

**RINGCENTRAL'S
GUIDE TO
UCAAS FOR
MEDIUM-SIZED
BUSINESSES**

CREATING THE SPACE FOR CONTROLLED GROWTH

Modern business communications face an unprecedented challenge: in an age saturated with tools to cover every type of interaction conceivable, businesses are struggling with the volume and complexity of the communication they're dealing with.

Businesses of all sizes are using a range of different communication platforms and performance measurement tools to connect and align a diverse global workforce. As agility plays an ever-critical part in businesses' struggle for relevance, 70% of medium-sized businesses—those with between 100–499 employees—in the UK currently employ contractors, with that

figure set to increase by more than a quarter over the next two years. Engaging and enabling a disparate workforce is a serious concern for the C-suite, as 84% of medium-sized business employees work remotely for more than two days per week. Again, that number is likely to increase over the next two years.¹

These trends are creating a more disparate, even fragmented, workforce, bringing new challenges for businesses to address in order to remain competitive through the evolution of the digital age.

Driven by the disruption, business communication has evolved to produce a plethora of communication and collaboration tools—many of which are effective and even essential—but the sheer number of tools available is enough to overwhelm any worker or IT team. Some form of consolidation is needed.

Digital communication has found its zenith in social and lifestyle applications, which need to be negotiated by businesses in order to remain relevant. The smartphone industry now boasts two billion users worldwide, and 80% of adults use messaging apps on a daily basis.² Social media has empowered consumers

to influence how businesses talk to their customers, using an average of seven different channels to engage with brands.³

Faced with so much fragmented communication, there needs to be systems in place to prevent employees from getting overwhelmed by deluges of messages from customers and colleagues alike.

This is where unified communications as a service (UCaaS) comes in. Thanks to cloud capability and UCaaS, businesses can avoid the hassle of switching between different apps and tools to accomplish their goals.

1. Cavell Group, UK Enterprise Insight Report 2019

2. Greenberg, Inc. in Messages That Matter, 2017

3. Aberdeen

UCAAS FOR A DIGITAL WORKFORCE

UCaaS uses cloud capability to connect different communications systems and collaboration tools so that employees can access them from anywhere and at any time. Given cloud's capacity for scaling and establishing virtual connections, UCaaS is an ideal way to address the growing popularity of mobile communications: 65% of UK medium-sized businesses provide mobile communications to at least 30% of their staff.⁴

In today's "always on" culture, flexibility and mobility is critical for businesses to deliver the service and experience expected of them from their customers. With competition fierce across the majority of marketplaces, the friction threshold is low and customers readily drop a brand that doesn't match their expectations.

Microsoft's global customer service survey reported 56% of respondents have stopped doing business with a brand due to a poor customer service experience, and 47% of those respondents say they made that choice within the past 12 months.⁵ Workforce enablement is key to driving quality customer experience through empowered and connected employees.



UCaaS bridges the physical gaps in a dispersed workforce, allowing flexibility in the way work is conducted. It enables collaboration between colleagues and departments and ensures that no matter where you work, you can still access the same secure system.

Some of the features that help to do this are:

- Voice and video communication
- Team collaboration
- QoS reports
- Conferencing
- Analytics
- Integrated tools

4. Cavell Group

5. Microsoft, State of Global Customer Service Report, 2017

WHAT UCAAS CAN DO FOR YOUR BUSINESS

UCaaS's base in the cloud eradicates any need for storing private branch exchange (PBX) equipment on your own premises.

UCaaS service providers manage all maintenance and upgrades, which saves you time and money as well as physical space and the need to provide those specific skills in house. In terms of functionality, UCaaS provides many additional features on top of a phone connection.

THE BENEFITS OF UCAAS FOR MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES:



Instant admin

UCaaS is quick to install and simple to use. Switching over causes only minimal disruption to business operations. By opting to have devices shipped instantly and enabling phone numbers and using Single Sign-on to create access to business apps, it's easy to onboard employees and set up users.



Integrate for efficiency

UCaaS works in collaboration with existing workplace applications such as video calling and messaging, and integrates with a range of tools. Whether it's CRM, project management, file storage, or workflow tools, you can augment their functionality with additional options such as click-to-dial, call recording, real-time reporting, etc.



