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The Definitive Guide to UCaaS:
Simplifying Unified Communications
as a Service

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Effective unified communications as a service (UCaaS) promises to deliver seamless, secure, and cost-effective communications—across multiple channels (voice, text, video, etc.), and on different devices, anywhere the user needs it.

With UCaaS, virtually any business can realize the benefits of a simpler, more cost effective way to communicate and collaborate. A trucking company saves on long distance charges and gains better connections to customers. A global commerce company cuts costs and increases employee engagement with richer meetings leveraging VoIP and video.

But how do you get there?

Read on to learn about moving enterprise communications to the cloud, challenges behind unified communications, the role of the user, and the multiple pay-offs of successful UCaaS and collaboration.
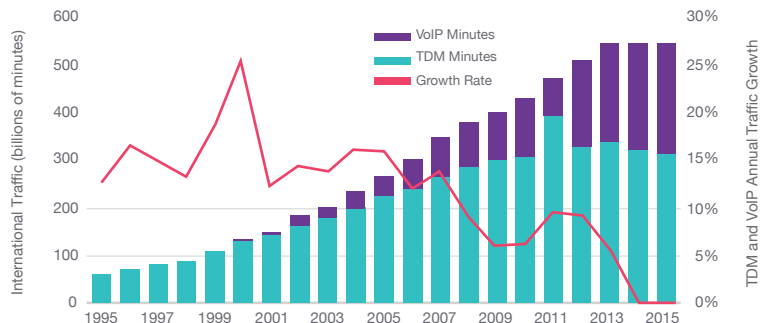
"With the modern, global workplace being increasingly disconnected due to differences in time and location, the need for effective unified communications and collaboration is greater than ever."

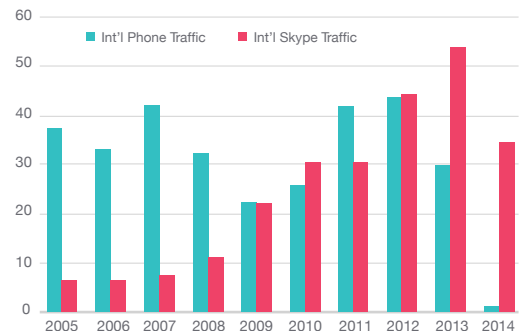**- Jim Lundy, Aragon Research, Hot Vendors in Unified Communications and Collaboration, 2016**

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Traditional unified communications is complex and expensive

Volume of VoIP versus TDM

Legend:
- VoIP Minutes
- TDM Minutes
- Growth Rate

Y-axis (left): International Traffic (billions of minutes) — 0, 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600

Y-axis (right): TDM and VoIP Annual Traffic Growth — 0%, 5%, 10%, 15%, 20%, 25%, 30%

X-axis: 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015

Source (Focus should be on growth of VoIP vs TDM)

Growth of Skype Traffic

Legend:
- Int'l Phone Traffic
- Int'l Skype Traffic

Y-axis: 0, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60

X-axis: 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014

Source (Focus on growth in Skype traffic vs International phone traffic)

Over **80%**
of people use text messaging for business.
(eWeek)

72%
of business professionals prefer texting to messaging apps.
(eWeek)

Complex and expensive: That about sums up the world of enterprise communications. Think about the sheer volume and growth of the new business communications CIOs need to manage.


Then factor in the rapidly changing digital formats, and the different types of devices being used today.

Employees themselves are a moving target – literally – with shifting preferences in their highly mobile lives. They expect easy-to-use, beautiful user interfaces just like their consumer apps.

