RingCentral

UNIFY YOUR COMMUNICATIONS

One solution. One vendor.

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Whatever industry you're in, whatever the size of your business, your team is probably already benefiting from at least some cloud communications services.

Maybe you have employees in different locations, and you've found that a **team messaging app** helps them collaborate easily and inexpensively from anywhere. Maybe you've discovered the ingenious tactic of letting your hiring managers conduct their first round of job interviews over a **video conferencing solution**, before narrowing the list of candidates to invite to your office. And if you're in an industry that still requires faxing, perhaps you've switched to an **online fax service** that lets your team send and receive faxes from anywhere, without the headaches of maintaining fax machines or paying for dedicated fax lines, ink, and paper.

Cloud communications give businesses all sorts of ways to collaborate more effectively, improve their operations, get more done, and save money. But if you don't set up these solutions the right way, you could be creating a new set of problems for your business.

Your business will reap the greatest benefits from cloud communications when you unify them on a single platform from one vendor.



We've worked with hundreds of thousands of businesses, and we've found that **the most common mistake in transitioning to cloud communications is signing up for disparate solutions from different providers**.

This brief guide will walk you through the key cloud communications services available today to even the most budget-conscious business—and the benefits of each. Then we'll discuss the main drawbacks of attempting to build this infrastructure piecemeal.

Finally, we'll introduce you to a solution that can deliver your business all of these benefits while helping you avoid the common pitfalls of moving your communications infrastructure to the cloud.



WHAT WILL CLOUD COMMUNICATIONS MEAN FOR YOUR BUSINESS?



For your company, implementing cloud communications might simply mean transitioning from your costly and inflexible telephone service to a cloud solution that lets your staff make and receive phone calls from anywhere, over the internet.

Or, because the technology supports so many other types of services, cloud communications could involve a much broader upgrade to your infrastructure: giving your employees web-based tools to call, text, fax, message, collaborate, share files, conduct video conferences, and more.

Here are just a few key cloud communications features that can improve your operations. As we will explain later in this guide, these cloud services offer your business the greatest benefits if you implement them not as stand-alone tools from separate providers, but as **one integrated solution from a single vendor**.

Cloud phone service

Most businesses first learn about the concept of cloud communications when they begin looking for a better phone solution.

This is because as a business grows, the limitations of its phone service are often among the first technological challenges the company runs into. These challenges include the difficulty of maintaining on-site phone hardware, lack of "big company" phone features, the ever-increasing costs of monthly service, confusion with the phone company's billing, lack of service mobility, and the costs and physical constraints of updating infrastructure dependent on old-fashioned copper wiring.

As the head of technology for New York's 130-year-old Ethical Culture Fieldston School puts it:

> "At some point, it was no longer just difficult to add a new phone—it was impossible. Our building didn't have enough wire to support more lines, which stopped us from growing as quickly as we wanted because we couldn't give new people phones.

A cloud phone solution can solve all of these problems while giving a small business many powerful features they've never had before, including:

- The ability for employees to make and receive business calls from anywhere—using a desktop phone, their personal smartphone or other mobile device, or a computer, all with the same business phone number.
- An auto-receptionist with professionally recorded greetings and menu options.
- Advanced call routing instructions that can be easily updated online anytime.
- Toll-free, local, and vanity phone numbers.
- Voicemail-to-email, which alerts employees to a new business voicemail and lets them listen to the recording even if they don't have their phone with them.
- Voicemail transcriptions, which let employees scan the text of a voicemail rather than having to listen to it.
- SMS text messaging, enabling employees to send and receive texts using their business phone numbers from any device.

Online faxing

Another popular cloud communications feature for businesses is online fax capability. This lets employees receive, forward, save, send, and even sign faxes digitally—by email or through a user-friendly web interface. No paper or fax machine required.

For businesses whose vendors, customers, or industry regulators continue to expect communication by fax, this is a great way to maintain enterprise-caliber fax capability while eliminating the hassles and expenses of maintaining on-site fax infrastructure.

