

The UCaaS *Evolution*: From Communication to Productivity

How Ongoing Technology Integrations are
Increasing Sales Opportunities





What is UCaaS?

UCaaS is the delivery of communications and collaboration applications and services through a third-party provider over an IP network, usually the public Internet. In the beginning, UCaaS was synonymous with voice services and seen almost exclusively as a replacement for traditional phone services.


However, UCaaS has since become an umbrella term for a suite of business communication solutions: phone, email, voicemail and messaging.

Gartner considers UC as encompassing six functions:

- 1 Voice and telephony**, including mobility
- 2 Meeting solutions**: audio conferencing, video conferencing and web conferencing
- 3 Messaging**: email with voicemail and unified messaging
- 4 Presence and Instant Messaging**
- 5 Clients**, including desktop clients and thin browser clients
- 6 Communications-enabled applications**, like integrated contact centers, communications platform as a service and workflow collaboration

UCaaS has developed from strictly communications into a broader collaboration and productivity tool in a relatively short time. This transformation has added significant value for customers and greatly increased sales opportunities for partners.

While UCaaS includes a wide variety of solutions, its evolution has created more ways for customers to improve their user experiences and increase organizational efficiencies. The growing number of integrations provides partners with new ways to approach customers who have been reluctant to move to the cloud and allows for expansion upon the services of those who have already made the move.



Benefits and Features

By now, you've undoubtedly heard it: UCaaS is a golden sales opportunity, and North America is expected to hold the largest market share in the world with estimated \$96B by 2021 (Global Market Insights).

If it's not currently a central part of your portfolio, you're missing out on an easy-to-sell and easy-to-deploy technology that nearly every business can benefit from.



10 Benefits of UCaaS:

Built-in redundancy (improved reliability)	Ease of management and effortless reporting
Streamlined user experience throughout existing tools/applications	Security
Flexibility	Scalability
Reduced IT workloads	OpEx model = reduced upfront CapEx on equipment/software
Decreased maintenance; managed updates and security patches	Single point-of-contact for troubleshooting

From SMB Solution to Universal Business Tool

Much of the early growth of UCaaS, as well as the eye-popping numbers associated with adoption, can be attributed to small businesses. The appeal is obvious: UCaaS offers SMBs access to enterprise-level technology in an affordable pricing model with little need to manage and maintain infrastructure or IT resources.

But while UCaaS has always been a natural fit for SMBs, it wasn't nearly as easy a sell to midmarket and enterprise companies, many of which already have on-premise infrastructure and in-house IT teams. Rather than move to the cloud, many of those organizations opted to virtualize communications in-house or use a hybrid UC solution. But with new features and benefits coupled with added privacy and security, the shift up market is strong and steady.

Around the same time that Cisco and Mitel announced their respective acquisitions of ShoreTel and BroadSoft, data emerged showing that mid-market and enterprise companies were warming up to cloud-based UC solutions. Frost & Sullivan White Paper "UCaaS Adoption in the Age of COVID-19" explores how businesses have increased their usage of cloud communications:

82% of North American decision makers

report having moved or are planning to move part or all of their enterprise telephony solutions to the cloud

Mid-market businesses (100 to 2,500 users) are projected to reach

54% of the total UCaaS users by 2024.

Even before the pandemic, more than 90% of employees

with access to cloud collaboration tools reported using desktop video, web conferencing and messaging tools at least on a weekly basis.



The shift from UCaaS as a targeted SMB service to a universal solution that transcends market segment is good news for partners, opening the door to unlimited sales opportunities. It's a shift driven by an evolution in technology, pricing and expectations.

From Communication to Productivity: How UCaaS Increased Its Value

Once seen as technology for improved communication, UCaaS is now viewed as a platform that helps increase productivity. And, more than anything, the promise of increased productivity (and the resulting increase in revenue) is what has accelerated UCaaS growth in midmarket and enterprise businesses.

A BroadSoft survey found enterprise IT decision-makers have three key demands of cloud-based UC solutions:

Feature sets and bundled offerings

A solid user experience

Reliability

Now those expectations are somewhat general and true demand has come from specific business drivers that have forced out older, on-premise solutions. For partners, understanding these drivers can provide insight into the challenges businesses are facing, how to speak with them about UCaaS and ways to position services and vendors.

