

# Successfully Deploying Communications And Collaboration Solutions To Meet The Needs Of Your Medium-Size Business

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## Introduction

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Whether you're a growing medium-size business (MB), a thriving multinational, a small local player, or somewhere in between, the way your employees communicate today differs significantly from how they did as little as five — even three — years ago. Why? Simply put, it's a difference in technology and heightened business demands. Today's assortment of mobile form factors, video endpoints, social forums, and ubiquitous information, coupled with a distributed, mobile, tech-savvy client base facing persistent economic challenges, calls for a more strategic approach to enabling business communication.

For IT decision-makers at medium-size organizations, that means quickly identifying communications and collaboration solutions that have the rich functionality to meet today's business challenges and requirements while providing flexibility and scale to meet future goals and objectives. This profile examines the specific challenges that senior IT decision-makers at MBs face and how cloud communication and collaboration technologies can help them resolve those issues. The profile's key findings include the following:

- Employees at MBs are increasingly mobile.
- MBs struggle to quantify the benefits of a unified communications and collaboration (UC&C) solution.
- Network performance issues at MBs create a barrier to extending functionality to users.



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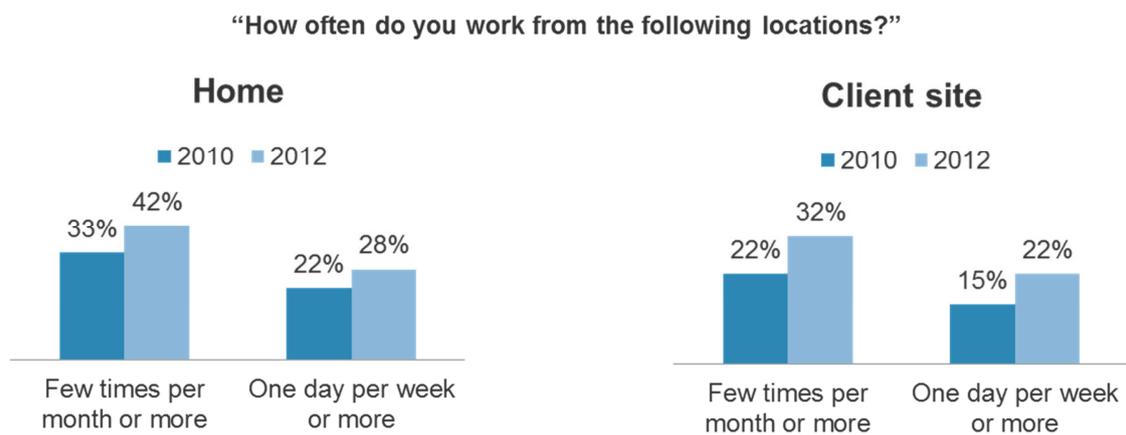
## Empowered Employees Demand Tools They Need When, Where, And How It's Needed

When, where, and how employees work is changing. How? In Forrester's Workforce Employee Survey, Q4 2012, more than 40% of employees worked from home a few times a month or more, with a further 28% working one day or more per week at home (see Figure 1). Compared with 2010, there has been a steady increase in the number of employees seeking to work more flexibly.

To keep up with the mobile working environment, employees are increasingly using their own devices to stay productive when they are on the go. The top benefit of using or purchasing a personal device or applications for work is to boost an employee's efficiency or productivity in an increasingly hectic lifestyle: 40% of employees from MBs in Australia, New Zealand, the US, and the UK cite greater efficiency and productivity as a key benefit of using a personal device, with a further 29% citing a better work/life balance as a key benefit.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 1**

Your Workforce Is On The Move: Employees Increasingly Work Away From The Office



Base: 819 employees at medium-size businesses (100 to 999 employees) in the UK and US (2010);  
912 employees from medium-size organization (100-999 employees) from UK and US (2012)

Source: Forrsights Workforce Employee Survey, Q3 2010, Forrsights Workforce Employee Survey, Q4 2012

## IT Departments Need To Keep Up With Their Empowered Users

Employees are using more consumer devices, such as tablets and smartphones, and enhanced enterprise-level mobile applications when working away from the office, whether at home or on a client's premises. Allowing employees use an array of employee- and employer-provided devices to access corporate data and resources when working remotely so frequently opens up new challenges for IT organizations at MBs. In February 2013, Cisco commissioned Forrester Consulting to take a closer look at how MBs plan to adopt and use collaboration and communication technologies. The resulting survey of 75 organizations from Australia, the US, and the UK shows that MB decision-makers believe it is very important to secure business data and information and ensure network resiliency and remote access (see Figure 2). IT must meet the needs of an increasingly mobile workforce while continuing to ensure that corporate data is secured and managed appropriately across all networks and devices. Improving the external customer experience is high on the agenda of IT organizations at MBs and drives many IT managers' agendas.

