

UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS



3
FACTS

REACHING WORLD WIDE

Ritchie Bros. Auctioneers have improved communication between 40 locations around the globe with one centralized platform and six support staff

Product review
Real time communications from Avaya Flare



PHOTO: AVAYA

Greening your business
Lower travel costs and emissions



PHOTO: RITCHIE BROS. AUCTIONEERS

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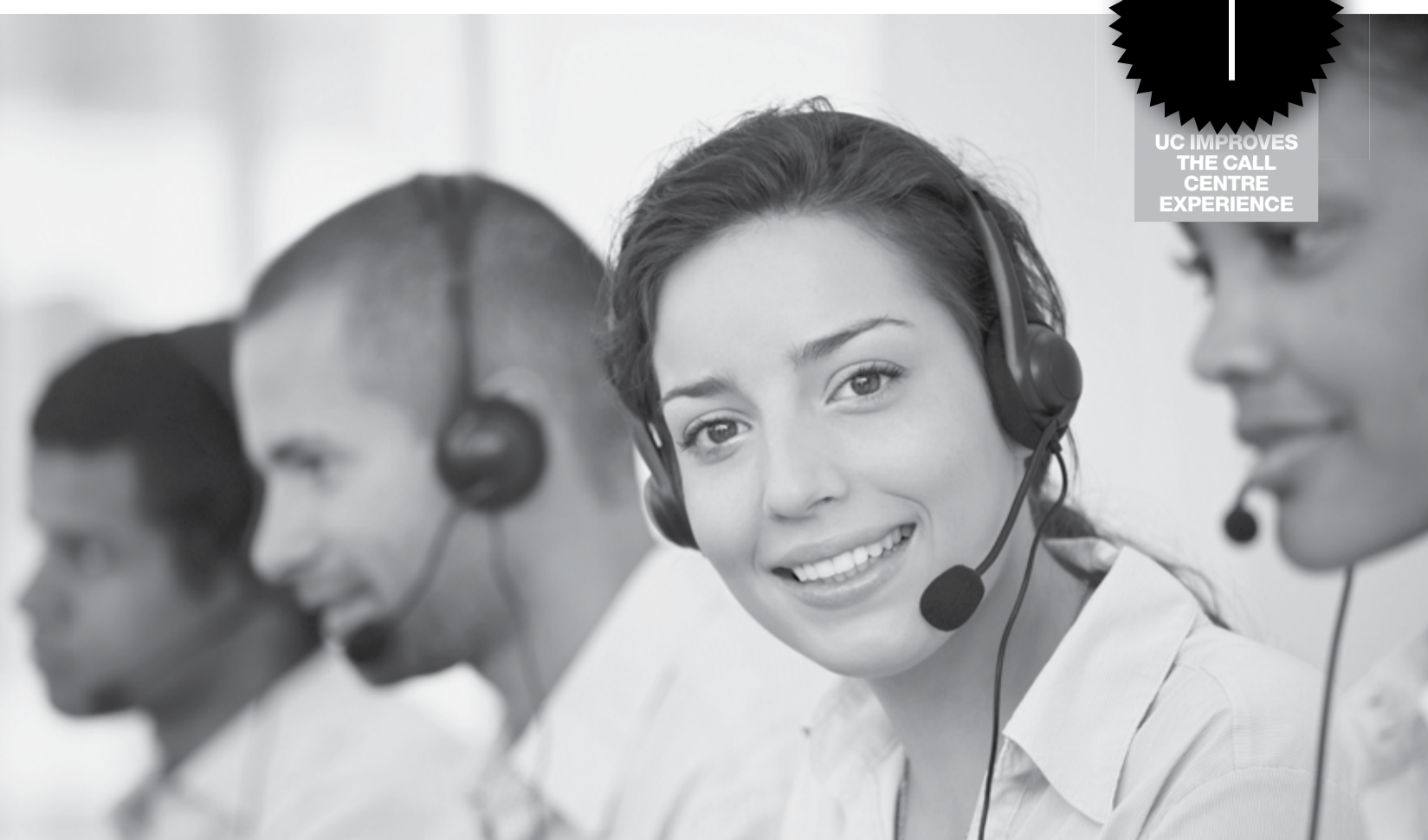
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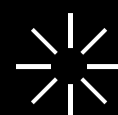
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CHALLENGES



FACT

1

UC IMPROVES
THE CALL
CENTRE
EXPERIENCE

WE RECOMMEND



Greening your business
UC brings people together without the carbon emissions.

