



To Cloud or Not to Cloud?

Which Communications Deployment
Option is Best for Your Business?



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Guide

WHICH COMMUNICATIONS DEPLOYMENT OPTION IS BEST FOR YOUR BUSINESS?

What You Will Learn

You have three choices for using Cisco® Unified Communications and Collaboration applications: on-premises, in the cloud, or a hybrid of the two. The option that is best for your company depends on your IT skills, budget priorities, growth plans, and customization requirements. This guide, intended for organizations with 100 to 1000 employees, will help you compare the options.

Either Way, Improve Interactions and Experiences

Your employees and customers enjoy the same experience whether you deploy Cisco Business Edition 6000 (BE6000) on-premises, use a Cisco Powered cloud service, or combine the two. Either way, Cisco Unified Communications and Collaboration applications can help you:

- **Improve team performance:** See at a glance which co-workers are available and then just click to call, send an instant message, start a videoconference, or start a Cisco WebEx® meeting.
- **Increase customer satisfaction:** Make it easier for your customers to reach the right person the first time, with intelligent call routing and extension mobility. Your employees can get answers while callers are still on the phone. They just look to find an available expert and then click to call or send an instant message.
- **Enable employees to work from anywhere:** Provide wireless IP phones to highly mobile employees such as safety officers, IT helpdesk technicians, and healthcare providers. Simplify telework by giving employees the same communications and collaboration experience at home as they have in the office. Introduce a bring-your-own-device (BYOD) policy, allowing employees to use personal smartphones or tablets for work.
- **Lower total cost of ownership (TCO):** Use the same network for voice, data, and video, lowering equipment and management costs. Eliminate service provider fees for telephone extension moves, adds, and changes. Reduce monthly costs for service provider connections by using a Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) link.
- **Integrate communications into your business processes:** With help from a Cisco partner, you can add click-to-call capabilities to your other business applications. You can also integrate your Cisco Unified IP Phones with other systems to open doors for visitors, check in and out of shifts, indicate that a hotel room is ready for occupancy, and much more.

A Proven Platform

More than 85 percent of Fortune 500 companies use Cisco Collaboration Solutions to build their competitive advantage.

Gartner placed Cisco in the Leader's Quadrant for the following technologies: Web Conferencing, Corporate Telephony, Unified Communications, and Contact Center Infrastructure (2012 and 2013).

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On-Premises or in the Cloud: Questions to Guide Your Decision

Do you have enough dedicated IT staff for your current and new projects?

If your IT staff is overextended, think about whether it makes sense for them to spend time managing your unified communications and collaboration applications. An on-premises solution might be best if collaboration technology is core to your business. Some organizations in this situation include contact centers, educational institutions offering distance learning, and software development companies with team members in different offices.

But if collaboration technology is not core to the business, a cloud service can free your IT team to focus on activities that add more value. The monthly per-user fee includes management of user accounts, dial plans, and software upgrades. Not having to spend time on these activities frees your IT team to focus on strategic initiatives.

How do you plan to invest your IT budget?

Some companies prefer to invest in capital assets that they can depreciate over time. If you deploy Cisco Unified Communications and Collaboration solutions on-premises, your only major operational expenses are service contracts and IT staff time to manage the system.

But if your company prefers to shift capital expenditures (CapEx) to operating expenses (OpEx), consider a Cisco Powered cloud service. You pay a predictable, monthly per-user fee that includes access to the latest features. Later, you can add new collaboration services without any capital investment in servers and software. If you add Cisco TelePresence® conferencing, for example, you need to purchase only the endpoints.

Do you need the agility to rapidly deploy, change, and scale?

If your business is likely to remain the same size or is growing at a slow and steady rate, either Cisco Business Edition 6000 or a Cisco Powered cloud service will suit your needs.

If growth is rapid or unpredictable, you might prefer the flexibility of a Cisco Powered cloud service. You can add or delete employees from the plan whenever you want, and pay only for the number of accounts you need. This flexibility is especially useful if call volume varies by season, you expect to add new locations, or you are planning acquisitions. You can generally start using Cisco Powered services just one or two weeks after signing the contract.

Cloud Fusion: Combine On-Premises and Cloud Solutions

The choice between on-premises and cloud deployments is not either/or. You also can combine them, using some collaboration services from your private cloud and others from Cisco, Cisco partners, and other cloud service providers.