Go mobile

UCaaS supports flexible working and keeps a disparate workforce connected. Workers are able to access the same features and functionality regardless of whether they're in the office or on the road. That empowerment and connection helps to maintain a high productivity rate while delivering flexibility according to the needs of the business.



Save money

UCaaS is much cheaper to install and maintain than traditional on-premises phone systems. While an on-site private branch exchange (PBX) takes up space and requires expensive maintenance, management, and training, cloud services eliminate the owned hardware aspect and vastly reduce costs.

Using a VoIP capability rather than traditional telephone lines helps to cut costs on voice and video calls. The "U" in UCaaS means communications tools are unified, based on consolidated services provided by a single vendor, eliminating the additional costs introduced by running multiple contracts.



Be global

UCaaS enables users and services across the globe from a central point of control, connecting all locations on one single platform and giving all users a unified set of tools to work across. This centralisation provides consistency in access, functionality, and company communication, which together create a consistent employee experience.

A NEED FOR UCAAS

In today's workplace, a deluge of apps, tabs, and tasks are overwhelming employees. Employees want to succeed at their jobs, but with so much technology taking up mental space, work becomes significantly more stressful. Disjointed communications are part of the problem.

Employees are frustrated with disjointed communications technologies that prevent them from providing great customer experiences. Around three quarters of customer service agents toggle daily between apps to resolve customer issues, some using anything from two to 12 apps on a daily basis to do their jobs.⁶

Unification is the future of communications. With a single, unified platform for all modes of communication, employees can easily track all information while dealing with lower mental taxation. This leads to higher productivity, happier employees, and higher profits.

UCaaS is much more than a suite of channels: the unified nature of those channels is what allows employees to collaborate and share information in consistent, structured, and inclusive formats. The right UCaaS platform gathers everything your employees need to connect, share, and work together on ideas in the same streamlined interface.

6. CITE Research

WORKING AS ONE

The explosive growth of communication apps equipped with collaboration tools illustrates how communication and collaboration are complementary concepts. Successful collaboration in the workforce relies on effective communication.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION IS ESSENTIAL TO ANY COMPANY

As the means of communication multiply in digital channels, a strategic approach is essential for business to ensure it is getting the right message to the right people at the right time via the right means. Business needs to be strategic with communication in both directions: internally and externally.

External communication strategy:

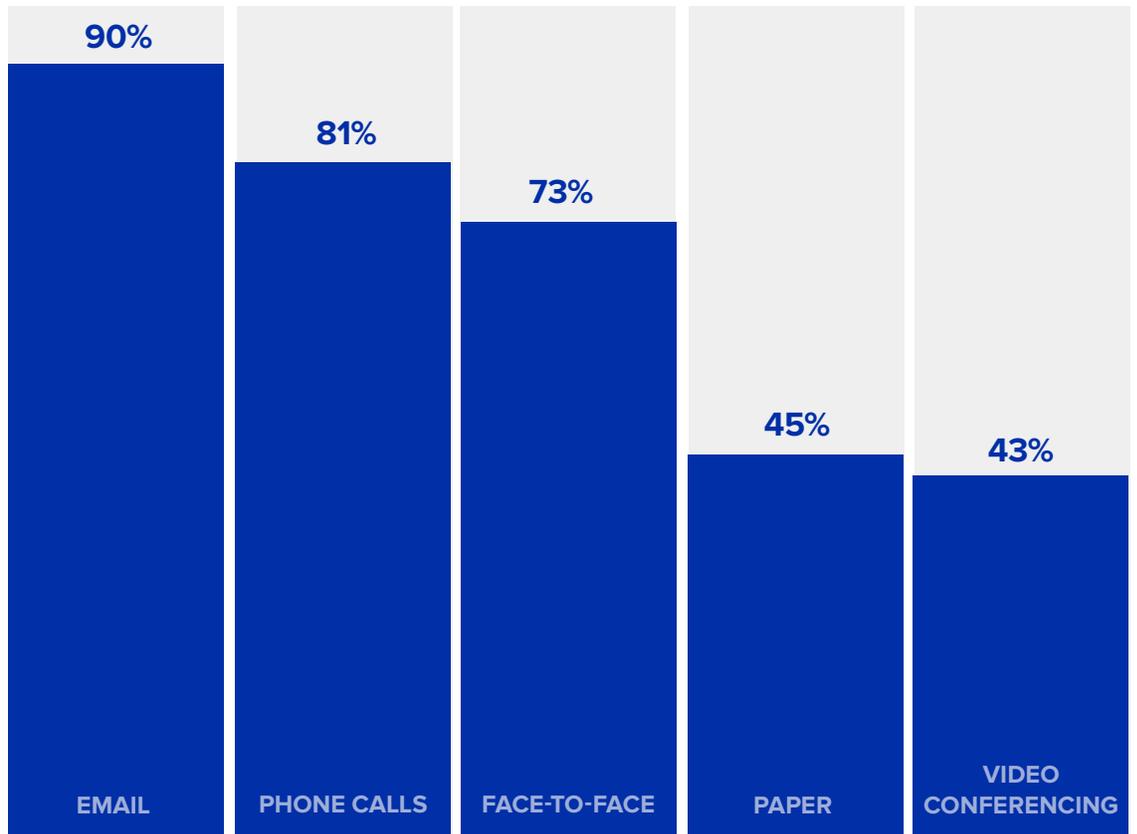
Covering the who, what, when, where, how, and why of audiences external to the company. Every audience segment and the timing of every message should be considered in the strategy. External communication plans should be omnichannel, stretching all the way from VoIP to social media, SMS, and more.