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It’s hard to imagine now, but not too long ago, if someone wanted to **move data** among different “office suites”—say, place a spreadsheet into a slideshow presentation—he or she often had to recreate that spreadsheet **from scratch**.

The Time for UC is now

That’s because the data formats of each program were incompatible—a problem that gradually went away with technology that now eases the integration of social media tools such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. For industry insiders such as Jeff Rodman, co-founder and chief technical officer at Polycom, a Pleasanton, Calif.-based telepresence, video, and voice solutions and service provider, a similar evolution in technology—on a larger scale—led to the creation of what’s now commonly called “unified communications” or “UC.” “The same move is underway now in this new arena of business collaboration, blending another broad set of disparate functions so they can work smoothly and seamlessly together—for example, determining a colleague’s presence, initiating an (instant messaging) session and then escalating to a voice or video call,” Rodman said.

Real time

As the term is generally used, UC is the integration of real-time communication services such as Internet telephony, IM, video conferencing, presence information, speech recognition and call control with non-real-time communication services, such as voicemail, e-mail, text messaging and fax. A tech segment that market researches are expecting to become a \$5 billion business in about five years, UC is gaining traction largely because

it offers simplification, cost-savings, advanced functionality and freedom.

Consider the benefits of UC in the wireless world. As the use of mobile devices such as smartphones, netbooks and tablets rises, and as video plays a more prominent role in business communications—two trends which should get a further boost with the spread of superfast “4G” mobile Internet networks—UC is expected to become critical. In fact, the mobile environment gets one of the fastest paybacks from UC “because you don’t have a lot of buttons, you’re short on time and you can’t afford to scroll through a lot of screens.”

“You can’t be cutting and pasting, or switching among programs to find someone’s alternate phone number and try to link them into an ongoing conference,” he continued. “This is one place where UC really shines—for people who spend a lot of their time in the ‘mobile sphere’ and really need simple, powerful and highly efficient ways to communicate.” And that certainly includes healthcare professionals, as an often on-the-go set that needs to be able to receive timely and accurate information, according to Wes Durow, vice president of global marketing at Avaya, a Ridge, N.J.-based provider of enterprise communications systems.

“With UC we have been able to substantially cut patient check-in/check-out processes and when a hospital bed often represents more than \$1 million a year in revenue the productivity be-



RICH TEHRANI
CEO, TECHNOLOGY MARKETING CORPORATION (TMC)

BENEFITS OF UC

Fewer emissions

1 Not only does UC make it more feasible to use home-based workers, it also reduces the need for business travel, as employees can now meet with partners and prospects anywhere in the world, live and in real time, without having to board an airplane.

Cost reduction

2 The world of telephone applications has come a long way, bringing productivity, cost reduction and customer satisfaction to the mobile user. Having a mobility strategy is the first step.

Increased accessibility

3 Employees working remotely can easily stay connected with their office when working from home.

nefits of communication enabling the staff work flow with UC has driven

(a return on investment) in months, not years,” Durow said. Unified communications also facilitates telecommuting—an advantage for dispersed businesses that’s also eco-friendly and can save office space and money. Customer-facing businesses that must be able to scale up or down depending on demand also greatly benefit from UC.

Reducing costs

James Bond, vice president of software and product development at Herndon, Va.-based hosted communications provider Apptix, recalled one client, E-Appraisal, a Las Vegas-based provider of residential and commercial appraisal services and products, that increased its collaboration capabilities while reducing e-mail costs alone by nearly 90 percent with a UC system.

“Prior to using Apptix, E-Appraisal incurred costs reaching \$500 per month with their e-mail service provider—with Apptix’s integrated communications solutions, their costs for hosted Share-Point, IM and e-mail under \$60 each month,” Bond said. While unified software integration has had a head start on unified communications, UC’s cost savings and productivity likely will continue to fuel its rapid adoption. One day soon, experts say, we can expect all of our communications modes to seamlessly integrate.

A new form of collaboration

“Collaboration” means working together, exchanging information, and communicating in a timely manner with people and processes in various ways. It usually is a term that applies to people involved in a common task or problem and often need to discuss important issues in real time.

However, “customers” were rarely treated the same as enterprise personnel in the collaborative space because they are independent of the enterprise communications and information infrastructure and can’t be easily contacted for timely collaborative

interactions.