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Talking VoIP

Adoption of IP Telephony

IP Telephony

Year	Value
2012	4.5%
2013	13.0%
2014	17.5%
2015	24.6%
2016	39.0%
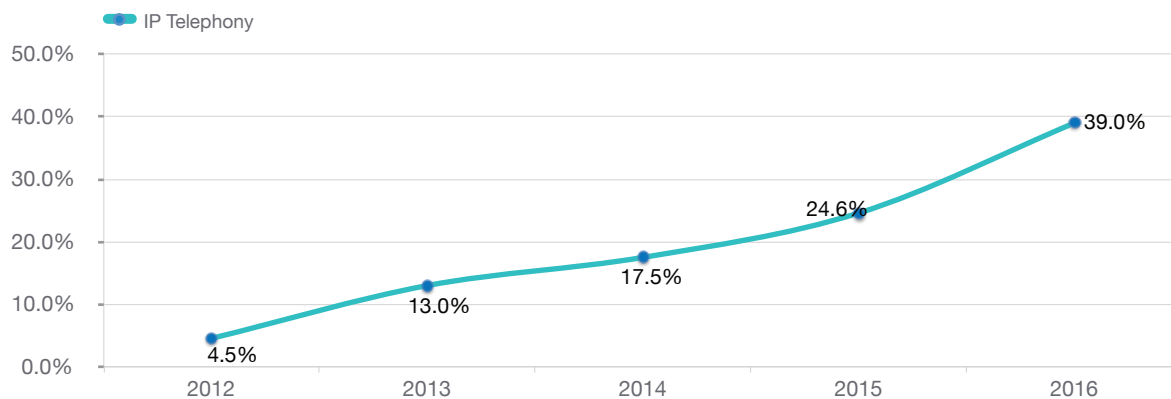
CIOs face quality of service (QoS) issues, data management, and privacy requirements, frequently spanning countries and continents.

The primary goal of UCaaS is a simple user experience that drives cost savings, better informed decision making, more efficient operations, improved customer engagement, and more.

But how do you get there?

Many businesses start with VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocols), moving from PBX telephony systems to VoIP solutions.

The reason? The significant total cost of ownership savings. No more on-premise PBX hardware, support, and maintenance, lead to reductions in monthly phone line costs.

VoIP is just a first step.

Since IP telephony is digital and cloud-based, it has the potential to be combined with other digital communications: email, texting, videoconferencing, and beyond.

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Communication system patchwork

Enterprises uncovered a significant hitch in the giddy-up to IP-telephony.

For distributed offices or remote employees, you may need to deal with a different service provider in each location. Even within a country you may have one provider for VoIP, another for video, yet another for SIP trunking, and so on.

This communication system patchwork is complex to manage and costly. It can be a barrier to realizing the full benefits of unified communications.

What if you could deal with one service that provided global, complete communications?

Take the initial promise and savings from VoIP, combine them with other digital communications such as messaging, video, and conferencing and extend them across the enterprise?

"More than anything, enterprises are seeking better and faster communications and collaboration tools. Today, it is an imperative to be able to offer voice, video, and mobile messaging as key capabilities that are interconnected."

– Jim Lundy, Aragon Research, Hot Vendors in Unified Communications and Collaboration, 2016.

A Patchwork

A global enterprise headquartered in London has major offices in North America and throughout Europe. Just for phone service, the UK facilities deal with British Telecom; North America deals with both AT&T and Bell Canada; and across Europe it deals with Orange SA, Deutsche Telecom, and Telefonica – among others. IT tried to consolidate video conferencing services onto a web-based system, but several large campuses continue to use specialized and expensive video telepresence systems.

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UCaaS in a nutshell

That is the mission of cloud-based, unified communications delivered as a service (UCaaS).

UCaaS is built upon a service provider's global infrastructure of data centers connected to the Internet. For the CIO, that means no upfront capital investments and economies of scale that can reduce unit carrier costs (e.g. per phone).

