

The power of connection

Why today's "work from anywhere" workforce needs Unified Communication as a Service (UCaaS)



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Chapter 1

Integrations today and tomorrow



The modern business relies on an array of tools to boost employee productivity, automate workflows, provide customer relationship management and support, and manage internal and external communications.

With today's "work from anywhere" hybrid business models – with some employees at the office and others at home – how do companies support communications? And what about the applications that employees use? What's the state of applications in the workforce? How can unified and simplified communication as a service (UCaaS) help support today's workforce?

Here's what businesses need today:

- A larger, more professional, customer-facing calling experience
- The right technology to enable a hybrid work environment
- Meeting and connection availability to customers and employees, how and when they want to connect
- Simple integration of multiple applications

Let's start by looking at how employees use applications.

A Harmon.ie survey¹ of information workers reports that, on average, 74% of employees have at least five applications open at one time, and 16% use more than 15 applications per business day.



74%

Employees that have at least five applications open at one time



16%

Employees that use more than 15 applications a business day

In the case of communications and collaboration, many tools were adopted at different times and for different purposes. A company's landline phone and fax systems may date back decades, and it may have been years since email platforms or calendaring software were last updated. At the same time, modern businesses likely use other types of applications, like video conferencing or instant messaging tools, that have been implemented in just the past few years.

Businesses often lack an automated solution for sending data between one system and another. These businesses often rely on manual, ad hoc processes to connect platforms.

Ad hoc strategies come at a great cost, such as a lack of productivity and the loss of tools over time. IT teams in particular feel the pain of the ad hoc approach, because they must deal with disconnected business workflows and, more worryingly, the security and compliance risks associated with employees using unsanctioned apps to circumvent poor workflows.



Equally worrisome is the impact that disconnected communications have on employees. In a recent survey by CITE Research², more than 2/3 of respondents said they waste up to 60 minutes at work navigating between applications.

This constant switching between applications is referred to as "app overload," a problem that 75% of IT leaders cite as a major challenge. App overload means that users have so many applications to navigate within their company, they struggle to find the right solution for a given task and to master the different tools they're expected to use. This stifles productivity and leads to decreased employee engagement.

But thanks to the advent of the cloud, a better model is possible. By migrating to a cloud-based strategy for deploying applications, a business can:

- Achieve easier implementation of applications
- Lower maintenance effort, thereby reducing the strain on IT departments
- Increase productivity within a robust cloud work environment
- Integrate applications more efficiently than what's possible with a traditional approach

With cloud-based technologies, a business can unify its entire work ecosystem, easing the strain on the IT department and end users.

¹ Harmon.ie

² "From Workplace Chaos to Zen: How App Overload Is Reshaping the Digital Workplace", CITE, March 2018

Chapter 2

The power of one cloud communications solution

Many businesses today use cloud-based enterprise applications such as Microsoft® 365, Salesforce, and Google Workspace. Cloud-based applications are great for helping companies become more efficient and leverage data effectively.

These applications become more powerful when they're integrated with a cloud communications application. However, simply adopting cloud-based communications applications is only the first step in realizing the full value of these technologies. To maximize potential, businesses must integrate their communications tools with the other cloud-based business applications they already use.

To illustrate, a business might integrate cloud-based fax solutions with its email platform, so faxes can be read and received as easily as email. Or, it could integrate video meeting tools with its calendar software to schedule meetings automatically. These are just some of the integrations that cloud solutions make possible.

Integrations in a cloud communications system make the whole enterprise ecosystem much greater than the sum of its parts, whether those integrations are out of the box or via custom APIs.

Cloud-based communications deliver several critical advantages as compared to legacy, on-premises communications tools.

- 1.** Modern cloud-based communications tools increase productivity and streamline workflows. They lend themselves to automation. For example, there's no simple way to automate phone dialing or appointment scheduling on a legacy system, but in the cloud, common tasks can easily be scripted and automated to save time.
- 2.** Cloud-based communications tools give a business flexibility to run operations from anywhere, because they work equally well on workstations, smartphones, and office devices.
- 3.** A cloud-based centralized communications hub provides a better user experience. It also makes it easy to store and back up data such as call or webinar recordings into the cloud, where they are accessible from anywhere, instantly.

Successful organizations today build best-of-breed solutions that merge new cloud technologies with multiple applications like Microsoft® Office, Microsoft® Teams, Outlook®, Google Drive™, Box, Dropbox®, and Salesforce to deliver a complete experience in a familiar interface.

