THE POWER OF OPEN
Enterprise Communications, Advanced.

RingCentral®
How an open platform with open APIs streamlines custom service integrations

The power of a truly open platform

Breaking down the barriers that have isolated communications from business applications

An open platform offers developers unparalleled functionality, support, and access

Use cases

Integrating unified communications features into workflows improves customer response time and satisfaction

Cloud integrations enable organizations to satisfy “the new customer”

Using customer experience as a differentiator

Case in point: A locksmith referral service enhances the customer experience with the RingCentral Developers Platform

Summary
Enterprises of all sizes and across industries are adopting cloud communications at an incredible pace. In fact, Infonetics Research forecasts that by 2018 the size of the worldwide cloud PBX and UC services market will reach US $15B in spending, or 68M seats.¹ This impressive growth is owed in part to the cloud model, which eliminates large up-front investments in hardware as well as the skilled staff needed to manage it; improves support for mobile and distributed workforces; and provides many additional benefits. However, simply moving the PBX to the cloud is not sufficient for organizations to realize the full promise—and ROI—of cloud business communications.

¹ D. Meyers, quoted from IHS Infonetics Research website (2015)
A key benefit of moving from inflexible, closed on-premise PBX systems to the cloud is the ability to extend a communications platform with new features and capabilities—and to tightly integrate communications into core business applications. Yet many cloud-based solutions are also closed and proprietary, which makes integrating communications into workflows costly and complex. This either limits the capabilities that are possible or requires too much time and effort to deploy new capabilities.

Maximizing the potential business value of a cloud communications system requires an extensible platform based on open standards and open APIs. An open platform makes it significantly more time- and cost-effective to integrate communications into key businesses processes, enabling automated workflows. This allows IT departments and third parties to rapidly roll out solutions that enhance employee productivity and deliver higher levels of customer satisfaction.

As a leader in cloud communications, RingCentral addresses the needs of enterprises of all sizes to reduce time to capability, improve satisfaction indexes, and increase productivity. This means working with developers, partners, and customers to do what no other cloud communications and UC provider has been able or willing to do—create an open, self-service platform that allows businesses to seamlessly integrate communications logic into key enterprise applications. This open platform offers internal IT teams an unprecedented level of customization. At the same time, the open architecture makes it fast and easy for developers to add significant value to their own business applications or product offerings, which drives innovation through a vibrant developer ecosystem.
How an open platform with open APIs streamlines custom service integrations

The RingCentral vision is to provide best-in-class cloud communication solutions that serve the needs of today’s more mobile, more distributed and more dynamic businesses. This vision extends beyond connecting people and the devices they use. It also means connecting the applications and tools organizations rely on to run their businesses and serve their customers.
The power of a truly open platform

A number of companies offer transport as a platform. That is, they provide closed APIs to add basic voice and text capabilities to custom applications. However, the end result of this approach is to simply add another layer of communications on top of the existing communications and customer service platforms, which basically results in sub-par telephony services and added complexity. And ultimately, these kinds of services cannot deliver the flexibility and capabilities required by enterprises and fast-growing companies.

RingCentral goes far beyond these proprietary approaches, opening its APIs to expose the industry-leading cloud-based business communications system as an open platform. With the RingCentral Connect Platform™, independent developers and enterprise IT teams can now access the power of real-time communications and messaging, supported by extensive business logic and customer data management and reporting. This truly open approach makes it simple for developers to not only enable applications to send and receive calls and texts, for example, but also deeply embed communication functionality into the business workflow of the application.
Breaking down the barriers that have isolated communications from business applications

This open approach is similar to the Salesforce® platform, which has APIs that are used by customers and partners who want to get the most out of the Salesforce experience by integrating directly with their custom services. Likewise, RingCentral customers can easily access the wealth of data (e.g., call logs, business rules, messages, presence, etc.) that is already captured, stored, and managed by the RingCentral cloud communications platform.

Ultimately, the goal is to enable customers and developers to create custom service integrations that enable much richer and more innovative workflows for their businesses. Enabling access to data across previously isolated silos also enables line-of-business leaders to gain valuable insights by making it possible to perform business analytics on broader pools of data.