The UCaaS provider's multiple data centers can provide on-demand scalability and built-in redundancy to ensure business continuity.
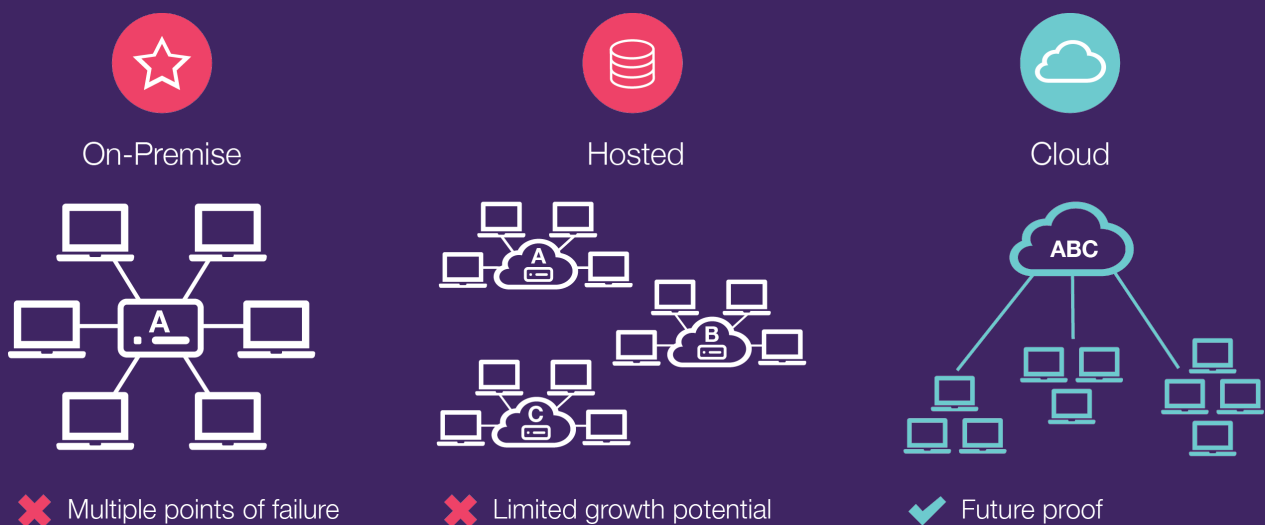
Services can be fast (low latency), reliable, and in many cases more secure than those patchwork

systems they are replacing.

Additional communication services such as chat and video – support for entire customer contact centers – can be added more easily via a ready-made, global IP infrastructure.

Dealing with one vendor, the CIO experiences a simple billing process, consolidated across geographies, and different services. One provider – a global carrier – for all communications: voice, text, video, etc.

How easy is that?

On-Premise	Hosted	Cloud
✖ Multiple points of failure	✖ Limited growth potential	✔ Future proof

"Businesses now have a choice in how to deploy unified communications, including traditional on-premises, hosted and cloud-based deployments. Each of deployment scenarios carries with it varying levels of maintenance and management responsibilities. For on-premises deployment, administration and management falls exclusively internal IT resources, while hosted UC deployments allow a sharing of responsibilities between the business and the provider. Cloud-based UC deployments allow customers to offload management and maintenance responsibilities to the cloud provider."

– Michael Braydenburg, industry analyst, Frost & Sullivan

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Multiple payoffs

UCaaS offers immediate cost-savings by reducing capital investments and inefficient operational expenditures. It also offers speed and flexibility.
• More flexibility to extend communications, faster, to new offices and employees;
• Faster, enterprise-wide software upgrades to existing services;
• Easier adoption of new IP-based communications technologies.

"WhatsApp now handles 30bn messages each day sent by its 700m users, making it 50 percent more popular than traditional text messages."

Global UC

Global, cloud-based platforms have already transformed some industries: think AirBnB in hospitality, Uber in transportation, or Amazon Web Services in data storage.

What about enterprise communications?

With cloud-based UCaaS, the management of different plans and billing for separate offices is replaced with reduced rates and a consolidated, greatly simplified management process.