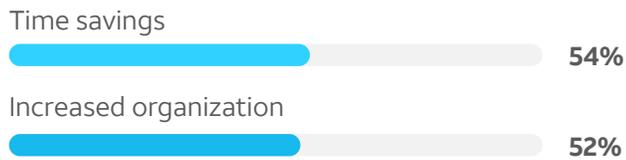
Chapter 3

Business communications and applications: Consumers want “easy to use”



Consumer comfort with using cloud technologies to connect with friends and family has led to a change in their expectations for the business applications they use to communicate with fellow workers. Whether their communication is for business or pleasure, they want the same simple user experiences and efficient workflows. For example, where once users may have been satisfied with integrated email and calendar, now they demand a much more integrated communications experience that includes voice, messaging, meetings, fax, and more.

Workers said in the CITE Research study mentioned previously that they believe an integrated, unified approach to communications and collaboration would lead to:



As end users demand a more comprehensive and seamless communications experience, the pressure is on for IT to respond. Successful companies must combine business productivity suites with purpose-built communications solutions to empower employees with the full range of functionality they want and need to perform their jobs.

The marriage of enterprise applications and cloud communications and collaboration solutions relieves crippling bottlenecks in enterprise workflows. Rather than toggle endlessly between disconnected applications multiple times per day, users can access the needed functionalities from within one centralized cloud communications hub.

That's why today's workforce is moving toward integrated solutions that combine tools like email, calendars, and conferencing versus stand-alone applications and programs to streamline workflows, easily manage their scheduling and correspondence, and maintain a unified business identity.

By integrating applications like Microsoft 365 and Google Workspace with cloud phone, fax, and text into one consolidated interface, all employees are able to access everything they need when they need it.

Today's businesses need tools that offer seamless connectivity, unified collaboration, and simplified service.

Integration use cases

Sales agent

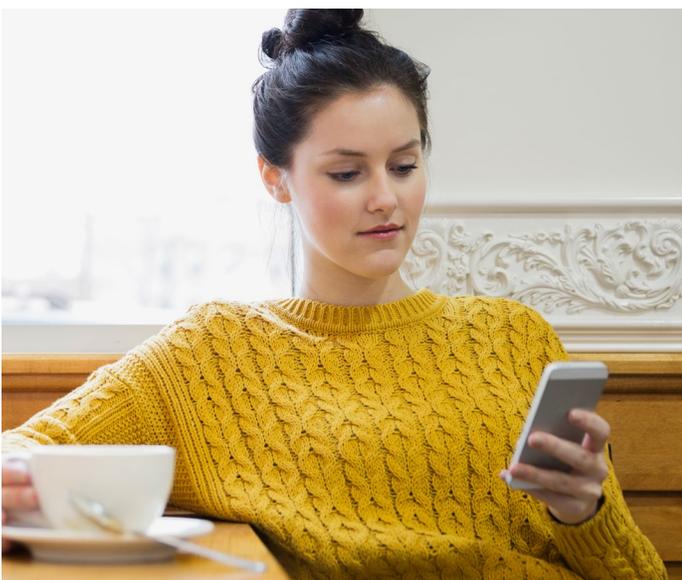


John is a sales agent whose job includes calling 50 leads per day. That's a tall order if John is expected to place each call manually, as well as keep manual records of which leads were called, when leads were called, and what the outcome of each call was. John also relies on his desktop computer, his desk phone, his mobile phone, and his email to both call and respond to leads each day.

By integrating a cloud-based calling tool with a CRM platform like Salesforce, John can automate most of these tasks. Working from a PC or smartphone, he can easily store call records automatically within his CRM platform and use it to keep track of the outcomes of calls. Few CRM tools offer this type of functionality natively, but it can easily be added through integration with a cloud-based communications tool.

Also, John can quickly dial down a list of calls with an integrated dialer in his company's favorite CRM.

Mortgage company employee



Sue, a mortgage company employee, prepares a document using a cloud-based productivity application like Google Docs or a Box account, but she needs to send the document to a client as a fax due to regulatory requirements in the financial services industry. This task requires several tedious, time-consuming steps. The document has to be downloaded into an offline word processor, printed out, inserted into a fax machine, and then faxed manually.

Having an integrated UCaaS allows Sue to fax the document in a few steps. With a cloud-based fax solution that integrates with Google Docs or Box, the document can be quickly delivered as a fax directly from a workstation or phone, even if Sue doesn't have a fax machine on site.

