UCaaS | Modern Workplace

Why Unified Communications Is the Catalyst Driving the Modern Workplace Forward

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After the coronavirus pandemic hit, businesses had to adapt to survive it. For many, that meant switching to remote work and undergoing rapid digital transformations. Because of this, 97% of companies believe that their digital transformation saw rapid acceleration.
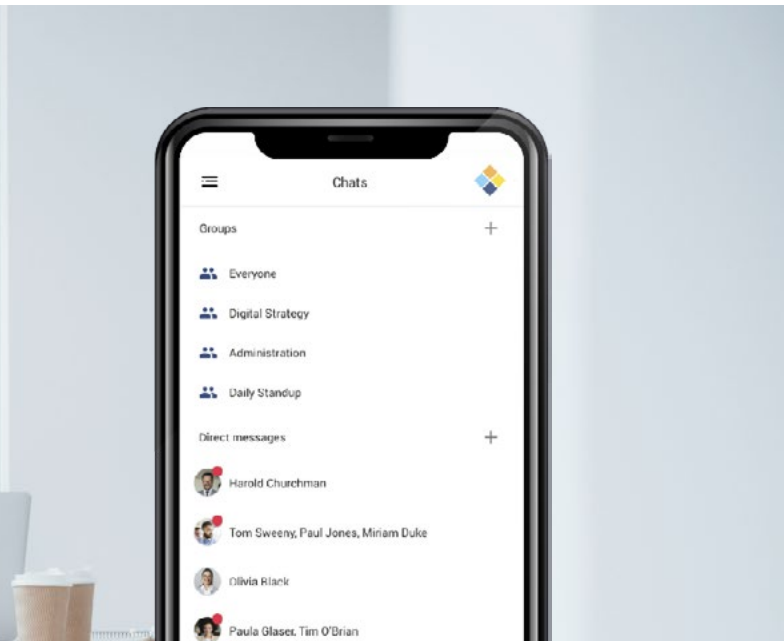
Even before the pandemic, there's been a trend of companies evolving and switching to a cloud-based modern workspace. Some of them foresaw the possibility of an event that would require them to shift to remote work, and some of them identified the advantages of a modern workspace. For example, 73% of employees report that when their company leveraged the latest technology solutions, it had a positive impact on their productivity.

But a cloud-based workspace doesn't come without challenges. When you're working remotely, you miss the flow of in-office conversations, which makes team communication more fragmented. What would normally be a quick verbal exchange could take hours of waiting for a reply.

This challenge can be addressed with the implementation of unified communications as a service (UCaaS). UCaaS refers to any communications platform designed to unify all forms of communication, such as real-time messaging, phone calls, and audio or video conferences.

Since communication is key to the functioning of a workplace, UCaaS really is the catalyst driving the modern workplace forward.

So, how are you keeping up with or falling behind the evolution of the workplace? Is your team's communication fragmented?

Read on to learn how UCaaS can be the business solution that drives your workplace forward. We'll help you understand the developments that are taking place in the workplace and the key role UCaaS plays in them.

What Is the Modern Workplace?
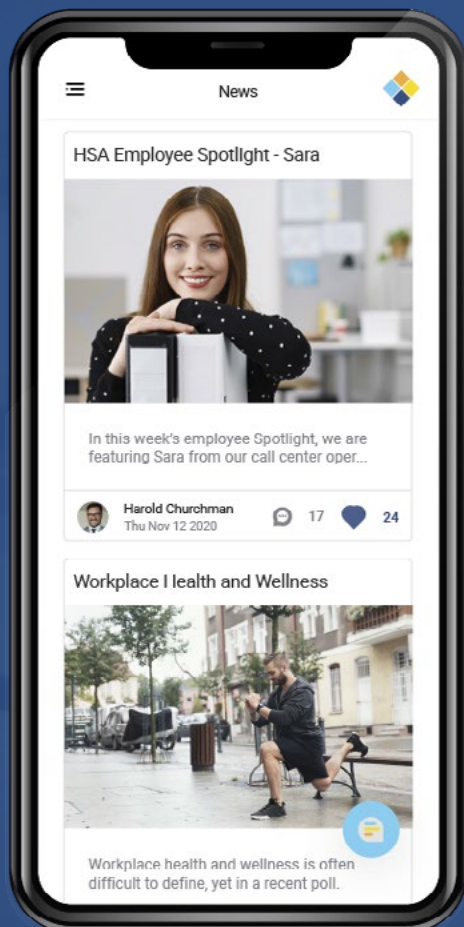
The modern workplace is a virtual, cloud-based workplace. In a modern workplace, all the programs, storage, and communication solutions that a team needs to work are hosted on the internet. Unlike with traditional IT systems, they are not hosted on personal computers, so they can be accessed from any device with an Internet connection.