Internal communication strategy:

To drive productivity, employees must feel engaged, empowered, connected, and valued. Internal communication helps keep remote workers in the loop, builds transparency and trust in an organisation, and ensures updates are delivered to the right people at the right time in the right way. Like external communication, internal communication frequently involves multiple channels.

PERCENTAGE OF BUSINESSES USING CHANNELS TO COMMUNICATE WITH CUSTOMERS

The chart below shows the most popular external communications channels used by UK medium-sized businesses:⁷



The top three channels in the list are significantly more popular than the lower two—a result that is reflected across all business sizes in the UK. The growth in the use of video conferencing for customer communication has been significant over the past five years. Remote working has become more common, driven partially by the obvious benefits of reducing costs and travel time. At the same time, video tools have become more reliable, and adoption of video conferencing has grown as a result of these combined factors.

As business size increases, the likelihood of adopting UCaaS increases. Three quarters of medium-sized businesses use some form of UCaaS to manage their external communications. In an age of faster-paced communications, businesses are

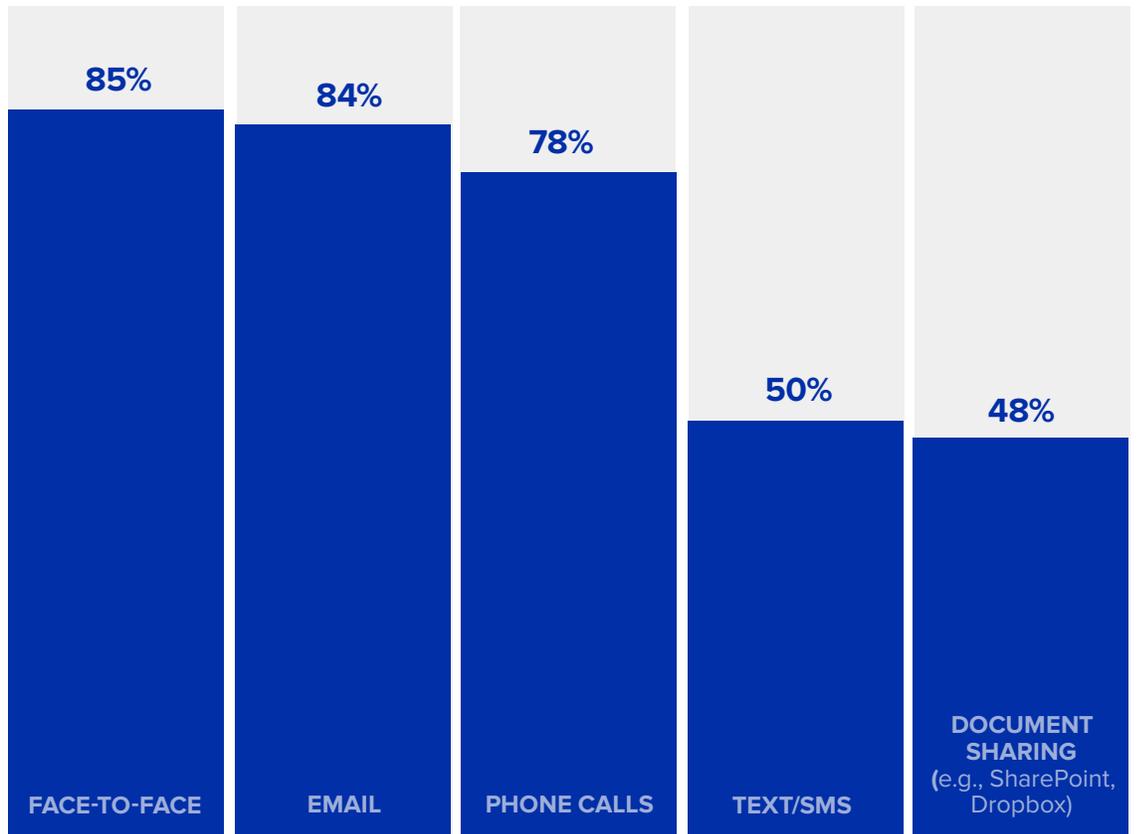
turning to more immediate forms of messaging. UCaaS helps alleviate email overload while achieving that instant communication by adding chat functionality. Add to this a layer of collaboration features such as document and calendar sharing, with the whole stack fully unified, and UCaaS provides the efficient communications functionality businesses are searching for. That's why only 19% of businesses have yet to adopt any form of UCaaS for external communication.

The needs of medium-sized businesses are generally more complex than those of small businesses, often requiring the unification of existing communications tools under one system along with the integration of complementary tools such as Salesforce, Zendesk, and Outlook.

7. Cavell Group

PERCENTAGE OF BUSINESSES USING CHANNELS TO COMMUNICATE WITH COLLEAGUES