UCaaS allows IT to focus scarce resources on helping lines-of-business (LOBs) achieve their business goals. IT can align more quickly and tightly with LOBs and play a bigger role in the digital transformations of their organizations.
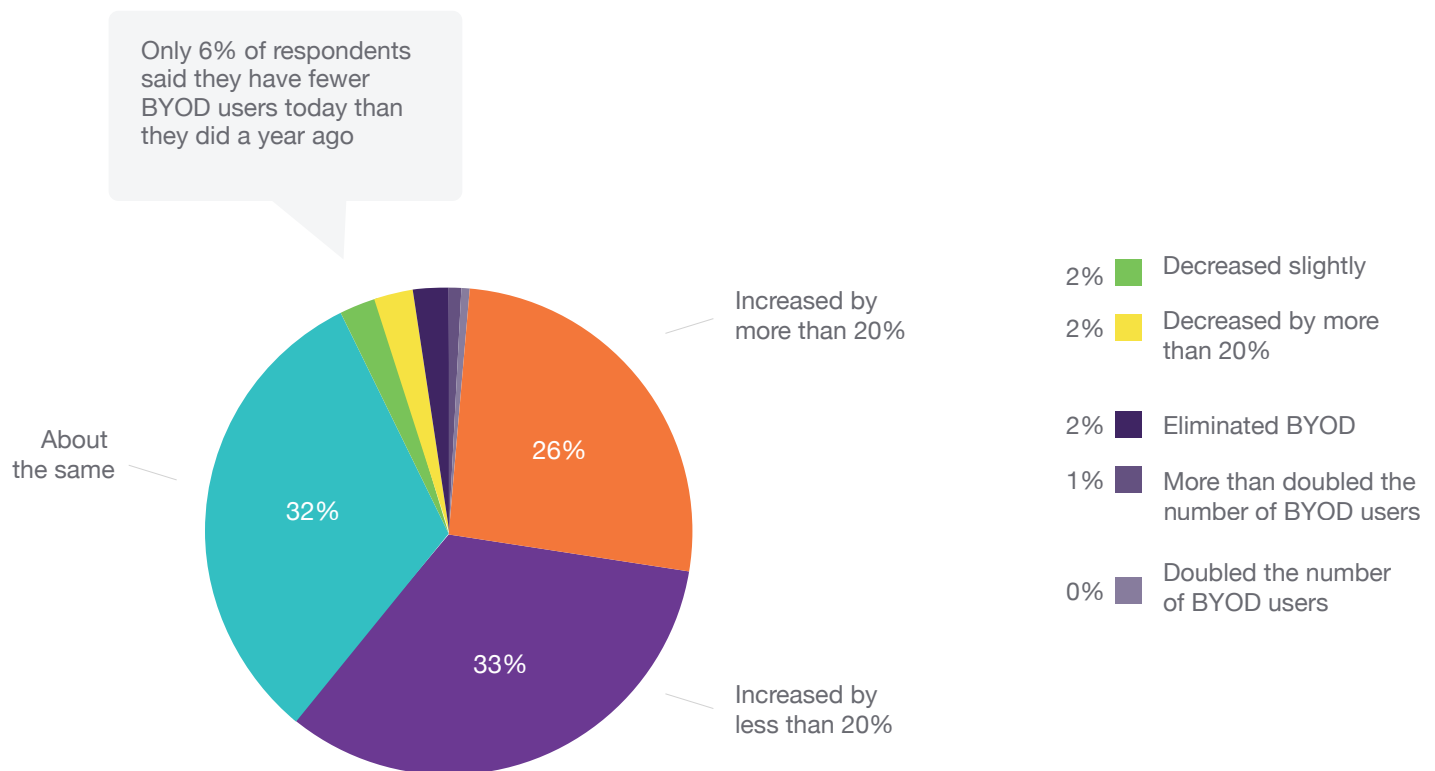
And thinking ahead, a global platform can provide real-time visibility on enterprise communications. Digital channels allow IT administrators to gather data on actual usage and the context of multi-channel communications. Such insights can be used to optimize workflows, employee collaboration, and customer engagement in contact centers and offices.

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The real risk

But let's not forget the users. Employees continue to bring their devices to work. In fact, according to a global survey of CIOs by Gartner, Inc.'s Executive Programs, over half of employers will require employees to provide their own devices for work by 2017.

