

# Why hosted UC?

How to improve operations and control costs through a hosted unified communications service provider

**U**nified communications (UC) is receiving a lot of buzz in the business world these days. Even though no one is really sure where exactly UC is going and where it will be in the future, it's becoming the norm and businesses would be well served to get on board.

Understanding the need and value of having all of your telephone, e-mail and instant messaging functions rolled into one single service or application is easy. UC can transform the workplace, making it more productive, efficient and effective. What's difficult is determining how to properly implement and deploy UC. Not only that, companies need to find reliable UC companies to partner with.

Hosted service providers remotely deliver and manage various IT application services using shared resources, enabling customers to consolidate and outsource much of their IT needs for a predictable recurring fee. Unlike premises-based solutions, hosted solutions require no hardware to provision, no software to buy, install or configure, and no expensive training for in-house IT staff.

"Hosted providers deliver their service from servers housed in highly secure, geographically redundant data centers," says Monty Ferdowski, the president of Broadcore. "Each data center contains fault-tolerant servers that are load-balanced from server to server. In the unlikely event that one data center is unavailable, traffic is automatically routed to another data center, ensuring business continuity."

*Smart Business* spoke with Ferdowski about UC and how a hosted UC service provider can help you streamline your business.

## Why should a business partner with a hosted UC service provider?

A hosted unified communications solution offers a business several advantages. For one, there is a low initial capital investment. Hosted solution providers offer a service, not hardware or software, so you'll never have to invest in purchasing network and application products. Plus, you'll never have to upgrade or replace to support new functions or features. Upgrading and adding new functions and features is all part of the service.

UC also offers great flexibility. An on-demand, pay-as-you-use model allows organizations the flexibility to grow as fast as their business requires without investing in



**Monty Ferdowski**  
President  
Broadcore

excessive capacity.

Bottom line, hosted solution providers enable their clients to focus on their core business objectives instead of getting involved in the 'business' of providing information technology tools for their employees.

## What is the total cost of ownership for hosted UC services?

As is the case with any venture an organization may undertake, the larger the organization the lower goes the per-unit total cost of ownership (TCO). A UC solution is no different. Hosted UC providers are able to deliver their services for lower than an equally equipped premises-based solution provider and still maintain acceptable profit margins. Moreover, the TCO is a predictable flat monthly fee that is based on the number of current users.

## How can you ensure that your hosted UC services are reliable?

Hosted service providers have a vested interest in their clients' total satisfaction, if for no other reason than to improve the probability of their continued patronage. Conversely, the interest of equipment resellers of premises-based solutions in cus-

tom satisfaction diminishes as they take their money upfront. In fact, hosted service providers offer specific service level agreements that establish objective tools and processes to measure and verify compliance, along with appropriate incentives or penalties based on service performance and reliability.

Also, hosted service providers regularly implement their solutions for a number of clients each month. Through repetition, they have established process-led, repeatable implementation workflows resulting in more successful and timely deployments. Hosted UC service providers use the session initiation protocol open standard to deliver their solutions. Unlike premises-based solution providers, hosted providers are indifferent to use of network equipment, voice endpoints, desktop clients and mobile devices.

Finally, hosted service providers relieve their clients from having to hire and retain highly technical staff with special skill sets just to maintain and manage resources to support and operate customer premises equipment and applications.

## What other big-picture benefits can be seen from hosted UC services?

Hosted UC service is delivered over any private or public IP network without requiring virtual private networks or multiprotocol label switching designs. Clients are able to easily maintain a distributed work force with unified presence and receive the same user experience.

Reduced energy consumption is something everyone is talking about. It is estimated that an individual premises-based IP telephony solution consumes about 20 to 30 amps. A hosted solution removes this consumption from the customer's premises to the carrier's and reduces the customer's direct consumption due to telephony by more than 50 percent.

Finally, you'll have single-vendor accountability. The hosted UC service providers are responsible for delivering the whole solution to their customers. There is no separation between providing access or UC components and there is no finger pointing. The one single vendor is ultimately responsible for ensuring uptime at all times. <<

**MONTY FERDOWSKI** is the president of Broadcore. Reach him at (800) 942-4700 or info@broadcore.com. With more than 20 years of experience in communications technology, Monty has led Broadcore to bring advanced communications capabilities to businesses nationwide.

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