Unified
COMMUNICATIONS
BUILDING THE IDEAL VOICE ENVIRONMENT

COMCAST
BUSINESS

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From early click-to-dial apps to today's fully-integrated, cloud-based service model, unified communications (UC) has changed the way businesses communicate, collaborate and manage their digital transformations.

Businesses are recognizing a number of important operational, customer-experience and revenue growth benefits from cloud-based UC. It's helping them improve productivity and reduce errors. It's letting them collaborate more efficiently and connect with customers and colleagues more easily. Plus, it's helping them create more revenue-generating initiatives while reducing their total cost of ownership.

This e-book was developed to help businesses understand how they can leverage the power of UC to enhance and improve the way they communicate, collaborate and operate.

For many businesses, deploying a UC strategy is easiest when a cloud strategy already has been deployed. A strong network infrastructure is essential to assure quality of service as UC features and functions expand. As you read through this e-book, do so with the following questions in mind:

Does your voice solution today allow you to collaborate easily, both internally and externally, without wasting time on complex functions?

Does your voice solution work seamlessly with the applications your employees rely on to do their day-to-day jobs?

Does your voice solution provide an intuitive interface to let on-the-go employees manage their voice application from anywhere at any time?

Does your voice solution reduce the burden of management to lower your total cost of ownership?

Does your voice solution give you the reliability, security and reporting capabilities needed to drive revenue-generating initiatives?

After reading this e-book, we invite you to learn more about the powerful UC features available with Comcast Business VoiceEdge™, our cloud-hosted phone system that's ideal for small to mid-sized businesses.

4 WAYS
UC IMPROVES
YOUR BUSINESS
PRODUCTIVITY

Contributed by Eric Hyman ▶
Director of Product Marketing at Comcast

Ever feel like you spend more time managing your communications than managing your business? Your employees spend countless hours every week toggling between email and voicemail; inbound calls, outbound calls, and conference calls; desk phone and mobile device; desktop computer, laptop computer and tablet; and web browser, customer relationship management (CRM) programs, and other apps.

Unified communications (UC) takes the hassle out of managing disparate platforms and applications. Even better: With new mobile- and cloud-based platforms, UC is no longer tied to PBX and other premise-based equipment. That means businesses can quickly and cost-effectively put the power of UC to work to better manage their communications and collaboration and be more productive.
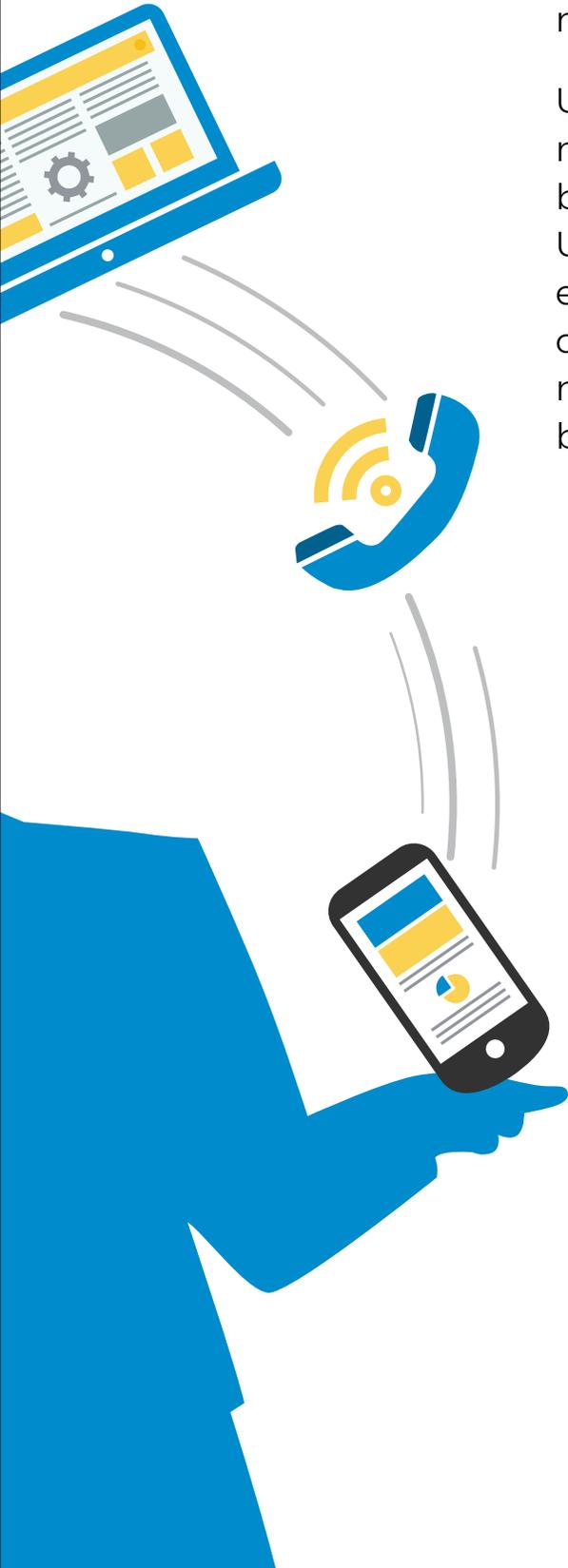
UC takes the hassle out of managing disparate platforms and applications.

UC ENHANCES PRESENCE AND AVAILABILITY

"Presence" is a key component of UC and is familiar to anyone who has used an instant messaging app. Users can easily find colleagues, determine where they are and check their availability for an immediate call or a future meeting. Calls to a landline phone can be accepted on a mobile phone while outside of the office. Plus, with cloud-based UC mobile-enabled find me/follow me functionality, even a natural disaster or a power outage in the last mile network won't affect users' ability to stay connect-ed and be reached by phone.