Employees have come to expect their on-the-job experience to match – or surpass – what they experience as consumers.

BYOD at Work

Only 6% of respondents said they have fewer BYOD users today than they did a year ago

Increased by more than 20%

26%

Increased by less than 20%

33%

About the same

32%

2% Decreased slightly

2% Decreased by more than 20%

2% Eliminated BYOD

1% More than doubled the number of BYOD users

0% Doubled the number of BYOD users

From Cassinfo

The real risk of any UC investment is failing to deliver on those expectations, creating a barrier to broad employee adoption.

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Maximizing user adoption

Most UC deployments have an Achilles heel: user adoption. Let's consider some facts.

According to Gartner, more that 75% of the workforce is now distributed. Employees who feel more connected to their co-workers and company are also less likely to change jobs. Losing a valued employee can **cost an employer $10,000 to $30,000** and more to hire and train a replacement.

How do you boost productivity and performance through broader employee use of new UC tools? What actions encourage, or necessitate, user adoption?

Maximizing user adoption requires – among other factors – a consistent, consumer-grade user experience (UX). Consumer technologies such as Apple, Google, Netflix, and others have **created new expectations** for enterprise tools. For the enterprise, this means:

☑ Ability to personalize the UI, allowing the user to tailor the experience to their preferred way of working;

☑ Access across any of the user's preferred device(s), whether BYOD or provided by the employer;

☑ Ability to localize, e.g. languages and certain functions like directory assistance;

☑ Connectivity must be transparent to the user, whether at the desk, mobile, WiFi, or broadband;

☑ Include real-time synchronization among desktop, laptop, smartphone, and tablet devices.

That's a tall order.