Meeting end user expectation

From FaceTime to Google Drive, people have gotten used to technologies in their everyday lives that make it easy to communicate, collaborate and share work. These consumer experiences have played a significant role in shaping expectations in the workplace, where employees are demanding similar features to make their jobs easier.



SCALABILITY

Unlike on-premises solutions, UCaaS is flexible and scalable, giving businesses the option of adding or subtracting users and expanding or cutting options and capabilities as needed. And because it's an OpEx model, scaling or upgrading services doesn't require a huge investment of money or resources.



SECURITY

The leading UCaaS providers use world-class data centers with multiple layers of security and the required redundancy to make businesses feel confident their data is safe. Additional security features have become attractive for various verticals where there are HIPAA and PCI compliant voicemail solutions as [examples](#).



COLLABORATION

More than ever, companies of all sizes are employing mobile and remote work forces, which have made real-time collaboration a must-have. With easy out-of-the-box collaboration tools as well as the ability to integrate of a variety of other collaboration services, UCaaS offers a compelling and affordable solution.



MOBILITY

Business today isn't defined by the nine-to-five office. People want to be able to work wherever and whenever they need to, meaning mobile integration is essential. UCaaS-native mobile integration provides advanced business calling features across multiple devices, such as softphones as well as the ability for desk and mobile phones to ring, simultaneously.



CRM INTEGRATION

Businesses invest heavily in robust customer relationship management software to better organize, manage and track customer information, activities and conversations. Today, UCaaS platforms offer CRM integration for a streamlined experience and the ability to pull real-time analytics.



OPEN API

UCaaS doesn't have to be a standalone product. The open API environment allows companies to integrate other software solutions, such as Office 365, Dropbox and Skype for Business into their UCaaS platform.



CONTACT CENTERS

Modern customers expect 24/7/365 support. On the other hand, businesses want increased visibility and insight within their contact centers, to better handle inquiries and improve the customer experience. UCaaS gives companies call center functionality in the cloud through contact center solutions called CCaaS (Contact Center as a Service).

Contact center solutions offer features that businesses of all sizes, not just those with call centers, can benefit from. These include the ability to:

- Route calls based on location and availability, cutting down on wait times and putting customers in contact with the right department
- Provide agents with immediate access to information and resources relevant to the caller
- Record and collect data on calls, which can then be used to improve the customer experience
- Call back customers, letting them get back to their life rather than wait on hold
- Integrate multiple channels, including chatbots for websites and social media



PRICING MODELS

Pricing has long been a barrier for midmarket and enterprise businesses that had previously made significant investment in infrastructure and personnel. It's difficult to justify migrating to the cloud with significant capital already tied up in IT resources.

Demand from SMBs and a boom of competing cloud solutions have pushed providers to create UCaaS pricing structures that bundle services in ways that now offer value and savings for midmarket and enterprise businesses alike.



The UCaaS Target Audience

MID-MARKET



GATEKEEPER

ROLES

IT Director/Manager
Network Manager
Operations Manager

PAIN POINTS

Needs to support office moves/
expansion

Struggling with disparate systems

Wants to deliver on strategic
initiatives (i.e. business system
integrations, mobility, etc.)

Fast deployment is a must



DECISION MAKER

ROLES

C-Suite Execs
VP of IT

PAIN POINTS

Technology needs to support
rapid growth

Transition to more digital business

Communications system is last
thing on their mind

Revenue generation/news sources
of revenue

Needs mobility - geography/time
constraints don't factor in



INFLUENCER

ROLES

VP of Sales/Sales Director
VP of HR/HR Manager
VP Marketing/CMO

PAIN POINTS

Prove ROI

Growth of business

Productivity-focused

Effectively engage customers &
workforce anywhere

Easy to deploy

Run the department/business easily

ENTERPRISE

ROLES

IT Director/Manager
Telecom Manager
Operations Manager/
Bus Sys Manager

PAIN POINTS

Consolidating communications
systems across multiple locations

Complex integrations; needs white-
glove deployment/service

Too many systems currently being
managed

Too many vendors to manage

ROLES

VP of IT/Systems

PAIN POINTS

Optimize bottom line across global
company

Concrete ROI analysis

Solution must be global

Existing ELA's (Enterprise License
Agreements) may be a road block

Hard to navigate and gain approval
with procurement involvement

ROLES

C-Suite Execs:
VP of Sales/Sales Director
VP of HR/HR Manager
VP Marketing/CMO

PAIN POINTS

Prove ROI

Growth of business

Achieving each
department's
business objectives

Tool integrations

Security and compliance
are big concerns

Each department has own
systems/vendors

Opening the Door to Other Sales

UCaaS can be a powerful and effective solution when implemented correctly. However, its performance relies on the underlying network, and many partners launch UCaaS without thinking through the overall system. The result is a service that doesn't realize its full potential and therefore falls short of customer expectations.