The open, enterprise-ready RingCentral cloud communications platform also links with the many business tools that have migrated to SaaS (software as a service) models in the cloud. While business communication is still about connecting people, it is also increasingly organized around critical business application systems, including CRM (customer relationship management), HDS (help desk systems), and ERP (enterprise resource planning) to name a few. Customers and developers can use open APIs offered in the platform to create an endless array of custom service integrations that deliver synergies between the RingCentral service and other cloud SaaS offerings.
An open platform offers developers unparalleled functionality, support, and access

The RingCentral Connect Platform comprises a suite of tools and services to build, deploy, and manage custom integrations using RingCentral APIs. It provides a developer portal, a rich set of self-service APIs, SDKs, a sandbox environment, and tutorials. Developers can manage the full lifecycle of custom applications, including tracking applications in development and moving apps from sandbox to production. Additionally, the platform provides extensive developer support, documentation, and a forum where developers can get answers to their questions. An App Gallery also offers a steadily growing array of prebuilt apps for integrating everything from mobile to CRM capabilities.

Better still, anyone can access these tools, which include:

- Quickstart Tutorials that offer detailed, step-by-step instructions for specific use cases using the cloud APIs.
- API Developer Guide: a detailed cookbook that also describes many different cloud APIs provided in the RingCentral Connect Platform. It covers everything from language support and HTTP methods to authentication and RingOut.
- SDKs to help developers get started faster in the following languages:
  - JavaScript library
  - PHP library
  - Python module

---

## Open APIs
- Yes

## Self-Service Portal, SDKs
- Yes

## Developer Community & Support
- Yes

## APIs
- CRM/CTI
- Directory, Ext.
- SMS, Fax
- RingOut
- Presence, events
- Call Recording
- Call Log Access
- Reporting (2016)
Use cases

With the open RingCentral Connect Platform and these tools, developers can quickly and easily build custom integrations with the RingCentral Office® service to add powerful communication capabilities to business applications. Below are examples of some of the most common custom service integrations.

**CRM**

CRM is the tool of choice for growing and maintaining customer loyalty in today’s enterprises. However, many CRM deployments still rely on users manually entering data to initiate and track phone calls, SMS messages, faxes, or paging. With the RingCentral Connect Platform, developers can take full advantage of Computer Telephony Integration (CTI) by tightly integrating communications directly into key CRM processes to maximize efficiencies and boost business outcomes.

For example, a recent addition to the growing RingCentral Connect App Gallery is Callinize for RingCentral, a suite of high-quality CTI integrations that connects the RingCentral service with SugarCRM, Infusionsoft, Insightly, Zoho, Salesforce, and other leading CRMs.

**Sending SMS and fax**

Many consumers and B2B customers prefer to communicate by SMS, and businesses want to capitalize on this highly responsive way to communicate with their customers. In addition, fax still has an important function in many fields. SMS texts and online faxes offer quick ways to get important information, such as confirmations or authorizations. The RingCentral Connect Platform makes it simple to integrate fax and SMS functionality directly into a variety of core business applications, providing a secure and reliable way to communicate with customers. For example, sales, service, and marketing professionals could increase response time by sending SMS or faxes directly from their back-office applications.
Click-to-dial

For employees who spend much of their time making phone calls, manually dialing numbers on a keypad or repeatedly copying and pasting phone numbers into softphone apps can become a very tedious and error-prone task. Integrating the RingCentral click-to-dial functionality with common front-office applications allows employees to make calls simply by clicking a phone number, which means they save time and make fewer errors. This simple API integration typically saves sales and service representatives up to an hour a day in lost productivity.

Reporting

Every day, companies engage in a high volume of voice calls, text messages, and faxes as an integral part of getting work done. By collecting and analyzing communication data, businesses can gain valuable insights for planning current and future business needs. However, with manual processes, much of this potentially valuable data is either lost or entered incorrectly. RingCentral reporting automatically captures call, text, and fax data and provides usage analysis and trending metrics in customizable, easy-to-read views.