With the interoperability of the Internet, personalized multi-modal endpoint devices, business communication applications, business process applications, presence information, and mobile accessibility, “Customer UC” flexibility is enabling business contacts with customers to be treated in a more “collaborative” way. What “UC” as a concept does is to make the choice of interaction more flexible for all the people directly involved with a business process.

Process-to-Person Contacts For Work Flow Inside And Outside The Organization

UC is not just about person-to-per-

son contacts, but also about proactive process-to-person “notifications” that enable the recipient to dynamically use any mode of notification receipt (text, speech), as well as choose the modality of response. The latter can include interactions with automated self-service business process applications (on-line, IVR) and any mode of communication access to live assistance when necessary.

Outbound contacts with customers by automated business process applications is coming to life under the label of “Communications Enabled Business Processes” or CEBP, and will be particularly effective with the growing population of mobile users that carry “smart-phones” for flexible ac-

cessibility and increased availability and responsiveness.

CEBP, coupled with UC, is thus enabling customers to become part of the “collaborative” business landscape by providing a cost-effective means for a business process application to contact a customer whenever and wherever they may be through UC “notification and response” services. Notification alone is not enough to close the communication loop in a timely and efficient manner. Remember the pager?

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“all modalities of person-to-person communications are becoming available to end users, depending on their individual needs and circumstances. This is becoming particularly important as both consumers and business users are now becoming more communication-accessible with the flexibility of mobile, multimodal smartphones.”

– Art Rosenberg,
The Unified View

NEWS

UC for smartphones: A new platform in flexibility

A major concern for business organizations planning to implement unified communications (UC) is to prepare their end users for the changes in operational communications that UC will introduce to traditional business communications.

Until now, the business communications market has been grappling with the definition of "UC" from a business management and technology perspective, including integration issues, operational cost savings, and overall business process performance, but consumers and end users could care less about those factors. What they want to under-

stand is what benefit they will get directly from exploiting UC-based capabilities.

Need for flexibility

UC is not only "multi-media" in terms of content and user interfaces, but also "multi-modal," because UC-based applications also support synchronous contacts and asynchronous messaging interactions between people, as well as with automated business applications. So, it is not just a matter of which communication application will be used, but also the flexibility of the user to choose when and how to utilize the most practical mode of communication

whenever they want to.

This need for flexibility of choice is becoming more critical as end users increasingly start using personalized, mobile "smart-phones." With such devices, end users can fully exploit the flexibility benefits of UC, not only because of the multi-modal communication applications they can now access, but also because mobility increases both their "accessibility" and thus their "availability" for initiating, receiving, and responding to communication contacts from people and business processes.

"UC" Means "User's Choice"

For consumers and especially any

business end user using mobile "smart-phones," "UC" really means end-user personal choice of contact initiation, independently of the person they are communicating with. The same choice will exist for contact recipients who wish to respond to a contact. Textual notifications from an automated business application can be dynamically converted to voice messages when appropriate, and responses can exploit interactive applications (IVR) or, with "click-to-live assistance," be switched from a self-service application to available live assistance.

For person-to-person contacts, UC, with federated presence management, will be able to schedule a future call if the recipient is not currently available, rather simply placing a "blind" and disruptive call attempt.

The bottom line of "UC" to any end user is more flexible and personalized "User's Choice" communications!

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UC gives small businesses the advantage

Increased productivity is one of the key benefits of unified communications for businesses of all sizes. Now SMBs increasingly are both willing and able to embrace UC and take advantage of that.

SMBs are particularly well positioned to realize the benefits of UC given how they operate, says Larry Levenberg, vice president and general manager of national channels at NEC Corp. of America. He notes that employee roles at SMBs tend to be a lot less defined than they are in larger firms.

"By breaking down communication silos, UC makes it easy for SMB employees who wear different hats to switch from one task or role to another and get more done, faster," he concludes.

To make UC more accessible and manageable for SMBs, hosted and cloud-based UC solutions also are becoming more common. And, according to Nemertes Research, these types of services - that involve VoIP, unified messaging, videoconferencing, Web conferencing, and document sharing - are expected to see significant growth in the near future.

Such services locate the UC hardware and software within a service provider data center. That way, the cost can be shared among various customers, making it possible for providers to make affordable UC solutions available to much smaller customers.

Speaking to this trend, UC service provider Alteva this spring announced a new partnership with BroadSoft and Microsoft to deliver hosted UC services for small businesses.

