



Integrate. Collaborate. Accelerate.

WHITE PAPER

Trends in Unified Communications and Collaboration

A Cisco and SPS Industry Survey

**Strategic Products
and Services**

300 Littleton Road
Parsippany, NJ 07054

888.777.7280

www.spscom.com

EVERY ADVANCEMENT IN communication technology results in changes to the Unified Communications and Collaboration (UC&C) landscape. As a result, companies often find it challenging to navigate the available options and vendors to decide which solution is best for them. Many companies have not yet incorporated collaboration capabilities into their UC environment – a move that can help increase productivity by seamlessly connecting their workforce and enabling their business processes.

The State of UC&C by the Numbers

In the spring of 2016, Gatepoint Research conducted a survey of 105 executives in a wide variety of industries to learn what UC&C solutions they use, the concerns they have about them, and the changes they'd like to see.

More than half of the survey participants also use mobile phones, desktop sharing, video, and apps such as Skype, FaceTime, and Snapchat.

Most survey participants use telephones (91%) and email (83%) for communication, and 75% use instant messaging. More than half of the survey participants also use mobile phones, desktop sharing, video, and apps such as Skype, FaceTime, and Snapchat.

Microsoft and Cisco are the most common suppliers of collaboration infrastructure, and 36% of the survey respondents rely on manufacturer support for their UC&C infrastructure. But only 24% of those surveyed reported being "very satisfied" with their UC&C environment. Their concerns included price, downtime, and security protocols for sensitive information.

Respondents noted shortcomings in their current solutions:

- / Getting users to adopt the features and capabilities of their UC&C solution (38%)
- / Securing information across all devices (38%)
- / Integrating UC&C into business processes (35%)
- / Managing the pace of change (29%)
- / Collaborating with partners, vendors, and customers (24%)
- / Management of mobile devices (24%)

While some respondents (20%) said they have everything they need in their UC&C environment, survey participants also sought the following capabilities:

- / Better integration of mobile phones into the user environment (45%)
- / Video capabilities that are more prevalent and easier to use (32%)
- / Better workflow collaboration tools (29%)
- / Improved customer support capabilities (16%)

Respondents said their IT organization's UC&C initiatives in 2016 would focus on improving security and compliance (23%) and 14% said they planned to upgrade the software and capability of their existing system. Although 41% of those surveyed are on a fixed budget for UC&C, 18% would consider additional spending if ROI is demonstrated within a budget cycle.

The results of the Gatepoint survey show that although most enterprises have a diverse UC&C environment, many are not satisfied with their solution.

Planning for the Future

Workers are coming to expect constant connection with decentralized teams, where mobile and remote workers collaborate seamlessly — neither distance nor disparate technology present a barrier to productivity.

The data indicates that businesses today are rapidly becoming dependent on UC&C technologies beyond traditional voice telephony and email. The integration of UC and Collaboration that will be central to the workplace of the future. Already workers are coming to expect constant connection with decentralized teams, where mobile and remote workers collaborate seamlessly, and neither distance nor disparate technology present a barrier to productivity. Real-time coordination of pervasive networks, predictive analytics and smart devices is already enabling real-time collaboration among internal, mobile, and remote workers. The future will build on this trend as companies personalize productivity apps and environments with connected, mobile, social, and contextual-aware systems.

The future of work is continually evolving, and UC&C technologies will be key to creating work environments where companies can encourage collaboration and innovation to increase flexibility and accelerate decision making to accommodate changing business needs.

Emerging Trends in UC

Huge advances in mobile technology are driving the growth of an increasingly mobile workforce. Workers need to be able to communicate no matter where they are, no matter what device they're using. To keep up with these changing business needs, there has been an explosion of new communication technologies that help people stay in touch, including video and social media capabilities.

Native audio, video and collaboration features are appearing on every sort of device.

- / **Customized workspaces** encourage communication and collaboration, enabling workers to use the devices of their choice – computers, desk phones or smartphones – to collaborate, whether in a traditional office setting, a remote office, or on the road. Native audio, video and collaboration features are appearing on every sort of device. Technologies once found only in dedicated (and hard-to-use) teleconferencing rooms are now available in small meeting rooms, at the desktop and on the road.
- / **Web-based collaboration and teaming apps** help companies manage projects across multiple locations. Cloud-based capabilities like real-time chat, video on demand, online project viewers and other features help define flexible work environments that help companies increase productivity and reduce costs.
- / **Web Real-Time Communication (WebRTC)** embeds real-time voice, text, and video communications into web-based applications. This open-source technology makes it easy for developers to add high-quality real-time media interactions to any application, allowing users to communicate over a common set of simple protocols, using a wide range of browsers and mobile devices.
- / **Workstream communications and collaboration (WCC)** represents the convergence of UC with collaboration capabilities to create an online environment that supports the total workflow used to execute a task or business function – specifically when these capabilities replace other isolated technologies like email as the official documentation “of record” for the workflow.
- / **Cloud application programming interfaces (APIs)** give organizations the ability to embed communications into the applications they use to collaborate. The use of secure,

multi-tenant public cloud environments helps companies build infrastructures that are robust yet agile, capable of growth and expansion. But, precisely because public-cloud-based services are used to deliver the same service to multiple tenants, they cannot be customized to meet the needs of individual customers. APIs enable organizations to couple cloud-based computing with other cloud-based and proprietary applications and services – multiplying their value.

Conclusion

Many companies deploy individual UC&C elements to address specific needs, but few design a complete, enterprise-wide architecture.

UC&C is becoming critical to the modern workflow. As new technologies become available, many companies deploy individual UC&C elements to address specific needs, but few design a complete, enterprise-wide architecture. With so many options available, companies require a deliberate plan and a process to design their unique workplace of the future, and then plan a roadmap that will effectively leverage prior UC&C investments to get them there. Identifying the correct strategy is a challenge; it can be difficult to determine which cloud solutions are right for any given company.

To choose the right solution, companies need the right combination of knowledge and experience – either on-staff or as a consultant – to match unique business needs with the best and latest technology. The right partner will use a systematic process to identify and prioritize UC&C deployments, designing a UC&C roadmap that uses the best new technologies to maximize investments and optimize resources.

About SPS

Strategic Products and Services (SPS) is a global, multi-vendor system integrator for unified communications (UC) and managed services.

SPS provides strategy, consulting, design, implementation, support and managed services for UC solutions including collaboration, telephony, video/multimedia and contact centers. With documented and repeatable processes, deep knowledge, broad competencies and certifications, the company enables clients to optimize their business communications with on-site, hosted or cloud-based solutions.

SPS partners with global industry leaders, including Avaya, Cisco and Microsoft. Having achieved more than 25 years of profitable growth, SPS has offices across North America and the United Kingdom. The company is also a founding member of the Intelligent Communications Alliance (ICA), a global partner network providing multi-national customers with a consistent approach to pricing, design, installation and support of integrated business solutions. Visit www.spscom.com to learn more.

About Cisco

Cisco (NASDAQ: CSCO) is the worldwide leader in IT that helps companies seize the opportunities of tomorrow by proving that amazing things can happen when you connect the previously unconnected. For ongoing news, please go to <http://newsroom.cisco.com>.