The Essential Guide To Workplace Modernization Through Next-Generation Unified Communications

CISCO

TechTarget | Custom Media

The New Face of the Modern Workplace

The pace of innovation for collaboration and unified communications (UC) technologies has been nothing short of incredible during the past few years. IT teams are now able to deliver consistent, simple and high-quality experiences with voice, video, messaging and chat from any smartphone, tablet, laptop or conference room system. Users can move seamlessly and securely from one device to the next, escalate from one communication mode to another and share content—all while retaining the context of the meeting or discussion.

The power and breadth of these innovations are important factors in enabling workplace transformation. Organizations are now able to deliver the tools, technologies and cultural environment to support an increasingly mobile and tech-savvy workforce, one that is also team-oriented and geographically diverse. By leveraging digital content, collaboration and connectivity, IT can drive gains in productivity and organizational agility. Teamwork, customer satisfaction and profitability are boosted as well.

This e-book will provide an analysis of the opportunities and challenges of digital transformation, as well as the key technologies and deployment models that lead to successful initiatives.

Let's get started.

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By the end of 2017, two-thirds of Global 2000 CIOs will put digital transformation at the center of their growth and profitability strategies, according to IDC. The percent of enterprises with advanced digital transformation strategies will more than double by the end of the decade.[1]

Chapter 1:
Building the Right Foundation for Today's Digital Workplace

Modernizing the workplace through digital technologies is one of the defining movements of our time. The disruptive impact of digital transformation is affecting every industry as organizations massively scale up their initiatives.

UC is critical to digital transformation because it provides employees, customers and partners with a wide range of modern collaboration tools and technologies. When used in concert with one another, these technologies empower users to work more efficiently and be more productive overall.

Unified communications is also becoming more vital because it helps businesses deal with the challenges of "IT consumerization," a relatively new workplace phenomenon triggered by the widespread use of personal digital technologies.

The Impact of IT Consumerization

The idea of IT consumerization is that everyone is now a user of technology in his or her personal life and has the same expectations for how technology can be used at work. This applies not only to employees,

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1   "IDC Predicts the Emergence of 'the DX Economy' in a Critical Period of Widespread Digital Transformation and Massive Scale Up of 3rd Platform Technologies in Every Industry," IDC, Nov. 4, 2015

but to customers, partners and anyone interacting with the business. As users become more accustomed to great video experiences on their personal devices, for example, they expect at least the same level of quality and innovation in their workplaces. They also expect to use the same devices for both business and personal activities.

The New Norm

Companies need to move away from traditional hierarchical organizations characterized by big teams in cube farms in large branch offices.

Workers are now much more mobile, tech-savvy and geographically dispersed, and they expect to use devices of their choice from any location at any time. Customers demand simple, fast and flawless interactions with the company whether they are online, on the phone or using collaborative technologies such as chat or messaging. If your organization doesn't deliver a quality customer care experience, customers will go elsewhere—and fast. Effective real-time collaboration with partners and suppliers is also part of the new norm.

Case Study: Digital Transformation

Company: Local Government Federal Credit Union

Industry: Financial Services

Challenges:
- Create a contemporary workplace to stimulate productivity and attract the brightest talent
- Leverage new tools, such as video and web conferencing, for internal stakeholders and external business partners
- Support secure mobility while reducing the IT workload

Key Technologies:
- Comprehensive UC platform incorporating VoIP, video, messaging, presence and chat
- Unified contact center/UC client/secure mobile solutions
- Converged infrastructure

Results:
- 25% increase in employee productivity and collaboration
- TCO reductions through reduced travel, operations and training costs
- Workplace modernization is now a tool to recruit quality candidates

Complete Case Study:
Digital Transformation Raises Efficiency, and Employee and Customer Experience

"Video is another way for our staff to conduct business, and we know it will one day be extended to our members as another way for them to communicate with us. We believe it's unique in the market. Our operation is changing radically, and we need to be prepared to deliver for our members."

— Terry Phelps, Senior Vice President, Management Information Systems, LGFCU

75% of IT decision-makers plan to invest in UC technologies in the next year.[2]

For IT leaders, digital transformation means delivering a new type of collaborative experience to users, whether those users are employees, customers or partners. IT must enable diverse and distributed team members to effectively communicate and share information, enabling them to work toward the efficient completion of a common goal or business initiative.

