



What's the real value behind UC?

A Mitel Guide

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Whatever communications and collaboration systems you already have in place; if you can put them in perfect harmony, you stand to reap tangible bottom line benefits as well as a far richer and more intuitive user experience. That's the promise of Unified Communications (UC), to combine and enhance communications capabilities via a single platform.

Unified Communications is the most up-to-date industry term we've got for what business has always needed. But if you asked 10 IT Directors for their definition of UC, you'd probably get 10 different answers. So for the purposes of this paper we'll simplify it: An easy way to work together via voice, video, online collaboration and mobile devices.

This paper explores the most popular reasons for committing to a UC future, and how different organisations have gained real value out of UC strategies.

Five challenges for UC to overcome

Market analysts all point to significant current and projected growth in the UC market as enterprises of all sizes embrace the rewards of this technology.

Common business objectives for UC include achieving noticeable improvements in customer service delivery, greater competitive differentiation, lower running costs and less drain on scarce management resources. However, analysis of a large body of real organisations points to the following core drivers for success.



Productivity

Enabling better ways for people to get more done together



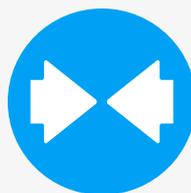
Continuity

Ensuring the business is always available to do business



Mobility

Supporting a connected workforce demanding 24/7 access from anywhere, using any kind of mobile device



Integration

Leveraging, rather than stranding, existing and potential IT investments



Future Proofing

Being ready for uncertain future challenges

According to a recent survey among 355 IT decision makers by telecom analysts MZA, 85% of organisations* that have rolled out UC have seen tangible benefits. The remainder of this guide will use real organisations to illustrate each of these top five concerns, and explore the evidence for real value achieved through UC adoption.

Productivity

Does UC improve collaborative working practices and get more work done?

Saving on travel expenses aside, the real productivity value from UC comes through greater collaboration reducing the time it takes to reach a decision, solve a problem or complete an action.

At luxury travel adventure company Abercrombie & Kent, implementing a uniform UC platform for its 48 offices around the world proved a far more positive alternative to its previous variety of locally sourced telephony solutions. The result boosted productivity as well as heralding a significant leap forward in this market leader's ability to deliver superior personal service to customers, as IT Director Philip Napleton explains. "Our staff are constantly sharing information about destinations and experiences, and the Mitel system allows them to do that far more easily and cost effectively. Thanks to the IP applications that layer seamlessly on our platform, we now ensure customers are recognised and able to speak to a well-informed representative every time they call."

Even the automated set up and initiation of audio and web conference saves time, which ultimately saves money. Revolution Tea has only 50 employees but believes it saved around 16,500€ a year bringing collaboration, audio and web conferencing in-house. It also believes it closes multiple additional sales each quarter thanks to the UC capabilities, resulting in 2-5% extra revenue without adding more staff. "At the end of the month, you can't wait 24 hours to get approvals to get the sale completed," says IT Manager Paul Whiting. "Using Mitel's suite of UC and collaboration solutions, we can close about 10-15 sales a day at the end of the month, and can get the money into the bank account faster."



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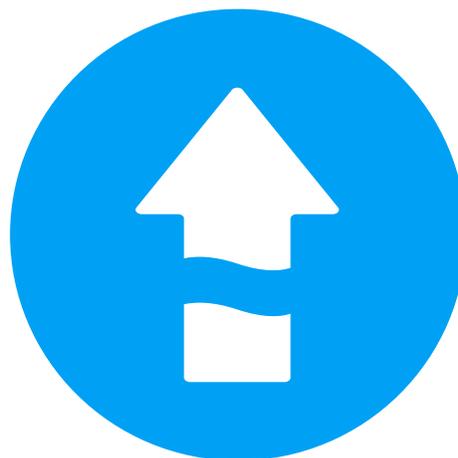


Continuity

Does UC benefit the need for continuity of business operations and processes, ensuring maximum communications uptime and availability?

Using UC capabilities such as presence, IM, conferencing, collaboration, single number reach etc., businesses eliminate the delays and latencies that negatively impact results. In addition, the use of virtualisation in the deployment of UC assures business continuity in the event of a network failure or other unforeseen outage.

Spalding University, which accommodates over 2,400 students and 175 faculty members, deployed its virtualised Mitel solution in a separate datacentre to provide a secure, plug and play method of connecting remote users. When Spalding suddenly experienced power outages and lightening strikes, the virtualised system switching to another platform seamlessly without any disruption. In addition, workers were immediately able to work from home if desired.



Mark Barnes & Associates is a typical small to medium sized legal firm that manages to function as a single tight-knit team, available 24/7 rather than just nine-to-five, despite being in different cities, countries – even continents. “With Mitel, not only can I direct dial Terri in Germany just as if she were in Washington, I can instantly connect and collaborate with her or any other colleague as if they were just two doors down the hall. The advantage is that people can more naturally conduct their workflow.”



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Mobility

How does UC support a mobile-empowered workforce demanding 24/7 access from anywhere?