**Figure 2**

Technical Issues Top IT's UC Concerns



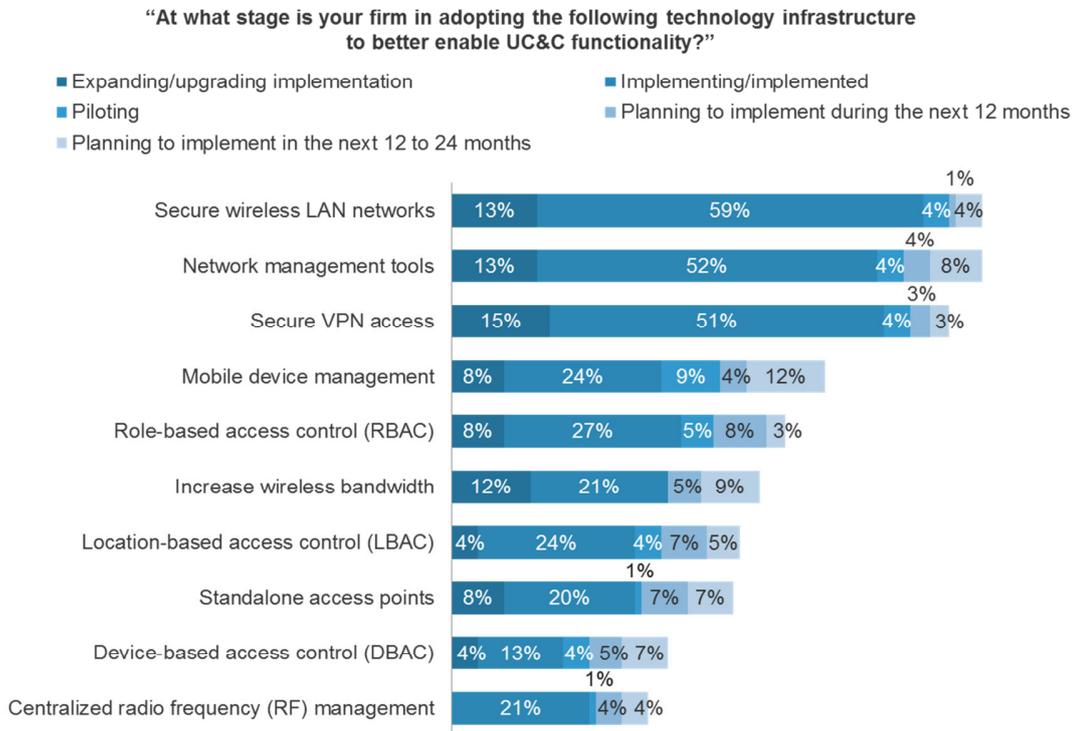
Base: 75 unified communications decision-makers at medium-size businesses in Australia, the US, and the UK

(Some responses have been omitted)

Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Cisco Systems, February 2013

To overcome the challenges associated with increasingly flexible and remote working environments, it comes as no surprise that IT decision-makers at MBs are looking to expand, upgrade, implement, or pilot secure wireless LAN networks (76%), network management tools (69%), and secure VPN access (70%) (see Figure 3). In addition, IT pros at MBs are extending functionality to mobile users by allowing remote access to secure working environments. Information workers at MBs are able to utilize a broader array of devices thanks to deployments of other mobile-specific technologies like mobile device management (MDM), role-based access control (RBAC), and location-based access control — all of which are being expanded, implemented, or piloted at between one-third and one-half of the MBs in the study.

