Workplace as a Service: Deploying an All-in-One Office Solution can Transform Your Organization

Frost & Sullivan White Paper
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Growing mid-size organizations know that opening a new office or upgrading existing technology infrastructure can be costly, complex, and time consuming. Most mid-size companies don’t have the budget, or they choose to prioritize investment in their core business technology. And often, the staff lacks the skill to evaluate, deploy and maintain a complete infrastructure—including Local Area Network (LAN), Wi-Fi, PBX, and PSTN connectivity; data center; and mobile device management—as well as a full suite of communications applications (including voice, conferencing, messaging, presence and chat). And yet, to compete and grow, mid-size businesses must give their employees the tools they need, when they need them, reliably and securely.

As a result, many innovative and forward-thinking companies are turning to the cloud to deploy critical infrastructure and software. A 2015 Frost & Sullivan survey of more than 1,000 IT decision makers in the US and Europe, The Future of Unified Communications in the Workplace, reveals that 43% of companies use cloud-based solutions today, and that will increase by 20% by 2016. Cloud computing is also the second-highest rated of all the technologies we asked about, with 63% of decision makers rating it “highly effective” for their business.

Still, cloud is just one piece of the complex IT and communications puzzle that a mid-size business has to solve. It must also manage multiple vendor relationships, integrate a hybrid mix of premises- and cloud-based applications, and invest a significant amount in up-front capital. A truly seamless experience requires a complete “workplace-as-a-service”: a full suite of communications, data and connectivity solutions that makes it easy and cost effective to get all your employees up and running in a matter of weeks, not months; and which does not require on-site IT staff or multiple resellers for ongoing maintenance and support.

With an office-as-a-service solution, companies can get a complete infrastructure, communications, and productivity deployment, including all the necessary networking, connectivity, and applications. The result: predictable monthly costs, flexibility, scalability, performance, reliability, security, and simplified management. This allows them to focus on investing in and growing their business.

This paper will examine the reasons so many mid-size companies are struggling to open new offices or upgrade existing technology in today’s increasingly mobile workplace; outline the tools and technologies needed by smart organizations and their employees to drive productivity; discuss the benefits of deploying an all-in-one, integrated set of communications, data, and network services; and offer best-practices recommendations for choosing a provider partner to ensure success.

NEW WAYS OF WORKING REQUIRE A NEW WORKPLACE

The workplace is changing fast, and smart companies are adjusting right along with it. Frost & Sullivan research shows that more than one-third of employees now routinely work remotely, whether from the road or a home-based or small satellite office. And with the Millennials now making up the largest percentage of the population, that number will only increase, as the next generation of employees expects a flexible workplace that offers the advanced communications and collaboration tools it needs—from anywhere and on any device.

More and more, employees not only want to collaborate with their colleagues, partners, and customers, but they expect to be able to do so in a seamless manner that allows them to leverage the best possible application for the task at hand. This means they need to be able to easily segue from email to chat, and from audio conferencing to Web collaboration and even video conferencing with the click of a button. They also need anytime access to email, applications, and tools such as team spaces and productivity docs.
Add to this the “bring-your-own-technology” (BYOT) trend, in which employees routinely bring their own smart phones, tablets, and various apps and services into the workplace to improve their productivity—often at their own personal expense. That can deliver clear benefits to the organization, which can leverage new tools and a willingness on the part of employees to work together to improve outcomes, reimagine the customer experience, and drive the bottom line. But it also puts a new pressure on corporate leaders, who today are faced with a daunting challenge: assuring their offices are set up to allow employees to be as productive as possible, 24/7, on any platform, operating system, or endpoint—all while balancing the need to enforce security and compliance policies to safeguard their company data.

