

Three reasons to short-list unified communications in 2012

Gary Ross August 8, 2011



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After much belt-tightening over the last few years, we have found business is thawing and IT spending is resuming once again.

As you plot your strategy for recovery and to gain that competitive advantage, look for technology that delivers current value, leaves room for future expansion and is sure to withstand disruptive innovation.

Unified communications (UC) offers all that – the right tools will grow with you, and the heart of the technology, Internet Protocol, is as future-proof as you're going to get.

As for business value, here are three good reasons to short-list UC this year:

UC can help you deliver great customer service

As business becomes ever more competitive, it is vital to deliver an exceptional customer experience at all times.

Unified communications tools such as self-service are great at helping customers navigate to the right person more quickly. Seamless integration of your communication system with your CRM gives your agents an impressively 'informed' feel – about the caller's identity, their past interactions with you or even just their reason for calling. Phone/e-mail/IM integration lets customers engage in any way they choose. And virtual contact centre technology lets you use home-based agents for a longer working day.

The list goes on, but it's all about great customer experience. Ultimately, resolving a query or complaint forthwith is much easier with UC.

UC can help your company retain the best workers

Productivity and efficiency are the name of the game nowadays. Particularly during the recession, it was vital to have your best people functioning at their peak.

But efficiency doesn't just boost your bottom line – many job functions depend on it for their professional success and morale. In the world of sales, availability can mean the difference between a sale and a lost opportunity.

The tools that make the jobs of customer-facing staff easier have both direct and indirect pay-off – yes, it earns your sales force more commission and gives them credibility with customers, but it also gives them job satisfaction.

UC can improve your star performers' working experience by letting them:

- Manage communications from their PC
- Switch seamlessly between video, voice (wired or wireless) and IM
- Make easy, affordable person-to-person video calls
- Turn a voice call into a full Web collaboration session at the touch of a button, and
- Make audio conferencing, desktop/application sharing, virtual meeting rooms and online presentations a part of their everyday workflow

UC can help your company simplify IT

Because UC is tightly integrated with IT infrastructure, it doesn't require additional skills or infrastructure, and is less cumbersome to manage than a separate voice system.

It is also less complicated. Unlike TDM systems, moves, adds and changes require little technical support. When someone moves down the passage, they unplug their IP phone and plug it in elsewhere, while adds require only basic user provisioning, done centrally. The best tools make administration a truly simple exercise.

The high complexity and cost of running a TDM system is also widely understood nowadays, and UC systems are making particularly fast inroads in upgrade or green-field scenarios.

Economise while looking ahead

As the economy recovers, businesses must continue to optimise costs to deliver results, but they also need new ways to feed competitiveness and profitability. Unified communications can help you do both.

Above all, find a tool that makes your switch to UC as easy and natural as using Outlook. Anything less will just add more frustration, instead of taking it away.

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About ShoreTel

ShoreTel, Inc. (NASDAQ: SHOR) is the provider of brilliantly simple [Unified Communication \(UC\) solutions](#) based on its award-winning [IP business phone system](#). We offer organizations of all sizes integrated, voice, video, data, and mobile communications on an open, distributed IP architecture that helps significantly reduce the complexity and costs typically associated with other solutions. The feature-rich ShoreTel UC system offers the [lowest total cost of ownership](#) (TCO) and the [highest customer satisfaction in the industry](#), in part because it is easy to deploy, manage, scale and use. Increasingly, companies around the world are finding a competitive edge by replacing business-as-usual with new thinking, and choosing ShoreTel to handle their integrated business communication. ShoreTel is based in Sunnyvale, California, and has regional offices in Austin, Texas; United Kingdom; Sydney, Australia; and Singapore. www.shoretel.com