Users can easily find colleagues, determine where they are and check their availability.
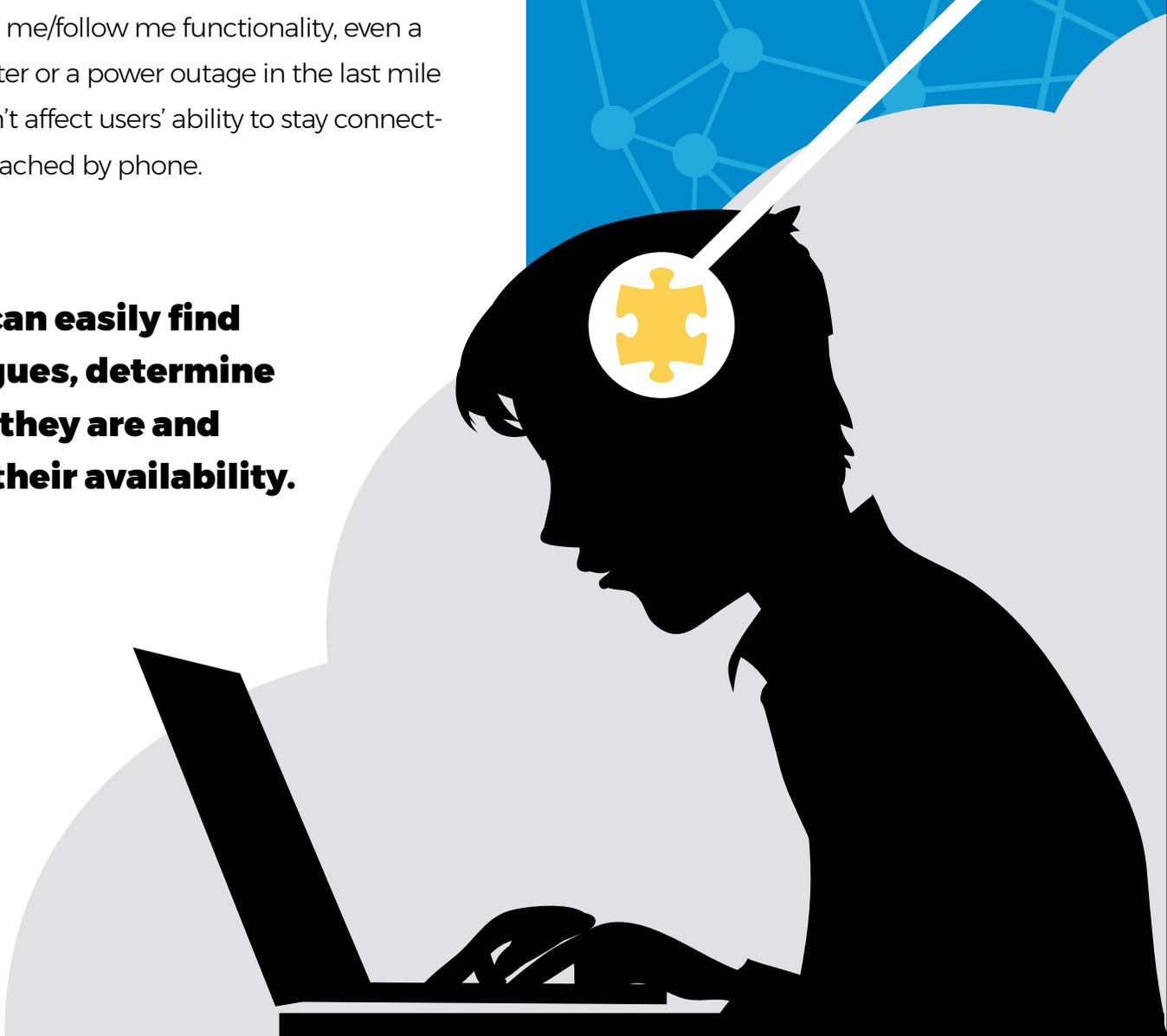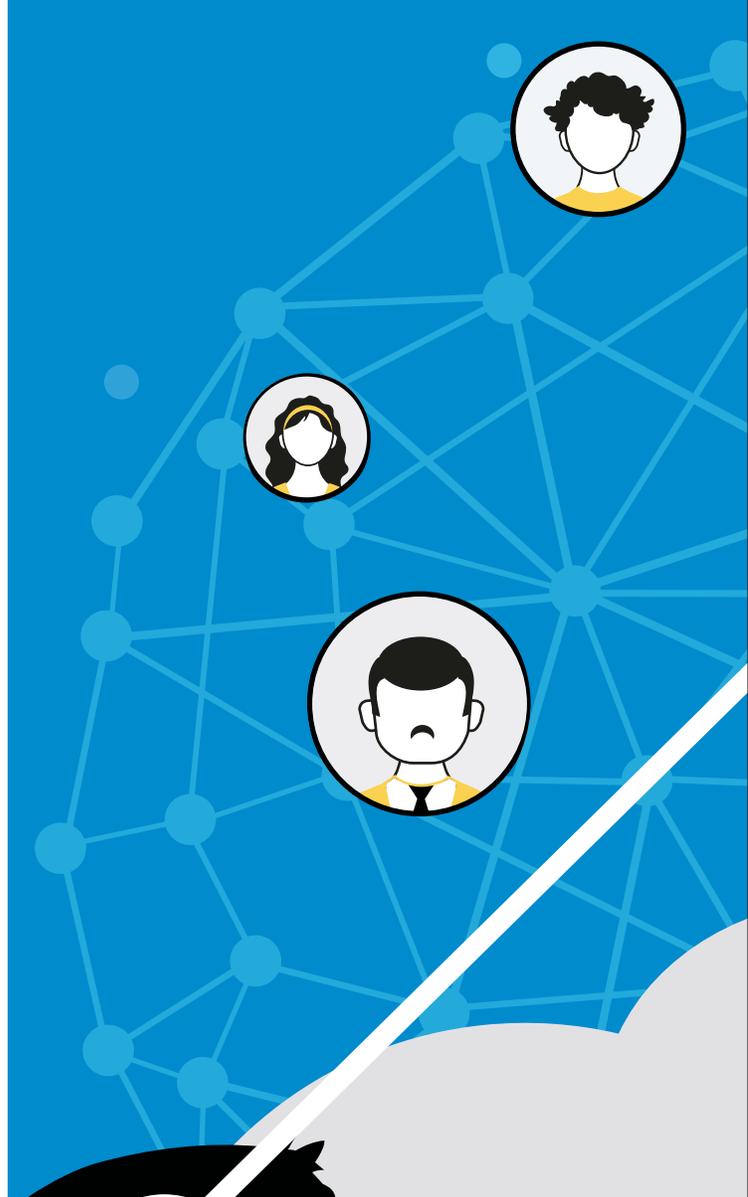
UC ELIMINATES DOWNTIME