With online faxing, a business can:

- **Empower employees** to send and receive important faxes without having to stand over a fax machine.
- **Increase staff productivity** by speeding the fax process, eliminating the need to print documents and cover sheets, stand in line at the fax machine, and redial busy fax numbers. With online faxing, this process is as easy as sending an email.
- **Improve fax security and compliance**—by reducing the risks of paper faxes left sitting on a common-area fax machine.

The classic scenario illustrating the value of online faxing is healthcare, an industry regulated by strict data-privacy laws. Because those laws still favor faxing patient records over other forms of transmission, online fax capability can be a compliance life-saver for health providers.

Case in point: (auto)MATE Healthcare, a software company providing medical records automation. As the company's co-founder and engineering director explains:

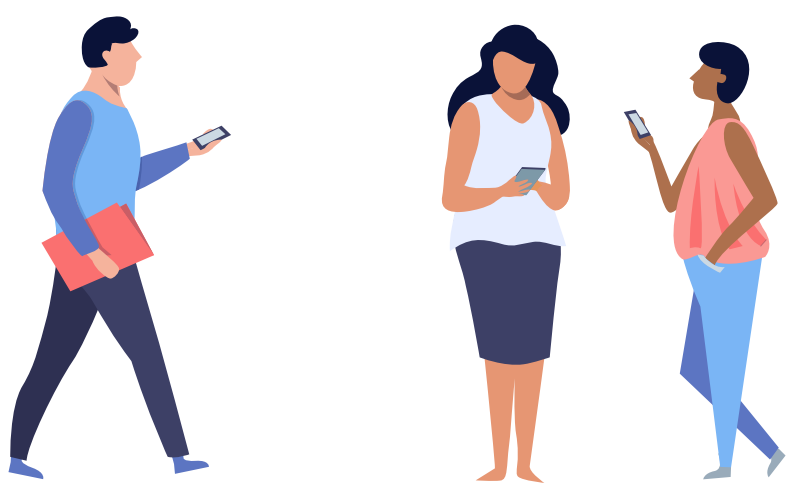
> "We're saving [our home healthcare customers] hours—in some cases, dozens of hours—every week in repetitive and unproductive tasks like redialing busy fax numbers and filing paper faxes. Where our large customers might have needed a full day, maybe 9 hours, to manually process 100 medical records faxes, our system is now doing it for them, automatically, in minutes.
>
> We're also helping them save money by getting rid of their fax machines and traditional fax lines from the telephone company. And because we use advanced encryption for faxes both in transit and at rest, we're also making our customers' patient records more secure and HIPAA compliant.

Team messaging and collaboration

For businesses that operate from multiple locations, have employees who are regularly on the road, or just need to manage many complex projects at the same time, a team messaging and collaboration app is a simple and cost-effective way to keep everyone on the same page.

With this type of app, a business can:

- Create real-time communication channels just for specific teams or specific projects.
- Allow team members from anywhere to message, share files, track tasks and calendar events, and even host video chats where they can share their screens.
- Create a permanent, searchable archive of all work related to a specific project.



Audio and video conferencing

As an organization's staff grows, it often finds that the standard phone service it launched with is no longer cost-effective or even technologically capable of handling its company-wide or other large conference calls or online video meetings.

For these businesses, a cloud audio and video conferencing app is a great way to:

- Quickly and easily set up **conference calls** for up to hundreds of people—with local dial-in support, so attendees aren't required to incur long-distance calling costs.
- Quickly and easily set up **video conferences** for hundreds of people—for company meetings, training, webinars, etc.—with the ability to share screens, record the session, chat to the group, and more.
- Instantly launch impromptu **video chats** with colleagues, prospects, or others in just a few clicks.
- Enable attendees **to join your audio or video conferences** from any connected device via an app, so team members can participate whether they're at their desks or on the road.