Tightly integrating RingCentral Reports into front-office applications, business intelligence tools, and dashboards allows businesses to easily access these valuable insights and enrich their understanding of how their companies communicate.
Integrating unified communications features into workflows improves customer response time and satisfaction

This capability to break down barriers that isolate communications from business system applications and workflows is important for one of the most critical goals of any business today—improving customer satisfaction. Custom service integrations not only eliminate manual processes and human error but also represent a significant step forward because businesses want to connect with customers more effectively. Having communications well integrated into the tools and applications companies rely on every day is critical to eliminating inefficiencies and gaps that get in the way of achieving the best possible customer experience.
Cloud integrations enable organizations to satisfy “the new customer”

A new type of consumer is driving organizations to put more focus on the customer experience. Smartphones, ubiquitous broadband connectivity, and services like Uber have created an on-demand society in which we all have a variety of content and services at our fingertips. As a result, consumers who in the past were comfortable waiting their turn in line now expect immediate gratification and instant answers to their questions. Whether it’s a taxi, an airline seat assignment, or an answer about billing on an order, they not only want to get it now, they also want to get it via the communications channel of their choice. And that channel may change based on their location, the device they are using, time of day, or other factors.

This new customer will abandon purchases after long hold times on the phone or ambiguous types of communication—and there is a high likelihood that their next call will be to a competitor. The Service Quality Measurement (SQM) Group recently found that only 3% of customers are at risk of defecting to competitors if their issue is resolved on the first call. By contrast, a whopping 38% are at risk of defecting if their issue isn’t resolved on the first contact. And according to a White House report, poor customer satisfaction puts approximately $75B of business revenue in the US at risk.

1 ICMI, Seven Metrics to Watch for Call Center Success (2011)
This shortage of satisfaction may be an indicator that most companies haven’t yet adjusted to the fact that customers have changed in a fundamental way. This applies not just to consumers but also to B2B customers who—armed with “perfect information” acquired online—increasingly look to themselves for buying advice rather than to the sales person. In other words, they have little patience for engaging with an employee who does not have ready and seamless access to all of the data pertinent to a transaction.

Consequently, organizations that want to do business with these always-on customers need to invest in new integrated solutions. Building the capacity to respond to this new customer involves new processes that require integrations between systems that traditionally have been siloed and unable to work together. These integrated solutions give employees the customer-facing tools they need to deliver the best and most efficient customer interactions possible. For example, caller ID–based pop-ups that provide key customer data can result in employees or call center agents who feel less frustrated and more empowered to help customers. This access to the right tools and information to resolve issues or complete sales creates a virtuous circle because happier employees tend to make for happier customers.
Using customer experience as a differentiator

Thus organizations that ignore the customer experience do so at their own peril. For example, in an always-connected and uber-social world, while customers tend to share good experiences, bad experiences tend to be shared even more quickly. According to the Harvard Business Review (HBR), 48% of customers who had negative experiences told 10 or more others. 

But the real key to achieving the levels of customer satisfaction that can be a business differentiator involves tightly connecting communications with data and business logic contained in core business systems such as CRM, ERP and others. The RingCentral service combines the strength of a cloud PBX infrastructure with off-the-shelf integrations with popular cloud SaaS applications such as Zendesk and Salesforce. But that’s only the beginning. The RingCentral Connect Platform goes beyond these off-the-shelf integrations, providing in-house IT teams and third-party developers with open APIs, SDKs and other tools to create synergies with custom CRMs and the many other unique systems designed to serve the needs of various businesses.

For example, using open APIs it would be relatively easy to create a custom integration with a company’s internal CRM system that uses caller ID info to the customer information right in front of the agent. Without an open platform, this type of project might take more time and budget than many companies could afford.
Case in point: A locksmith referral service enhances the customer experience with the RingCentral Developers Platform

24HR Lockouts is a leading provider of emergency locksmith services for residential, commercial, and automobile needs, serving two major US cities. The company recently leveraged the RingCentral Connect Platform to tightly integrate the RingCentral cloud communications service with 24HR Lockouts’ custom CRM and dispatch systems.