SMBs want to be able to do the same things as larger customers, including mobile devices for work purposes, easily launch conferencing applications, and otherwise more efficiently manage their communications, says Lawrence Byrd, director of unified communications architecture at Avaya. These businesses also need unified communications solutions to be packaged affordably and delivered in an integrated, easy-to-use way, he adds.

Responding to the call, the company offers the Avaya IP Office solution, which Byrd says helps SMBs get up and running without a lot of know-how, hassle or expense.

Another all-in-one solution for SMBs comes from Siemens Enterprise Communications Inc. OpenScope Office MX, designed for businesses with up to 150 users, has all the UC features typically associated with solutions for large enterprises, tight Microsoft integration, and contact center capabilities.

"We've found OpenScope Office MX is straightforward and requires little training, which helped us smoothly integrate the technology and get started easily," says Wendy Marks, IT support and LAN analyst at Member Insurance Agency. "Even more importantly, it has helped us improve customer service in our contact center by ensuring we never miss a call and customer questions are routed to the appropriate person in a timely manner."

PAULA BERNIER
editorial@mediaplanet.com

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INSPIRATION

FACT

2

UC MAKES
GLOBAL COMMUNICATION
ACCESSIBLE

A GLOBAL BID

Question: How did a company spanning 40 locations world-wide increase communication with minimal cost?

Answer: They streamlined it onto a centralized platform with the help of UC.

Auctions may still take place in their traditional sense, but UC technology has taken them to a global scale. When an auctioneer has that kind of presence around the world, communication and collaboration are key to making business run smoothly and efficiently.

Global reach

As an auctioneer spanning 40 locations worldwide, Ritchie Bros. Auctioneers serves the transportation, construction, agricultural, forestry, mining, petroleum and marine industries by selling heavy equipment, machinery and other assets. Several hundred auctions take place every year, attracting a high level of communication and contact both within Ritchie Bros., and from off-site bidders.

To remedy the communication challenges, the company invested in and deployed a unified communications system with the help of Avaya and Newmarket, ON-based Unity Telecom. The Avaya Aura system offered an opportunity to streamline communications between employees, sales staff and customers in one centralized platform.

"Ritchie Bros. supplies a global marketplace to its customers, so it's pos-

sible for our sales team to be working on deals in many different territories at once," says Chris Farrer, telecommunications manager at Ritchie Bros. "We've seen a 20 percent drop in long distance over the same period last year, but we expect this to increase as we deploy and train on what we call the 'rVox' (Ritchie Bros. Voice) voice network."

The company is able to do this by utilizing a multi-protocol label switching (MPLS) network that basically allows employees to make seven-digit station-to-station calls to any of the 26 rVox locations around the world, thereby reducing branch-to-branch international calling.

In addition, Farrer says Ritchie Bros. also implemented "least cost routing" tables to direct long distance traffic to the closest "point of presence" to further extend its local calling area. And if needed, the tables can be used for disaster recovery and business continuity, allowing calls to be placed via an off-site facility in cases where one location has failed.

"It's been great communicating using our seven-digit 'One Number', knowing that calls will be 'extended' to all devices to actually speak to someone, and not leave a message," Farrer says. "Also, our tie to Microsoft Active Directory, allows us to dial by first or last number to any of our 1,100 employees globally, using Avaya One-X Communicator."

Small group, big support
Farrer has a small telecommunica-

PROFILE

Ritchie Bros. Auctioneers

■ **Established:**
1958, Kelowna, BC.

■ **Locations:**
Headquartered in Vancouver, BC, Canada, Ritchie Bros. has over 110 locations worldwide, including more than 40 auction sites in North America, Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Australia.

■ **Employees:**
Ritchie Bros. has more than 1,100 full time employees around the world.

■ **Industries:**
Ritchie Bros. sells used and unused equipment for the construction, transportation, agricultural, material handling, mining, forestry, petroleum, marine and other industries.

tion group of six people in Vancouver, which is responsible for deployment and support of all Ritchie Bros. corporate enterprise and mobile telecommunications. Avaya has helped his team support the entire voice network globally, saving money, resources and time. This eliminated the need to build relationships with many different vendors in different countries to deploy a system now that the entire company's telephony has been centralized.

While internal communications have seen a significant change, so has the way information and contact flows during auctions. Since Ritchie Bros. offers an online bidding service, it was important to ensure that lines remain open for long periods of time. In achieving that with Aura, lines can stay open for more than eight hours at a time, lowering the costs for long distance, trunk lines and mobile phones.