In a modern workplace that uses UCaas, people can communicate seamlessly. So, they can instantaneously connect and share information with whoever they need to contact at that time.

The modern workplace is moving toward having all your systems working together. This provides you with access to various platforms. And it improves the flow of data so you always have the most up-to-date data available, which means you don't need to do any guesswork or worry about having inaccurate data.

Also, the modern workplace is adaptable to the integration of any platform. For example, you could use a customer relationship management (CRM) platform in tandem with UCaaS. This would allow you to receive a call on your UCaaS platform and automatically have that call logged in a CRM profile. And integrating these platforms would let you gain more data, which means more insights into the data you rely on to make strategic decisions.

The Traditional Workplace Is a Thing of the Past
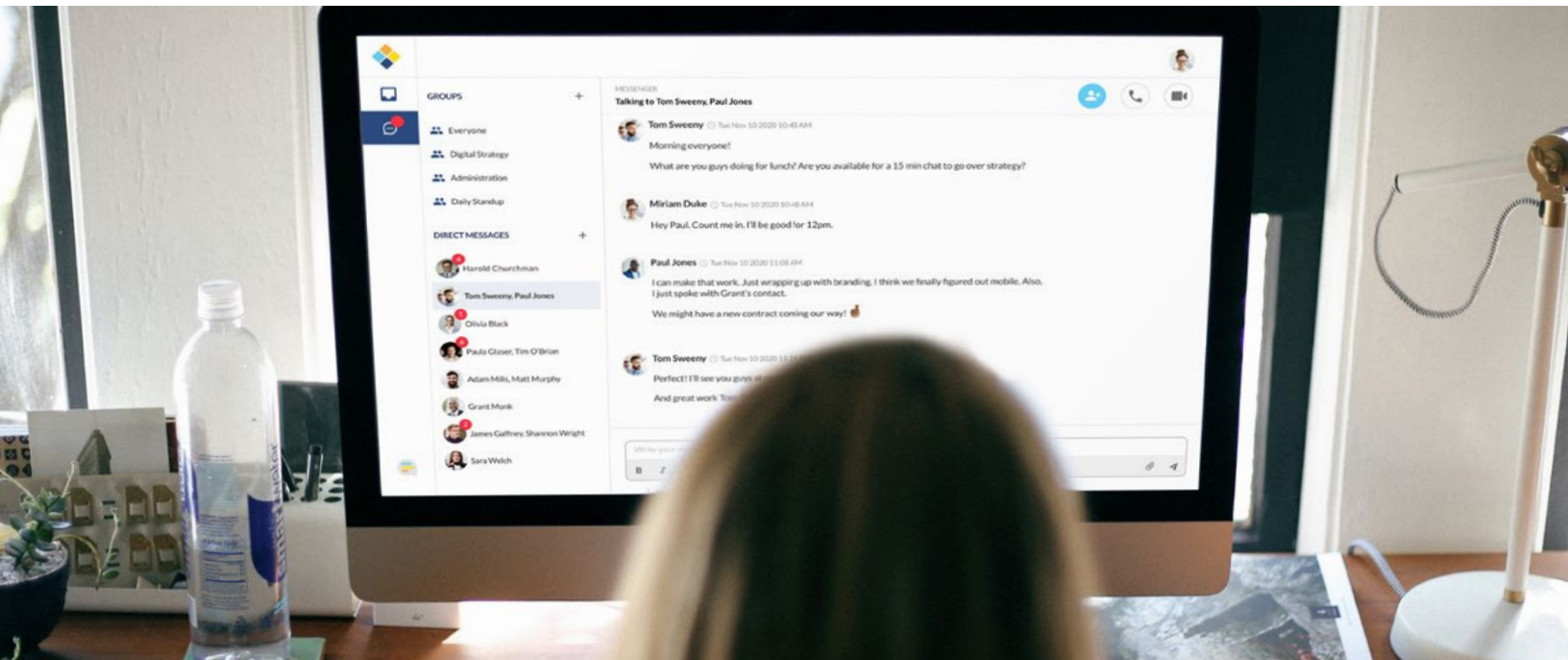
Many businesses are switching to a virtual workspace to leverage its benefits over traditional IT systems. 85% of businesses around the world are already storing information using cloud technology. Here's what shifting to a modern workplace will enable you to do