For most businesses, voice communications is a necessity, but it can be a source of frustration as well. Cloud-based UC eliminates one key frustration because it allows users to seamlessly transfer and transport calls from one device to another. Users can start a call from an office-based landline or desktop call app and then take the call on the road via a mobile device, with one easy click instead of having to hang up and re-dial. UC also lets users connect with others in real-time instead of having to leave messages and wait for a response.
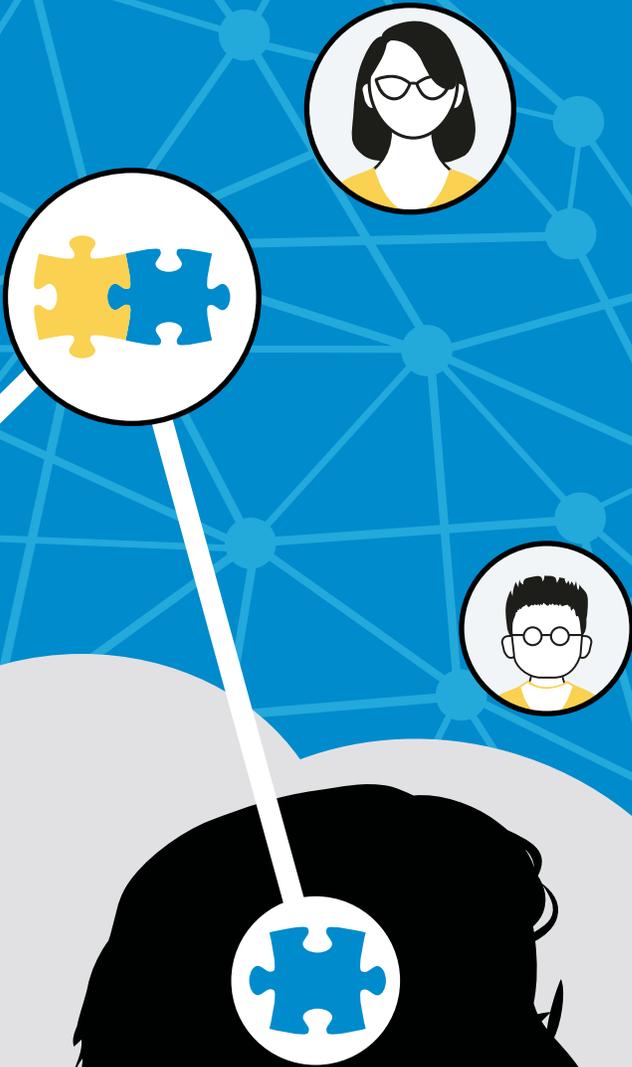
UC IMPROVES COLLABORATION AND DECISION-MAKING

UC provides easy access to tools and apps from multiple devices. Screen sharing, web and audio conferencing, virtual workspaces, smart whiteboards, and team chat can be integrated with project management and workflow systems to make it easier for individuals and teams to **meet remotely and collaborate** with one another.

PLAY

UC provides easy access to tools and apps from multiple devices.
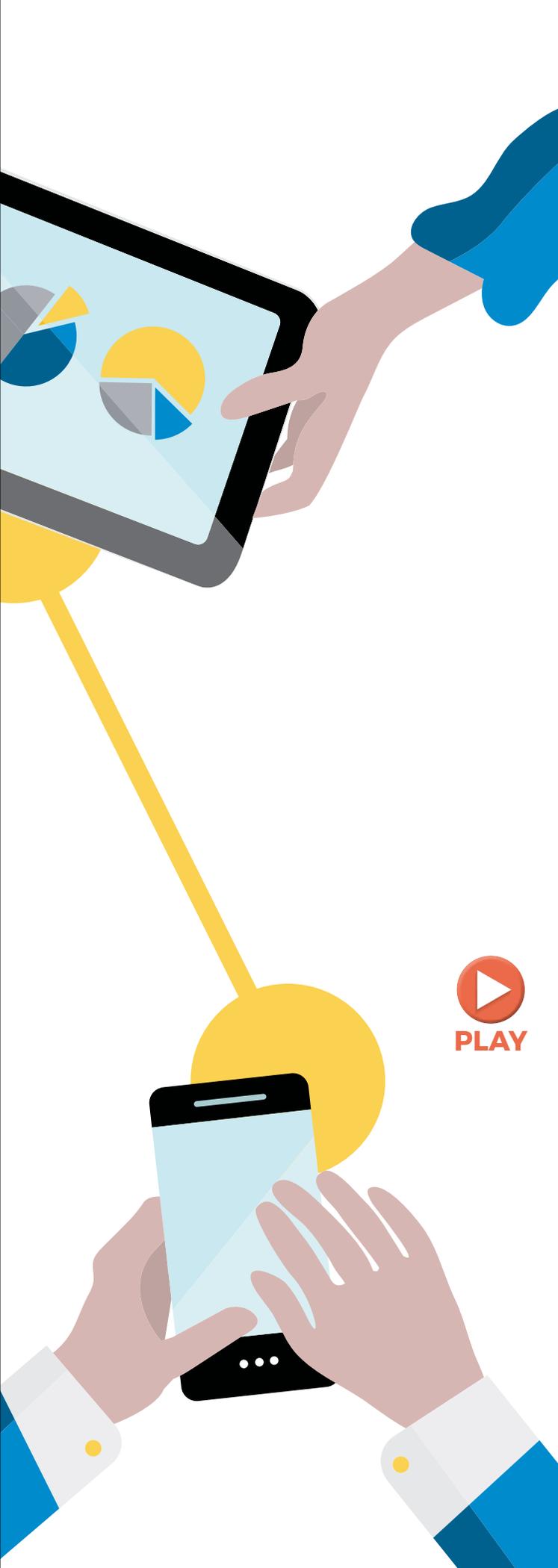
UC DRIVES REVENUE-GENERATING INITIATIVES

With intuitive cloud-based UC, businesses no longer need to devote technology-certified IT staff and capital expenses to manage, provision and support communications. Because UC is easily scalable, businesses of virtually any size and shape can easily add or delete users without special training or premise-based equipment required. IT staff can be re-allocated to revenue-generating initiatives.

The benefits of UC extend beyond the C-suite; they apply to individual users as well. For example, users no longer need to carry both a personal mobile phone and a business mobile phone. With a cloud-based UC system, all business communications are routed through an **easily downloadable app**. Business-related communications traffic remains secure in the cloud, and individual employees aren't required to track and submit business-related communications expenses for reimbursement.

Heavily regulated industries such as healthcare, finance and government may still have hurdles to overcome before UC becomes well-entrenched, but for most business sectors, cloud-based UC is the best way to converge voice and data communications and enhance communications-driven productivity.

