Mobile Unified Communications & Collaboration (UCC)

The CIO’s Guide

To drive productivity and competitiveness, organizations are unifying their communications and collaboration capabilities. But as the workplace moves beyond the traditional office, choosing the right mobility component for UCC becomes critical. Here’s what to consider when making your choice.

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Communications, Mobility, & the 21st-Century Workplace

Two trends in telecommunications are driving productivity and competitiveness in organizations today. Unified Communications and Collaboration (UCC) combines diverse business-critical communications capabilities into a single system, while smartphones and similar devices keep an increasingly mobile workforce connected to each other and to business processes from just about anywhere. UCC and mobility both deliver value. But their full potentials are only realized when they are integrated in a Mobile UCC solution.

Communications tools united

Business people have more ways to stay in touch than ever before. VoIP and traditional telephony, voicemail, email, instant messaging, text messaging, presence systems, video conferencing … the list goes on. Each technology promises to help them stay in touch with co-workers, customers, partners, and business processes, keeping them connected, responsive, and efficient. For the enterprise as a whole, the rewards include cost savings, satisfied customers, more efficient business processes, and higher productivity.

But when all of those technologies work independently of one another, they can actually make communications less efficient and more confusing. Multiple phone numbers, email addresses, and collaboration tools can result in missed calls, telephone tag, rapidly filling email inboxes, wasted time, and unhappy customers. They can also eat into IT budgets, as time and resources are spent administering a growing array of communications tools on a variety of infrastructures.

To overcome the challenges and realize the potential of these tools, organizations are taking communications technologies out of their silos and uniting them in a single, coherent, centrally administered Unified Communications and Collaboration solution. With UCC, the technologies can work together to deliver on the promise of more flexible, efficient, cost-effective communication throughout the enterprise.

The workplace goes mobile

There are also more options when it comes to where, when, and how people work. Enterprise mobility has redefined the workplace, as the boundaries between home and office, personal and professional life, business travel and in-office productivity disappear. The benefits can be substantial, and include higher worker satisfaction and retention, increased flexibility and agility, lower costs for office space and utilities, less energy consumption for a greener workplace, and new ways to be productive anywhere, anytime. So clear are the advantages of business mobility that IDC predicts the mobile workforce, including office-based “corridor cruisers”, non-office-based “travelers”, and home-based telecommuters will climb to over 1.3 billion by 2015, up from 1.0 billion in 2010.¹

But the mobile workplace comes with challenges as well as benefits. To be productive, mobile workers need to have the same seamless communications experience away from the office that they enjoy in the traditional workspace. When that isn’t the case — when mobile devices operate in silos like other non-unified communications tools — then the productivity gains and cost savings of enterprise mobility can be offset by increasing telephone tag, high mobile phone costs, and skyrocketing cellular roaming charges. There are also increased concerns about security and compliance, as corporate data leaves the building and call recording and logging systems cope with new requirements associated with mobile devices.

Communications, Mobility, & the 21st-Century Workplace

Mobile UCC – the best of both worlds

To address these challenges and realize the significant benefits that an increasingly mobile workforce can offer, organizations are integrating mobile communications with UCC solutions to create mobile UCC.

With mobile UCC, organizations realize the benefits of both UCC and mobility. By integrating mobile capabilities with traditional telephony, messaging, voice, presence, and other business applications, mobile UCC provides businesspeople with the same integrated communications capabilities anywhere, anytime, on smartphones and other mobile devices that are fully integrated with the organization’s communications and collaboration platform. Whether they are in the office, down the hall, at home, or on the road, Mobile UCC keeps them connected and driving business.

So compelling is the promise of mobile UCC that it is expected to grow quickly. Gartner predicts that not only will mobile and UCC integration increase dramatically in the next few years, but that mobile applications will play a major role in the adoption of UCC. By 2016, they expect 75% of mobile solutions will be integrated into enterprise telephony infrastructures.²

Mobile UCC offers real benefits to people in many roles in just about any enterprise. But for CEOs, CIOs, IT managers and other decision makers who must choose from the available options, the task of selecting a mobile component for UCC can seem daunting. It needn’t be. When assessing a mobility component for UCC, the key is to focus on a relatively small number of key factors, particularly ease of use, completeness of integration, and cost management capabilities.
Mobile UCC in Action

Mobile Unified Communications and Collaboration (UCC) keeps people connected and productive. Here’s what it looks like in action.