Call center

A business that needs high-quality phone support to fulfill the brand's promise to customers, or a sophisticated phone solution for its sales department, will often find that it can't run an effective call center using the company's existing phone service.

Traditional telephone company service typically won't have the specific call center features that sales and customer service department teams need to operate effectively and efficiently. These services often lack, for example, the tools that let support agents route customer questions to the right internal experts in real time, and they don't give supervisors much visibility into how many calls the support team is receiving, the length of the average sales call, or other key data that could help improve the department's efficiency.

When a business decides it's time to move to more sophisticated technology, the right cloud call center solution can be a game-changer, offering:

- Real-time **omni-channel routing**, which gives customers the option to connect with your agents using their preferred communication method: phone, email, text, instant message, etc.
- **Reporting and analytics** into what's happening with your call center agents—such as average length of calls, average time to answer, percentage of queries handled successfully, etc. These data can help with forecasting, training, and setting up call queues.
- **Integration with your CRM and other relevant apps**, to help your agents be more productive and eliminate the duplicate work of re-entering data into your other databases after each call.



WHY YOU SHOULDN'T CHOOSE A DIFFERENT VENDOR FOR EVERY SERVICE

Now that we've reviewed how you can improve the efficiency of some of your organization's regular communications by moving them to the cloud—your phone service, faxing, call center operations—can you imagine how much more effective these services would be if they were also fully integrated with each other?

To give you a better sense of the value of a unified communications platform, let's first discuss some challenges you'll face if you sign up for each of these services with different providers and force your employees to access each of them on different platforms.

You'll have to monitor too many vendors' bills

If you have separate accounts from different providers for your monthly phone service, your team chat app, your online faxing solution, your conferencing app, and your call center service, you're going to be wasting a lot of time reviewing these bills every month and making sure you're not being overcharged or paying for unused capacity.



Here's a real-world example. Before they switched to unified cloud communications with RingCentral, Luxfer, a UK-based manufacturer with facilities all over the world, had a patchwork of PBX phone systems and accounts with more than 20 different telecom providers globally. As the company's IT and applications manager explains:

> "At one location, we thought we were paying for 100 business phone lines. Turns out it was 500, and we didn't even know we had those extra lines.

Do you really want to have to review different vendors' bills every month for phone service, your audio conferencing app, your online fax subscription, and still others for other services?

And don't forget, if you don't have these services integrated into a single platform, chances are your employees are going to default to their own preferred apps. That could mean your company uses not one but two or even five different video conferencing solutions or team messaging apps.

We've seen that happen to many organizations. And it can lead to an operational problem that's far more serious than having to deal with multiple vendors' bills.



Your team's efficiency and productivity could suffer

Let's say your employees in different departments or locations use different conferencing apps. Now when someone starts a cross-functional team and wants to schedule regular meetings, some employees won't be able to join because they use a different online meeting app. This could lead to delays, missed meetings, and frustrated team members trying at the last minute to download and figure out how to use a new conferencing app.

Many businesses experience a similar problem with their team messaging apps. These solutions can be terrific for real-time communication and collaboration, but if employees use different apps, getting a team-chat conversation going with the right people can be difficult.

These issues can result in wasted time and frustration as employees try to figure out which chat app their colleagues are using, or try to persuade them to switch to the one they prefer.

You'll face more employee questions and complaints

If you don't provide them with a central, unified communications platform, your employees are going to hunt for their own tools. And because your IT team won't be there to train them on these new services, you can expect questions and complaints as those employees inevitably run into trouble. (One question to anticipate: *How can I set up this video conference if everyone here is using a different app?*)

Your employees might also find out that they've reached their limit of allowed chats or file storage on that "free" team messaging app they signed up for on their own. At that point, you'll have to decide: Do we need to pay for this upgrade, or should we cut our losses and start over with another service?

(**Note:** RingCentral's team messaging feature, Glip, offers unlimited free messages, file storage, and more.)