PLAY

HOW 4 BUSINESSES DEPEND ON UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS

Contributed by Community Editorial Team
at Comcast Business

HOTELIER

MANUFACTURING

Unified communications (UC) is helping countless businesses improve their communications, collaboration and productivity. It's the perfect platform for both growing companies and those that need to scale their operations up and down to react to seasonal or market fluctuations.

Just about any type of business can benefit from converging voice and data via a mobility-enabled, cloud-based UC strategy.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

SALES ORGANIZATIONS

SALES ORGANIZATIONS

Sales organizations can improve customer service by converging voice services with popular customer relationship management (CRM) systems like Salesforce.

CRM information is immediately available on-screen (computer or mobile device) when calls come in, and outbound calls can be made directly from the CRM system, making transcription errors a thing of the past. With UC, companies can also integrate voicemail and email, making it easier for sales reps to reach out and respond to customers. Plus, calls can be prioritized so customers' calls ring directly through while unknown callers are directed to voicemail.
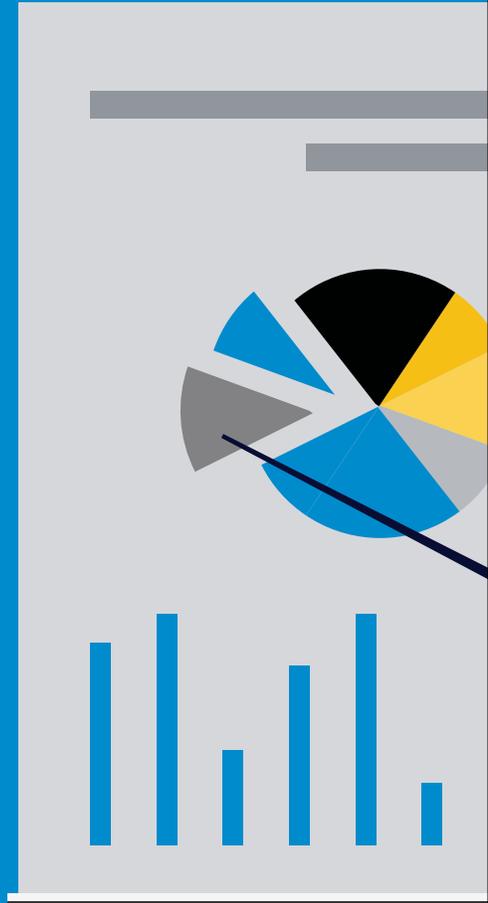
With UC, companies can also integrate voicemail and email, making it easier for sales reps to reach out and respond to customers.

HOTELIERS

Hoteliers can operate more efficiently and increase guest satisfaction by not being tied to a desk phone.

When UC is managed in the cloud, a hotel manager can forward incoming calls from their landline phone to their mobile phone, so they can address issues and answer questions no matter where they are on the property. The manager can also seamlessly transfer calls from one device to another without having to hang up and redial.
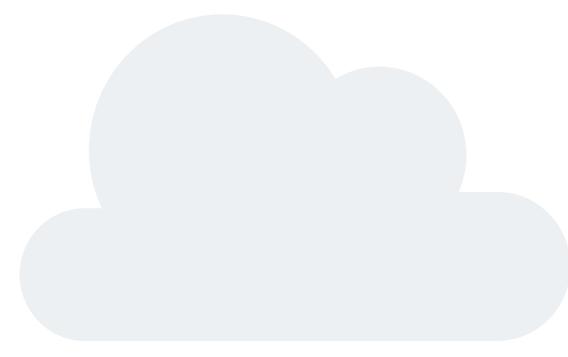
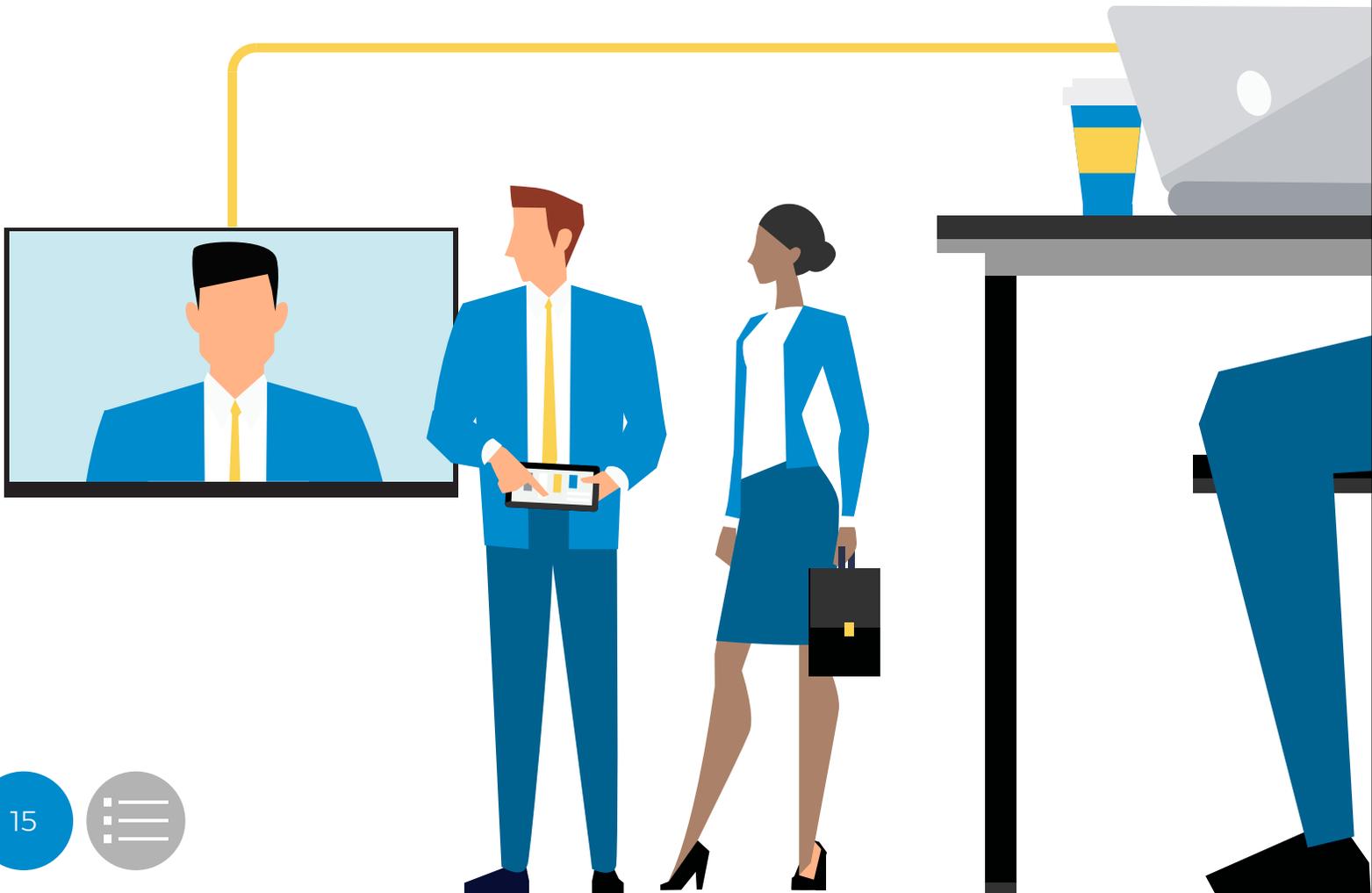When UC is managed in the cloud, a hotel manager can forward incoming calls from their landline phone to their mobile phone.
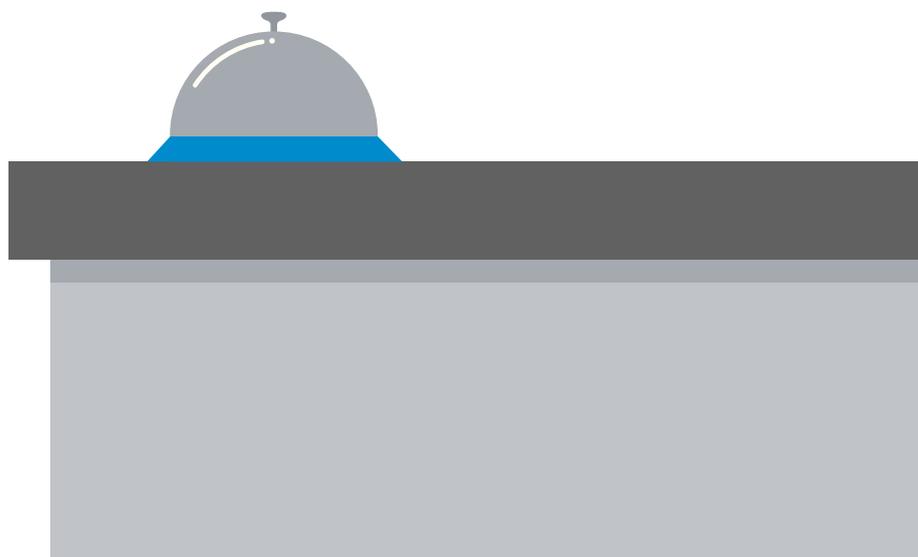
Enhance collaboration and share rich media assets with UC tools such as screen sharing and audio or video conferencing.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FIRMS