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Stay connected to survive COVID-19 disruption. Even if you're working remotely, you need to have unbroken communication channels with customers and employees in order to maintain their engagement, brand loyalty, and trust. Remember: never communicating is almost as damaging as saying something harmful.

Quickly adapt to new technologies as they're developed. When you move to having a virtual workplace, you lay a foundation you can build on to become more technologically advanced. It makes it easier for you to integrate new technologies. You'll be able to change your processes with agility and flexibility because a cloud-based system is more compatible to change.

Attract the modern employee to work for your company. It's not just the workplace that has changed. Workers' expectations of their employers have evolved alongside it. 71 percent of millennials say that a factor in deciding where they will work is how much a company embraces technology and innovation. In order to attract the best talent, having a modern workplace is key. This promotes a positive, collaborative, and flexible work culture that they desire and seek.

Adapt to the new norm to keep up with the competition. When your business has a modern workplace, it shows that you're open to new technologies and positive change. And it almost goes without saying that it makes you appear more modern. Alternatively, if you have a traditional workplace, you may seem like the odd one out — the one using outdated systems. Also, making the switch to a modern workplace enables you to compete with other companies that have done this and are leaner and more agile.
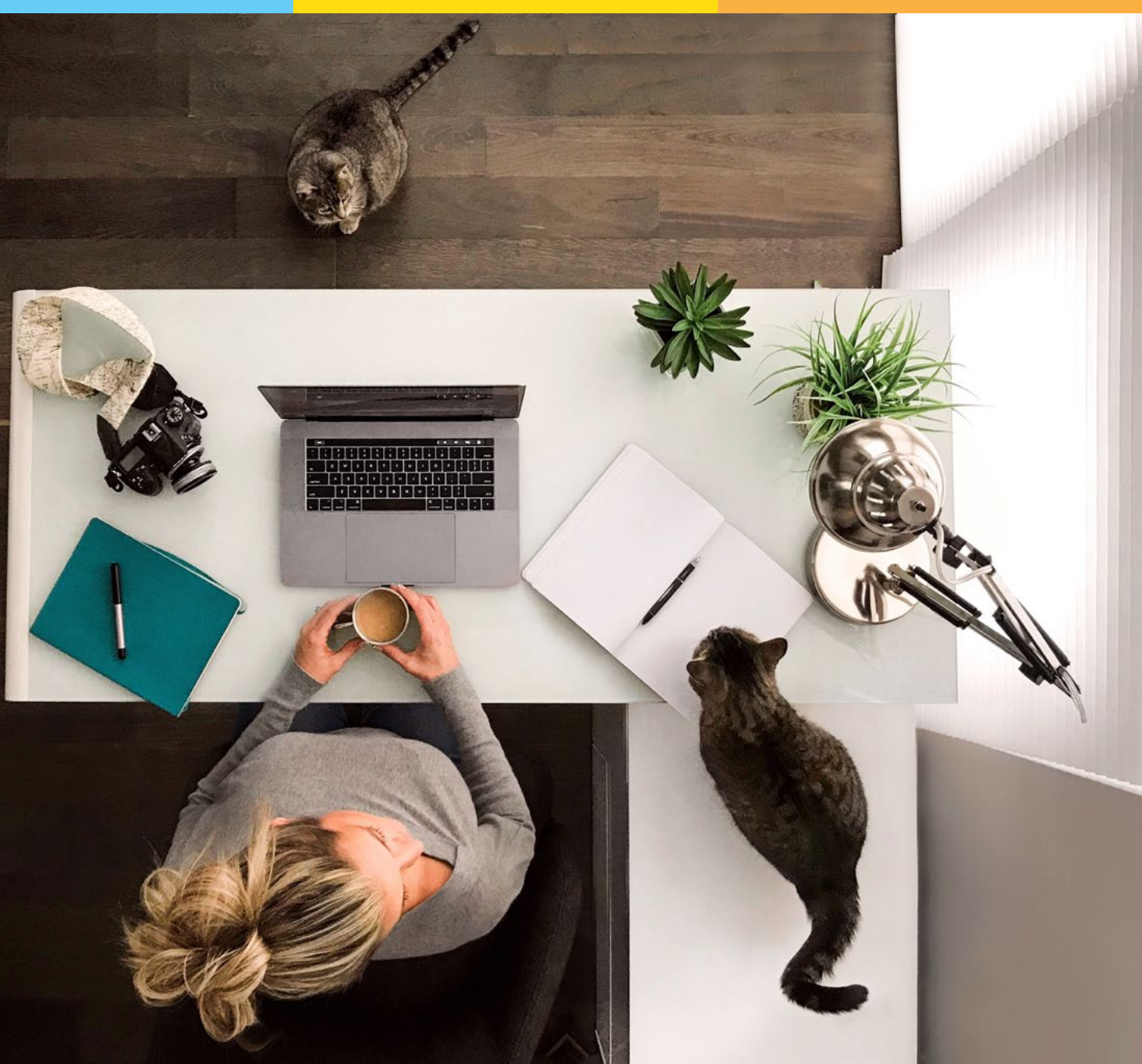
Why the Modern Workplace Is Here to Stay