**Workplace Requirements for 2015—and Beyond**

*Focus on Work Results Rather than How, When and Where*

**CONNECTED WORK**

- **MOBILE**
  - BYOX
  - Mobile-first Tech Development
  - Wearable technologies
  - IoT

- **PEOPLE-CENTRIC**
  - User Experience
  - Flexible Work Practices
  - Work-life Balance
  - Global Talent Sourcing

- **CUSTOMER-DRIVEN**
  - Omni-channel Support
  - Context Awareness
  - Crowd Sourcing

- **ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY**
  - Travel Reduction
  - Remote Working
  - Innovating to Zero

- **COLLABORATIVE**
  - Multi-model Conversations
  - Content Collaboration

- **AGILE**
  - Ubiquitous Connectivity
  - Software-based Solutions
  - Cloud Architectures
  - WebRTC

- **CONTEXTUAL**
  - Single Pane of Glass
  - Persistent Conversations
  - Analytics

To support this new way of working, companies must ensure their employees have access to networks, communications, and collaboration tools where and when they need them. But that is not a negligible requirement. It means delivering reliable and secure access to the Internet, work documents, conferencing tools, and voice communications (landline, VoIP, and cellular); offering support for any operating system, on any device; standardizing on collaboration applications wherever possible; and maintaining support for the latest technologies, even if they come in through your employees rather than IT.

This is especially true for mid-size companies, which must compete with larger organizations for talent without the benefit of a robust IT staff or budget. Companies must deploy the necessary infrastructure and networking capabilities to enable their employees to collaborate and compete—but doing so can cost hundreds of thousands of up-front capital and months of IT and vendor management staff time.

When it comes to making investments in IT, mid-size businesses are most interested in improving productivity, reducing costs, staying ahead of the curve, and improving both the customer experience and overall collaboration. But they face significant challenges, including training IT staff on new technology, managing multiple vendors, and supporting remote workers and branch offices.
IT Investment Drivers and Challenges—Medium Companies

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<th>IT Investment Drivers for Medium Companies</th>
<th>IT Challenges for Medium Companies</th>
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<td>Improve productivity</td>
<td>Making effective and timely IT investments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduce enterprise costs</td>
<td>Training IT staff on advanced IT tools</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stay ahead of the curve</td>
<td>Managing multi-vendors solutions</td>
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<td>Improve the customer experience</td>
<td>Dealing with new regulatory requirements</td>
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<td>Improve collaboration</td>
<td>Supporting remote workers and branch offices</td>
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Think about what technology goes into a modern office designed to support 20 to 200 people:

- Wi-Fi and LAN
- Internet
- Wide Area Networks to access applications hosted in the data center
- Desk and mobile phones
- Laptops and tablets
- PBX/IP-PBX
- Local and long-distance calling
- Cellular services
- Mobile Device Management
- IM, screen sharing, and other collaboration tools (audio, Web and video)
- Email
- Storage
- Security
Now think about what goes into enabling all those disparate components: multiple products and services from multiple vendors and integrators. Numerous cables, routers, servers, and other hardware. Cellular, local, and long-distance voice, audio conferencing, broadband, and/or network circuit contracts. Software licenses from various email, productivity, and collaboration vendors. Support for home-grown and third-party apps on several operating systems and form factors. Network security services. Mobile device management. Network optimization. Ongoing support for users inside and outside the organization.

The result is a complex array of knowledge, skills and services that requires internal IT and supply chain management staff to manage multiple provider relationships, struggle with integration and interoperability, and constantly put out fires as they pop up, rather than focusing on the strategic initiatives core to the business. The process consumes time, resources, and budgets. And it doesn’t always deliver the kind of reliable up-time today’s employees expect and, increasingly, demand from their workplaces.

