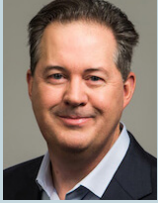# Deliver Effortless Shopper and Employee Experiences

WINNING IN RETAIL WITH CLOUD COMMUNICATIONS AND COLLABORATION

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Q What challenges exist around ease of communication and collaboration for both shoppers and retail employees?

The ubiquity of digital, mobile, and social applications and experiences has forever changed the communications and collaboration expectations of shoppers and retail employees. Consumers today expect to be effortlessly in touch with their brands on any device, at any time, and from any location. Unfortunately, many retailers fall short, either not offering all engagement options or providing clunky, disjointed experiences caused by using tools with limited integration capabilities.

Unsurprisingly, employees face similar challenges when they're forced to wrestle with antiquated communication tools in the workplace and are overwhelmed balancing the influx of objectives and tasks (communicated via siloed applications) with the need to flawlessly execute to meet shopper (and corporate) expectations.

Retailers must have a solid strategy that connects their digital touchpoints and in-store activities to create a seamless shopper journey.

Q What communication and collaboration tools can retailers provide their employees to empower them to offer shoppers better experiences?

A trifecta of communications—messaging, and video—has now emerged. Consumers today are more likely to begin a conversation digitally, then escalate to a phone conversation, and then, only at this point, launch a real-time video connection. Consumers, until recently, used three separate apps, each with different user experiences and disparate data sources, making for start-stop, cumbersome, and dropped connections.

For most consumers today, these are now unified experiences. We choose who we contact and how we do so, moving seamlessly from one mode to another. Sadly, most retail frontline workers don't have this luxury. When they clock in, they become time travelers going back to the era of twisted-pair copper, fixed lines, and no mobile, messaging, or video capabilities — or, if they are lucky, to a world of modern but siloed communication tools. We have seen enough time travel movies to know that this story doesn't end well.

In retail, these experiences result in low morale, high turnover, unhappy customers, and lost revenue. The solution is simple: Retailers need to provide their frontline workers with a modern, cloud-based unified communications and collaboration solution that provides a seamless experience as they (and the shoppers they are serving) transition from one mode of communication to another.

Q How is unified communications re-shaping the way retailers do business?

Unified communications and collaboration solutions are transforming how retailers engage shoppers and empower associates while also fueling innovation.

Shoppers demand real-time engagement, and retailers that employ unified communications and collaboration solutions are better positioned to deliver effortless experiences across touch points. For instance, a shopper seeking product information may launch an inquiry via chatbot, move to a human-powered chat experience, and transition to a phone or video conversation with an associate or agent, who then collaborates with other employees to respond. Typically, this requires three or more technologies with different user experiences, creating an uneven journey for both shopper and associate. With unified communications and collaboration solutions, retailers manage interactions on a common platform that enables an effortless exchange between shoppers and associates.

And, migrating communications to the cloud fuels innovation by enhancing collaboration, streamlining workflows, and reducing unnecessary expenses—retailers save 40–50%. Imagine the innovation that could be unleashed with such robust savings that can be reinvested in game-changing projects. Finally, unified communications and collaboration solutions naturally improve an organization's ability to compete by enabling team messaging, file sharing, and project management capabilities that can be leveraged with employees and shoppers.

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