The question on everyone's mind is when will the pandemic end. This question affects companies who need to anticipate when employees will return to in-person work.

While the traditional in-office experience may return one day, it's safe to say that remote work isn't going anywhere. And regardless, it will be essential for companies to have a modern workplace going forward.

Here are a few reasons why companies should see the modern workplace as the next step in the evolution of the workplace.

People Are Growing Accustomed to Working Remotely

Even after the pandemic ends, people may not want to go back to having a traditional workplace. Over one-third of firms with employees who switched to remote work during the COVID-19 crisis believe it will be more common for them even after the pandemic ends. Companies don't want to revert back unless they have to because they've seen that having a modern workplace is more beneficial to them — for example, due to increased productivity.

And employees are right there with them. In the post-COVID-19 workplace, 85% of people say they would prefer to keep working remotely at least a few days per week. They'd rather do remote work than commute to work every day. Working from home gives them more free time that they can spend with their family. It also saves them money because they don't have to spend as much on gas, car maintenance, parking, or other travel-related expenses.

And working remotely increases employees' focus and productivity because they can work in a more focused environment. 76% of employees say they're more productive because there are fewer distractions — because they're in a less noisy workspace, for example.

It also gives them more freedom in how they work because there's no pressure to always look busy. So, they can simply focus on delivering high-quality work.

It's All About Agility

At the start of the pandemic, only 12% of organizations felt highly prepared for an emergency that forced them to work from home, according to a Gartner report. On the other hand, others ended up needing to rush to deploy cloud technologies before their employees went home. This forced IT teams to adopt short-term solutions and not meet some of their long-term IT goals.

The lesson we can take from this is that agility makes a huge difference. Companies need to be adept to change because you never know when disaster will strike.

The key to business continuity is to always be prepared to keep your company running and keep delivering products or services even when an unforeseeable event occurs.

In order to do this, it's essential that companies are on the cloud. Cloud technologies need to be integrated into employees' day-to-day work so that they will have no trouble transitioning to remote work when they need to.