This comes in handy when auctions take place at temporary locations because these public auctions see a lot of communications traffic from hundreds of people before, during and after the event. The problem in prior years was that there wasn't a single central point of contact to manage the millions of dollars moving back and forth.

The next step is to better integrate Avaya One-X Communicator into IBM Lotus Notes, so that auctioneers would be able to launch interactive sessions with any other employees by simply clicking on their names.

Rolling out a unified communications system has created a better way for Ritchie Bros. to manage and perform its auctions — a seamless integration that has already benefitted both employees and customers alike.

TED KRITSONIS

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Unity

TELECOM

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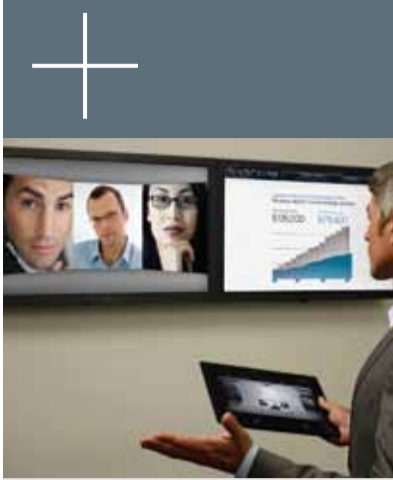
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GLOBAL PRESENCE UC makes Ritchie Bros. Auctions available to off-site bidders.

PHOTO: RITCHIE BROS. AUCTIONEERS

PRODUCT REVIEW



Avaya Flare

Avaya recently announced a family of new real-time enterprise video communications and collaboration products and services that deliver a simpler and more compelling end user experience. Highlighting this next wave of Avaya's innovative, fit-for-purpose solutions is the Avaya Flare™ Experience, the industry's first next-generation user experience that delivers unique collaboration capabilities across video, voice and text.

The new solutions, which range from personal desktop to multi-screen room systems, make high definition, low bandwidth video collaboration accessible for more employees in more enterprises at one-third the cost of competing solutions using significantly less bandwidth.

ROB DALEMAN

National Marketing Manager
Avaya Canada
editorial@mediaplanet.com



ADVERTORIAL: ARE YOU MOBILE? OR ARE YOU MOBILE SAVVY?

Since the absolute explosion of the Wireless/Smartphone industry much has been discussed about how to reduce costs in these areas, especially for the larger corporation who has large numbers of mobile users (usually field staff, sales etc.).

I am going to show you how to A) Increase the productivity of mobile workers and B) Reduce cell phone costs and C) Provide superior customer service while being mobile.

The product I will focus on today is part of the Avaya Unified Communications portfolio, it's called One-X Mobile™.

One-X Mobile™ is a mobile phone application, it can run on virtually any mobile or smart phone including the iPhone and Blackberry. It's like having your office phone in a tiny software package on your mobile, with all the same features that you are used to in the office.

- Allows you to control your outbound caller ID to display your office number in place of your mobile number when you make calls

- Access to internal office phone directories

- Allows your co-workers to see if you are on a call or available for a call

- Calls route from your cell phone through your office phone system

- Only one voice mail to manage, if you miss a call on your mobile, it goes to your office voice mail

- You can program it so when someone calls you at the office, it can ring at any other phone number you want it to

Here's where we get back to business, Avaya One-X Mobile can enhance the customer experience with single number access, no need for them to try and remember another number. Access to corporate direc-

tories means you can dial someone internally with the typical 4 digit extension, not the full number, this makes it quicker to call people in the company. Avaya presence aggregation means your co-workers know if you are on the phone or not, and won't call and leave you a message, which makes communicating more efficient. Single voice mail means you don't have two mailboxes to manage, which saves time. Calls route through your company's internal phone system (all over the world), which saves money in long distance charges. The follow me

feature, allows calls to come to any phone you choose, lets you save your valuable cell phone minutes for when you really need them.

The world of telephone applications has come a long way, bring productivity, cost reduction and customer satisfaction to the mobile user. Having a mobility strategy is the first step.