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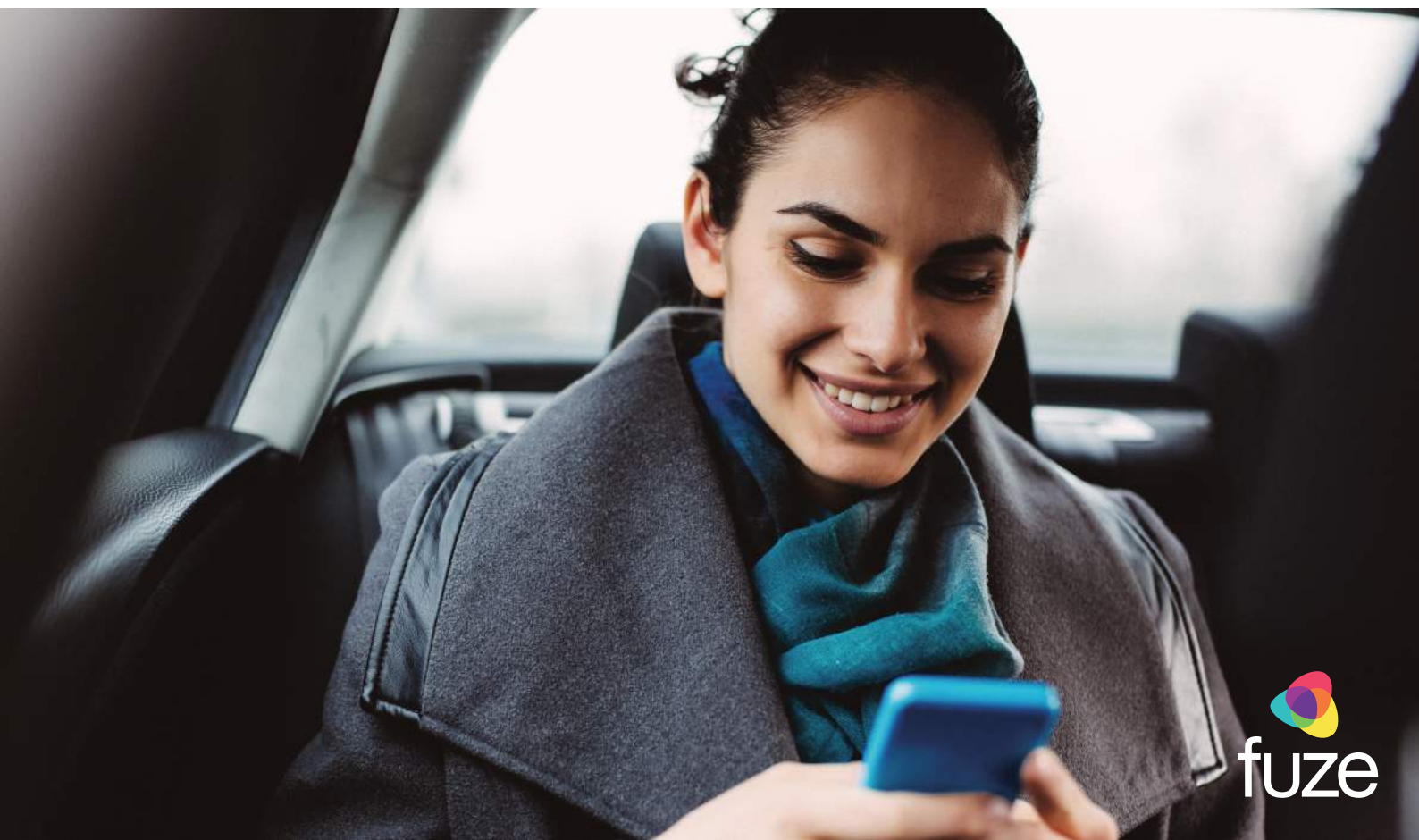
The only practical solution: UCaaS
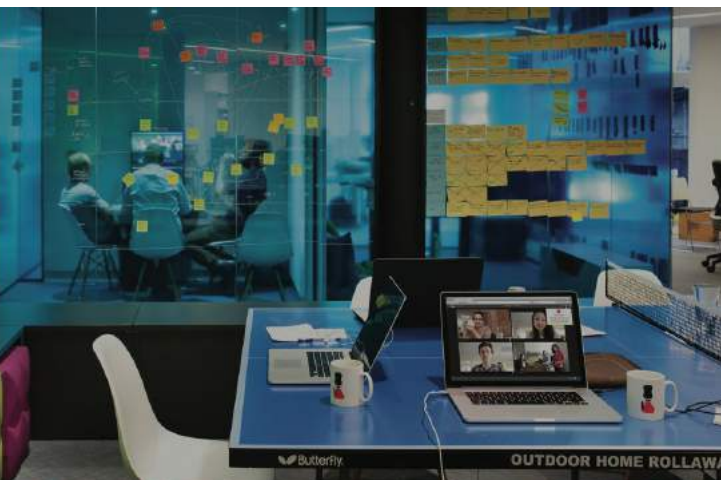
It's not easy making the user experience consistent across devices, personalized, and synchronized across preferred devices in real-time. Oh, and don't forget to make it easy-to-use.

A consumer-grade UI based on a global UCaaS platform offers the only practical solution.

A consumer-grade UI retains the ability to personalize and localize the user experience. A global platform can provide a consistent user experience across devices – as well as the capacity for real-time synchronization.

The right global UCaaS experience, while living up to the consumer-grade expectations of employees, maximizes adoption. And widespread adoption is key to achieving the business benefits of true enterprise collaboration.

UCaaS in action: ThoughtWorks
Fuze helps connect a truly distributed, global organization.

Founded	# of employees	# of countries	# of offices
1993	4,000	14	34

ThoughtWorks is a global consultancy that helps companies solve some of their toughest business challenges through technology. It has averaged 20% year-over-year headcount growth for the last decade with customers spanning industries including retail, government, education, healthcare, entertainment, and transportation.

ThoughtWorks was looking to streamline and consolidate its communication tools and improve accessibility to richer collaboration through video. It partnered with Fuze to replace its fragmented voice and video communication tools with one platform.