Professional services firms, like advertising agencies, can enhance collaboration and share rich media assets with UC tools such as screen sharing, audio and video conferencing, virtual workspaces and smart whiteboards — all of which can be integrated with project management systems.

Team chat lets account management, creative groups, and production personnel brainstorm together from different locations and get instant updates on projects in progress. Travel costs and time are reduced, and businesses can respond more quickly to client demands.

MANUFACTURERS

Manufacturers can streamline development and production processes with presence and instant communications functionality.

For example, a production supervisor facing a problem on the manufacturing line can use presence information to easily find the product's R&D leader, determine where they are and check their availability for an immediate call or a future meeting. With cloud-based UC, the days of leaving a message and waiting for a response are over, and downtime is reduced.

The convergence of voice and data in a unified communications platform has been helping businesses reduce their costs, improve their productivity and power revenue-generating initiatives for some time now. The latest UC platforms — driven by cloud-based advanced voice technology — and cost-effective productivity apps for businesses of all types and sizes, will make UC more intuitive and future-proof, making it easier and less costly for virtually any business to adopt UC without costly investments in premise-based equipment.

With cloud-based UC, the days of leaving a message and waiting for a response are over, and downtime is reduced.

CLOUD-BASED ADVANCED VOICE: YOUR UC FOUNDATION

Contributed by Community Editorial Team
at Comcast Business
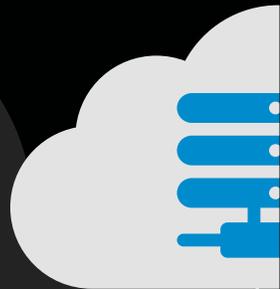
Unified communications (UC) has been converging data and voice over a single network for some time now. But the benefits businesses are reaping from UC have multiplied, thanks to the cloud. In fact, the cloud and its attendant mobility functionality have allowed the promise of UC to be fully realized in a way that premise-based systems can't.
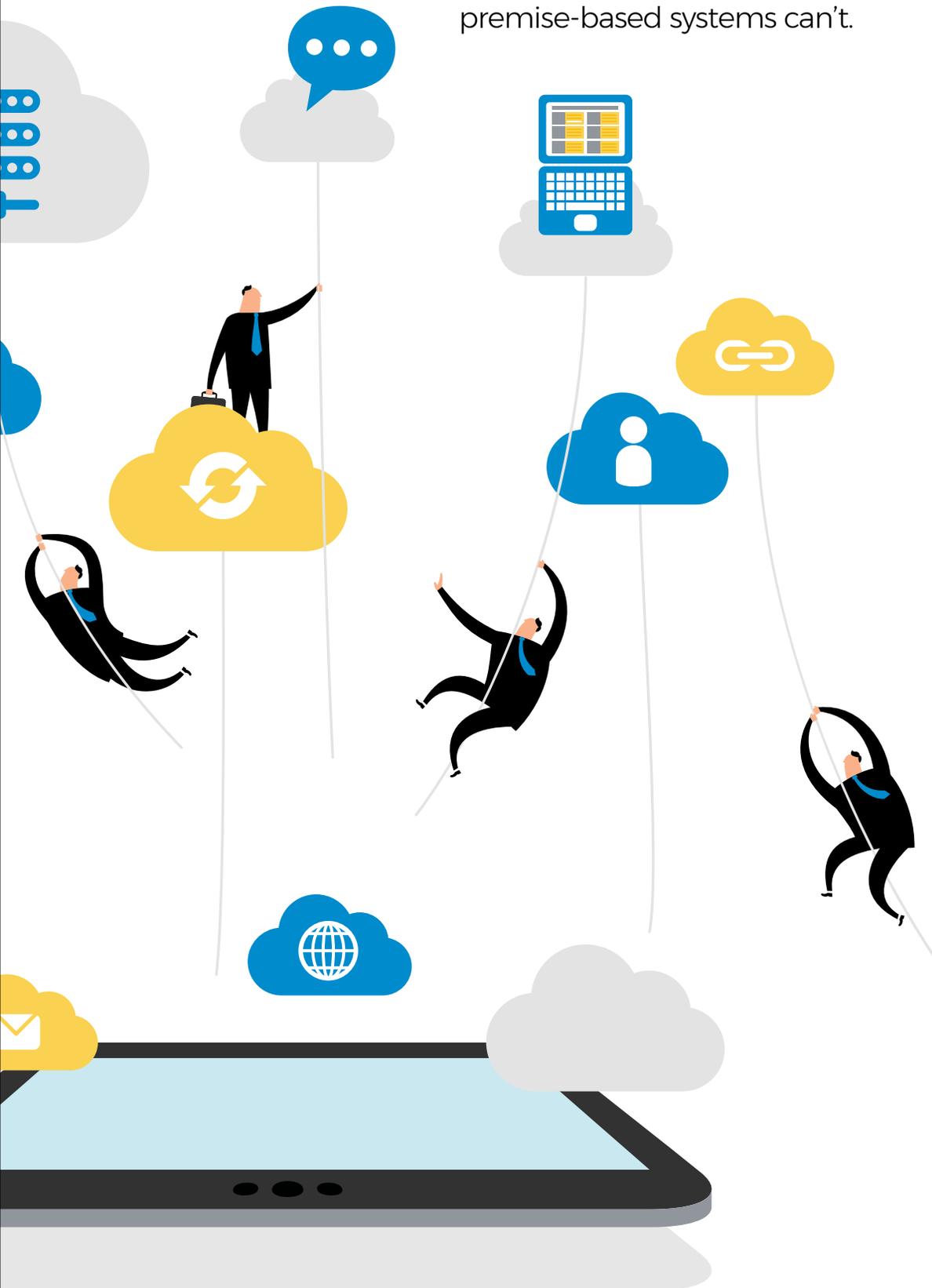
Today, UC encompasses much more than "click-to-dial." Instant messaging, presence, audio and video conferencing, desktop sharing, voice messages as email, and other productivity tools — all from best-in-class providers — can now be combined in one easy-to-manage advanced voice platform hosted in the cloud. Enterprise applications can be integrated as well. Plus, businesses can choose how, when and to whom they want to roll out individual UC functions and apps.

Unlike premise-based UC platforms, a cloud-hosted platform offers the important advantage of mobility. Users can quickly and easily move their conversations and interactions from desktop phones or computers to smart phones and other mobile devices (and vice-versa), allowing them to collaborate anytime, anywhere. Cloud-hosted voice platforms also integrate easily with cloud-based apps, such as customer relationship management (CRM) and project management programs.