Embracing UC makes users more effective when they're away from the office, while reducing costs. Using presence tools, users can avoid wasted calls and shift many communications sessions to IM, replacing many short phone calls. Single number reach lets customers and colleagues reach a user wherever they are and on whichever device is nearest to hand. Additionally, supporting each user's own device (BYOD), configured with UC software, means the organisation can save thousands on purchasing its own devices.

Online accommodation wholesaler Hotelbeds operates from 132 offices around the world, with 1,700 of its users capitalising on UC to improve operational efficiency and easier management. One of the benefits arising from Hotelbeds' introduction of Mitel technology has been a mobility solution that allows both managers and staff alike the same communication services as those available at corporate headquarters. This guarantees productivity, even when employees are away on business or travelling away from the office.

Publishing company Llewellyn Worldwide wanted more flexibility and mobility, particularly for its sales and marketing personnel as well as on-call IT staff. These and other employees are now able to make and receive calls securely from any workstation - on-site or off. "If I'm away from my desk, I can have my calls forwarded to my cell phone," explains MIS Manager Daryl Connell. "If I'm on a call and have to leave to attend a meeting, I can seamlessly transfer from my desk phone to my cell. And if I'm in the server room or leaving my car, I can transfer just as easily to my desk phone. The person I'm talking with doesn't know and isn't affected in any way."



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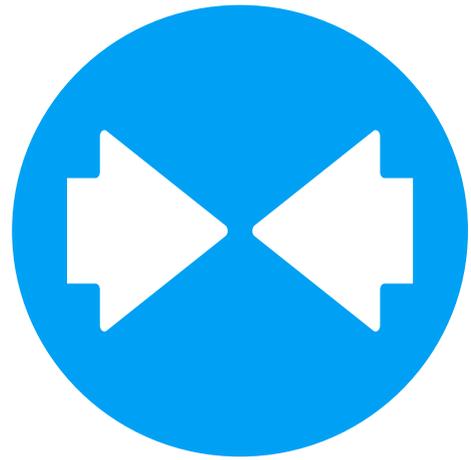


Integration

A major driver for UC adoption is integration, but is this genuinely achievable?

Recent research by telecom analysts MZA found a large discrepancy between what potential adopters fear about UC (89% anticipate problems with rollout) and what adopters actually experience in relation to migration and integration (only 5% experienced any IT-related challenges).

Hotelbeds IT Infrastructure Manager Adi Merzbach clearly believes that the ends justified the means: "The integration of the telephony system with Outlook and other Microsoft applications makes it easier to make calls to colleagues, customers and suppliers directly from the employee's computer. It's the sole access point for all communications and represents an improvement in our productivity."



Six Payment Services is a global provider of bankcard payment processing services that has moved to a single, integrated communications system based on a virtualised communications infrastructure. According to IT Director, Benoît Collet, not all UC-enabling solutions are made alike: "What Mitel provides us - and what others couldn't - was significant value add in terms of additional applications that we could run across our virtualised voice infrastructure to give us more manageability, flexibility and more sophisticated and adaptable report generation potential."



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Future Proofing

How well future-proofed are UC adopters?

Vital to the calculation of any UC business case are the improvements that will keep on delivering returns on investment year in, year out. Reviewing the experiences of UC adopters, it's clear that wherever their initial objectives led the investment decision, the results invariably provided a stable platform for future development as well as immediate benefits. By comparison, many see continuing with legacy approaches to their communications as an inhibitor to future success, if not a direct threat.

A good example of this is at Niko Group, where the primary motivators for change were reduced cost and improved customer service. By turning away from the narrow constraints offered by their legacy technology, Niko discovered they could reap the benefits of advancing technology, as ICT Director Robrecht Paridaens explains: "It's a solution that we can manage ourselves without any problems. Thanks to the scalability of Mitel's IP telephony system, Niko Group will be able to effortlessly add new IP phones to the system in the coming years."

It's a similar story at Veritas – the environmental and water services authority for the Veneto region of Italy – which has to handle frequent movement of staff and entire organisational structures to cope with demand, yet manages to adapt its communications capabilities seamlessly. "Our solution has resulted in a drastic decrease in activity of IMAC (install-move-add-change)," said Christian Chiusso, Telecommunications Manager. "Today, the Mitel solution can grow along with the evolution of the services offered by Veritas, allowing receipt and management of new operational procedures as soon as they are needed."

Future proofing is not simply about planning for long-term strategy. The mark of any future-proofed UC solution is its ability to contend with unforeseen integration



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To discover more about how Mitel can provide you with effective Unified Communications solutions contact us today at www.mitel.com/contact.

About Mitel

Powering more than 2 billion connections every day, Mitel (NASDAQ: MITL; TSX: MNW) helps businesses connect, collaborate and take care of their customers. That includes more than 33 million cloud connections daily, making Mitel the world's fastest growing provider of cloud communications. Our business communications experts serve more than 60 million users with over 2500 channel partners in more than 100 countries. We have #1 market share in EMEA and have been identified by top industry analyst firms as a business communications leader. For more information, go to www.mitel.com and follow us on Twitter @Mitel

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