a way that legacy approaches never could.

**“Digital transformation initiatives are already underway at nearly 70% of companies”**





## Enabling the Future

UC provides the ability to future-proof businesses for what's next. The Internet of Things (IoT) is just starting to become an important aspect of how businesses function. From adding tracking sensors to inventory pallets to enabling virtual reality-based “field trips” in geography class, UC business uses become more and more common every day. Industrial IoT apps, such as applications on manufacturing floors to detect malfunctions and using GPS-based location reporting to manage transportation are already well embedded in many locations.

Each of these connections generates data—data that needs to be collated, analyzed, and made available to various applications. An integration with the UC system will be an invaluable piece of this puzzle. For instance, in the inventory example, the IoT system can trigger automatic notifications in real-time when stock levels of a particular item start to get low. That alert can be sent to the provisioning and requisition team automatically. During busy seasons, or on sale days (think Black Friday), the system can be configured to not only send a message, but also notify on-floor retail staff, via text, that levels are low and when stocks might be replenished, so they can level-set expectations with shoppers. The combination of IoT, messaging, and collaboration via UC, supports these kinds of operational models that can be game-changers for delivering better customer satisfaction and operational efficiencies.

UC holds great promise for businesses of all sizes with a number of clear advantages, from basic productivity gains, to enabling future business models. The cost-savings associated with implementing UC are real and achievable—as are a number of other benefits that may not seem so obvious on the surface. By buying into UC, you can save money and improve efficiency. For this reason, the industry is shifting in that direction. Don't let your company fall behind.

**“UC holds great promise for businesses of all sizes...enabling future business models.”**





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