The Evolution of Digital Collaboration and UC

While UC has been around for a long time, it is only now that technology advances are truly meshing with the business opportunities enabled by a changing workplace. That is why this is such a critical time for IT to be investing in modern collaboration and UC capabilities.

To fully appreciate the vast potential for collaboration and UC, IT leaders should understand just how dramatically the technologies have evolved during the past few years. When the concept of UC first came on the scene more than a decade ago, the term "unified communications" was used as something of a catchall for a variety of separate products that sometimes worked well together, but often weren't designed to specifically unify communications and enable digital collaboration and commerce.

Dramatic Technology Improvements

Things have changed remarkably in the past few years, however. For example, VoIP quality has improved greatly and prices have come down— to the point where VoIP is rapidly replacing legacy PBX systems as the go-to technology, whether deployed as a traditional on-premises solution or consumed as a cloud-hosted service. In addition, IT departments can provide extensive collaboration tools and capabilities to mobile workers, and also deliver a completely modernized desk phone experience—with high audio and video quality, smartphone integration and significant cost savings, including reduced power consumption. Organizations can also leverage collaboration tools, applications and devices that span video, web conferencing and virtual meeting rooms. Tools are also available that enable instant messaging, social media, document sharing and more.

With the right technology foundation, IT teams can deliver levels of reliability, consistency and performance that were impossible to achieve several years ago. In addition, today's collaboration and UC technologies provide better security, simplicity, scalability and cost efficiencies.

2   TechTarget research, July-Dec. 2016

The State of the Market

Most IT professionals recognize the compelling need to deliver a modern collaborative experience to their users through the use of today's UC technologies and tools. Exclusive research from TechTarget conducted between July and December 2016 across more than 350 IT decision-makers shows that investment in UC will continue in 2017. (See graphic, "Which areas of UC will you be investing in over the next 12 months?")

In addition, the TechTarget research shows that organizations are already using a wide range of collaboration and UC technologies, as shown by the graphic, "Which of the following UC applications do you currently have installed?"

The challenge, however, is that merely having these technologies in place is not enough to maximize their vast potential business value, particularly when it comes to workplace transformation. IT teams need to develop strategies that utilize these technologies in even greater numbers so they can deliver a modern collaborative experience to all users at all times. What's more, IT must ensure that users have flexibility in using all of these technologies in concert with one another.

Which areas of UC will you be investing in over the next 12 months?

98% already use collaboration services in their work environment

75% will invest in:

- Desktop UC applications
- Mobility
- VoIP
- Video

Chart data "Which areas of UC will you be investing in over the next 12 months?":
- Desktop UC Applications: 44%
- Mobile UC: 41%
- VoIP: 37%
- Video: 31%
- None: 25%
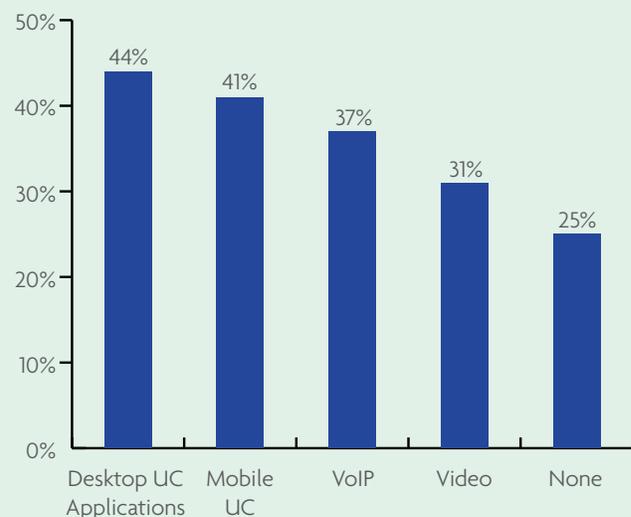
SUMMARY sample size = 558; total sample size = 578; 20 missing.