The chart below shows the most popular internal communications channels used by UK medium-sized businesses.⁸



Medium-sized businesses' frequent use of face-to-face internal communication is a reflection of a more centralised workforce that makes face-to-face communication easier. Traditional communication methods are still very popular with medium-sized businesses, as old habits die hard.

The tools that fewest medium-sized businesses report using for internal communications are web conferencing tools and project

management tools. As with external communications tools, the top three channels in the list are significantly more popular than the lower two.

In general, more UK medium-sized businesses use advanced UCaaS tools for internal communications than for external communications. The capacity is there, but there is a restriction in application.

8. Cavell Group

THE PARTNERSHIP OF COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION



While communication is about the sharing of information, collaboration is about enabling people in the workforce to contribute and work together on a project.

Get communication right, and you'll create a natural partnership: if communication is clear, accessible, and easy to use across a range of touchpoints, it helps collaboration work.

As physical location matters less thanks to virtual connectivity, the need for flexibility increases and collaboration comes to the fore. Collaboration tools increase team efficiency by as much as 20%, and among UK businesses as

a whole, the most common reasons to adopt collaboration tools are improved flexibility and increased productivity.⁹ Over three quarters of businesses find collaboration tools make it easier to track and manage projects and allow them to deliver a better customer experience, and 80% agree that using such tools leads to higher employee engagement.¹⁰

9. Cavell Group

10. Cavell Group

HOW UCAAS BENEFITS MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES

Mid-sized companies need to keep productivity levels high while also keeping costs at a minimum as they navigate the changing landscape of business communications. A UCaaS strategy benefits adopters through mobility, cross-platform flexibility, and scalability.