In healthcare — always in touch
Many doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals are constantly on the move. Yet they need to stay in continuous contact with colleagues, and to be constantly aware of what is happening with patients. With Mobile UCC, presence information on smartphones lets healthcare workers know who is available to help in an emergency, and how best to reach them. Integration with calendars, messaging, WebEx and other conferencing makes diagnostic charts, x-rays, and other critical information available on smartphones and tablets. Whether they are in the office, down the hall visiting patients, or in transit, with Mobile UCC healthcare workers know what is happening and can make better, faster decisions.

In the call center — support from anywhere
Help Desk and Call Center workers play a key role in managing customer relationships. Often, they work beyond the confines of the traditional corporate cubicle, visiting customers in or out of the building. Wherever they are, they need to be easily reachable and highly responsive to customer needs. They also have to stay connected to corporate knowledge bases and experts. With mobile UCC, support workers keep colleagues informed of their status. They can be reached using a single phone number. And they are connected to the resources they need to resolve problems quickly.

In sales — no call unanswered
The mantra of salespeople is, or should be, “no call goes unanswered.” When smartphones and other mobile devices are part of corporate UCC, salespeople are available to customers no matter what. A single phone number reaches them whether they are in the office or another city. Presence information and access to individual and shared calendars lets others know the location and status of everyone in the sales force, and how best to reach them. Salespeople connect with Sales.com and other management systems via smartphones and tablets. They can drive sales and impact the top line from any location.

In document management — team collaboration
Mobile UCC can connect people with all of the business processes of the enterprise, including Microsoft SharePoint and other document management systems. Teams can work collaboratively from multiple locations, checking documents in and out on smartphones and tablets and staying on top of group calendars and schedules. Everyone on the team, no matter where they are, stays up to date on project developments and contributes to the team effort.

In finance — risk management and compliance
To manage risk, financial organizations, call centers, and others that do business on the telephone are recording their voice communications. For some it is a legal requirement. With Mobile UCC, smartphone conversations are integrated with landline recording platforms, so that business calls can take place anywhere, anytime, and are still recorded and logged. Integration with the corporate telephone platform ensures that mobile workers present the same professional image to clients whether they are in the office or on the go.

For busy executives and professionals of all kinds
Lawyers, consultants — anyone who needs immediate access to information and who must be able to communicate and collaborate with co-workers, partners, customers and clients at any time — all benefit from mobile communications that are fully integrated with corporate UCC. An “in-office” experience anywhere and anytime means they are always connected, always productive, always driving business.
What to Consider When Choosing a Mobile UCC Solution

Then choosing a mobility component for Unified Communications and Collaboration (UCC), focus on ease of use, ability to fully integrate mobile devices with your UCC infrastructure, and cost controls that let you maximize ROI.

Ease of use

With any technology, the bottom line is that people must be willing and able to use it or it won’t deliver on its promises. The more eagerly users adopt a solution, the greater its benefits. And the key to adoption is ease of use. In short, other things being equal, user satisfaction should be the primary driver when choosing a mobile component of UCC.

This is especially important given current trends in the workforce. Millennials and other new workers who have “grown up digital” are entering a workplace where competition for their services is strong. They come eager to learn and contribute, but they expect to be able to choose where and when they work and how their work lives will mesh with personal and family life. Their experience and education predisposes them to communicate and collaborate to solve problems and accomplish tasks. They are used to multiple modes of interacting with peers, and they expect to be able to tap seamlessly into all of their communications options. What’s more, they want work to be fun, and technology to be easy to use and enjoyable.\(^3\)

Increasingly, too, Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) workers want to use their own smart devices for both corporate and personal communication. Not only are they already power users of these devices, so that training isn’t needed, but it means they can work with the device of their choice in the ways that they choose to be most productive. It raises issues of security, to be sure. But if those concerns can be addressed effectively, and personal devices can be integrated with corporate communications policies and capabilities, there are considerable benefits to be realized.

\(^3\)Grown up digital: how the net generation is changing your world, Don Tapscott, McGraw Hill, 2009
BlackBerry and the user experience

BlackBerry® recognizes that end-user satisfaction with a mobile solution is the primary driver when it comes to UCC, and it handles the ease of use factor in a number of ways.