Building the Right Technology Foundation

One of the obstacles for many companies is that they remain slow to embrace some of the important technologies that are essential to developing the most effective and efficient business strategy for remaining relevant in the digital and social age. In particular, many organizations have not yet seen the imperative to migrate to a full deployment of Internet Protocol (IP) telephony, which is a critical success factor in leveraging UC to provide the best foundation for collaboration, customer satisfaction and commerce.

Organizations who rely on TDM technology limit their ability to realize the full benefits of UC for workplace modernization, a challenge that will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter. The bottom line is this:

When IT decision-makers consider all of the variables, they will find it is much riskier to stand still than it is to move forward and embrace a comprehensive UC strategy.

Which of the following UC applications do you currently have installed?

The highest percentages for **Which of the following UC applications do you currently have installed?** include:

- 57% for 'Voice over IP'.
- 36% for 'Chat/presence'.
- 35% for 'Audio conferencing'.
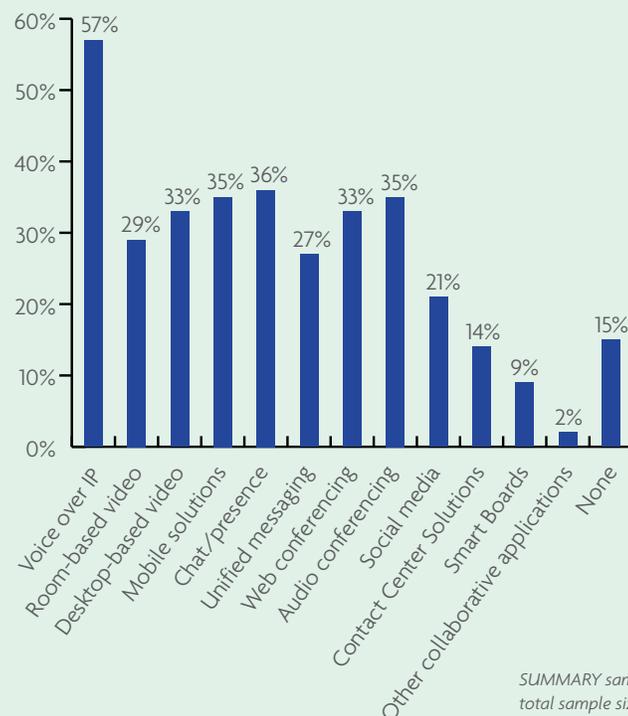
SUMMARY sample size = 368; total sample size = 578; 210 missing.

Only about 28% of companies have managed to move all endpoints to IP. [3]

With the right UC solutions in place, organizations will increase productivity and improve customer service. In addition, they will be able to:

- Modernize their workplaces to meet the needs of a changing workforce, thus helping improve employee recruitment and retention.
- Expand their potential talent pool by supporting enhanced and secure mobility, collaboration, device ubiquity and geographic diversity.
- Reduce total cost of ownership through lower facility and travel costs.

3   "Business Value Analysis: Cisco Unified Communication Manager, Phybridge PoLRE," Nemertes, Mar. 2016

Case Study: Workplace Modernization

Company: Top Right Group

Industry: Media

Challenges:
- Decentralize/move 1,200 employees to four new buildings
- Introduce flexible ways of working via collaboration
- Lower real estate and telecom costs

Key Technologies:
- Unified communications manager/call center and unified contact center
- UC client that supports Windows and Mac laptops, iPhones, iPads and Android devices
- Telepresence/videoconferencing for an in-person collaboration experience

Results:
- Employees can collaborate from any location
- 50% faster time of resolution for help desk calls
- Reduced real estate space requirements through hot-desking
- 15% increase in user satisfaction ratings

Complete Case Study:
U.K Enterprise Increases Competitiveness with Collaboration Capabilities

"We moved out of our old offices on a Friday, and the following Monday employees sat down at any unoccupied desk in their new building, connected their laptops, and began making and receiving calls and instant messages."

– Sean Harley, Group IT Director, Top Right Group

When IT decision-makers consider all of the variables, they will find it is much riskier to stand still than it is to move forward and embrace a comprehensive UC strategy.

Chapter 2:
Why Modernizing Collaboration and UC Must Be a Top Priority

The rate of technology innovation is off the charts, and business models are evolving dramatically. It is taking place across all industries and a wide range of technologies such as cloud, big data analytics, social media, the Internet of Things, UC and mobile computing.