Current cloud-based voice services have improved compared to their earlier VoIP predecessors. Dedicated, carrier-grade voice connections are now available so that voice traffic does not have to fight for attention with data traffic over the same public internet, as with some over the top (OTT) services. **Voice quality and reliability remain high**, giving businesses the confidence they need to consistently maintain a professional image. A service hosted inthe cloud also lets businesses maintain communications continuity in the case of localized power outages or disaster-related network problems.

PLAY

Unlike premise-based UC platforms, a cloud-hosted platform offers the important advantage of mobility.

PLAY

A cloud-hosted voice platform offers benefits beyond making employees more productive. It also makes UC easier to manage for businesses. Because cloud-based UC management tools are intuitive, businesses no longer need to invest in certified personnel to provision, manage and support business communications. IT staff can be re-positioned to revenue-generating activities instead.

A cloud-based platform also makes UC future-proof because system maintenance and new service integration are handled by the provider. Updates happen automatically. Administrative users can adjust system settings and services with a few clicks in a mobile app. Scaling up and down to react to business needs is also simpler and no longer requires capital investment in premise equipment that has the potential to go unused if demand or staff size decreases.

Cloud-based advanced voice has transformed the way UC works for businesses. It allows employees to carry a **virtual office** right in their smart phones with all the productivity and collaboration tools that used to be tied to a desktop. Plus, it allows businesses to easily scale, manage and future-proof their communications.
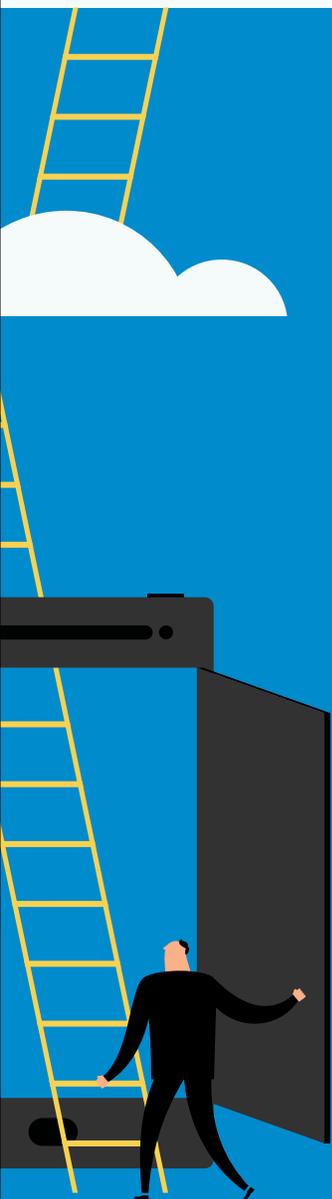
WHAT TO LOOK FOR
IN A UC PROVIDER

Contributed by Eric Hyman ▶
Director of Product Marketing at Comcast

Unified communications (UC) helps businesses of all types and sizes improve their collaboration and productivity while removing the hassles and reducing the costs associated with managing voice and data communications. At least, that's the promise of UC. But is that promise being realized?

The most successful implementations of UC are hosted, cloud-based, mobile and run over an easy-to-manage, advanced voice platform that is scalable and has the ability to integrate enterprise applications. Not all approaches to UC are equal, and neither are all UC providers. Here are five things businesses should look for in a UC provider to help ensure the potential of UC is fully realized.