Getting locked out is a very stressful experience. So customers naturally want updates regarding the status of the call and the expected arrival time of a locksmith. On the other hand, busy locksmiths want convenience and efficiency in confirming jobs and keeping customers updated. The new custom service integration helps the service’s dispatchers and locksmiths get customers back into their homes and cars faster. At the same time, it keeps the customer informed that a locksmith is on the way while connecting the locksmith into the situation and making it easier to provide updates.
Before implementing the RingCentral Office cloud communications system, 24HR Lockouts relied on an on-premise communications system. This approach failed to adequately support dispatchers working from home. Plus, it was costly and complex to maintain and not reliable enough for the type of emergency situations often facing the company’s customers.

After replacing its previous communications system with RingCentral, 24HR Lockouts joined the RingCentral Connect Developer Program and explored the APIs available to implement its strategic vision. It took less than two months to fully integrate the RingCentral platform with the CRM system using the developers’ platform JavaScript SDK.

After the integration, RingCentral call management APIs handle incoming calls, while the messaging APIs send and receive SMS messages. This complete phone and SMS integration enables real-time, bi-directional communication with customers and locksmiths. All the data is then logged into 24HR Lockouts’ dispatch system for tracking purposes.

The solution boosted efficiency while improving customer and locksmith satisfaction. The RingCentral Developer Platform allowed the company’s IT team to transform the customer experience by delivering real-time updates and speeding up the dispatch process. Integrating SMS into the workflow also provided an ideal solution to keep customers informed and give rapid confirmation of their jobs to locksmiths.

Another benefit of the integration is that all interactions are done through a single number for phone and text messages, allowing customers to easily save the number for the next time they need help. The platform also opens the possibility for a deeper customer relationship in the future. 24HR Lockouts is currently exploring ways for customers to submit service reviews also at the end of a job. The company is also looking at leveraging SMS as an emerging channel for nurturing customers and introducing new services.

The results of the initiative exceeded expectations. The company reduced communications infrastructure costs by 60% and dramatically reduced dispatch time. Overall, the dispatch process is now easier and more cost-efficient, and 24HR Lockouts benefits from having complete historical communication data tracked right in its CRM system. Finally, the cloud-based solution virtually eliminates the downtimes experienced with the previous on-premise hardware.
Summary

Despite the rapid adoption of cloud communications by enterprise customers, few are maximizing the potential of these solutions. This is because many cloud offerings are almost as closed as the legacy PBX hardware that these companies left behind. Maximizing the productivity benefits and business value of the cloud requires integrating communications and UC capabilities into core business processes. Additionally, companies need capabilities to analyze the data that is automatically captured by the underlying cloud communications platform—ranging from sales call information to call center agent performance metrics. Access to these insights in real time allows managers to continually adjust and make improvements to processes.

In-house and independent software developers and an open platform are the critical missing links to integrating communications into core businesses processes. While business applications have revolutionized the way business gets done, developers are crucial at two steps in that lifecycle—originating the software, and then tailoring that software for the end user and the specific use case. And without the benefit of open APIs, SDKs as well as documentation and other support, they could not deliver the robust capabilities needed, in the time the business needs them.

The open RingCentral cloud communications solution coupled with the RingCentral Connect Platform for developers streamlines custom service integrations, accelerating time to market and minimizing time to capabilities. As a result, businesses can quickly reap the benefits of greater productivity, increased customer satisfaction, and others enabled by infusing communications into workflows.
About RingCentral

RingCentral is the leading provider of cloud-based business communications and collaboration solutions. Easier to manage and more flexible and cost-efficient than legacy, on-premise communications systems, RingCentral’s cloud solutions are meeting the needs of modern distributed and mobile workforces. Delivered on a state-of-the-art cloud platform, RingCentral solutions unify communications by bringing together voice, video, conferencing, team collaboration and contact center solutions into a seamless experience that integrates with leading cloud-based tools and business applications. RingCentral enables more than 350,000 businesses, from SMBs to enterprises around the world, to empower their workforces, more easily connect with their customers, and streamline their business communications.