FRANK MIRECKI

Director of Sales & Technology,
BrantTel Networks

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PROFESSIONAL INSIGHT



How UC can green your business

While the main reason for investing in unified communications is increased employee productivity, many organizations are discovering that UC also brings numerous “green” benefits and can help reduce their carbon footprint. Let’s take a quick look at the top ways unified communications is helping companies go “green:”

■ **Telecommuting:** With UC employees can more effectively work from home or remote locations, thus taking cars off the road. With today’s IP-based UC systems, phone calls, emails, IMs and faxes can be routed to any worker with an Internet-connected PC or laptop, regardless of location. Yet these workers appear to everyone on the outside as though they are in the main office: For example outbound calls display the employee’s office number on caller ID, even though they’re working from home. What’s more “presence,” one of UC’s most powerful features, allows home-based workers to see the availability status of all other workers on the company network. Even companies that don’t nor-

mally allow employees to work from home can green their operations through UC’s ability to extend



Patrick Barnard
Group Managing Editor, TMCnet

“Even companies that don’t normally allow employees to work from home can green their operations...”

employee working hours. “Sometimes an employee might not have time to complete a project in the of-

ice,” says Scott Noles, general manager of Kinex Medical, a manufacturer of medical equipment that purchased a UC system two years ago. “But with a UC system, they can more easily finish that project once they arrive at home, and meet their deadline, which is a better alternative to having them drive back in,” Noles says, pointing out that this too helps take cars off the road.

■ **Conferencing:** Many UC systems come with audio and video conferencing pre-integrated. Audio conferencing allows remote and home-based workers to hold conference calls with multiple parties in on-demand fashion—thus reducing the need for travel—while video conferencing allows for “face-to-face” communications with colleagues, partners and customers. Not only does this make it more feasible to use home-based workers, it also reduces the need for business travel, as employees can now meet with partners and prospects anywhere in the world, live and in real time, without having to board an airplane. This also greatly reduces carbon emissions.

■ **Reduced energy usage:**

UC solutions, especially software-based ones, also help companies green their operations by reducing the amount of equipment in the server room, which in turn helps reduce energy consumption. An “all-in-one,” software-based UC system can cut the number of server boxes by more than half, not only reducing energy consumption but also reducing the need for cooling. “Furthermore, virtualization can be used to achieve an even smaller carbon footprint,” says Tom Fisher, systems engineering director at Interactive Intelligence. “Because software is used to provide UC, servers can be virtualized so that instead of each server requiring its own physical ‘box,’ multiple virtual servers can be run on a single physical server. In other words, the hardware to server ratio goes from 1:1 to one to many. For example, a company can buy one large server and run multiple instances of Windows Server on that single piece of hardware. This enables more servers to run on less hardware, thus decreasing the re-

quired electricity to run the server.”

■ **Cloud computing:** Companies can further reduce their carbon footprint by going with a hosted, SaaS or “cloud”-based unified communications solution. With the cloud model of software delivery, organizations can essentially eliminate the need for on-premises equipment, as it is now located in a service provider’s data center, as opposed to their own server room.

“The same UC functionality is provided by the cloud or SaaS solution, however, the power consumption for many customers can now be managed at the data center, where servers are centrally located,” Fisher says. “Since a data center manages many servers at a single location, it focuses on maintaining and improving efficiencies in power consumption and cooling. So there’s an economy of scale when more customers use a SaaS solution.”

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PRODUCT REVIEW



VXI Vci V100
Can last 10 hours on one charge

Vci V100: A sleek and stylish headset

Designed specifically for contact centers and office environments, the Vci V100 wireless headset system provides hands-free mobility and superior audio performance for the office professional. Using 1.9 GHz DECT 6.0 technology, the sleek and stylish headset design includes a microphone boom with noise-canceling technology that filters out unwanted background noise. With up to 10 hours of continuous talk time, users can talk all day long on a single charge. Weighing less than 1 oz, the headset comes in three different wearing styles. The optional L50 handset lifter lets users answer and end calls anywhere within the headset’s 300 foot range.



Jabra GO 6400 series
Crystal clear sound and comfort

Jabra GO 6400 series:

The Jabra GO 6400 series is a future-proof headset. Capable of transmitting calls from your desk, mobile and softphone, your Jabra GO 6400 series headset delivers big benefits in the office as well. Advanced audio technology gives you crystal clear sound; a lightweight, ergonomic design with choice of wearing styles increases comfort; a flip up screen with touch and touch handling easy.

Live Internet updates enable you to download the latest firmware, new functionality improvements and free drivers for the latest generation of softphones. Jabra GO 6400 series headsets are also UC ready, preparing you for a smooth transition to Unified Communications in the future.

