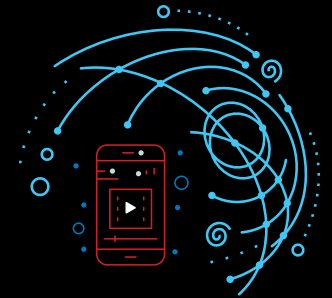


## MOBILE-FIRST COMMUNICATIONS:

# A Necessary Strategy for a Work-From-Anywhere World



## KEY SOLUTION ELEMENTS, AND HOW A PARTNER CAN HELP

**The nature of work changed irrevocably thanks to the global pandemic.** While many employers were skeptical of remote work and work from anywhere models prior to the lockdowns, once they actually experienced them their impressions were very positive. According to the 2021 PwC Remote Work Survey, 83% of employers think remote work was a success, and it's likely many employees will continue working remotely at least some of the time. After all, 68% of organizations said that employees need to work in the office only three days a week to retain a strong culture.

While there are many advantages to a hybrid work model where some employees are in the office and others are working from home, this model does pose some challenges for effective collaboration. And management recognizes it—in the PwC survey, 72% of managers say they are increasing their investment in tools to enable virtual collaboration.

### Mobile-First Communications and New Work Models

Overcoming communications challenges is nothing new. For many companies, a substantial portion of their workforce always has been mobile, working from client locations around the country and, often, the globe. Even before the COVID-19 confinement, 43% of US employees already were working remotely, at least some of the time, according to a 2017 [Gallup survey](#).

Thanks to the rapid transformation brought about by the pandemic and to meet the needs of a workforce that now works from anywhere, organizations are beginning to realize the differences between solutions that can accommodate mobile workers and solutions that are built from the ground up to be mobile-first.

Mobile workers are different from remote workers; they work from a variety of locations including their homes, client sites, and corporate offices, whereas remote workers primarily work from one remote site or from their home. Thus, in a mobile-first approach, communications follow the employee wherever they go, meaning they are always reachable, and the employee experience is consistent regardless of where they happen to be physically working.

**68% OF ORGANIZATIONS SAID THAT EMPLOYEES NEED TO WORK IN THE OFFICE ONLY THREE DAYS A WEEK TO RETAIN A STRONG CULTURE.**

SOURCE: 2021 PWC REMOTE WORK SURVEY

For instance, clients, partners, and colleagues shouldn't have to call multiple numbers to reach an individual. Instead, employees should have a single number through which they can be reached via voice and a single handle for text communications, no matter where they are physically located. Likewise, video conferencing should be simple, with easy, one-click-to-join capability. Employees shouldn't be tied to a single device or location—they should be able to join from the device and location of their choosing.

Additionally, in a mobile-first organization, communications systems need to be unified. In too many organizations, employees must manage a wide array of disconnected communications channels—email, instant messaging, video conferencing, document collaboration, voice, and more. It's not always apparent which communications channel to use to reach an individual. Additionally, some modalities may be limited to internal communications only, making it difficult to connect with clients and partners outside of the organization.

"In today's business environment, staying connected is critical," said Norma Cernadas, Director of Product Marketing at Verizon. "Organizations can't afford missed connections, especially when the technology to keep all stakeholders connected is available."

And if employees need to search through a conversation thread, they often have to pore over a host of applications, unless that conversation was meticulously logged and archived.

## Mobile Unified Communications and Collaboration

Mobile unified communications and collaboration (UCC) provides organizations a chance to pull together a centralized mobilized communications strategy and to scrap the "uncontrolled, untracked mish-mash of consumer-centric, carrier, and third-party communications tools traditionally applied over the years," [according to NetworkWorld](#).

A well-designed mobile UCC solution can enable organizations to improve response times, efficiency, and customer service, because there's a single means of reaching every employee no matter where they are or what device they may be currently using. It's much easier for teams to collaborate and move between different modalities effortlessly, as needed. For example, a consultant on a customer site may need to move from an audio conference call to a video meeting in order to visually share images of the customer issue with team members—UCC makes this transition simple, saving time and improving productivity. Finally, a UCC solution can help teams simplify their workflows by automating document approvals and routing through a unified communications and collaboration platform.

Before evaluating UCC solutions, IT and business leaders should make sure that the organization fully understands its communications needs. Map personas and roles within the organizations to determine which specific communications needs will be addressed, and make sure the UCC solution addresses them. Organizations don't want to pay for capabilities they won't use, and no one wants to buy a mobile-first UCC solution only to discover employees are using alternate point solutions to provide functionality the UCC solution might not include, like enhanced analytics or remote video capabilities.

"Before selecting a UCC solution, it's important to conduct a business and technology assessment to determine what you already have and where gaps exist," says Verizon's Cernadas. "Equally important is identifying employees' needs and the pain points your business is experiencing. For instance, office workers may have relatively few mobility requirements, whereas sales reps and remote employees likely will need mobility and collaboration tools that help them stay connected to the rest of the organization."

## What to Look for in a Mobile-First UCC Solution

Typically, a strong mobile-first UCC solution will provide a wide array of functionality including: voice and video calling; audio, web, and video conferencing; screen sharing; file sharing; instant or text messaging; voice mail; and email.

The solution should be device-agnostic, and employees should be reachable over voice and text via a single number. Launching a voice or video meeting must be simple and transitioning from one modality to another should be seamless.

IT must be able to manage devices and apps from a single centralized console because it's too cumbersome to manage multiple consoles. With employees constantly changing locations—even if it's just between their home and the office—management needs to be simple. Management should also include services and service levels; simple onboarding; usage monitoring; data collection for client billing; and cost control for carrier communications services.

Also, implementation should not create any downtime. For most organizations, time is literally money, and firms cannot afford to lose precious hours. Solutions should integrate together seamlessly and, ideally, should be an extension of the current user experience. The goal is to avoid deploying an entirely new system that also comes with a new learning curve.

For many organizations, leveraging a partner can help smooth the transition, boost adoption, and improve ROI. In this context, ROI equates to programs that realized more in employee productivity than the organization spent on the program. [A Verizon research report](#) shows that many more companies who work with a vendor for their UCC solutions report a positive ROI (77%) compared with those that do it themselves (50%). A key success factor are vendor experts that help drive efficiencies and enable customization. That's important because customization has been shown to improve adoption rates of UCC solutions. There is a clear benefit to tailoring services to specific roles, and vendors will often do so at no additional cost.

With a strong mobile-first UCC system, organizations will be well-prepared to meet the challenges of a hybrid work environment, and better equip their increasingly mobile workforce to be more productive and effective.

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For more information, visit:

[www.verizon.com/business/solutions/digital-transformation/business-communication-tips](http://www.verizon.com/business/solutions/digital-transformation/business-communication-tips)