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Working together

The workplace shift:
How can UC improve
the way we work?

Introduction

Some senior decision-makers are embracing the recent workplace shift; the use of consumer technology at work, changes in how and when people work, with more flexibility and fluidity between work and home lives.

While there is plenty of anecdotal evidence about how organisations feel about unified communications (UC) and how this affects the way their executives work, some decision-makers are still holding back from implementing the right technology. Further to this, business executives don't always use workplace technology in the way IT decision-makers want or expect them to, and concerns about data security are high on the agenda.

We conducted a detailed investigation with over 500 UK business executives working in mid-sized and multi-site organisations and covering a range of roles and sectors. Our aim was to understand what people thought about the existing communications technology in their workplace and how they believed UC could best benefit them.

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What are fragmented communications costing you?

84% want video at their desktop.

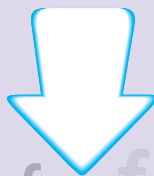**52%** think it's getting harder to get face-to-face meetings.

62% of executives **under 35** are frustrated with work technology.

80% want to swap a phone call for a video call.

Simple communications changes make a **big difference**.

67% believe UC would reduce comms management costs.

78% think better comms make a big difference to success.

UC can help make business more successful

1. More than two in three (62 per cent) of Gen Y executives are frustrated with the technology available at work.

Nearly one in three uses IM at work, and 26 per cent utilise a 4G connection (compared to just five per cent of those over the age of 50).

Two out of three (67 per cent) also believe that better information-sharing technology would be an improvement to their working environment.

A massive 62 per cent also feel that the devices they use for work (desktop, laptop, tablet, phone, etc.) are not well integrated — just one of the many reasons BYOD has taken off; businesses are looking for better ways of connecting with customers, suppliers and employees.

2. Sixty per cent of those surveyed believed that their business will experience growth in the next 12-18 months.

As a result of increased optimism about growth, nearly 40 per cent are planning to increase IT budgets by as much as 20 per cent.

Currently, only 12 per cent of the organisations we sampled of had a UC system in place. Whether expanding or consolidating, investing in UC technologies will deliver better communication and collaboration and this in turn will drive profitability.

3. Better communications would lead to higher success rates for 67 per cent of IT decision-makers.

Instant Messaging, Presence and other features of a UC solution all pave the way for better communications, leading to quicker decision making and faster project roll-outs.

Two in three executives preferred working in teams rather than alone, and half wanted to find better ways of working together. There has never been a better time to embrace collaboration, and seven in ten of those surveyed were already thinking about a UC solution.

One third currently use social media channels to collaborate on work issues, and it's the role of organisations to make these formally available to improve interactions with customers, suppliers and partners.

4. UC systems would reduce communications management costs for 67 per cent of those surveyed.

By improving call handling to make it more efficient, sales performance can be boosted at the same time as lowering the operating cost. The number of calls being handed-off to third party agents can be reduced by around 15 per cent. The cost of mobile and long-distance calls can be reduced with SIP, and calls can be made over an IP connection rather than a traditional telephone network. Calls for up to 64 participants can be hosted, which means travelling costs can also be reduced.

5. Over half (52 per cent) say that it's getting harder and harder to secure face-to-face meetings.

When face-to-face meetings are such rare occurrences, technology like video calling can help businesses to truly connect. A true UC approach offers your multigenerational employees a wealth of communication options, allowing them to choose what's best for them, leading to more efficient collaboration.