For starters, we recognize that use of a corporate smartphone, tablet, or other smart device should be intuitive. If users need a half-day of training before they can be productive while mobile, the chances of them using the corporate mobile solution will diminish – they will fall back on familiar technology to try to get the job done, inefficiently working around preferred corporate communications channels.

Unlike mobile solutions that require users to master call processing and other communications applications on their smart devices, BlackBerry provides an experience that is completely transparent to the user. Whether they are making or receiving calls, or using other unified communications tools, the technology layer is transparent to the end user, leaving them free to focus on the task rather than the technology.

For example, when a user initiates a BlackBerry call, BlackBerry signals the corporate Private Branch Exchange (PBX) to set up the call using the best option available, whether that is WiFi or cellular. Users don’t depend on separate applications and additional tasks to specify call variables, because the phone and the client are one and the same, making for a seamless and transparent user experience and unparalleled ease of use.

That ease of use extends to all aspects of unified communications when BlackBerry is part of UCC. Not only are all of the applications needed to integrate mobility and UCC transparent to the user, they are all interconnected – they “talk to” and understand one another. If a user is communicating using one mode, such as enterprise instant messaging, and it makes sense to switch to another, then it is available with no extra effort. The instant messaging user can see presence information, for example, and switch to that application or another when it makes sense. All of the applications needed to make the most of corporate UCC capabilities are native BlackBerry tools. No additional applications are needed, and no training is required.

BlackBerry also addresses the growing trend toward consumerization and BYOD. With BlackBerry® Mobile Fusion and BlackBerry® Balance as part of UCC, users can perform all of their communications functions – business and personal – on a single BlackBerry® smartphone or BlackBerry® PlayBook™ tablet. Mobile device management for other smartphones and devices means that users can work on their device of choice. Complete separation of corporate and personal applications and data at the storage level ensures that industry-leading BlackBerry security keeps corporate data and communications secure, while freeing users to meet all of their communications needs on a single, easy to use device.4

4For more, see the BlackBerry Balance white paper.
What to Consider When Choosing a Mobile UCC Solution

Completeness of integration

No Unified Communications and Collaboration system is a single-vendor, turnkey solution. The many components that make up UCC – everything from basic telephony to the latest in messaging and video collaboration – mean that, by its very nature, UCC is an integrated solution. Adding mobility to the mix means one more component to integrate with the rest of your UCC platform. As a result, when choosing a mobile component for UCC, a key factor to consider is how easily and completely it integrates with other UCC components.

The mobile component must integrate with all aspects of UCC, including messaging, presence, and business-critical applications like sales and supply chain. This means providing support for all the major players in each category of UCC. And it means providing application program interfaces (APIs) for integration with business processes, such as line of business applications. This integration must not only be complete, it must be transparent to the user. Everything must simply work together as a single solution for communications and collaboration.

Especially important, it must integrate with all of an organization’s security systems to ensure that corporate data and communications shared via mobile are just as secure as they are inside the office and the corporate firewall. One aspect of particular relevance to call centers, financial institutions, and others that need to record calls to manage liability or comply with regulatory requirements, is how mobile calls can be handled. Adding a mobile component to the UCC mix means that mobile calls must somehow be integrated with landline calls for recording and auditing purposes. Added to this is the need to ensure security when it comes to using SharePoint or similar document collaboration tools, and other business process applications.

BlackBerry and UCC integration

Unlike mobility providers who are actually competitors of the companies that supply other components of UCC, BlackBerry is not in competition for non-mobility-related aspects of UCC. We have formed strong partnerships with leading UCC component providers, and we develop BlackBerry for UCC in close partnership with them, both at the business and technical levels. Our mobile solutions are tested against partners’ components and certified as compatible, so that customers can have full confidence that BlackBerry will work hand in glove with other leading components of UCC.

BlackBerry supports seamless integration with a full complement of enterprise communications tools, without requiring additional applications. Our BlackBerry Client for Microsoft SharePoint, for example, ensures smooth integration with SharePoint document libraries, in addition to supporting workflows and social media to increase collaboration and reduce interruptions in your business.