So, whether it's due to a catastrophic event or a new transformative technology, you need to be ready to implement change whenever you need to. That way, it won't be a barrier to the continuous operation of your business but a change you can easily navigate.

Access to a Broader Global Talent Pool

In this day and age, finding qualified employees is a challenge. According to Manpower Group, around 70% of companies say they experienced talent shortages in 2019, which was the worst level in history.

But when you have a modern workplace, you have a much broader pool of candidates. Because your business exists and operates in a virtual space, you're not limited by geography. Instead of only considering local candidates, you can offer to hire anyone from around the world. Then, they can work remotely from where they are.

And a global talent pool means access to more talent. You could even choose from the top talent across the globe.

In addition, it may be necessary to offer remote work as an option in the future. By the time the pandemic is over, workers will have been accustomed to remote work already. And companies may offer it to be more competitive.

In that case, potential candidates would likely choose the company that's more flexible and willing to let them work from home. But if you're not one of those, you may not be able to find strong candidates.
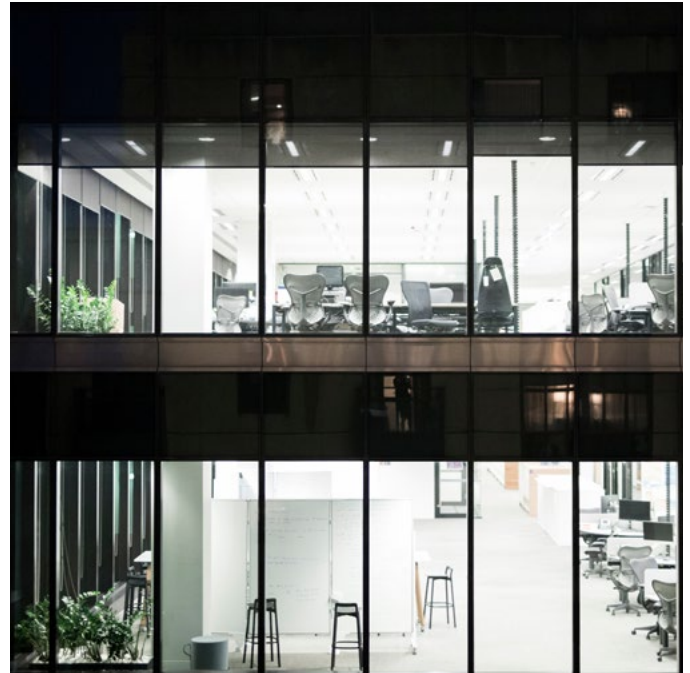
Immense Cost Savings

So, if there's a chance businesses won't go back to working onsite after the pandemic, does that actually mean you'd save money? Because your employees would be working from home, you'd be able to greatly reduce the costs required to operate in-office.

Almost 60% of employers say cost savings are a major benefit of remote work. For example, Sun Microsystems calculated $68 million in savings per year. Here are a few areas in which your business can save big by switching to a virtual workspace:

- Rent and utilities: If enough of your team is working remotely, you won't need to rent a large office space anymore, saving you money on rent and utilities.

- Cleaning services: With less employees onsite and a potentially smaller space, your cleaning services bill will likely decrease.

- Physical servers: If you switch to the cloud, you'll no longer have to pay for the various costs related to using physical servers. These include the cost of operating, maintaining, and upgrading them.

- In-office perks: If you provide a cafeteria service or refreshments at meetings, then you know that these costs can greatly add up. But if your employees are working from home, you could eliminate this additional cost.

How UCaaS Can Drive Your Workplace Forward

We've seen that the pandemic isn't the only reason companies are making the switch to a modern workplace. They're also doing it to advance their companies — to leave behind the traditional workplace and move into the digital age.

UCaaS is vital to digital workplaces. It creates seamless communication and improves collaboration, which leads to more efficient teamwork.