For example, 35 per cent of people reported that they preferred passive interaction (email, call-recordings, messages, etc.) against 37 per cent who preferred more active communication (IM, phone calls, face-to-face meetings, video calls etc.).
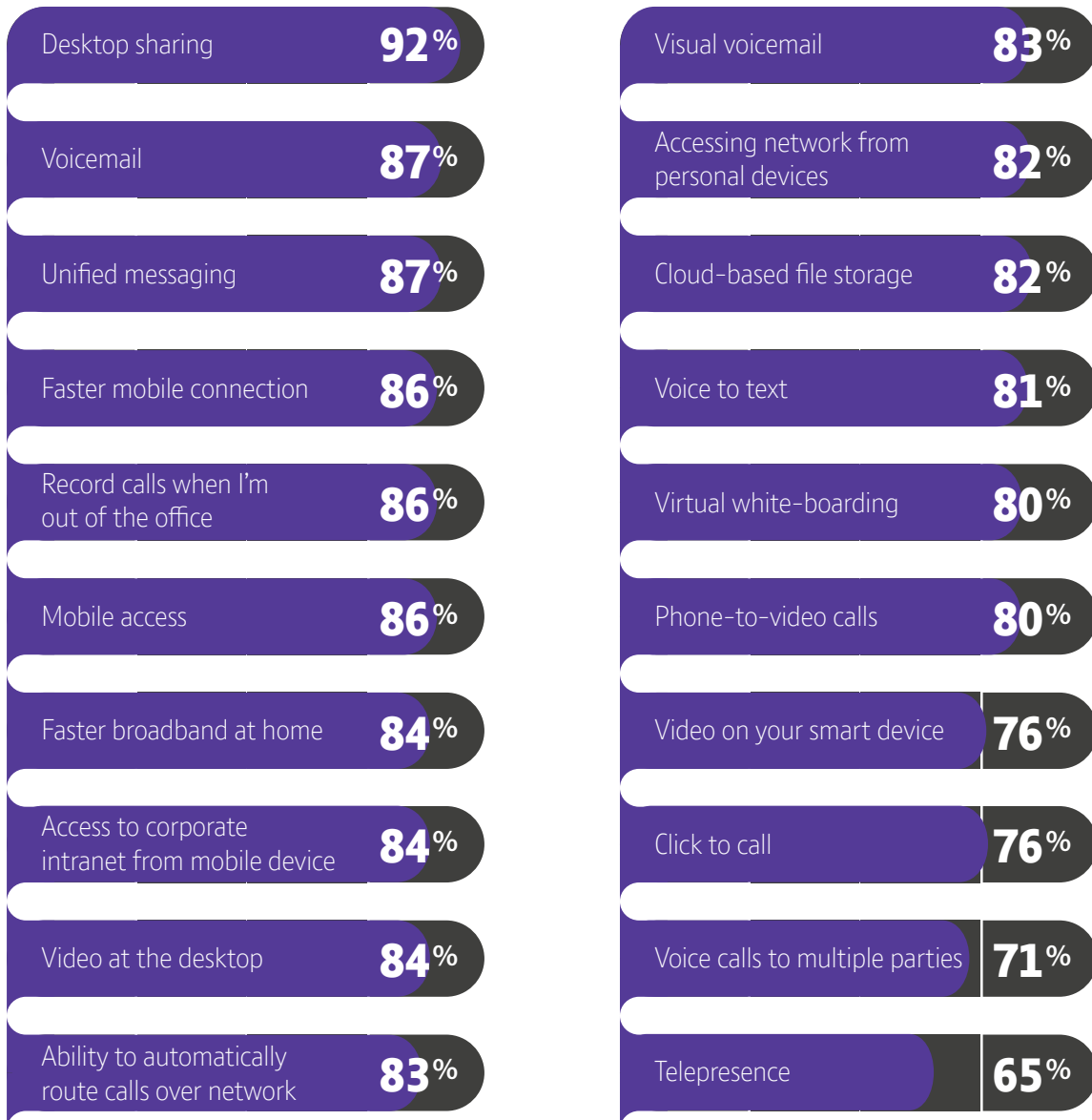
Now is the time to introduce UC

The uptake of UC so far has been low, encouraging employees to use their personal devices for work.

Because of this, BYOD has become a fact of modern working life, despite the risks it presents for data security. Already, more business executives are using their own iPads for work rather than those provided by their employer. And 69 per cent of IT decision-makers say that business executives don't fully appreciate how tough it is to meet the communications needs and desires of their employees.

