Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) - White Paper

Choosing a Phone System That Will Increase Productivity, Improve Efficiency and Reduce Costs

Abstract/Summary

Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) provides several benefits to companies of all sizes. Business can realize both initial and long-term savings with Voice over IP (VoIP), and with UCaaS, capital investment is minimal.

Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) is also easier and less expensive to manage and support, which means there is less reliance on IT teams or outside contractors for moves, adds and changes.

Businesses can take advantage of rich calling and collaboration features in their UCaaS solution. Call routing features can improve handling of inbound calls to a call center; collaboration, instant message and presence features help to improve employee productivity and mitigate the challenges of a remote staff.

Introduction

Your business has many priorities. With so many things to focus on, you may not be thinking about your phone system – it does the job, so why change it? But what if your phone system was able to help your employees be more reachable? Or it could help make your employees more productive? Or provide a means to respond more quickly to your customers?

If these outcomes are important to you, then switching to UCaaS should be on your priority list. Technologies such as Voice over IP (VoIP), especially when provided through a "cloud" based service deliver an impressive array of capabilities, and at a price point that fits all budgets.

A legacy phone system, with its outdated technology is very expensive to maintain, is difficult to scale, and does not deliver modern features that your business needs to succeed.

Are you moving or adding a new location?

Switching to UCaaS when moving offices or expanding locations will not only save your business time and costs but will give you the opportunity to take advantage of useful features you never had with your old system. Moving can provide challenges, it is difficult and expensive to move an old phone system to a new location. The cost of uninstalling it, transporting, and reinstalling it can represent anywhere from 20-40 percent of the cost of an entirely new system.

Adding an additional office location is another reason to consider switching to UCaaS. Transferring the entire company to UCaaS in this situation will not only be easier to manage but will only nominally increase the time and effort it takes when compared to what it would take to maintain and monitor two separate phone systems (or more, depending on how many office locations you have).

Can your current phone systems grow with your business?

Most legacy premises phone systems have a maximum number of phones they can support before having to purchase additional equipment. With UCaaS, simply connect your employees to an IP network, and they can take advantage of the benefits of your UCaaS solution.

Increased customers can also tax your legacy phone system. If you don't have enough incoming and outgoing phone lines, customers will get a busy signal, which leads to hang-ups, and potentially ends in lost revenue. A UCaaS system can be set up to have a potentially limitless number of lines that are activated when all real phone lines are busy. These lines can play music on hold or have a custom Interactive Voice Response (IVR) to direct callers to the right person.

Enhance Productivity

If you have an outdated phone system, you are missing out on the productivity enhancing features that are available with UCaaS . Below are just a few of these capabilities:

- Call Reporting - UCaaS systems provide offer impressive call reports and stats, as well as the ability to track and monitor individual phone calls – features that are extremely valuable to a business call center or inside sales team.
- Mobility and softphone applications
- CRM integration
- Call queues, such as Automatic Call Distribution (ACD)
- Collaboration
- Conferencing
- Instant Messaging and Presence

What is UCaaS?

UCaaS makes all the features and capabilities of a best-in-class phone system available to you without the need for a big capital purchase. With UCaaS, the service provider hosts and manages the phone system in their network. As a business, you do not have to worry about the expense, maintenance or other downsides to purchasing a physical phone system. Instead of that big up-front investment, you pay only for what you need.

With UCaaS, companies can expect:

- **Low or No Capital Costs –** Unlike premise-based systems, the "brains" of UCaaS reside in the cloud, so there is very little equipment to purchase, resulting in limited up-front costs – and often these are included as part of your monthly bill.

- **Predictable Operating Expense –** Monthly voice and data charges are usually calculated on a per user basis. If you have 10 employees each with a telephone on

their desk, your monthly operating cost will be 10 times a set fee. If you add people, you'll know exactly how your costs will increase.

- **No Maintenance Expenses –** Because the service provider owns the equipment, they are responsible of all the costs associated with maintenance.

- **Business Continuity** – Since the phone system resides in a secure facility with safeguards like back-up power and equipment, events at your location (such as a power outage) would not affect your business. You can simply and quickly configure the service to have the calls routed to an alternate number (such as another location, home, or mobile device).

- **No Obsolescence –** The service provider hosting the system will routinely upgrade the service so that new enhancements are delivered on an ongoing basis.

- **Feature-rich** communications for improved call handling and routing, mobility, and collaboration.

Benefits of UCaaS

By investing in a UCaaS solution, businesses can reduce expenses, improve employee productivity, increase flexibility, and better serve customers:

- Month-over-Month Cost Savings
    - UCaaS reduces overall cost-of-ownership, because there's no phone system equipment to buy or lease.
    - Most business UCaaS packages come with unlimited nationwide calling, resulting in a dramatic savings in long-distance costs.
- Less Reliance on IT - UCaaS is easier and cheaper to manage and support, in part because UCaaS and its features reside in the cloud.
    - UCaaS eliminates the need to maintain hardware.
    - Easy moves add and changes - all can be done via simple software changes,
    - Users can manage features and call routing themselves via an easy-to-use web interface.
- Improve Productivity
    - Visual Voicemail – Easily check voice, video and fax messages from a single message center. Voice messages can even be translated into text so you can read them without dialing in to retrieve them. Listen, delete or respond at the touch of a button.
    - Collaboration – Host and record conference calls using desktop and mobile clients, eliminating the need for a third-party conferencing solution.
    - Contact Management
        - Instant Messaging
        - Presence provides availability status of contacts using both calendar and phone status

- Integrate contacts on any device.
- Search, call and edit any of your contacts effortlessly and keep them synchronized.
- Send instant messages to other people in your corporate directory who are using the same service, no matter what device they are using
- Mobility
  - Seamlessly move calls from device to device, or from cellular to Wi-Fi, even in the middle of a call.
  - Employees can work from anywhere and use all the features they value so much when you're in the office, and all connected to their office phone number.
  - Quickly change call routing using an easy-to-use web portal.