When it comes to selecting a UC provider, size and strength matter. Businesses can ensure a future path to greater collaboration and productivity by choosing a hosted, cloud-based, advanced voice system that is run and managed over a private, secure, nationwide network.

1 DOES THE PROVIDER OFFER UC AS A SERVICE?

For many businesses, UC works best when it's provided as a service (UCaaS) instead of a premise-based solution. A cloud-based UC service is easier to maintain. Updates happen automatically. Plus, it's easier, quicker and less expensive to scale up and down as business needs dictate. There's no need to deploy a physical solution for peak utilization, only to have cards go unused when demand goes down. There's also no need to divert costly IT engineers from revenue-generating activities because all maintenance, updates, adds and changes are handled in the cloud by the service provider.

2

CAN THE PROVIDER SUPPORT REMOTE LOCATIONS?

UC isn't truly unified unless it supports all of a business's physical locations and remote workers. Multiple locations often require a mix of UC solutions — a perfect scenario for cloud-based UCaaS, because services can be rolled out on a location-by-location basis. The combination of a private, secure, nationwide network infrastructure — including the last mile — and mobile access is key. Make sure the provider offers a single point of contact for all locations to facilitate troubleshooting and ensure the provider always has the bigger picture.
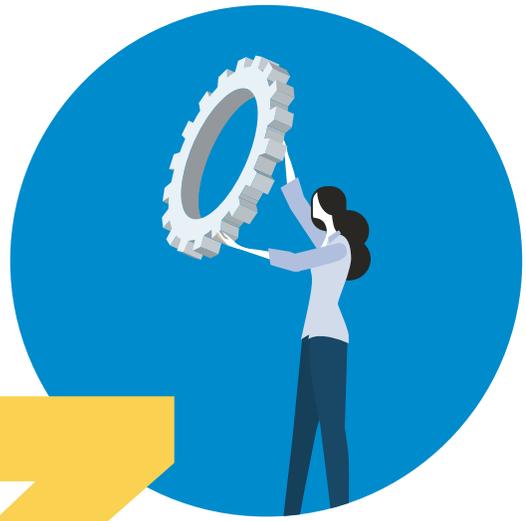
3

IS THE USER INTERFACE EASY TO MANAGE?

The goal of UC is to make businesses more productive, but if users can't figure out how to make it work, those productivity gains won't happen. Look for a service provider that offers a single user interface (and single admin interface) for both data/internet and voice, no matter the type of desktop or mobile device used. The interface should be intuitive and provide one-click integration with common tools like Microsoft Skype for Business, Office 365 and Google Chrome so users don't have to toggle between applications. Selecting a provider that will offer user and admin training is a big plus when it comes to getting up to speed quickly with new UC tools.

4
WHAT IS THE QUALITY OF SERVICE?

When VoIP is delivered over the public internet as with Over the Top (OTT) providers, voice and data compete for bandwidth, leading to packet loss jitter, dropped calls and poor voice quality. A dedicated, carrier-grade voice connection eliminates those problems, so voice communications remain clear and reliable. Businesses should also make sure their provider offers a redundant network architecture, which keeps communications running in the event of a natural or man-made disaster that impacts the network. Around-the-clock network and customer monitoring, as well as service level agreements, will provide extra peace of mind.

5
HOW STABLE IS THE PROVIDER?

It seems like everyone is getting into the VoIP and UC game these days. Although providers can be found around every turn, businesses would be well-served to select a UC partner that is financially strong, growing and committed to continuous investment in its network infrastructure. A provider dedicated to offering services and support that meet the special needs of various business segments will be in the best position to offer the right solution at competitive prices.

COMCAST BUSINESS VoiceEdge™:
UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS BUILT FOR THE CLOUD

Contributed by Eric Hyman ▸
Director of Product Marketing at Comcast

Unified communications (UC) has changed the way business is conducted. It helps improve collaboration, decision-making and productivity, and lets companies focus on managing their business instead of their communications infrastructure.

PLAY

Today's UC systems are a big step forward from the early days of UC. No longer tied to hardware deployed on your premise, newer UC solutions like Comcast Business VoiceEdge are cloud-based and mobile. Business communications can be routed through an easily downloadable desktop app providing one-click integration with common business productivity tools like customer relationship management, Microsoft Skype for Business, **Office 365** and Google Chrome. In addition, from Google Play or App Store, an end-user can download the mobile application from Comcast to have desk phone features and functions on a cell phone.

Businesses of all shapes and sizes are using Comcast Business VoiceEdge, the cloud-based virtual PBX service that works where you work — office, home or on the road. Comcast Business VoiceEdge allows your employees to stay connected with customers and each other from anywhere for increased productivity and an improved voice communications experience.

Additionally, Comcast Business VoiceEdge works with the business applications employees rely on the most: text with readable voicemail; email with interoperability with Office 365; cell phone access to your telephone directory, and; desktop call features delivered via a mobile app. Here are a few examples.

> **Today's UC systems are a big step forward from the early days of UC.**
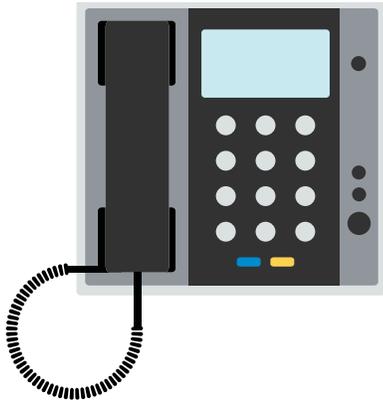
CRYSTAL CLEAR VOICE– ALL THE TIME

Members working at Tigerlabs, a Princeton, NJ, co-working community, originally relied on their cell phones to make business calls. Now, Tigerlabs offers their community an important amenity thanks to Comcast Business VoiceEdge: HD-quality IP phones from Polycom in all conference rooms, giving members an alternative to using their cellphones for important client collaboration conference calls.

## SUPPORT REMOTE EMPLOYEES

PLAY

Philadelphia-based **Maass Media** helps companies collect, analyze and use marketing-generated data to make better business decisions and drive more sales. With Comcast Business VoiceEdge Remote Office, Be Anywhere and softphones, employees have the quality, reliability and speed needed to receive inbound calls to never miss a call. Because Comcast Business VoiceEdge calls travel over a separate circuit, they don't compete for traffic with the company's data usage, so calls can be completed clearly and reliably.