THE FIVE MOST SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS OF UCAAS FOR MEDIUM-SIZED COMPANIES ARE:

- **Quick and easy** to install and use—for everyone
- **App integration** improving process efficiency
- **Cloud-based system** allows productivity from anywhere
- **Save money** on installation and maintenance costs and by using VoIP
- **Space to grow** through flexible control of channels and users

Mid-market UCaaS adoption is expected to grow at a faster rate than any other segment. For those businesses undergoing digital transformation in order to compete, transitioning to a UCaaS system offers the agility to become more responsive without paying premium costs for that edge.

The UCaaS proposition for medium-sized businesses

Medium-sized businesses understand the competitive risks of outdated PBXs and high-maintenance legacy systems and the significant impact moving to the cloud has on a company's bottom line. For mid-sized businesses looking to grow, legacy systems can be restrictive and cumbersome. UCaaS has the flexibility to scale with a growing business without requiring substantial further investments.

Be agile: UCaaS provides businesses the agility and the tools to adapt their services according to their strategy and position in the market.

Save money: In addition to providing companies with robust communication tools, UCaaS saves them money thanks to lower setup fees and maintenance costs.

Boost productivity: Teams benefit from access to a full range of work-supporting applications and services installed to improve processes.

Go mobile: UCaaS provides access to tools from anywhere in the world, opening up the talent pool and creating flexible and remote working opportunities.

UCaaS creates the opportunity for businesses to scale up and evolve their operations at a rate that matches the market demands. Thanks to the cloud's scalability, networks can be expanded in just a few clicks, onboarding can be completed quickly, and workforces can innovate as a standard practise. Medium-sized businesses with unified communications can consistently drive improvements across all touchpoints at once.

Budget considerations make UCaaS an attractive solution, given they support lean workflows where efficiency is key. Medium-sized businesses operate at scale, without being too large to maintain consistency in tools and processes throughout the organisation.

UCAAS IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT IN A MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESS

While UCaaS implementation requires careful planning, it's entirely possible to find a UCaaS system that can adapt to the needs—and improve the performance—of your existing business. The more clearly you can identify critical areas for integration and potential opportunities for improvement, the easier it will be to choose a cost-effective UCaaS vendor.

Look for a vendor that offers the services required by medium-sized businesses' most common communications systems:

- Industry-leading reliability and uptime ratings
- Bank-level security with end-to-end encryption
- Scalability across distributed offices with ease
- A unified platform with all communications tools in one system
- Integration capabilities with existing CRM, project management, and file-sharing tools

It's important to understand the needs of your workforce, including the functionality people need from communication and collaboration tools both now and in the future. Remember to establish the desired outcomes and goals for your UCaaS strategy so you're able to measure your success. Do an inventory of your current technology ecosystem, including which tools you need UCaaS integration with, in order to give you a clear idea of the costs involved.

AS YOU COMPARE UCAAS PROVIDERS, KEEP THE FOLLOWING POINTS IN MIND:

- How easily will the system scale to support changing business needs?
- Is the platform on offer flexible and adaptable to your current and future requirements?
- Does the service reduce the total cost of ownership now and into the future?
- Is it a "mobile-first" solution that adequately supports "bring your own device" and empowers a globally distributed workforce?
- Will the system make it easier for your IT, admins, and users to make small changes, updates, and fixes from anywhere with the click of a button?

Finally, ensure you have the opportunity to work with the provider on the deployment process and find out how they will support you through this.

Once you have your business needs and preferences clearly defined, you'll be able to compare providers and select the solution that best meets your needs. For more information on confidently purchasing a UCaaS solution, refer to [the latest Gartner UCaaS Magic Quadrant](#) report.

For more information, please contact one of our solution experts. Visit ringcentral.co.uk or call 0800 098 8136.

RingCentral, Inc. (NYSE: RNG) is a leading provider of cloud Message Video Phone (MVP), customer engagement, and contact centre solutions for businesses worldwide. More flexible and cost-effective than legacy on-premises PBX and video conferencing systems that it replaces, RingCentral empowers modern mobile and distributed workforces to communicate, collaborate, and connect via any mode, any device, and any location. RingCentral's open platform integrates with leading third-party business applications and enables customers to easily customise business workflows. RingCentral is headquartered in Belmont, California, and has offices around the world.



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