**Challenges Faced by Mid-size Offices and Organizations**

- Stay focused on core competencies to enable growth
- Attract and retain the best possible employees
- Compete with larger businesses that have more resources
- Adjust and react to changing business and IT needs
- Strive for predictable monthly costs for IT

**MOVING YOUR WORKPLACE TO THE CLOUD CAN TRANSFORM YOUR BUSINESS**

As companies struggle to deliver the necessary tools and technology to their virtual employee base, many are turning to cloud-based solutions. These deliver a wide range of benefits to businesses of all sizes, but they are being widely embraced by mid-size organizations that want to enable a full suite of communications and collaboration capabilities without enormous up-front costs and ongoing maintenance and support. Cloud solutions deliver state-of-the-art capabilities without significant capital investment; can be deployed in a matter of weeks, not months; make it easy for companies to grow as needed, scaling up and down in a flash; ensure all employees will be on the latest software without the need for costly and time-consuming upgrades; offer unmatched security, performance, and reliability; and require very little, if any, management and support from the company’s internal IT staff or other business managers.

But cloud-based communications offerings don’t cover all the bases when it comes to an organization’s IT needs. “Workplace as a Service” solutions go well beyond what’s included in a typical cloud-based offering, which is usually limited to one or two areas of infrastructure or application deployment, and does not typically include such components as Wi-Fi or cellular service. Mid-size companies looking to simplify their IT rollouts through the cloud should seriously consider what a complete Workplace-as-a-Service investment can give them: all the benefits of a hosted solution, including award-winning customer support, with the added convenience of an end-to-end infrastructure deployment.

The issue of how and when to manage cloud-based communications is top of mind for most organizations. A recent Frost & Sullivan survey of more than 1,000 IT decision makers in the US and Europe reveals that by 2017, cloud computing will be the second-most used technology in business organizations. Among mid-size companies, 44% use cloud computing today, and 55% expect to do so by 2016—more than the general sample.
Cloud computing is also the second-highest rated of all the technologies we asked about, with 63% of decision makers rating it “highly effective” for their business. That puts it ahead of smart phones, tablets, and even many of the applications it supports, including conferencing and unified communications; while all those technologies are valuable, delivering them in the cloud is where IT decision makers really see the benefits.

Companies of All Sizes are Moving to the Cloud

A recent Frost & Sullivan survey of…

...more than 1,000 IT decision makers in the U.S. and Europe reveals that 43% of companies use cloud-based solutions today.

Among Mid-Sized Organizations 44% use cloud computing solutions today.

That will increase to more than 50% over the next 2 years.

55% expect to be using cloud solutions by 2016.

No wonder our research also shows that in 2013, the North American hosted IP telephony and UCC services user base grew by 30.5% to reach 5.0 million users, adding 1.2 million net new users since year end 2012. Even though growth rates will gradually decline year over year due to the larger installed base, the number of annual net new users will increase consistently throughout the forecast period, driven by continued demand among under-served small and mid-size businesses (SMBs) and emerging demand among larger, distributed organizations with a significant number of remote and mobile employees. Growing customer confidence in VoIP and cloud technologies will also boost adoption.
Companies are flocking to hosted services

In 2013, the North American hosted IP telephony and UCC services user base grew by 30.5% to reach 5 million users, adding 1.2 million net new users since year end 2012.

Furthermore, the complexity and cost of managing a disparate, multi-vendor unified communications and collaboration (UCC) infrastructure is compelling businesses to look for single-vendor or more tightly integrated multi-vendor solutions. Tightly integrated, best-of-breed UCC deployments are expected to dominate the market two years from now. While today 32% of mid-size businesses describe their technology as a set of poorly integrated multi-vendor solutions, that number is expected to drop by 20% over the next two years.

Businesses want more tightly integrated solutions

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<td>Don't know</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partially integrated</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly integrated</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fully integrated</td>
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WORKPLACE-AS-A-SERVICE: A NEW WAY TO DEPLOY INFRASTRUCTURE AND APPLICATIONS

The situation is clear. If you’re setting up an office for up to 200 employees, or going through a periodic technology refresh cycle, you’ll require the wide array of services mentioned above, but probably don’t have the money or staff to actually deploy or support them in a cost-effective and timely manner.

But what if you could get everything you need—from infrastructure to networking to applications and services—with a single contract? What if those services are easy and fast to deploy? What if you could avoid up-front capital costs and instead know exactly how much you will spend per employee on a regular basis? What if you could skip the unpredictability of a major technology spend? What if you could add or remove users with a single phone call or a few mouse clicks? What if all management, maintenance, and upgrades were included, ensuring your end users are always on the most up-to-date versions of applications and that your IT staff can focus on more strategic initiatives that go to the heart of your business?

