

ENABLING OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND ENHANCED COLLABORATION

UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS (UC) CONTINUES TO RECEIVE A LOT OF ATTENTION AND PRESS COVERAGE; HOWEVER, THE 'HYPE' AROUND THE UNDERLYING TECHNOLOGY COMPONENTS TENDS TO OBSCURE THE ARGUMENT THAT ITS FULL POTENTIAL IS YET TO BE PROPERLY UNDERSTOOD AND FULFILLED. THERE IS MUCH TALK BY EQUIPMENT AND SOFTWARE SUPPLIERS OF THE BENEFITS OF UC, BUT ALL TOO OFTEN THIS IS TECHNOLOGY RATHER THAN BUSINESS FOCUSED.

There are three key themes that organisations should consider when evaluating UC:

- it is neither a product nor a technology; it is a means of integrating multiple technologies in an infrastructure agnostic manner
- operational effectiveness can be improved through presence management
- enhanced collaboration can be enabled

1 UC IS NEITHER A PRODUCT NOR A TECHNOLOGY

UC means different things to different people. Our view is that UC is an overarching concept rather than a particular technology or product.

The technologies underlying the concept of UC are advancing rapidly and not necessarily in a coordinated manner. What really matters are the potential benefits that can be achieved from the realisation of a well-developed UC strategy.

2 OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS CAN BE IMPROVED THROUGH PRESENCE MANAGEMENT

The ability for users to switch between connectivity preferences has been around since the early days of digital mobile telephony. As solutions evolve, the ability for the UC environment to detect user presence and automatically switch between profiles is maturing. Once the users presence status information is known, then anyone seeking to communicate with that user can elect the most appropriate form of communication to use.

The integration of systems in a UC environment allows the environment itself to determine the most appropriate means of communication.

Effective use of presence information not only improves the user experience of locating and

communicating with colleagues, but also greatly increases commercial efficiency by forcing the most cost effective means of communication.

3 ENHANCED COLLABORATION CAN BE ENABLED

Today's organisations face the challenge of managing a mobile workforce, disparate supply chain and diverse customer base, and of finding ways to enable the collaboration needed to bring new ideas and developments to the fore. Effective collaboration and speed of response is vital if a business is to function effectively in a world making increasing use of external partners and reducing the emphasis on vertical integration.

In this context, we are witnessing an upswing in the rate of UC adoption as well as growing interest in the wider spectrum of UC capabilities and benefits. This follows the market realisation that fixed-to-mobile convergence presents a greater opportunity if extended beyond the end-user device to include applications. The emergence of a whole generation of people whose social networks have migrated online, has led to increasing levels of expectation around instant communication through effective use of mobile and internet based technologies. The challenge for business leaders is to figure out how to take advantage of the collaboration opportunity presented by the UC solutions marketplace.

CONCLUSION

Wavestone, believes that UC can provide business benefits both directly through the rationalisation of systems and infrastructure, and indirectly through improved operational effectiveness and enablement of better collaboration. Whilst the benefits of UC are generic in nature, the actual value developed is contingent upon the organisation concerned.

UC is the bringing together of multiple technologies and solutions

in a single integrated environment to enable effective collaborative working. Given the multitude of UC applications and services, there is no one-size-fits-all implementation. The size and scope of a UC deployment must be supported by a robust business case and driven by a clear strategy, one that serves to underpin specific business and IT objectives.

ABOUT US

Wavestone is an international consultancy that provides connected thinking, insight and capability to industry leading organisations. We work collaboratively with our clients to plan strategic business transformation and seamlessly turn strategy into action.

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