The value of UCaaS in this new technological landscape is shown by how immensely widespread it's become. By 2023, an estimated 70% of businesses will use UCaaS. You don't want to get left behind as these businesses use it to move forward. Here are a few ways it can drive your business forward:

1 **Solves issues that exist with multiple disparate communication apps:** UCaaS creates a single, unified experience. Because a suite of communication tools are on the same platform, it eliminates the issue of having to manually switch between different apps. This helps you save time. For example, when you're switching from messaging to video conferencing, you no longer have to log in, search for meeting IDs and passwords, or spend time setting up. Instead, you can simply switch to the video call with a single click, since UCaaS combines these features in one platform. UCaaS also takes away the guesswork and potential frustration involved in searching for information. So, instead of looking for vital information in an old email thread, employees can actually focus on higher priority tasks.

2 **Allows you to embrace and leverage the movement toward integration:** This means it helps your systems to work together more effectively. How does it do this? UCaaS helps align the function of your communication systems with the tasks done by your operating systems. There are many types of business applications that benefit from the use of UCaaS. These include CRM platforms, customer support, data storage, and more. According to IHS Markit, for 60% of business, voice integration with business apps is critical. What this shows is that UCaaS is essential to promoting organizational

3 **Lets you adapt to the modern worker's needs:** Generation Z, the new generation of employees, is more accustomed than any other generation to using text and chat in the workplace. According to Microsoft's survey, their rating of chat is almost as favourable as that of an in-person meeting. So, communicating primarily through online channels, such as messages, virtual meetings, and calls, will likely become the new norm in the future. When it does, your business will need to be equipped to adapt to this new norm, namely with a UCaaS solution that allows your team to communicate seamlessly through all these channels.

4 **Allows a team to communicate anywhere, any time, and on any device:** Because UCaas is delivered on the cloud, employees can always communicate with each other. We know that this includes employees who are working from home due to the pandemic, but it can also include employees who are dispersed throughout diverse geographic locations. It gives them the flexibility and freedom to collaborate in real-time through audio and video conferencing. In addition, you'll never have to deal with impeded communication when your IT system goes down. UCaaS will always be operational. And as long as there's an internet connection, teams can continue collaborating on their tasks.

5 **Helps your company move away from the cold, corporate feel:** Workplace culture has advanced. Employees no longer expect to simply work from 9 to 5 then go home. They don't want to feel isolated from their colleagues. They seek a sense of community. UCaaS helps give your company that friendly feel. And it can transform your workplace into one where people can interact with each other and have shared moments.

What Are the Advantages of UCaaS?

Maybe you have some reservations about UCaaS and wonder if it's really worth it to move to a UCaaS provider. But it does have advantages that will make the decision to switch to it completely worthwhile.

The size of the global unified communications market is expected to go up to $167.1 billion by 2025. Grand View Research views the rising popularity of UCaaS as a catalyst for this growth. And there's a reason so many businesses have made the switch and chosen to invest in UCaaS.

This service helps businesses improve the customer experience, increase employee productivity, and saves money — all of which are key aspects of digital transformation. Read on to learn more about its advantages and why it's right for you.

1. Boost Employee Productivity and Customer Satisfaction

Workers spend much of their time communicating with co-workers, customers, and supplies. Managers and employees spend up to 80% of their time on collaborative activities, including meetings, calls, and replying to emails.

Since these activities are such a major part of their day-to-day, it is vital that they find ways to communicate effectively. UCaaS provides the tools to do this. A recent study by Aruba shows that 70% of employees say they saw improved collaboration. In addition, they found that they had increased motivation and job satisfaction and were more likely to say they have a positive work-life balance.

UCaaS gives employees the ability to quickly and easily access the tools and information needed to do their jobs. This results in a huge productivity boost.

It also enables them to serve customer needs much more efficiently. According to a 2019 survey by RingCentral, customers want to receive service and have their issue resolved quickly. They also want to communicate with an agent using the channel of their choice and not have to wait on hold, be transferred multiple times, or repeat information. This could cause them to have a frustrating experience.

2. Build a Sense of Community Within the Workplace

When employees feel isolated rather than connected, they are much more likely to feel unhappy about working for a company. It turns out that companies are more likely to have high turnover rates if employees lack a sense of community.

Poor communications can make it extremely difficult to create a welcoming environment for full-time, part-time, and seasonal employees.