INCREASED BANDWIDTH

Accessing services in the cloud requires greater network capacity than locally provisioned resources, which could mean a need for increased bandwidth.

SD-WAN

Because of SD-WAN's ability to enhance the UCaaS experience, the two make for a natural bundle.

Adding SD-WAN **allows**:

- Enhancement of UCaaS applications, such as video and voice, that are susceptible to latency, packet loss and jitter.
- Most SD-WAN providers provide a MOS score to allow quick/easy view of call quality.
- Prioritization of applications, routing traffic down the best available path and improving network performance.
- Improvement in resiliency by pushing mission-critical apps such as voice to a failover connection in times of need via packet duplication, preventing lost calls and lost business.

SIP (SESSION INITIATION PROTOCOL)

SIP is a natural sell-with for UCaaS because it reserves bandwidth specifically for voice, ensuring that call quality is maintained even when bandwidth utilities exceed available capacity.

MANAGED FIREWALL SERVICES

With the simplification UCaaS brings, many businesses might also find it easier and more cost effective to outsource their security to an outside vendor.

BaaS/DRaaS

Having backup offers protection against a worst-case scenario, while disaster recovery ensures files, databases and applications can be quickly accessed so normal business operations can be resumed.

CCaaS

Modern customers expect 24/7/365 support; businesses want increased visibility and insight within their contact centers. Contact center solutions offer features that businesses of all sizes, not just those with call centers, can benefit from. These include the ability to:

- Route calls more efficiently
- Provide agents with immediate access to information and resources relevant to the caller
- Record and collect data on calls, which can then be used to improve the customer experience
- Call back customers vs. waiting on hold
- Integrate multiple channels, including chatbots for websites

TBI offers a comprehensive audit of your customers' technology infrastructures to ensure proposed solutions work properly.

Take a holistic view of the network and its infrastructure to ensure the UCaaS solution performs to its fullest potential. **More up and cross sell solutions can be found here.**

TIP:
When selling UCaaS, it is best to perform a complete network assessment to ensure peak performance of UCaaS.



The Present and Future of UCaaS

Enterprise IT decision-makers have ranked and placed various technology as instrumental to business growth. When it comes to migrating and innovating respective departments within organizations to the cloud, executives look for:

- >> **Contextual intelligence** A way to look back and see past documents and historical communications.
- >> **Advanced analytics** to increase performance and for better monitoring.
- >> **Artificial intelligence** to improve customer experience and drive innovation and growth.

It's not surprising then, that UCaaS is moving in the direction of smart technology, incorporating data analytics, artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), augmented reality (AR) and connectivity with other products via IoT (internet of things).

Some of this technology is already being employed in a limited capacity and will be fully realized in the years to come. Examples below:



DATA ANALYTICS

AI and ML are used to aggregate and analyze data to help businesses better manage, track and improve the customer journey, as well as identify internal inefficiencies and training opportunities. In this way, data helps businesses apply the same metrics-driven approach to UCaaS that they employ on websites.



INTERACTIVE VOICE RECOGNITION (IVR)

IVR is an automated system that interacts with callers, gathers information via a combination of voice telephone input and touch tone keypad selections, and routes calls to the appropriate person/department.



VOICE ASSISTANTS

Amazon has already integrated voice assistants into its Chime service, allowing users to start and end meetings via voice control. During a video conference, Alexa can be told to dial in a coworker or call up specific documents or emails related to a client.



AUGMENTED REALITY

The Cisco Spark Board serves as both a video conferencing platform and a digital whiteboard. It works in both the physical and virtual environments - draw on it in the meeting room and your team can see it on their devices in real-time. Whiteboards can be saved, shared and annotated.



IOT

Mitel has partnered with Charles de Gaulle airport in France to outfit key airport functions with sensors that alert the appropriate staff when triggered. For instance, when a cabinet holding the automated external defibrillator is opened, the medical staff receives a message, or when the airport temperature exceeds a threshold, maintenance is informed.