**Figure 3**  
IT Decision-Makers At MBs Are Rushing To Bolster Security And Manageability

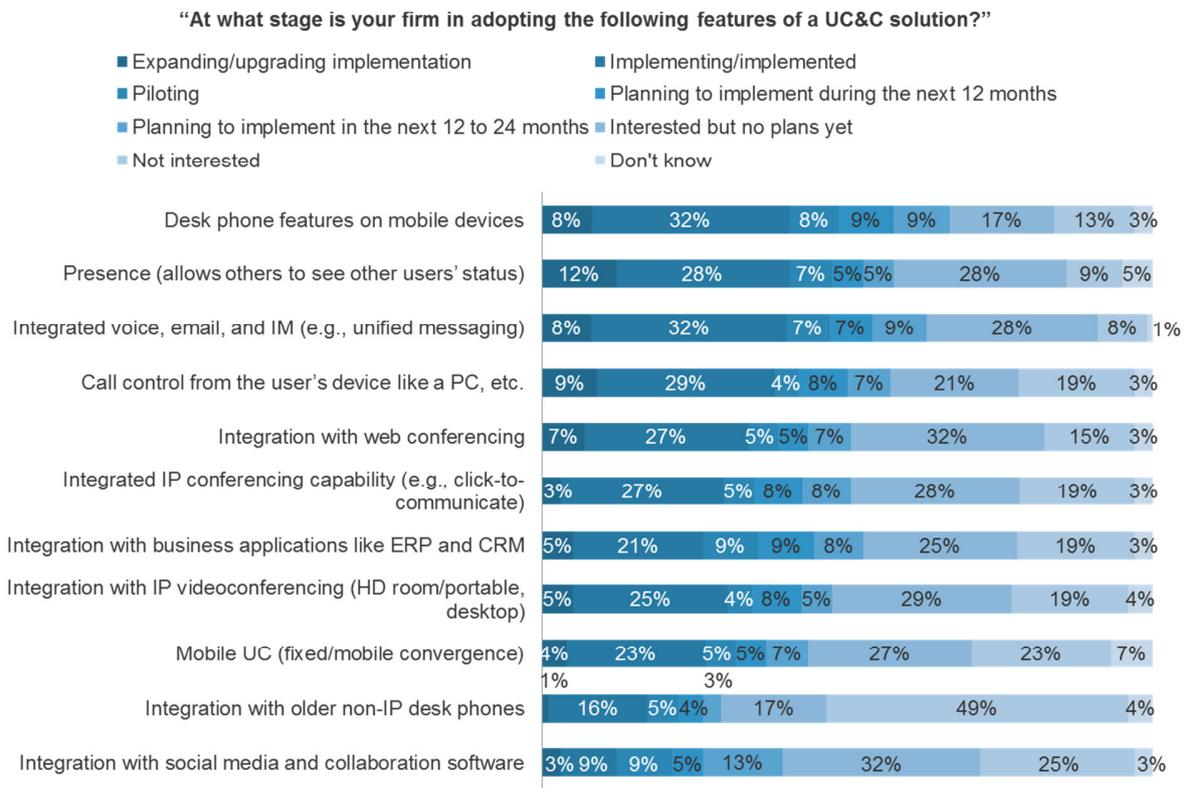


Base: 75 unified communications decision-makers at medium-size businesses in Australia, the US, and the UK (some responses have been omitted)

Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Cisco Systems, February 2013

The expansion of mobile-specific technologies has also led to more investment by IT decision-makers at MBs surveyed about their UC&C plans. The adoption of UC features focused on supporting mobile workers is critical to supporting sales and field service teams, as well as execs and other road warriors at MBs. Nearly half (48%) of MBs in the study report actively working to put desk phone-like features on mobile devices in the hands of their workforce (see Figure 4). MBs focus their UC investments on improving worker productivity and operational efficiency, not simply implementing a new or improved technology — 35% are integrating UC with core business applications.

**Figure 4**  
Deployments Shift From Foundational Features To A Business And Mobility Focus



Base: 75 unified communications decision-makers at medium-size businesses in Australia, the US, and the UK (percentages may not total 100 because of rounding)