UC Solution Delivers Super-Sized Benefits for Subway

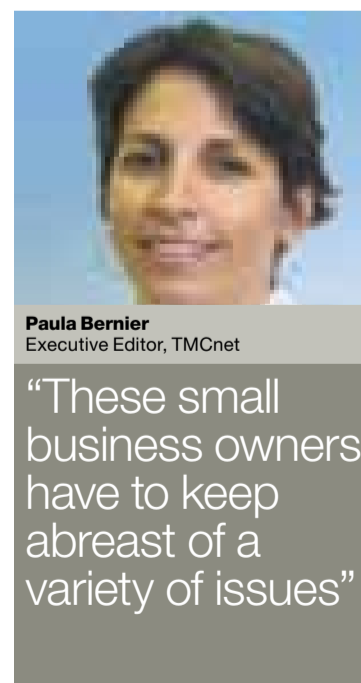
Subway is known for its delicious sandwiches, fresh-baked bread and spokesman Jared. But for franchise owners of the popular sandwich shops, delivering food quickly and to order is more complex than your simple mustard vs. mayo decision.

These small business owners have to keep abreast of a variety of issues, including various payment options and related customer loyalty programs. And unified communications has become a key ingredient in enabling them to do so.

Independent Purchasing Cooperative, an organization owned by the 24,000 North American Subway franchisees, uses the Interactive Intelligence Customer Interaction Center product for IP PBX, voicemail, presence, unified messaging, and softphone functionality.

Inquiry support

James A. Esposito manages the Value Pay Services division within IPC that handles electronic payments at Subway stores. When a franchisee has a question relative payments using gift cards, rewards cards, or credit or debit cards they can contact IPC to get an answer. Given the gift card program is mandatory for franchisees, and just last year the acceptance of credit and



Paula Bernier
Executive Editor, TMCnet

“These small business owners have to keep abreast of a variety of issues”

debit cards became a requirement, there are several such incoming inquiries, says Esposito.

In the past, he says, IPC had a basic key system, which simply routed all calls through the receptionist. But as the business expanded it needed a more robust telephony system, and IPC discovered that the product from Interactive Intelligence fit the bill, he says.

Clean reporting

A big selling point of the Interactive

Intelligence solution, according to Esposito, was its ability to integrate with Microsoft CRM. Prior to using the new call center, his reps were managing their CRM interactions using Excel—not a scalable solution. With the Interactive Intelligence solution, however, reporting is automated and much “cleaner,” he says, noting it automatically records such statistics as when peak calling periods take place and that data flows into the CRM system.

“That totally helped us with staffing,” he says.

And the ACD that IPC implemented with the Interactive Intelligence system allows the organization to queue and route calls quickly and efficiently, he says. Prior to the ACD caller wait times averaged 10 to 15 minutes each. Now they’re in the two- to three-minute range.

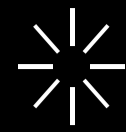
“That was huge,” says Esposito.

Additionally, he says, IPC recently implemented Interactive Intelligence’s IVR functionality. The new IVR system handles 250,000 minutes per month, and allowed IPC to see its return on investment in just six months. Esposito says the IVR, which was installed in early 2009, had yielded IPC more than \$240,000 in savings as of the end of last year.

“The IVR was sort of the icing on the cake,” he says.

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3

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Brendan B. Read
Senior Contributing Editor, TMCnet

The call centre revolution

When business owners first investigate unified communications, they often become so enamored with the benefits it can bring to their internal operations, such as improved collaboration and increased employee productivity, that they overlook its potential for improving their customer service operations.

Companies that have deployed UC in their contact centers can deliver a whole new level of customer service that traditional call center technology can't match. For example, suppose a customer calls looking for detailed technical information about a product or service (such as an educational science kit for a high school student). The customer might have a complex technical question that the agent can't answer.

No more "hold please"

If the call center is still using traditional technology, the customer might be asked to stay on hold until the right person can assist, which, as we all know, could take a while. Worse yet the interaction will "dead end": The customer might have to wait for a representative to call back. Or worse they're asked to call back.

But with a UC system in place, the agent can seamlessly contact a "knowledge expert" and bring them in on the call, thus resolving the customer's issue faster and in a single interaction. Using two of UC's most powerful features, presence and conferencing, the agent is able to see the availability status of various "knowledge experts" throughout the organization and, based on their availability and "type," can bring them in on the call to assist. These knowledge experts can be employees who work in various other departments outside of the main contact center - including workers at remote offices or even employees at partner or affiliate companies.