You'll pay more than you need to

Finally, if you build your cloud communications solution piecemeal—signing up for different accounts for each service—you won't benefit from the economies of scale available when you unify several services with a single provider.

The cost of activating online fax capability on your existing cloud phone service, for example, will be lower than the cost of implementing a stand-alone fax service from a different vendor your company is not already doing business with.

You'll also pay more for the piecemeal cloud communications approach in other ways as well. As we pointed out earlier, your staff will likely lose time jumping in and out of various apps to reach the right people and get work done. Your IT team will also likely spend more time resolving employees' app-related issues when people are using many different solutions.



THE BENEFITS OF A UNIFIED CLOUD COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE: ONE PLATFORM, ONE VENDOR



We've reviewed the common types of business communications that you can streamline and improve by moving to the cloud: voice, text, team chat, fax, conferencing, etc.

But as we've also discussed, there are drawbacks of trying to cobble together this infrastructure across different cloud services from multiple providers.

Now let's look at some of the unique benefits of moving your company to unified cloud communications—putting all of these services (and others) into an all-in-one cloud platform from one vendor.

It makes your staff more mobile and productive

When you give your employees anywhere, anytime access to all of their standard methods of communication and collaboration—phone, SMS, instant message, fax, video chat, etc.—you empower your organization to operate more efficiently at all times.

As you can imagine, the easiest and most cost-effective way to give your staff this communication capability is by using a **single unified app that does it all**.

Employees frequently on the road or who work remotely can still be just as accessible, responsive, and productive even when they're out of the office. Your company can build high-functioning teams even if their members are spread across the world. And employees in your busy, fast-paced office won't miss anything just because they're not at their desks.

As the IT manager for the global marketing agency Impact XM puts it:

> "We're a very mobile, very tech-oriented company. Even when our staff is in the building, they're often not at their desks but running around to conference rooms or impromptu team gatherings, and they always need to be connected and accessible to each other and to our clients. It's so great to have this service where you can have everything you need on your mobile phone.

It makes adding new communications services easier

If your organization is operating several different communication solutions from different vendors, introducing a new service into that technology environment could prove tricky. Maybe the new service won't be compatible with some of your other services, or making it work will require your team to do a lot of development work.

Let's say, for example, that you want to add online fax capability. If the fax vendor is different from the company providing your cloud phone service, will the faxing features work seamlessly with your employees' phone service? Will your support or sales reps be able to easily create and send a fax from their call center solution, or will they need to leave that platform, open their fax app, and re-enter the caller's data to generate a new fax?

Every time you add a new communication service from a new provider, you'll have to research questions and overcome hurdles like these.

Now imagine instead that all of these services are within a single platform from the same provider. Of course your new online fax service will work seamlessly with your employees' phone service, because it will all be a part of the same solution.

And if you want to add another new communication service later—like call center functionality—you'll know it will work seamlessly with the rest of your communication tools, because it's also on the same unified platform.

It streamlines your IT team's setup, administration, and maintenance

Rolling out a lot of new cloud services for your company can be difficult and time consuming, especially if each new service comes from a different source and requires intensive employee training (and even in-house development work) to make sure everyone is able to use it effectively.

With a unified communications solution, on the other hand, you're rolling out just one new platform—and all of the services within that platform are designed specifically to work together and complement each other.

This means you'll face fewer issues in the migration to your new cloud communications environment, getting your staff up to speed on using it will be faster and easier, and managing your communications infrastructure from an administrative standpoint will also be less time-consuming, because you'll be overseeing just one platform instead of many.

As the IT operations manager for Michigan-based Success Mortgage Partners says of his company's migration to RingCentral's unified solution:

> "
>
> RingCentral was so intuitive and so easy to use that we were able to cut over our entire corporate team of 200 employees in a single weekend. We hosted a training session at each of our 2 main corporate locations, and that was it. Everyone was up and running.
>
> In fact, our IT staff set up a hotline for the first week after the rollout to allow employees to call us directly with questions about the RingCentral system, and I don't think we got a single call.