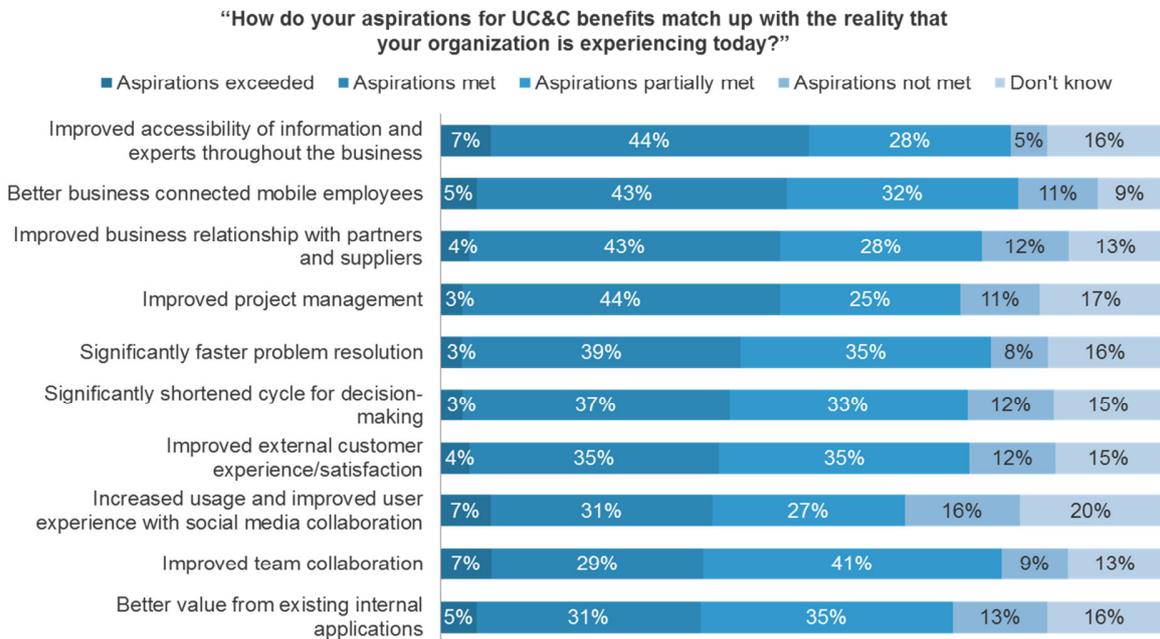
Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Cisco Systems, February 2013

## Investments In UC&C Technologies Are Paying Off

The investment in UC&C technologies and the infrastructure to support them is beginning to pay off. IT decision-makers from the MBs surveyed are improving the accessibility of information and experts throughout the business and improving the connection of mobile employees to the business (see Figure 5). These IT managers are placing an increasing emphasis on meeting their aspiration to improve the working environment and relationships with external partners, suppliers, and customers.

**Figure 5**

MBs Are Meeting The Aspiration To Improve Accessibility And Better Connect Employees



Base: 75 unified communications decision-makers at medium-size businesses in Australia, the US, and the UK (percentages may not total 100 because of rounding)

Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Cisco Systems, February 2013

A number of challenges remain for IT decision-makers at MBs that are implementing, expanding, or planning to invest in UC&C technologies. 12% of surveyed IT decision-makers at MBs were less successful quantifying the benefits they derived from UC&C solutions than they had expected (see Figure 6). Nearly 10% were unable to meet their expectations for access to and adoption of a UC&C solution.

**Figure 6**  
 Demonstrating Benefits, Ensuring Network Availability, And Driving Employee Adoption Elude IT



Base: 75 unified communications decision-makers at medium-size businesses in Australia, the US, and the UK

Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Cisco Systems, February 2013

## Conclusion

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Developing and implementing secure, reliable, and federated networks are a key technical priority for IT organizations at medium-size businesses. IT investment in flexible, mobile infrastructure sets the stage for networks that support employees who work at home or within partner networks almost as frequently as they work within their office networks. Senior IT decision-makers control and maintain reliable, secure, and compliant systems while keeping an eye on the business. At the same time, their business-oriented peers are driving IT to rapidly implement new technology aligned with business goals, satisfying end user desire for engaging solutions and driving value for the entire business. Many MBs are doing just this and beginning to see real value from their investments. Overcoming barriers like demonstrating business value and driving user adoption are key challenges. As many IT decision-makers at MBs surveyed in this study are shifting their IT investments to more business- and mobile-focused UC&C solutions, they first define and support the use cases — like sales force automation or field logistics optimization — deriving business value from these solutions and then overcome the technical and cultural challenges to driving adoption by employees working across varied public and private networks. Many IT decision-makers with limited resources seek external guidance on how to quantify the business value, ensure network performance, and extend functionality to more and more mobile users, so the investments boost the productivity for the firm's most empowered users.

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## Endnote

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Forrsights Workforce Employee Survey, Q4 2012