Companies that don't keep pace will find themselves on the outside looking in when competitors create fresh ways of doing business and establish new expectations for customers as well as employees and partners. By clinging to outdated technologies, IT decision-makers can expose their organizations to unnecessary costs and risks.

Organizations' continued reliance on TDM telephony is a prominent example—and a warning—of just how much legacy technology can hold a company back. Even companies with a mix of VoIP and TDM need to modernize and implement a consistent and consolidated IP foundation in order to enable new and emerging collaboration tools and services. TDM keeps organizations rooted in an obsolete technology that is becoming more expensive to maintain and less efficient to deploy.

Nearly 75% of all IT spending will be driven by cloud, big data analytics, social media, IoT, UC and mobile computing by the end of 2019.[5]

The Importance of an All-IP Environment

Research by Nemertes identified and measured these key benefits in moving to an all-IP environment:[4]

- 22% reduction in full-time equivalents required to manage the system
- 34% reduction in the cost of equipment maintenance
- 31% reduction in the cost of moves, adds and changes
- 71% reduction in mean time to repair

The cost and efficiency benefits of moving to an all IP-environment are the leading factors in motivating IT decision-makers to embrace VoIP. Research from TechTarget reveals that 71% of IT decision-makers implementing VoIP cited "cost savings from telecom savings" and 56% cited "cost savings from operational efficiencies." These were by far the key drivers, as shown in the graphic, "Which of the following factors are driving the implementation of VOIP?".
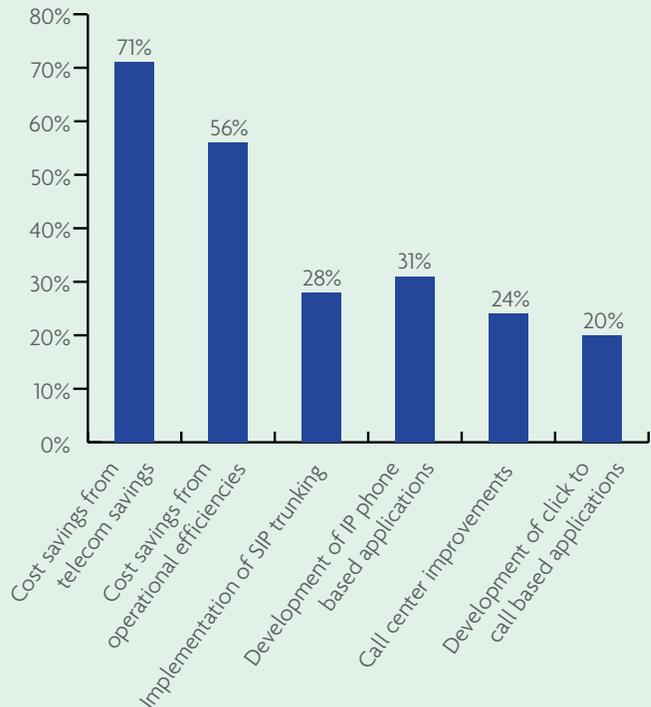
4   Op. cit., Nemertes
5   "IDC Sees the Dawn of the DX Economy and the Rise of the Digital Native Enterprise," IDC, Nov. 1, 2016

Which of the following factors are driving the implementation of VoIP?

The highest percentages for **Which of the following factors are driving the implementation of VoIP?** include:

- 71% for 'Cost savings from telecom savings'.
- 56% for 'Cost savings from operational efficiencies'.

SUMMARY sample size = 97; total sample size = 578; 481 missing.

Bar chart values:
- Cost savings from telecom savings: 71%
- Cost savings from operational efficiencies: 56%
- Implementation of SIP trunking: 28%
- Development of IP phone based applications: 31%
- Call center improvements: 24%
- Development of click to call based applications: 20%

Benefits of the IP-Centric Model

Despite the clear benefits of moving to an all-IP environment, many companies are still holding back because they may be intimidated by potential technical challenges or costs.

