TODAY'S TOP THREE UC&C CHALLENGES

According to a recent workplace study conducted by *Webtorials*, knowledge workers spend approximately 70% of their workday on communication and collaboration related task. Of course, based on job function(s), use case and personal preference these tasks can range from placing a phone call to a fully interactive team collaboration session with video, application sharing and white boarding.

Regardless of the level(s) the users apply, the expectation of a cohesively crisp experience is demanded.

Some may cynically suggest that the simplest course of action should include resetting the expectations around user experience… after all, we are not in the streamlined world of TDM which boasted 99.999 of reliability while delivering a consistent experience anymore!

The challenges that UC&C professionals face today are more expansive and can have a direct correlation to real business outcomes.

Let's take a look at the *Top Three Challenges*!

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> **"** ...monitoring quality challenges with agile intelligence to understand potential problems prior to impacting users, combined advanced analytics that map user behavior can empower IT **"**

1. INTEGRATION

Although more manufactures are offering a "near single vendor" approach to UC&C due to the improved breath of functionality across areas like voice, messaging, collaboration, video, etc. In many Greenfield environments, organizations have much easier decisions to drive towards a single vender approach. However the reality is that the lion-share of organizations have a mix of venders, manufacturers, technologies and delivery mechanisms that make up their UC&C ecosystem. Some are even attempting to thoughtfully integrate legacy component until which time they can justify a more cohesive replacement. Justification is generally hinged on business value and adoption of services throughout the organization. The *challenge within the challenge* is that organizations continue to struggle in understanding the use of legacy systems (off ramping) as well as the adoption (on ramping) of newly integrated UC&C technologies within the environment.

Most successful integration strategies start with a comprehensive audit of the current UC&C components. In many cases, you may find that an update of both hardware and software components are required. In addition the new UC&C components could require tweaks to compensate for any unique characteristics in your environment.

Once successfully deployed, it is critical that an on-going understanding of quality challenges as well as deep visibility into the cradle-to-grave session flow across integrated components to ensure easy of trouble-shooting in the environment and decreases the likelihood of challenges that adversely impact users.

2. SaaS BLOAT

The rising shift to cloud services by where you simply pay for what you need without the hassle of maintaining infrastructure is highly regarded as a significant path to improve efficiency while saving cost … after all, you are simply paying for what you need!   Right!? This has certainly been the case for many organizations, however there is always the danger of *SaaS Bloat*, by where an organization loses track of dollars that are being spent across the wide range of UC&C venders and applications. While the introduction of SaaS based services are attractive in most environments, organizations must improve visibility into these services if they are to right-size the licensed environment based on their specific user communities. Many SaaS based UC&C venders offer an array of licensing models that range from "employee count" licensing to licensing a subset(s) of "knowledge workers" as the initial out-lay with annual true-ups to usages based licensing. These models present elements and incentives that make it easy to over-license an environment. In many of these scenarios incentives in the first year make it justifiable to bulk up on licensing even if you have no real understanding of potential attach rate. Besides, you have the ability to "right-size" the environment once you get better usages information.

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By the time you multiply the propensity to over license across several SaaS offerings while sprinkling in a little IT staff turn-over and not to mention the sheer difficulty is getting the SaaS provider to provided usages and adoption metrics, an organization can easily become 30-40% over-licensed in a couple years. *The RightScale State of the Cloud* report established that more than 80 percent of enterprises have a multi-cloud strategy, with respondents estimating that they are wasting 30 percent of spend a year. RightScale itself puts this figure nearer to 35 percent.

As a result, undergoing a SaaS cost optimization process has become a top priority for organizations today, with 58 percent citing it as their top cloud priority.

The most effective ways to guard against "*SaaS Bloat*" is to implement a platform that enables thoughtful understanding of the services, usage and cost of services that are being provided by your venders.

3. USER EXPERIENCE

Remember the good ole days when you picked up a handset, punched in those 7 digits and received consistent quality… the feature buttons worked and the sound was crystal clear! Some of you may be wondering what happened… well, UC&C happened! UC&C has contributed to delivering an array of communication choices to users… choices that fit your preferences(s), your location and your

desired convenience. In return, we must be severely aware that these options can cause a multitude of challenges in the area of user experience if not properly management.

Many organizations mistakenly concentration on the desire to make a platform change including constructing the specifics around architecture and design. These are of course important elements! However the critical piece that is typically overlooked can be highlighted by asking, "what is the expected user experience" and "how can a poor experience impact the user's workflow process?" Having the foresight to define the desired user experience and then work backwards through the process helps to mitigate some unwanted blimps in user experience down the road. These questions are important during both the planning and migration stages. Maintaining a high level of service is critical. Any degradation of quality can have a profoundly negative impact on users... both employees and customers.

As we take a deeper look into user experience, things like service adoption rates become a critical off- shoot. It does not take a chest full of technical accreditations to understand the direct correlation between user experience and service adoption. Many organizations struggle to consistently deliver a high level of user experience, many likely are unaware that adoption rates are drastically below initial projections. Implementing a platform that enables a proactive approach to monitoring quality challenges with agile intelligence to understand potential problems prior to impacting users. Combined with advanced analytics that map user behavior can empower IT with the ability to successfully quantify and continue to improve user experience.

SUMMARY

As each organization continues its thoughtful quest to deliver transformative communications and collaboration environments to its users, it is clear that some challenges will appear universal but others will be as unique as your combination of venders, manufactures and user culture. Regardless, having a platform in place that enables a proactive approach to managing such a complex set of variables is a must have!

Top 10 Business Reasons that companies use to justify UC&C deployments:

1. Improved process efficiency and greater business agility.
2. Scaling of valuable people assets and improved productivity.
3. Accelerated time-to-market.
4. More effective supply chain management.
5. Scaling knowledge and improving decision making.
6. Greater customer intimacy and retention.
7. Talent management – better work/life balance and attracting and retaining the best people.
8. Cost reduction and business consolidation.
9. Supporting corporate social responsibility.
10. Business continuity, including disaster recovery.

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