With Fuze, ThoughtWorks is eliminating costly systems, supporting agile development teams, improving alignment across the organization, saving time, and reducing travel.

"We are seeing a massive increase in video use across the organization," said Andy Yates, ThoughtWorks IT Business Partner. "The difference is incredible, even over the last few years. It is changing work patterns. People are realizing they are not tied to the physical office. More people are working at customer sites, from home or on the road, and there is a growing comfort with that."

Evolution of enterprise communications

Voice TDM over PBX	Unified Messaging Voice and Text	Cloud-based VoIP & UC Voice, Text, Video, Analytics	Global Consumer- grade UX	Collaboration CEBP, Social

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UCaaS and collaboration

True collaboration happens when employees can exchange information and ideas globally, easily, and effectively. What employees don't need is to struggle with the tools they use to communicate. An easy to use and widely adopted UCaaS solution provides the right environment for effective collaboration.

Legend: Collaborators (teal), Non-Collaborators (pink)

Percent Annual Change n=120

Category	Collaborators	Non-Collaborators
Customer Retention	16%	7%
Employee Productivity	15%	2%
Employee Satisfaction	13%	-2%
Sales Cycle Reduction	12%	5%
Operational Efficiency	9%	4%

From "Why Enterprise Social Collaboration Means Business", Information week article, 2013

This also requires flexibility. UCaaS platforms with open APIs and connectors can quickly accommodate innovative collaboration technologies as they emerge, adapting to the changing ways employees want to work together across the enterprise.

Users Will Lead the Way

Who would have imagined the business implications of Facebook? Or the rapid adoption of Dropbox in business? The tools – and processes – employees use to do their jobs will continue to change.

The lesson: it will be the users who lead the way in communication and collaboration – not a mandate from management.

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Benefits of UCaaS

Increasing collaboration is critical. A recent study cited in the Harvard Business Review found that up to a third of value-added workplace collaborations come from only 3% to 5% of employees. Imagine increasing that 3% or 5% to 10%, 20% or 50% of employees by better enabling their communications.

Real business collaboration can improve productivity, enhance customer service leading to increased sales, get better products to market faster, and engage employees.

Achieving these benefits will be a lot easier with a global UCaaS solution that provides a superior user experience.

"Research participants claimed that successful collaboration initiatives on the commercial side increased sales by about 6% on average and profitability by about 4% (self-reported). Successful initiatives that focused on the supply side resulted in an average decrease of out-of-stocks by almost 4% and a cost reduction of 5%." -

From "Collaboration today and tomorrow – taking the right steps on the path to impact" Joint ECR Europe/McKinsey & Company Survey

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Moving Forward with UCaaS

Cost-efficient and effective communications across multiple channels are critical for today's global enterprise. Complex and disjointed solutions increase costs, inhibit flexibility, and stifle productivity.

Maximizing user adoption is key to the success of any unified communications strategy. Shifting employee expectations require the enterprise to deliver simpler, consumer-grade user experiences – anywhere the employee requires. This challenge is only aggravated by different devices and more remote workers.

UCaaS delivers a global, more cost effective way for all employees to communicate and collaborate. Moving unified enterprise communications to the cloud can provide a simple and seamless consumer-grade user experience—for any employee around the globe. With UCaaS businesses can better engage their employees – and customers – to realize the agility and productivity benefits of truly unified communications and collaboration.

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Sources / Disclaimers

Fuze is a global, cloud-based unified communications platform. Designed for the way people work, Fuze powers business conversations and insights across the modern enterprise. With a single unified voice, video, and messaging application, people can now communicate anytime, anywhere, across any device. Headquartered in Cambridge, MA, Fuze has additional locations including New York, San Francisco, Seattle, Ottawa, London, Amsterdam, Aveiro (Portugal), Paris, Munich, Zurich, Madrid, Copenhagen, and Sydney. For more information, visit **www.fuze.com.**