While these issues have some validity, they can seem shortsighted when viewed through the prism of today's changing workforce and evolving business models. This comes into clearer focus when you examine the benefits of embracing a modern IP-centric approach, including:

- **Saving money:** Shifting to all IP often comes down to a commonsense business decision. A university was running a hybrid environment of Cisco IP and aging Rolm TDM PBXs. It was going to cost $4 million to move to a new system, pull new cable and do the other tasks necessary to upgrade. The system would have been down for two weeks. Shifting to an all-IP UC platform was not only less expensive, there was no outage and the entire process took 30 minutes.

Case Study: All-IP Collaboration

Company: Virtua Health

Industry: Healthcare

Challenges:
- Replace legacy telephone system to reduce costs, improve workflow, enhance patient services and enable new revenue streams
- Improve customer care through collaboration and mobility
- Tightly integrate UC with electronic medical records (EMR) platform

Key Technologies:
- Unified communications manager
- UC client, videoconferencing, web conferencing and IP phones
- Next-generation intrusion prevention system, next-generation firewalls and other enhanced security protections

Results:
- Accelerated access for staff and patients
- Reduced operating and capital expenditures
- A future-proof and secure network to support growth

Complete Case Study:
Bridging the digital divide one patient at a time

> **"In 2005, we implemented a phone system so that we could make phone calls. The system is doing what it was meant to do, but the way we communicate has changed. There is a tremendous upside to selecting Cisco's telephony systems, especially as we continue to grow. As a software-based system, it will require much less infrastructure and hardware, and it allows us to offer the latest technology faster."**
>
> — Thomas Gordon, Chief Information Officer, Virtua Health

- **Enhancing customer care:** Organizations increasingly rely on collaboration technologies to improve customer care. Nearly 70% of respondents to a survey by Harvard Business Review Analytic Services (HBRAS) said fostering collaboration with customers has become a higher priority, and more than a third said an improved customer experience was their most important business objective.[6] With all-IP collaboration tools, organizations can seamlessly integrate inbound and outbound voice applications with internet applications, including real-time chat, web collaboration, email and social media. This helps to personalize each customer experience according to the specific issue that must be addressed.

- **Accelerating time to value:** In today's workplace speed is critical when developing new products, rolling out new services and responding to customer needs. Effective collaboration across geographically dispersed teams has become a mandate for many companies in accelerating time

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6 "Why Today's Digital Teams Need a New Class of Collaboration Tools and Solutions," Harvard Business Review Analytic Services (HBRAS) Survey, Mar. 2016

Case Study: Expanding Video to Desktop and Mobile Devices

Company: Cimpress

Industry: Manufacturing/Retail

Challenges:
- Expand video beyond conference rooms to team member desktops and mobile devices
- Enable team members to connect with colleagues from recently acquired companies
- Accelerate and streamline decision-making processes

Key Technologies:
- Unified communications platform, including telepresence, UC clients and unified IP phones
- Unified contact center
- Videoconferencing/web conferencing
- UC rack and blade servers

Results:
- Team members enjoy a no-compromise collaboration experience
- Workers have flexibility to work anywhere, increasing team member satisfaction and retention
- Easy setup and deployment accelerates onboarding for newly acquired companies

Complete Case Study:
Engaging a diverse global workforce with video

> **"With our distributed workforce, video has been a vital and natural way to keep our people connected and productive. At my previous companies, video was always cumbersome and expensive. Cisco taught me how easy the video experience can be. It's simple and people get it, which is part of the reason why video is the norm here."**
>
> – Jay Moran, Vice President, Technical Operations, Cimpress

to value. For example, as DevOps teams are more dispersed and rely on new technologies such as containers and microservices, it is essential that they have the tools to collaborate quickly and effectively.

- **Modernizing the corporate culture:** A study by Forrester Research says it is critical for businesses to support a tech-savvy workforce that values collaborative environments to creatively solve problems and drive business success. More than 60% of survey respondents said it is important that their culture fosters collaboration, and nearly 60% cited the importance of empowering tech-savvy users by investing in technologies that promote a remote working environment for employees.[7]

7 "A Diversity of Deployment Models Spells the Future of Collaboration," Forrester Research, Mar. 2016

Case Study: VoIP, Wireless and Mobile Collaboration

Company: Roper St. Francis

Industry: Healthcare

Challenges:
- Consolidate more than 50 different phone and key systems
- Connectivity and bandwidth problems limited mobile access
- High costs in maintaining and supporting legacy voice systems