The end of the transfer maze

"Before UC, calls would often get stuck in the contact centers," says Gary Barnett, CTO and EVP of R&D at Aspect. "Callers would get lost in 'transfer hell' as sometimes their calls would get dropped and agents would have to say 'let me get your number in case I lose you during this transfer to call you back.' Customers would then have to repeat themselves to the person they were transferred to, which added more time and annoyance. With UC, everyone from the customers to the contact center agents to the experts across the rest of the company can be connected, transferred, or brought into the same conversations seamlessly to get more accomplished."

The real future of unified communications

CHANGE

Not only are the old ways like real-time telephony, fax, e-mail, voice messaging, etc., becoming integrated, but new forms of exchanging text messaging information between people and automated business process applications are part of the UC game plan as well. The flexibility of UC supports the needs of individual end users, wherever they are located, whatever their business responsibilities and relationships are, and whether they are the initiators of a communication contact or the recipient and respondent to such a contact. The key benefit is that, except for real-time voice or video conferencing, which does expect all parties to use a common real-

"Unified Communications" has been confusing the business marketplace because it . . . integrates a number of ways to communicate person-to-person electronically."

Art Rosenberg
The Unified View

time modality, all communicants can communicate independently in any

way they want to, not necessarily in the same "channel" as the other party.

What does that really mean for business processes that will exploit UC flexibility? One thing is that it won't be "All talk, and no action!"

When we talk, we are really exchanging information, but now we have many modalities for ways to do that, depending on our circumstances, preferences, and device interfaces. Furthermore, when we talk there will be different kinds of action if we talk to computers. Not only do we not have to waste time and effort to transcribe important information for our records, but also such information can now become "contextual" to automate or monitor various kinds of activities instead of using expensive labor. Health care will be one of the big bene-

ficiaries of UC when mobile patients can be notified to take their medicine, keep their appointments, or report in to emergency care.

What we have been seeing so far from UC goes far beyond lower VoIP phone costs, mobile phones, or even "unified messaging." The tip of the UC iceberg is visible below the thousands of mobile applications being developed for "multi-modal" smartphone users (or business customers), by the wireless "app stores." That's where the real communication action will be taking place, especially when "click-to-call," combined with presence management, makes a big joke of our old way of making phone calls to people!

ART ROSENBERG
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Customer interaction means UC payoff

The bottom line payoff for UC-based business communications has been widely promoted as optimizing business process performance through communications efficiency and flexibility or "UC-B."

While there are also direct benefits to individual end users (UC-U) in terms of their productivity, the reality is that the more you can automate a business process and the less you need to depend on people to be part of the business process, the more efficient that process can be. (In the real world, however, we really can't automate everything all the time!)

With the rapid adoption of personalized mobile, multimodal, smartphones by both consumers and business users, the opportunity to exploit UC for both inbound and outbound

(proactive notifications) real-time interactions between customers, enterprise action-takers, and automated business applications will be increasing significantly. What that means is that both automated self-service applications and access to live assistance can be initiated by either a business process or by a customer, and the real-time medium of communication can selectively be combinations of "click-to-call" voice conversations, "Push-to-talk" (voice message exchange), online application interactions, or text messaging (IM, SMS). (Social networking might now also be part of the interaction game.)

The business of apps

The "Apps Store" concept of wireless service providers can be extended to enterprise portals to facilitate indivi-

dual consumer access to various mobile customer applications, while at the enterprise end, the automated business process can monitor the status of application metrics and proactively initiate a personalized customer contact with a choice of user interfaces based on accessibility (device, Presence status) or user preference. I see CEBP getting the most mileage out of mobile online applications and proactive "process-to-person" multimodal notifications, (authorized, of course), both coupled with "click-for assistance" (choice of IM or voice connection). Such contacts will be more "intelligent" and efficient because they will be multimodal and contextually initiated, based on the information source used by the customer for contact initiation or the business application that exploits CEBP. It won't be just their

identity as a caller or the location they call from.

Flexibility means revenue

If we are looking at UC-B business process benefits as the major justification for implementing UC, we obviously must highlight customer contacts and interactions as a key target for UC flexibility because that is where revenue and profit come from (in addition to cost savings). Accordingly, as consumer adoption of personalized mobile smartphones increases, the old enterprise voice-based customer call center game has to change to multimodal live and self-service interactions as well.

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