While many of these technologies are here now, they are in their infancy. Carriers are just starting to explore the ways in which AI, IoT and AR can transform communication and productivity. As they continue to mature within UCaaS, they will create added value for customers and selling opportunities for partners.

Discovery Questions

Here are several conversation starters for UCaaS opportunities that can uncover a company's basic communication needs, assess their current communications systems and understand long-term objectives.

- > What communication systems do you have in place today? Are they on-premise, how old and have they fully depreciated?
- > Do you have a contract with a service provider? If so, when is the contract up?
- > How many employees do you have?
- > How are your employees dispersed? Are they in multiple offices? Do they work from home and/or are they on the road?
- > How do your offices/branches call, communicate and share documents with each other? Are you able to dial an extension and reach other branches or remote workers? Do you have a company directory that has all offices/branches connected to each other?
- > Do employees have or bring their own devices to work/use? Are there any current frustrations with conferencing and remote dial-ins?
- > What email client is deployed throughout the organization?
- > Do you have a CRM?
- > Have you deployed any systems or applications to the cloud already? If so, which ones and what benefits are you realizing from those deployments?
- > What are the barriers holding you back from deploying cloud communications?
- > What is the number of vendors you currently manage to keep your current communications going? Example phone, instant message, video and audio conferencing?
- > Does your current phone system have a business continuity plan? If you experience an outage how long would it take to have the phone system back up and running?
- > Are you currently (or do you have interest in) utilizing any of the following communications applications: mobility, auto conferencing, video conferencing, instant messaging, contact center?

Pending how your prospects and customers answer, consult with TBI to determine which provider fits best. Not yet a partner?

Visit tbicom.com.

RECOMMENDED UCAAS PROVIDERS:



UCaaS Case Studies

Finance Use Case



CUSTOMER

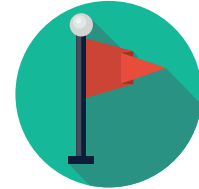
A mortgage company with more than 80 locations.



CHALLENGES

The customer was spending a large amount of time and money every month to fly technicians to their remote locations whenever there was an issue with their phones.

The customer recognized the need for flexibility, disaster recovery, analytics and improved support virtually as well as on-site.



RESULTS

Along with 600 hosted voice seats, an analytics package was purchased to help the customer monitor and track call quality and remotely diagnose/troubleshoot.

An eFax solution and virtual meeting application were also added.

Healthcare Use Case



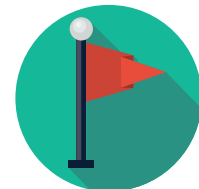
CUSTOMER

One of DC Metro's largest surgical and physical therapy practices



CHALLENGES

Any time they needed to add on to their existing services, it was complicated and expensive. Additionally, they felt they were not getting the level of customer service they needed when adding new services/features.



RESULTS

The customer implemented a full-featured hosted voice solution and is exploring additional cloud solutions with the provider to increase their efficiency and also remain compliant with HIPPA laws.



Manufacturer Use Case



CUSTOMER

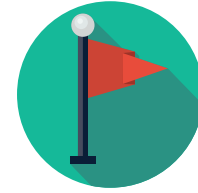
A world leader in designing and manufacturing instruments and software that deliver rubber and elastomeric materials analysis.



CHALLENGES

With a wide mobile workforce spanning across Europe and Asia, the customer's on-premise PBX system wasn't providing the service remote employees needed to be successful.

Additionally, they were being pressured by their parent company to adopt an on-premise Cisco PBX system.



RESULTS

A group of employees within the customer's organization implemented a proof of concept project. Seeing the capabilities of the technology firsthand, the executive team approved the purchase and implementation.

The customer was able to get all of the capabilities they were looking for, including robust contact center features.

Retail Use Case



CUSTOMER

An enterprise retailer and service station with locations nationwide.

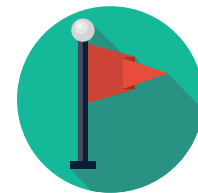


CHALLENGES

The customer needed a reliable hosted voice solution to standardize store operations across all their locations.

Previously, they had been adding phone systems piecemeal.

The customer was in a rapid stage of growth, and a virtualized phone solution would allow the consolidations and mergers to happen efficiently.



RESULTS

By implementing, Virtual Office and Virtual Contact Center solutions, they were able to offer self-service/information via phone and free up on-site staff from common questions.

Other benefits realized by the customer included the ability to utilize the analytics for both solutions, ease of deployment and the reasonable price point.



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