Key Technologies:
- Unified communications platform with VoIP
- Wireless access points and controllers
- UC blade servers, switches and fabric interconnects

Results:
- Every access point has been replaced and many new ones added
- Implemented 5 GHz high density, throughput and capacity model

- Development of new applications and services, including Interactive Patent Experience

Complete Case Study:
Roper St. Francis Deploys High-Performance Wireless and Unified Collaboration, Addressing Today's Problems with Tomorrow's Solutions

"This foundation has allowed us to focus on the future. We're working on a state-of-the-art concierge experience for patients and visitors and incorporating wearable devices into acute care. That's just the start. Going forward, as new technology becomes available, we won't need time to gear up. We're ready now."

— Jon Skelley, Director of Technical Services, Roper St. Francis

Chapter 3:
How to Ensure a Successful Deployment

The first step in ensuring a successful deployment of collaboration and UC technologies is to define what your organization wants to accomplish and then determine the challenges and obstacles that must be overcome in order to achieve your goals. While each company has its own goals and obstacles, there are certain characteristics that are common to successful collaboration and UC deployments.

These tend to focus on ensuring a simple experience for both users and IT administrators. Successful deployments also deliver the features and functions needed for today's workplace, including mobility, access from a variety of devices and the ability to utilize a broad range of tools, enabling users to choose the right technology for each application.

Evaluating a Platform

In evaluating a collaboration and UC platform—one that will be used across the organization and by customers, partners and others—IT decision-makers should look for solutions that can deliver these benefits:

- **An intuitive and consistent user experience:** The solution should have a similar design and feature set across a diverse array of platforms, endpoints and devices.

- **Availability at all times and from all locations:** Users should be able to use any device from any location—from the browser to the boardroom; inside and outside the firewall; delivered from your data center, from the cloud or both.

- **Management and user simplicity:** The collaboration platform must easily integrate with the organization's existing applications, workflows and network.

- **A full set of collaborative tools:** Users should have access to options spanning voice, video, web conferencing, virtual meeting rooms, instant messaging, social media, document sharing and more. Make sure your vendor offers all of these critical functions.

- **An end-to-end approach:** Collaboration and UC technologies are dependent upon a reliable, robust underlying network. Vendors with an end-to-end approach have a significant advantage in providing unified tools and consistent models. They also make it much simpler to identify and troubleshoot problems, address potential security gaps and scale the solution when organizational needs change.

Leverage Multiple Deployment Options

One of the most important developments in collaboration and UC technologies during the past few years has been cloud-based deployment models. By leveraging

According to a Forrester study[8]:

33% of small and midsize businesses have already deployed UC in the cloud

37% of deployments are hybrid

22% of deployments are on premises

the cloud, organizations can get deployments up and running quickly and utilize an Opex rather than a Capex payment model. Using a public cloud or hosted service can also make it easier for smaller businesses that may have limited IT resources to take advantage of the latest advances in digital collaboration and communications.

When it comes to using cloud models for collaboration and UC, there will be a continuing need for diversity of UC deployment models that mix on premises, cloud and hybrid. According to a Forrester study, 55% of premises-based cloud deployments will stay on premises, while 21% of them will move to the cloud.

TechTarget asked IT decision-makers across a broader cross-section of company sizes a similar question in its research during the second half of 2016. It saw similar results, with more organizations looking at potential cloud deployments than an on-premises model and a large number, 19% of respondents, still unsure exactly how they will deploy UC. The results of the survey are shown in the graphic: "How will you deploy your UC project?"

8   Op. cit., Forrester

How will you deploy your UC project?

47% of respondents are looking to deploy cloud or hybrid UC environments

- On Premise 23%
- Virtual 10%
- Cloud 30%
- Hybrid 17%
- Don't know 19%
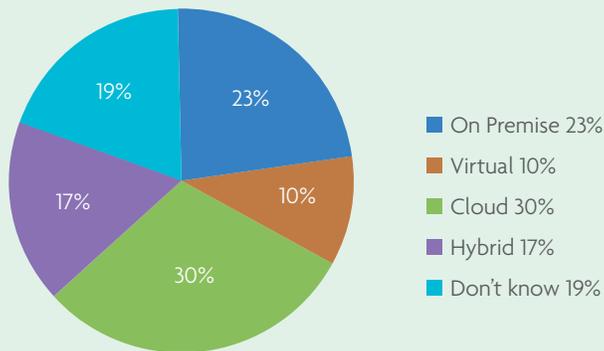
SUMMARY sample size = 248; total sample size = 578; 330 missing.