Integration use cases

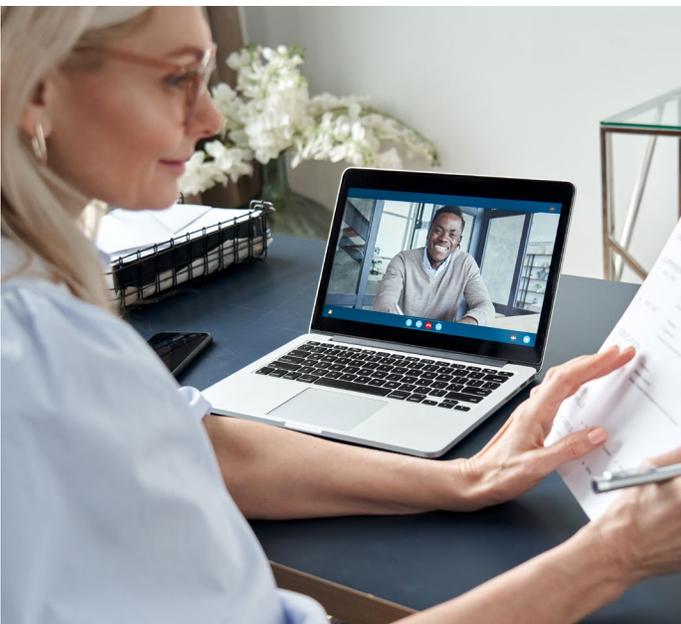
Customer support manager



Joel is a customer support manager who must ensure his team resolves 100 service complaints a week. How can he track which team members are most efficient and which need training? Joel might have each team member keep a manual tally of calls. He might compare these with anecdotal information he receives from a sample of customers. This unwieldy system provides few insights into his team's output.

Modern integration can help. Integrated analytics within a customer service cloud app, like Salesforce Service Cloud, gives Joel access to instant reporting on how calls are managed, answered, and more. With the inbound screen pop-up, Joel can see who's calling. Is it a customer or a prospect? Joel can get a 360-degree view of what's happening with that caller before answering the call.

Sales team leader



Ellen is a sales team leader overseeing a large team. The team goal is to schedule 50 meetings per week. Using calendaring software alone, Ellen has to schedule each meeting manually, and she must slog through a tedious scheduling process that involves the exchange of information over email or by phone and the coordination of multiple people's schedules before she can confirm each meeting.

With an integrated meetings solution that connects to Ellen's email tool, Ellen can schedule meetings quickly and automatically without having to shift between multiple applications.

Also, Ellen can leverage analytics on communications data to see how her team is working. Who's making the most calls and closing the most deals?

Chapter 4

The hybrid workforce and connected workspaces



Tools that boost productivity and cloud-based solutions are critical for businesses of all sizes. Today's hybrid businesses need a collaboration solution with one toll-free number that integrates voice, fax, SMS messaging, and audio and video conferencing across any device – desk phone, mobile phone, computer, or tablet. The flexible, scalable solutions provided by cloud-based communications systems deliver greater benefits to both end users and IT.

By integrating a cloud communications system with key enterprise applications, businesses gain a robust solution that merges all business communications into one productive cloud work environment.

Give your workforce the support they need with **AT&T Office@HandSM**

Get seamless connectivity, unified collaboration, and powerful features that fit your business

AT&T Office@Hand enables workers to work from anywhere with unified messaging, video, and phone across business devices. Pair it with core networking solutions, such as AT&T Dedicated Internet for advanced reliability and robust connectivity. Enjoy integrations with existing PBX equipment such as Microsoft® Office and Outlook®, Google Drive™, Box, and Dropbox®.

Mobile device integration comes with business-ready capabilities such as auto receptionist, extension dialing, voicemail and hunt groups – which allow incoming calls to be re-routed to multiple phone lines.

AT&T Office@Hand integrates with 200+ existing applications such as Microsoft Office and Outlook, Google Drive, Box, and Dropbox.

AT&T Office@Hand is a cloud-based service that works over an existing internet connection, or pair with AT&T core networking solutions for faster internet, enhanced security, and seamless video.

Plus:

- Unified collaboration offers one toll-free number that integrates voice, fax, text, audio, and video conferencing across devices.
- MSFT Teams messaging platform users can connect directly to the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) to make incoming and outgoing calls.
- Employees can work from anywhere on business-ready devices like smartphones, tablets, softphones, or desktop IP phones.
- Flexibility allows customers to choose wireline and wireless collaboration, wireline only, or mobile only.
- Only pay for the lines you need.

Unified:

- For smaller IT teams, native mobile dialing allows customers to make and receive phone calls without opening an app, reducing versioning and oversight needs.

Confidently connect your business anywhere with AT&T voice and collaboration services. We offer superior quality, streamlined integration, and one-stop-shop expertise.

[Visit us online today for more information and to get started.](#)