Cisco calls this approach cloud fusion. For example, you could host Cisco Unified Contact Center Enterprise in your private cloud and subscribe to a Cisco Powered cloud service for voice, voicemail, presence, and instant messaging.

Or you could deploy Cisco Business Edition 6000 on-premises, use a Cisco Powered cloud service for your contact center, integrate it with Salesforce.com so that employees can click to call, and also use Cisco WebEx and Cisco Cloud Web Security.



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How critical is it to stay current on the latest collaboration technologies?

The easiest way to make sure that your employees always have the latest collaboration features is to subscribe to a Cisco Powered collaboration service. Partners keep the software up-to-date, so you don't need to do anything.

If you have the staff to manage an on-premises solution, consider a Cisco Unified Communications Software Subscription (UCSS). During the term of your subscription (1, 2, 3, or 5 years) you receive guaranteed access to all new software upgrades.

Do you need a highly customized collaboration environment?

Think about whether you deploy collaboration solutions in a unique way that gives you a competitive advantage. Cloud service providers can provide some customization. But if you need highly customized collaboration capabilities, consider an on-premises solution. Your Cisco partner can work with you to integrate Cisco Business Edition 6000 with other applications from Cisco and other vendors. For example, you can provide click-to-call capabilities in your business applications. Add a "Contact Us" button on your website that starts a Jabber® Guest video call with a contact center agent. Or send emergency notifications to employees and visitors using instant messages, recorded calls, and digital signage.

Table 1 lists situations that might influence your choice of whether to use an on-premises, cloud, or hybrid deployment.

Table 1 Deciding Which Deployment Option Is Best for You

Cisco Powered Cloud Service	Cisco Business Edition 6000 (On-Premises)	Hybrid, also Called Cloud Fusion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your business model is in flux so you want to remain agile. You want to free time for your IT staff needs to focus on the core business. You want to shift from CapEx to OpEx. You need to very quickly add unified communications and collaboration services in a new location. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You want maximum control of your communications and collaboration platform. You have IT staff with the necessary skills. Your industry restricts usage of off-premises systems and services. Your CFO prefers to make capital expenditures that can be depreciated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some communications and collaboration capabilities are core to your business and others are not. You already have deployed some collaboration applications on-premises and want to continue benefiting from the investment as you shift to the cloud. 

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Customer Success Stories

Perspectives Charter Schools Chose a Cisco Powered Cloud Service

Perspectives Charter Schools operates five open-enrollment public schools in several Chicago communities. Just two IT professionals serve 300 employees in all schools. They couldn't afford the time to wait with technicians at the co-location facility whenever the voice system needed servicing. They needed the time for IT projects related to learning and administrative efficiency.

Now Perspectives Charter Schools uses a secure Cisco Powered cloud service, funded by e-Rate. The IT team no longer needs to wait with external technicians while they work on phone system equipment. They also don't need to spend scarce time upgrading software, because the Cisco partner keeps the system up-to-date. The school estimates that total cost of ownership has dropped by 25 percent.

Transwestern Chose an On-Premises Solution

Transwestern is a privately held real estate firm whose many specialties include property and facilities management and sustainability. Among its management properties is Pennzoil Place, an award-winning building owned by Metropolis Investment Holdings. The building currently has 37 tenants.

To provide communications and collaboration services for Transwestern employees and contractors who work in the building, Transwestern and Metropolis Investment Holdings implemented Cisco Business Edition 6000. The all-in-one solution supports voice, Cisco Unity® Connection for voicemail, Cisco TelePresence, and the Cisco Jabber™ messaging platform, which building engineers use on their iPads for presence and instant messaging. Later Transwestern will offer unified communications and collaboration as a service to tenants, on either a temporary or permanent basis. Now Transwestern can respond more quickly to tenant requests and building problems because employees can reach mobile building engineers and security officers by calling their wireless IP phones or sending an instant message to their tablets.

Synergis Education Chose the Hybrid Approach

Established in 2011, Synergis Education provides educational services for colleges and universities that are evolving to serve adults returning to school. The company decided to use cloud services exclusively. Employees currently connect to a Cisco Powered cloud service for communications and to other clouds for email, document sharing, accounting, project management, human resources, student information systems, learning management systems, software development, and more. Not having to manage infrastructure allows the company to focus on service excellence for its partners.



For More Information

To learn more about Cisco Business Edition 6000, visit: cisco.com/go/be6000.

To learn more about Cisco Powered cloud services, visit: cisco.com/go/ciscopowered.



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