

# Collaboration: The essence of Unified Communications

**E**very organization wants to improve its competitiveness, reduce the cost of doing business, increase the revenue generation, profitability and productivity, and improve customer services and decision-making abilities. But at the same time, one of the biggest challenges that organizations have to overcome is working across the geography, handling multiple customers, suppliers and partners, who might be following different working practices.

Therefore, organizations are constantly looking to improve their collaborative practices. Multiple collaboration solutions (or set of applications) are available in the market, right from knowledge management (wiki, social media, file sharing, etc.) to collaborative communications (mail, IM, video and audio conference).

The focus on UC has been increasing over the past few years, and now most enterprises have the required infrastructure to support it. UC vendors are delivering premises-based and hosted solutions. Service providers are offering Unified Communication as a service (UCaaS). UC market is transitioning from the hardware model to software model.

## Emerging areas to watch out for in UC and collaboration market:

### 1. Cloud-based Unified

**Communication:** One of the IT megatrends now is to move to the cloud. Gartner says that it will grow to USD 206.6 billion by 2016. All the big vendors like Cisco, Avaya, IBM and Microsoft are selling their cloud and hosted products. Service providers are providing Unified Communications as service. The advantages moving the UC to cloud include:

- Reduced IT infrastructure costs.
- Ability to increase business agility

c. Access regardless of location or type of device

d. Multi-tenancy

### 2. Web Real Time Communication

**(WebRTC):** WebRTC allows you to use your web browser either as a telephone or a video endpoint without downloading any software or plugins. The most important use of the WebRTC could be in customer-facing websites (customer services), where the user can use click-to-call or click-to-chat or click-to-video feature to establish an immediate real time communication with customer-care executives.

### 3. Communication-Enabled Business

**Process (CEBP):** This refers to the integration of the organizational business processes with enterprise communication and infrastructure. CEBP is an important and growing part of UC. Multiple verticals like retail, banking, and healthcare are embedding communication to their business processes. This helps them in automating the process, eliminating the scope for human error or latency, enabling faster and accurate decision making.

### 4. Social Networking and Unified

**Communication:** At the enterprise level similar to UC, social networking is also used to enhance productivity and collaboration within and between enterprises. Embedding UC attributes into social network speeds up communication.

5. **Mobility:** Day by day, the mobile work force is growing. As per Gartner reports, 40 percent of the employees in the U.S. workforce will be mobile by 2016. These workforces are using multiple mobile devices for communication purpose. Integrating all the devices to one and providing a single phone number is a challenge.

6. **Real-Time Analytics:** Contact centers are generating huge

amount of data to analyze, which is required to understand customer trends and to improve customer satisfaction.

The three major characteristics of any collaboration solution are: availability, simplicity and interoperability. To maximize the business impact, the solution should be available irrespective of your location, the type of device that you are using and your mode of communication. User Experience plays a significant role in the success; it should be easy to use in order to achieve widespread end-user adoption. It is important for the solution that it should be Unified Communication platform-agnostic.

Using collaboration, an organization can significantly reduce the overheads and improve the productivity. Any UC and collaboration solution must have relevant industry-standard protocols, codecs, and interface support. In an enterprise business environment, UC enhances collaborative activities by making workers more efficient and providing the ability to make faster decisions through better access to key players, and makes business operation more efficient and successful. [iw](#)



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