Most wanted UC technologies

How useful would the following capabilities be?

Technology	%
Desktop sharing	92%
Voicemail	87%
Unified messaging	87%
Faster mobile connection	86%
Record calls when I'm out of the office	86%
Mobile access	86%
Faster broadband at home	84%
Access to corporate intranet from mobile device	84%
Video at the desktop	84%
Ability to automatically route calls over network	83%
Visual voicemail	83%
Accessing network from personal devices	82%
Cloud-based file storage	82%
Voice to text	81%
Virtual white-boarding	80%
Phone-to-video calls	80%
Video on your smart device	76%
Click to call	76%
Voice calls to multiple parties	71%
Telepresence	65%

Note: Respondents – IT decision makers

Why are IT decision-makers considering UC?

1. To balance employee freedom through flexible working with data security and control.

Over half (56 per cent) of executives say they worry about how careful their colleagues are with their organisation's confidential data, and BYOD increases the risk.

Half say that employees wanting to use their own devices cause real problems in orchestration. On the flip side, 46 per cent of executives say that using their own device lets them keep on top of what's going on at home while they are working. By having a UC system all the main communication channels would be on one platform, enabling secure access and data safety.

2. To use big data for productivity gains.

IT decision-makers recognise that UC will enable the storage, retrieval and analysis of all contacts. This provides great opportunities to use tools like workforce management to understand how employees are using their time and help executives get the most from their working day. At the same time, 68 per cent believe that better communications and collaboration (as a result of UC) will improve employee productivity.

3. To create a better customer experience.

Three in four organisations are making and receiving customer service calls, and 40 per cent need these to be recorded.

Over half (55 per cent) of IT decision-makers say that UC would improve the customer experience, making sure that calls are handled by the best people, messages get through, and call backs are made in good time, which drives customer satisfaction and ease of use.

4. To facilitate better collaboration and communication.

Better communication would make a big difference to 78 per cent of surveyed organisations' success, and IT decision-makers see UC as a way of achieving this goal.

More than half of executives (53 per cent) say they often waste time trying to get hold of people, which then leads to delays in decision-making. The pace of innovation and competition is so fast that organisations need to act quickly to maintain or further their position in their sector.

5. To create a good environment for remote working and work 'on the go'.

Nearly three in four IT decision-makers say that one of the main benefits of UC would be in enabling more efficient remote and mobile working. It also offers considerable benefits to a workforce that increasingly has to balance home and work commitments; employees seem happy to use spare time for work, but want the flexibility to do some home tasks during work hours when necessary.

Organisations with UC are likely to be more attractive to young executives looking for companies with the best IT set-up that allows them to work flexibly when the need arises.

How we can help

Some of the traditional ways of working in organisations are in the process of being broken down, in favour of decisions being made more collaboratively; 56 per cent of business managers say they are increasingly involved in such high-level decisions. But there are still more opportunities created by the workplace shift up for grabs. Focusing on new technology can help organisations achieve a range of goals; whether that's growth, cost-cutting, or both.

BT understands the complex set of challenges that today's modern organisation faces. By working with Avaya, we can help you address them. Our new collaboration platform, Avaya IP Office, is tailor-made for small to medium-sized business. It's a simple but powerful platform that delivers a seamless experience for voice, video, mobility, and collaboration service.

The built-in flexibility of the solution provides IT departments with customised templates that deliver the right features to the right employee — whether they are an office, mobile or remote worker. This grants access to the communication resources they need, in order to be as effective and productive out of the office as they are in the office.

BT's approach to providing excellence in our UC solutions lies in our partnerships. Our relationship with Avaya is longstanding, spanning over 20 years and thousands of successful joint projects. Together, we know that one size doesn't fit all. That's why the depth of our partnership is vital. Our portfolio of solutions gives you the selection you need to make the right choices for you.

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