The most important consideration in choosing the deployment model is to ensure that you can maintain flexibility and shift from one environment to another without impacting the user experience or causing gaps in performance or availability. This makes it imperative to work with a vendor that can offer any deployment model— on premises, cloud hosted or hybrid cloud.

Choose the Right Technology Provider

In addition to flexibility in deployment models you also want a vendor that can deliver a complete end-to-end solution with best-of-breed technologies throughout. Successful collaboration is dependent upon a robust, reliable communications infrastructure. Working with a vendor that understands the underlying networking challenges can save your organization a lot of grief and heartache down the road.

Case Study: Creative Teamwork Through Digital Collaboration

Company: Golin

Industry: Public relations and marketing communications

Challenges:
- Improve collaboration by reducing reliance on cloud file-sharing services
- Accelerate and simplify decision-making
- Enhance creativity and use of social media among mobile workers

Key Technologies:
- Comprehensive unified communications platform
- Access through desktop, browser and mobile apps
- Virtual collaboration rooms for social media content, designers, IT and other business-critical functions

Results:
- 50% reduction in design review and approval time
- Decision-making accelerated to make company more nimble
- Collaboration tools enable more effective use of social media
- Increased involvement of mobile workers in creative and review processes

Complete Case Study:
A Winning Edge for a Global Communications Firm

"In our business, timeliness is everything. The communications industry is ultracompetitive. Clients tell us that we're extremely nimble and flexible. As other agencies catch up, we need to take two steps ahead. Tools like Cisco Spark help us stay out in front."

– Farrah Cox, Executive Director, Golin

It is also important to select a vendor that offers flexibility in deployment models, allowing the ability to customize a solution to best meet your company's business and compliance needs. Your vendor should offer flexible licensing and subscription plans that give you options to deploy in a way that makes sense for your business. For example, you should be able to combine on-premises and cloud services in a single subscription.

In the UC and collaboration space, for example, Cisco has been the acknowledged leader since the technology's inception. While many other providers and technology platforms have come and gone since then, Cisco continues to lead the market today—named the 2016 market leader in five categories of Gartner's Magic Quadrant, including vision and execution of unified communications.[9]

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9 "Here's Who Made Gartner's 2016 Magic Quadrant for Unified Communications," CRN, Aug. 22, 2016

Case Study: Digital Collaboration on a Global Scale

Company: AGCO

Industry: Manufacturing

Challenges:
- Modernize a disparate voice and IT infrastructure
- Improve communications across a geographically diverse workforce
- Collaborate among brands for greater innovation
- Provide better support for channel partners

Key Technologies:
- Centralized unified communications platform, including VoIP and unified contact center
- Collaboration meeting rooms, videoconferencing and web conferencing
- Unified communications client to support mobile and remote workers on various devices
- Standardized/consolidated networking and communications infrastructure for data centers

Results:
- Cost reduction of $45,000 per month with more than 500,000 minutes of VoIP calls
- Greater collaboration and improved productivity through video
- Streamlined management and greater control over administration

Complete Case Study:
Fueling innovation through global communications

> **"As a global organization, communication is essential to our success. Rather than trying to expand and upgrade numerous piecemeal systems to meet our growth, we would be better served by leveraging economy of scale and standardizing onto one platform that would serve us for years to come."**
>
> – Nikhil Narvekar, Director, Global Infrastructure Operations, AGCO

Chapter 4:
Conclusion and Recommendations

This is a critical time for IT decision-makers. Digital transformation is not a passing fad—it is the future. Companies that embrace it are building a foundation for success, and those that ignore it do so at their own peril. Decision-makers who don't embrace and lead the coming change, for their organization's sake and their own personal relevance, will be left behind.