Enter “workplace as a service,” a solution that delivers a complete communications package to get a new office up and running much faster than before—or refresh an existing office with up-to-date technology and applications. It’s a service that gives you presence and chat, conferencing and collaboration, voice and data, storage, and device management. Throw in support for mobile devices from multiple carriers, proactive capacity monitoring and management capability, a predictable spend with an integrated service experience, and a single point of contact for 24-by-7 support. Layer on your choice of hosted or premises-based applications. Suddenly, opening a new office or upgrading existing technology infrastructure doesn’t have to be a daunting challenge. Employees can get exactly what they need, far faster than you could provide it using the traditional approach—and they will become more productive from day one. To top it off, all this can deliver significant savings compared to a traditional solution.

Technology to Support the Modern Workforce
WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A PROVIDER PARTNER

When seeking out a provider for an all-in-one workplace solution, decision makers should look for a partner with a long history in business communications, and the reach and deep partner relationships to ensure a seamless, integrated solution. Furthermore, not all providers offer a complete set of infrastructure and applications; make sure the one you choose delivers more than a few ad-hoc, siloed services such as audio conferencing or Wi-Fi.

To ensure a successful and complete experience for IT staff, line-of-business managers and employees, look for a complete solution that includes managed Wi-Fi, WAN & LAN connectivity, Mobile Device Management, enterprise-grade voice for local and long distance, and a full suite of UCC apps and services. You should make sure you also get 24-7 managed services and support that covers per-site implementation, proactive capacity management, predictable monthly charges, and support for multiple carriers.

You may also want to be able to add on premises-based solutions already in use within the organization, including email, conferencing, presence, chat, and various productivity and back-office applications. Or you may want to be able to contract for additional enterprise services, such as Office 365 or Google Apps, as well as additional hardware (desk phone, mobile devices) and bandwidth capacity. Make sure your provider offers flexible options to meet all your current and future business needs.

Workplace-as-a-Service from Sprint Business

Workplace-as-a-Service from Sprint Business is an award-winning, fully managed and integrated communications solution designed to enable productive and empowered employees. It is delivered on a site-by-site basis for a predictable, per-employee monthly spend and is compatible with all types of devices to provide fast and easy access to people, teams, and data. Workplace-as-a-Service is ideal for new branch offices or existing offices that need a technology refresh. Workplace includes:

- Managed Wi-Fi
- WAN & LAN connectivity
- Wireless connectivity
- Proactive capacity management
- Unified communications Suite:
  - Enterprise-grade voice
  - Local and LD calling
  - Audio and video conferencing
  - Online collaboration
  - IM and presence
- Mobile Device Management
- 24-7 managed services and support
- Multi-carrier support
Key benefits include:

- Zero upfront capital investment
- A simplified infrastructure that is fully managed and secure
- Trained consultants to design, implement and manage communications infrastructure
- Attractive wireless voice and data plans
- The ability to enable multicarrier mobile devices and BYOD
- A single number to call for all of your support needs

CONCLUSION

Companies looking to open a new office or upgrade technology infrastructure for an existing office are faced with a daunting challenge: setting up a technology infrastructure that gives employees Internet access, telephony capabilities, and advanced communications and collaboration tools—using any operating system and on any device. The up-front costs and IT time and resources required to deliver reliable and secure connectivity and communications can set a company back months and delay the productivity gains expected from the new site or the technology refresh.

An all-in-one workplace-as-a-service can alleviate these challenges by making it fast, easy, and very cost-effective to deploy a complete infrastructure and suite of applications and services to support your changing workforce. By working with a provider that can deliver a complete workplace infrastructure solution, and the applications and services that run on it, companies can stay ahead of the competition, focus on core competencies, and drive growth and innovation.

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