It makes your cloud communications infrastructure more cost-effective

The cost-saving potential of cloud communications solutions generally is clear. A cloud phone solution won't require purchasing on-site hardware or in-house IT resources to manage it. The story is similar with online faxing versus maintaining an on-site environment of fax machines, servers, and dedicated phone lines.

But you can lower your organization's costs even more when you purchase an all-in-one, unified solution for cloud communications, rather than buying these various services from different vendors.

For example, your IT team will save time and resources on managing and administering your communications environment—they'll have just a single platform to oversee and a single point of contact for all of your company's cloud communications needs.

You'll also benefit from the economies of scale, where an all-in-one provider is able to save on the individual costs of providing each cloud service to your organization because those services are all on a single technology platform—and they can pass these savings on to your business.

And when your staff is able to be fully productive and accessible using any means of communication—from anywhere—you might also find you're able to lower your organization's costs of travel, employee commuting, and even the need to establish additional locations.

NWEA, a nonprofit developer of student testing software, knows firsthand about this type of cost-savings. As their IT director puts it:

> "RingCentral Meetings has also saved NWEA time and money on travel. Our sales teams used to meet maybe four times a year for an on-site meeting. Now they're doing most sessions remotely with RingCentral, so they meet in person just once a year.

It can help improve your company's service and reputation

Finally, when your employees have the tools to be accessible from anywhere, anytime, you can improve your business's overall responsiveness—and, as a result, boost your customer loyalty and your company's reputation.

To cite just one real-world example, here's how the VP of customer experience at Geotab, the world's top provider of fleet-management software, explains the impact RingCentral is having on the company's service levels:

> "Thanks to the real-time call visibility, our support supervisors can now—for the first time ever—jump on a call and help a rep who's struggling. Features like these are helping Geotab deliver a better customer experience than ever, and I can't overstate how valuable that is to our company's success.

Bottom line: If you use the data, reporting, and other features RingCentral provides, you can ensure you're meeting and exceeding customer expectations.



UNIFYING YOUR COMMUNICATIONS: WHAT'S YOUR NEXT STEP?

So, you're now convinced that cloud communications can improve your business's operations in many ways—including cost savings, increased employee productivity, streamlined IT management, and affordable business features that would be extremely expensive or not even available at all with your legacy communications providers.

But as we hope we've also demonstrated, you don't want to make your company's move to cloud communications by signing up with one company for cloud phone service, another provider for a team messaging and collaboration app, and still another vendor for your video conferencing, another for fax, etc. That's a recipe for complicated implementations, confused employees, systems that don't play well together, and monthly bills that are confusing and larger than they need to be.

Instead, the best practice is to find one vendor to help you roll out all of these cloud communications services on a unified platform where everything is designed to work with everything else. You don't need to purchase all of these solutions at the same time—you might want to just start with a cloud phone system to give your business sophisticated big-company features. Throw in team messaging (included in your plan), and you are on your way to the best unified communications solution you can find.

What's important is that you go with a company that offers an all-in-one unified cloud communications environment, so you can add more cloud services (faxing, conferencing, etc.) when you're ready.

Want help identifying the right cloud communications for your business? Talk to a RingCentral expert.

RingCentral®

About RingCentral

RingCentral, Inc. (NYSE: RNG) is a leading provider of global enterprise cloud communications, collaboration, and contact center solutions. More flexible and cost-effective than legacy on-premises systems, the RingCentral platform empowers employees to work better together from any location, on any device, and via any mode to serve customers, improving business efficiency and customer satisfaction. That is the promise of Work as One™. The company provides unified voice, video meetings, team messaging, digital customer engagement, and integrated contact center solutions for enterprises globally. RingCentral's open platform integrates with leading business apps and enables customers to easily customize business workflows. RingCentral is headquartered in Belmont, California, and has offices around the world.

For more information, please contact a sales representative.
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