Success Stories

Customer: Multi-location Auto Services Business

Challenge

A multi-location automotive services business wanted their technicians to be able to quickly identify a customer, and the details of their last visit.   They are using a custom, but off-brand CRM system to manage their customer base containing more than 1.5 million customer records. They were also seeking a call recording solution, which was necessary to maintain their customer satisfaction guarantees. Sales management also planned to use recordings as a key component of an improved employee training program.

Solution

This regional automotive service customer implemented Summit Broadband, Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) and took advantage of several advanced feature.

In addition to providing UCaaS handsets at all locations, they added CRM Integration which allowed sales and support to instantly know which customer was calling, and the ability to view their account information. The integrated calling interface provided seamless call tracking and call logging. With Screen Pop and Click to Dial from their CRM, the customer can be identified as soon as call is received. Using Call Recording – all calls can now be recorded for analysis and training purposes.

Impact

Upon installation of UCaaS, sales and support employees were able to decrease their call durations by more than 20%. Recordings from those calls were used to develop a comprehensive training program that is used for new hires as well as ongoing coaching.

Customer: Regional Healthcare Staffing Agency

Challenge

A regional healthcare staffing agency was seeking a new communications solution for their outbound agents. They have several remote users and were seeking ways to improve the efficiency and productivity of each agent. Robust reporting was crucial to their improvement plans.

Solution

This customer chose UCaaS and implemented several enhanced features to meet their requirements. CRM Integration provided a seamless way for agents to track and manage their activities. They are taking advantage of the Click-to-Dial functionality from their CRM so outbound calls can be made directly from the customer record. Call Recording was also implemented for future call analysis and training purposes.

Impact

Implementation was quick and painless, and they were able to quickly improve how they tracked their agents provide training tools. Agents were able to save time because all tracking was done in real-time with CRM integration, resulting in increased customer contact and sales. Ongoing training efforts were also improved using he Call Recordings, especially important for the remote staff.

Summary

Summit Broadband UCaaS is truly the last phone system you'll ever need. It delivers best-in-class capabilities at a price that fits all budgets. As described earlier, a UCaaS solution has a lot of advantages. In addition to those, here are a few others:

- **Cost savings** - A bundled price for everything you need to run your business. UCaaS includes everything you need to support the voice and data needs of your business. Included with the price of each "seat", or user, is:
  - Full feature set plus a web portal to customize the business or employee experience
  - Business-wide features such as Auto Attendant and Music on Hold
  - A large pool of long-distance minutes
  - Equipment and installation

There are no hidden costs – you simply pay a flat rate per employee per month and that's it. As your business expands, you can simply add new users to your account. Big business features. UCaaS provides you all the features you need and then some. If you're on an older system today, you'll be thrilled with the functionality that's available with UCaaS. Included are the features you'd expect – call transfer, voicemail, call forwarding, and the like. However, what really makes UCaaS exciting are capabilities such as:

Mobility

Summit Broadband's mobility package, MaX UC, allows you to integrate your mobile device, tablet, or laptop into UCaaS. MaX UC includes downloadable clients for:

- Windows based laptops/desktop computers
- Android-based mobile devices and tablets
- Apple devices and tablets (iPhone, iPad, MacBook)

Max UC integrates your mobile device with enterprise phone functions and enables you to send and receive calls from any connected device. You can also Instant Message, Video Chat, integrate with Microsoft Outlook, and move active calls between devices.

Communication and Collaboration
Max UC provides fully integrated collaboration and messaging features for seamless communication and collaboration.
- Instant Messaging and Presence, and SMS capability
- Integrated collaboration capabilities for Desktop and Application Sharing
- HD Voice and Video Conferencing
- Meetings and Webinars

Quick and Easy Customization
An easy to use web portal enables you and your employees to easily customize their phone system experience to suit the way they do business.

Have an employee that's out of the office a lot of the day? With the click of a mouse, a user can take advantage of UCaaS powerful remote office capabilities to have their desk phone and mobile phone ring simultaneously or use the mobile client to receive calls anywhere.

Want to distribute inbound sales calls to a group of employees? Again, a click of a mouse in the web portal lets you set up a hunt group that can ring your sales team's phones simultaneously, in sequence, or in a specific pattern.

Customer Service

Summit Broadband is located where you are. Should there ever be a question or problem, our trained staff will solve it to your satisfaction – quickly. Compare that to other providers that serve customers with an 800 number in another state or even another country and you'll understand why local is better.

Voice Quality and Security

Since UCaaS is a service that's fully managed, we ensure a superior experience. This is not a product that uses the commercial internet to route voice calls. With UCaaS, end-to-end quality and security are assured. All calls are routed over our managed network to give your calls highest quality.

Conclusion

There are a lot of options out there when looking at a phone system. It may seem like the status quo – no change – is the safest bet. However, the pace of technology has now made possible an impressive array of capabilities available to small business that was previously only available to larger ones. Now might be the right time to evaluate your needs and see if new capabilities might help your business be more productive. You might find you can make a big jump forward while spending pretty much what you're spending today or even saving money.

With UCaaS, Summit Broadband is delivering a best-in-class phone system with no up-front costs that allows you to buy only what you need. We take care of all the details – phones, equipment, installation, training, and ongoing service – so you can focus on your business. Best of all: we're local – we're available around the clock to help solve any problems you might have.

Find out how UCaaS can help your business.
Call us or email **sales@summit-broadband.com**
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