SCALE AS BUSINESSES GROW

The Business Incubator, Utah's largest business incubator, provides a collaborative workspace and a full range of resources to local entrepreneurs. To help its small business clientele grow, it needed to provide high-quality and secure voice services that could grow along with them, without requiring costly infrastructure investments and maintenance. The Business Incubator chose Comcast Business VoiceEdge for its flexibility and scalability. The HD-quality voice lines improve both employee and customer communications for Business Incubator clients, providing them with a professional voice alternative to cell phones while enabling features like Be Anywhere, which allows calls to reach cell phones when clients work outside the office.
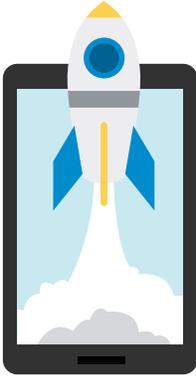
ALWAYS REACHABLE

Chicago-based CLK Engineers wanted to make it easier for customers to reach engineers working in the field. Comcast Business VoiceEdge provides advanced call features like call forwarding, allowing the firm to send incoming calls to the field so they don't have to miss an important client- or business-related call.
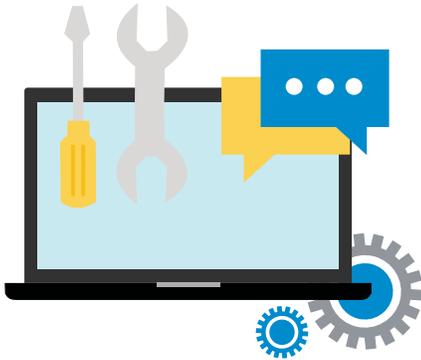
BETTER CUSTOMER SERVICE

For Mattress 1, of Jacksonville, FL, unreliable voice service from other carriers was affecting customer satisfaction. Mattress 1 switched from traditional voice services delivered by a mix of service providers to Comcast Business VoiceEdge nationally. With their prior phone service, advanced features like Call Forwarding, Auto Attendant and Hold Music were inadequate or nonexistent, and employees could only answer calls when they were near the phone. With Comcast Business VoiceEdge, employees can stay productive even when they're away from their desktop phones, accessing voice services via softphones and mobile devices. HD-quality voice using Polycom IP phones provides a clear connection between retail locations and headquarters. Plus, the company can review billable call detail records in real-time via a secure and private web portal.

SET FOR SUCCESS:
HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF COMCAST BUSINESS VoiceEdge™: PRODUCTIVITY TOOLS

Contributed By Community Editorial Team
at Comcast Business

Comcast Business VoiceEdge provides a powerful suite of unified communications (UC) tools that can improve communication, enhance collaboration and make your business more productive.

PLAY

As with any tool, Comcast Business VoiceEdge works best when you know how to use it. Fortunately, you don't need to be a rocket scientist — or a telecom engineer — to quickly learn and take advantage of all that Comcast Business VoiceEdge has to offer. Everything can be accessed and managed through an easy-to-use **online portal** or our free downloadable app for iOS or Android devices.

Make sure you secure your Comcast Business VoiceEdge system with a username and password you can remember (and store it somewhere that's easily accessible in case you forget). That way, if you need to change any features, you'll have immediate access right at your fingertips.

Here are a few of the most popular features Comcast Business VoiceEdge offers. Click on the links to view informative videos on our YouTube channel to help you take advantage of these features. Or, visit our Business VoiceEdge Help Library.

AUTO ATTENDANT

Give incoming calls prompt, consistent and professional treatment. Auto Attendant routes calls to another individual, department or recording via menu prompts, without the assistance of an operator or receptionist. Calls can be routed to internal numbers, cell phones, voicemail boxes or Hunt Groups. Greetings (such as hours of operation, sales and specials, or directions to your location) can be recorded to provide important information while callers wait. **Learn more about Auto Attendant.**

PLAY

CALL WAITING

Sometimes, you know a call can be handled with a quick response. Call waiting lets you pause your current conversation by answering an incoming call while you're already engaged in another call.

HUNT GROUPS

Make sure important calls get answered by automatically distributing incoming calls among a group of users. There are four options for setting up Hunt Groups, giving you the flexibility you need to support your customers and other callers:

- Ring each user in the order they appear on a user list
- Ring all users at once
- Note the last user to answer a call then ring the next user on the list
- Ring the user that has been idle the longest

PLAY

Learn more about Hunt Groups.

CALL QUEUE

Make sure incoming calls are answered as promptly as possible. Call queues are used to temporarily hold calls in the cloud when all users (called "agents") assigned to receive calls from the queue are unavailable. Queued calls are routed to an available agent when he or she is no longer on an active call, or according to a configurable hunting policy. Calls in queue are played a welcome message, then hold music and periodic messages until an agent is available.

CALL FORWARDING SELECTIVE

Some incoming calls are more important than others. Call Forwarding Selective allows you to forward calls you don't want to miss to a specific department or individual at certain times of the day, such as after business hours, on holidays or during vacation times.

CALL NOTIFY

There are times (such as during meetings with the boss or a client) when you don't want to be bothered by a ringing phone. Call Notify allows certain incoming calls to trigger an email or text notification with details of the incoming call attempt.

CLICK-TO-DIAL

Save time and transcription errors when placing a call. Click-to-Dial lets you call a contact listed in Outlook, your CRM database, your phone directory, or on a website by hovering over the number and clicking, instead of having to enter the full phone number. [Learn more about making calls from Office 365](#).

RETRIEVE VOICEMAIL

Your business day extends beyond the four walls of your office and 9-to-5. With Comcast Business VoiceEdge, you can retrieve voice-mail messages directly from your desk phone, softphone or mobile phone. You can also retrieve messages from the VoiceEdge portal or mobile app.

Learn more about retrieving your voicemail from your desk phone.

PLAY

ENHANCED VOICEMAIL

If you want a written record of your voicemail messages, you can turn them into readable text sent to your email address or a group of email addresses. You can also transfer voicemail messages to another phone number or extension.

UPDATE DIRECTORY, VOICEMAIL, EXTENSION

You can edit these items easily in the user Dashboard. Simply sign into My Account and select VoiceEdge from the Manage Services dropdown. You can also set up and access voicemail from another phone number.

These and other "Be Anywhere" tools from Comcast Business VoiceEdge help to ensure you'll never miss a call no matter where you're working, letting you serve customers, collaborate with colleagues and solve problems faster and more efficiently than ever.