

# Leveraging the business platform of the future

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As businesses across sectors consider various new modes of work to drive business performance, there is an increasing urgency to streamline and optimise communication channels - for both internal and external functions.



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Without a doubt, the health and economic crises of recent months has accelerated corporate transitions into cloud environments and placed collaboration tools such as video conferencing and instant chats at the forefront of daily business.

According to a study from mobile market data provider App Annie, video conferencing software downloads reached 62 million in mid-March - the highest ever reported. Yet as businesses adopted more tools and platforms to support teams working remotely, it created new complexities, as well as inefficiencies. For instance, with employees switching between platforms (i.e., moving from WhatsApp to Zoom to softphone), it created the potential for data loss and a lack of continuity when addressing customer concerns and queries.

In response to this complexity and risk of data leakage, interest in Unified Communications (UC) and Communication Platform as a Service (CPaaS) offerings have surged – primarily because these offerings integrate various apps and platforms into one, unified and centralised communications solution.

Importantly, by capturing data across these platforms and weaving this data into every customer interaction and touchpoint, business teams are then able to have better quality conversations with customers through more context, speed and accuracy.

Given that more businesses are embracing fully remote working models or a hybrid of in-office and virtual working, these types of benefits are becoming increasingly critical to maintaining strong customer relationships and ensuring continuity and brand consistency across virtual teams. Perhaps unsurprisingly, general interest in UCaaS increased by 86% immediately after the Covid-19 pandemic, according to a report from Avant Research & Analytics.

Today, forward-thinking businesses are realising that not only do they need to be operating in cloud environments, but they need to harness future-fit UC and CPaaS solutions to remain relevant, agile and responsive in an increasingly digitised business ecosystem.

### **Quality conversations, seamless customer experience**

In essence, the concept of unified communications (UC) is what binds various cloud initiatives and offerings into one, simplified service. It is the integration of real-time enterprise communication offerings that include mobility and instant messaging with non-real-time channels such as voicemail, email, and SMS. For instance, UC enables a team member to send a message on one channel, and receive it on another (for instance, accessing your corporate voicemail through your personal mobile phone; or getting an instant message on your laptop).

Previously, UC harnessed a combination of multiple solutions. But through dynamic innovations, all this functionality and integration can now be delivered behind a single pane of glass. Not only does this vastly improve the user experience and user efficiency, but it also strengthens the visibility of all communication in the business (while significantly reducing costs).

For businesses, a cloud-based UC environment has enabled them to standardise, simplify and streamline their existing communication infrastructure – while boosting internal productivity and engagement. For instance, updates take place automatically through the Cloud - with the software featuring the latest security patches and other innovations as they become available (thus removing the burden of constant and costly system updates). This allows IT teams to focus on strategic initiatives, instead of being caught up in day to day administration of communications platforms.

### **Supporting agility as a key business driver**

In line with the agility and continuous innovation that global business now demands, responsive cloud-based solutions shift the cost to a consumption-based model: the business only pays for the services and features it uses - allowing it to scale up, and scale down, according to the business growth path and trajectory.

Additionally, future-fit solutions are built on open standards, meaning that customers can leverage other cloud offerings like Amazon Web Services, Google, chatbots, and importantly, data analytics. This also enables savvy businesses and teams to continually integrate emerging technology innovations (such as AI and Augmented Reality)...and in doing so, remain current with the most important developments within customer experience (CX), collaboration and productivity.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

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