But how do you get from here to there? How do you adapt current UC technology to satisfy the needs of today's more mobile, tech-savvy, geographically dispersed and "consumerized" workforce?

On the following page, you'll find a 10-point checklist to consider when modernizing collaboration and UC.

Checklist for modernizing collaboration and UC

Here are 10 considerations to keep in mind when moving to more modern collaboration and UC solutions:

1 **Take inventory of what you have:** This goes beyond technology. Make sure you also understand your corporate culture and how it works. Collaboration and UC are enabling technologies; how they are used, and by whom within your workforce will determine their success.

2 **Set reasonable goals:** Determine if it makes sense to work with a specific team or department and develop a proof of concept. Remember that each organization will have its own challenges and expectations, and make sure that you have the resources in place to deliver upon the expectations you set.

3 **Involve users and line-of-business managers:** Collaboration and unified communications only work if they provide users with an experience that they value. Don't just make technology available to your users. Involve them in the process from beginning to end, including providing the training needed to facilitate adoption.

4 **Focus on ease of use:** This gets back to the previous point. If the user experience is compromised, or if the deployment is time consuming and difficult to manage for IT, then the technology will not be used to the extent you may desire.

5 **Quality counts:** This is a new world. IT consumerization means users expect a glitch-free, high-quality experience. If you are offering collaboration tools such as VoIP and video, choose a supplier that understands these technologies and can deliver the underlying infrastructure required. Also, make sure your technology vendor has longevity in meeting the needs of the most demanding enterprise customers and service providers. In the UC market, there have been too many instances of failing providers leaving customers without future support.

6 **Ensure a great mobile experience:** Mobility is one of the most important considerations in empowering today's collaborative workplace. Your mobile connectivity and collaboration tools must assure a great mobile experience no matter which device is being used at whatever time and from whatever location. And remember, mobility is not just for your workers. It's also for customers, partners, contractors and other collaborators.

7 **Modernize your infrastructure:** As discussed throughout this e-book, one of the biggest challenges for many companies is a continued reliance upon outdated technology such as TDM telephony. Now is the time for all companies, large and small, to root out those last pockets of TDM and ensure a fully digital experience for the workforce. Don't allow your organization to be stuck with an obsolete technology when there are far better and more cost-effective alternatives available.

8 **Embrace the cloud:** This is not to say that you should use cloud models for all of your collaboration and UC requirements. But you should work with a technology provider that gives you flexibility to use cloud models whenever and wherever you deem them appropriate. Consider providers that offer commercial solutions that allow you the flexibility to deploy some services on premises (where it makes sense) and to consume others from the cloud. And no matter what approach you take, make sure the result is a consistent and simple-to-use experience for end users and IT.

9 **Embed collaboration into your line of business applications:** To ensure that your organization maximizes the business value of collaboration, it is important to embed communication and collaboration into your applications and business practices. This can best be achieved using application program interfaces (APIs) and software development kits (SDKs). Make sure your vendor has an ecosystem of reseller and technology partners that can understand your organization and can leverage APIs and SDKs to embed collaboration best practices into everyday activities.

10 **Choose an experienced technology partner:** Collaboration and UC solutions together represent one of the most important investments your company will make to ensure a successful future. You can't afford to go wrong, and you don't want to be in a situation where you have to swap out partners or technologies down the road. It is important to choose a technology vendor that is a leader in providing all elements of your collaboration and UC solution from end to end. This way, you will ensure a successful deployment for today and a clear path for the future.

With that checklist we have reached the end of our journey and the beginning of yours. We hope the information provided in this e-book has been helpful, and we encourage you to explore some of the additional resources listed on the next page.

Additional Resources

"IDC Predicts the Emergence of 'the DX Economy' in a Critical Period of Widespread Digital Transformation and Massive Scale Up of 3rd Platform Technologies in Every Industry"

Business Value Analysis: Cisco Unified Communication Manager, Phybridge PoLRE

"IDC Sees the Dawn of the DX Economy and the Rise of the Digital Native Enterprise"

Unified Communications

"Why Today's Digital Teams Need a New Class of Collaboration Tools and Solutions"

A Diversity of Deployment Models Spells the Future of Collaboration

"Here's Who Made Gartner's 2016 Magic Quadrant for Unified Communications"