For organizations that record calls, BlackBerry integrates with their existing call recording platforms. Unlike other mobile solutions, there is no client software to install on the BlackBerry smartphone, and no recording done by BlackBerry® Mobile Voice System (MVS). Instead, an IT administrator simply configures BlackBerry smartphones that will be used for business purposes, so that all calls to and from those mobiles are routed through the corporate PBX, where they are recorded and logged using the same call recording platform and same security measure as landline calls.5

Finally, BlackBerry's industry-renowned security ensures that all mobile communications and collaboration is secure. All encrypted data is backed by a FIPS 140-2 Validated cryptographic module, DOD compliant device wipe, and the assurance associated with a solution that is known as the “Gold Standard” in the industry for secure, mobile communications among governments and major organizations worldwide.

5For more, see “The CIO’s Guide to Call Recording with BlackBerry smartphones”
What to Consider When Choosing a Mobile UCC Solution

Telecom cost management

A third factor to consider when choosing a mobile component for UCC is whether it helps manage communications costs.

In-office communications are initiated and managed using the corporate PBX (Public Branch Exchange) and landlines, but mobile communications that are part of UCC can use landlines, the cellular network, or a fast-growing number of “hotspots” for wireless network access. Landline long distance calls are more economical than cellular, so that when calls depend too heavily on the cellular network those costs can rise precipitously. As a result, many of the attractive productivity gains and cost savings associated with Mobile UCC can be offset by high mobile phone costs and international cellular roaming charges.

BlackBerry “least cost” call routing

With some mobile solutions, it’s up to the user to specify which network – PBX, cellular, or WiFi – to use for calls. But with BlackBerry, the mobile and the UCC client are the same. When a user makes a call, BlackBerry signals the PBX to set up the call using the most cost-effective route. If the caller is within WiFi range, BlackBerry establishes the call over WiFi. If WiFi is not available, BlackBerry uses the PBX-based phone network. In the same way, BlackBerry automatically answers calls via the PBX, so that cost is minimized without the user having to think about it.

This means that, when BlackBerry users are using corporate WiFi or home WiFi, they are not using the cellular network for data transmission. BlackBerry “knows” when to switch systems too, moving from one mode of transmission to another, ensuring not only lower cost but call reliability.

For example, if a user is in a building where WiFi is available, BlackBerry routes calls over WiFi. If it’s not available, BlackBerry uses the cellular network. If a caller initiates a call on cellular and then WiFi becomes available, BlackBerry switches over to WiFi automatically. Conversely, if a call is initiated using WiFi, and that WiFi becomes no longer available, BlackBerry switches automatically to the cellular network, ensuring no disruption of service.

For the user, this switching to ensure cost-effectiveness and quality of service is transparent. While other mobile solutions require users to manually select different call-processing applications for their mobile devices, with a separate application for each type of call, with BlackBerry the user simply makes the call. Automatic selection of method ensures least-cost routing that reduces international roaming costs.

These cost controls, combined with ease of integration with other UCC components and ease of use for the businessperson make BlackBerry the ideal mobility component for Mobile Unified Communications and Collaboration.
BlackBerry is much more than a smartphone – it’s a portfolio of products that includes handhelds and tablets, cloud-ready backend infrastructure, and centralized management tools. BlackBerry ease use, integration with any combination of PBX platforms and other Unified Communications and Collaboration (UCC) components, and cost-effective call routing, deliver Mobile UCC for effective communication throughout the enterprise.

BlackBerry Enterprise Solution includes:

**BlackBerry Mobile Fusion**
Enterprise class software that acts as the centralized link between BlackBerry smartphones, BlackBerry tablets, iOS and Android platforms.

**BlackBerry smartphones and tablets**
Integrated wireless voice and data devices that are optimized to work with BlackBerry® Enterprise Solution.

**BlackBerry Application Platform**
A flexible, easy-to-use environment for developing BlackBerry smartphone applications.

**BlackBerry Mobile Voice System**
Converges office desk phones and BlackBerry smartphones on multiple PBX platforms, unifying fixed and mobile voice communications so that users can be reached at a single business phone number and access enterprise voice features whether they’re at their desks or on the go.

**BlackBerry Solution Services**
Helps customers maximize the capabilities of the BlackBerry® solution.
Links

For more information on Unified Communications & Collaboration go to: www.blackberry.com/collaboration

To locate an authorized BlackBerry® Reseller in North America go to: www.blackberry.com/varlocator

To be contacted for more information email: sales@blackberry.com