Here's why UCaaS is invaluable for building relationships that increase employee commitment:

- In a remote work environment, it's more difficult to stay connected with each other. There are fewer opportunities to have social interactions with colleagues because everyone is working separately from each other. But employees still devote a third of their lives to work. So, naturally, they want to be in a supportive, inspiring, and positive virtual workspace. In the digital workplace, UCaaS is the key to providing workers with opportunities to interact. It helps build a sense of community and a healthy, happy work environment.

- UCaaS solutions encourage people to stay connected. They allow you to communicate with your team or have private conversations on various channels. And they let you do this in real-time. UCaaS collaboration tools are also easy and fun to use. So, it helps break down silos and promote key social interactions that build relationships. In addition, UCaaS keeps everyone in the know. For example, Unio's company-wide newsfeed makes sure everyone sees important announcements so no one is left in the dark.

- UCaaS helps you be a leader who's not isolated but engaged. To be an effective leader, you need to regularly engage with employees and provide them with proper guidance. 70% of employees feel unhappy in their jobs due to poor management. This could lead to higher turnover rates. But UCaaS offers a solution to avoid this. Studies show that regular engagement with their leaders helps employees feel less pressured and stressed, which also helps them work more effectively. And UCaaS provides you with a platform to do this. It also makes communication effortless and efficient so you can be more engaged with your employees in different departments.

- Stay connected with temporary and seasonal workers. In the traditional workplace, it was common to use bulletin boards and centralized meeting places to discuss project updates, daily tasks, and other relevant information. With strict safety guidelines, that's not always possible today. UCaaS solves this problem by making it easier than ever for you to synchronize with seasonal workers, ensuring they too can engage with your workplace community. This can even increase their productivity by allowing them to be a part of your greater workplace culture, rather than leaving them feeling isolated and alone.

3. Realize Significant Cost Savings for the Business

It may surprise you how many ways moving to UCaaS can save you money. 34% of businesses saved an average of $161,000 on IT spending per year by shifting to it and eliminating redundant apps. These are the ways UCaaS can help you make significant cost savings:

- Provides a more manageable cost structure: It is much cheaper than paying for individual phone plans and provides the same functions that phones do. With UCaaS, you no longer have to tally your call costs for the month, since you're only charged a flat per-user fee.

- Provides a lower acquisition cost: Because you make and receive all your calls from the Internet, you don't have to pay any upfront hardware expenses. With a cloud-based system, all you need is an internet connection that has sufficient bandwidth. Once you have that, you're all set.

- Replaces multiple apps: You no longer have to pay for additional third-party apps to handle video conferencing, group chats, or file sharing because a UCaaS suite comes built-in with all of these features.

4. Reduce Cybersecurity Risks

The shift to digital has left many companies more exposed to cybersecurity risks than ever. And for many companies, this is an even bigger problem due to the use of unauthorized third-party communication apps

Think about which apps you're using to communicate within your business. Are they unauthorized? Are they safe to use? Now think about the information that's exchanged on these apps. You'd probably like this information to stay within your company, right?

No one wants their information to be leaked or end up in a hacker's hands. So, UCaaS is a crucial investment in improving your cyber security.

When you use UCaaS, your communications flow through encrypted channels that have been approved by your IT department. And you can be sure any sensitive information you share is safely encrypted and only visible to your users.

With UCaaS, you can spend less time worrying about your information being stolen and more time driving your business forward.

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Embrace the Modern Workplace With Unio

It's safe to say the traditional workplace will never be the same. The rise of the modern workplace has demonstrated that staying connected is more important than ever before.

UCaaS can be the catalyst that drives your workplace forward by creating a unified, seamless experience that improves employee productivity, company culture, and customer satisfaction. It's the key to not only surviving this pandemic but thriving in the modern workplace.

Unio keeps all your communication tools at your fingertips with one place for your messages, group chats, calls, company news, bulletins, and more.

Are you looking for a UCaaS platform that's designed to drive your company forward by unifying not only your communications but also your people? Get in touch with us today to see how you can turn your communications into a competitive advantage.

To book a demo, email: hello@getunio.com