

The power of true unified communications

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Communication in today's business world is so much more than picking up the phone and making a voice call. It is about collaboration, cross-platform communication and presence, and intelligently locating the best resources and getting in touch with them in a way that suits all parties.

In a nutshell, it's all about Unified Communication (UC). However, true UC is not simply a combination of email, messenger and voice anymore; it is the ability to bring all of these media together, along with videoconferencing, presence management and more, into a single solution that allows for a seamless user experience between different communication technologies across a variety of different platforms, such as laptops, tablets and even smartphones - and across a variety of UC landscapes and environments.

Today's users are looking to communicate with richer tools than ever before and are no longer satisfied with a normal audio call. Users are demanding the ability to know if contacts are available and then to collaborate, share rich content, and see people face to face. Given the increasing mobility of workforces, all of these tools also need to be available not only in boardrooms and conference centres, but also for PC and tablets. Users want to have a seamless experience that works regardless of brand or technology. This is the power of true unified communications, with standards-based tools and communication that enable cross-platform, cross-technology seamless communication for users, no matter where they are or what device they wish to connect with.

More efficient communication

Ultimately, any modern UC solution should work with the technologies that the business people within the organisation want to work with, helping to boost productivity, simplify the way information is shared and improve efficiency - meeting the challenges of today's tough economic climate. Whether a user is on a train, in a boardroom, at a home office or sitting at the airport, connectivity should allow these users to join in on collaborative, productive visual communication. By providing a single, central interface, UC not only allows more efficient communication, it also simplifies management, driving down operating costs.

Extending this platform outside of the enterprise to include customers, partners and suppliers, further improves collaboration and information sharing. This wider UC network not only allows for cheaper IP-based calls to be made across the network, but also enables faster, more agile decision making, better levels of service, and an improved ability to respond proactively to changes in the market.

Video collaboration

However, the true power of UC lies in video collaboration, which delivers a host of benefits and also minimises the need for travel across geographically dispersed organisations, lowering travel expenses and decreasing carbon footprint. Video capability as part of a UC strategy should offer easy-to-use video collaboration for a variety of environments, from doctors connecting with patients to lecture halls, conference rooms, courtrooms and manufacturing. Across environments and industries, video is becoming the new communication standard, enabling users to meet, debate, consult, decide, plan, instruct, agree, sell, create and, most importantly, to collaborate face to face with users regardless of their geographic location.

Bringing together multiple communication technologies into a single platform for collaboration, regardless of a user's location, network, carrier, protocol, application, or device, is what true unified communication is all about. Given the number of different platforms, technologies and environments available, achieving true unified communication requires open and native interoperability to enable all the disparate parts involved to work together seamlessly. From voice and email to instant messenger, presence, calendars and contact, to video collaboration, UC should be able to integrate seamlessly to provide the end-user with an immersive and rich communication experience.

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