

AVAYA CLOUD OFFICE™
by RingCentral®

Unite your Communications





Whatever industry you're in, whatever the size of your business, your team is probably already benefiting from 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 tactic of having your hiring managers conduct their first round of job interviews over video, allowing them to narrow the list of candidates before face to face interviews. And if you're in an industry that still requires faxing, perhaps you've switched to an online fax service that lets you 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 implementing a cloud solution carefully and thoughtfully is essential to ensuring you garner the full benefits of the solution.

We've worked with thousands of businesses, and we've found that the most common mistake in transitioning to cloud communications is adopting 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 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?

What will cloud communications mean for your business? For your company, implementing cloud communications might simply mean saving money by transitioning to a cloud solution that lets your staff cost-effectively 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 client-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.

Your business will reap the greatest benefits from cloud communications when you unite them on a single platform from one 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 hardware, the lack of mobility features, and the costs of updating legacy infrastructure.

A cloud communications 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, and voicemail transcription, both of which simplify and speed the process of reviewing and responding to messages.
- SMS/ text messaging, enabling employees to send and receive texts using their business phone numbers from any device.
- Online fax to send, receive, and sign faxes digitally—by email or through a friendly web interface.

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 a team collaboration solution, a business can:

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

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Audio and video conferencing

As an organization grows, it often finds that its existing platform is no longer cost-effective or even technologically capable of handling its needs for conference calls or online video meetings.

For these businesses, a cloud audio / 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 conferences from virtually any device or location, so team members can participate whether they're at their desks or on the road.





Why you should choose a single vendor for all your Unified Communications services.

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 calling, meetings and messaging capabilities—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 bills

If you have separate accounts from different providers for your monthly phone service, your team chat app, your online faxing solution, and your conferencing app, 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.

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 solutions to provide the benefits that a single solution could.

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 solution. This could lead to delays, missed meetings, and frustrated team members trying at the last minute to download and figure out how to use an app they're not familiar with.

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 your employees with a unified communications solution, they will find and use 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?

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 cloud-based unified 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 cloud-based unified 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—calling, fax, messaging and meetings—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.

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.



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

With a single unified solution, if you want to add a new communication service later, you'll know it will work seamlessly with the rest of your tools, because it's also on the same 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.

It makes your cloud communications infrastructure more cost-effective

The cost-saving potential of cloud communications solutions is clear. It minimizes the requirements for on-site hardware and in-house IT resources. 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.

You'll also benefit from economies of scale, with an all-in-one provider able to save on the costs of providing each cloud service because they are all on a single platform—savings that are passed onto 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.

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.





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 business features that would not be available with your legacy solution.

And we've also demonstrated that finding a single all-in-one solution is superior to buying piecemeal options from different providers - that's a recipe for complicated implementations, confused employees, systems that don't work well together, and monthly bills that are confusing and larger than they need to be.

So which solution should you choose? We think Avaya Cloud Office is your best choice. It will allow you to enhance the way you communicate with customers, partners and colleagues through an all-in-one solution that delivers seamless collaboration across multiple channels. By enabling voice calls, team messaging, meetings, conferencing, file sharing and more, Avaya Cloud Office empowers workforces to meet, share and collaborate productively no matter where they are.

Flexible, easy to use, feature rich, mobile friendly and backed by Avaya's award-winning support, Avaya Cloud Office is available today to simplify your communications so you can focus on driving your business forward. Talk to your Avaya representative today to learn more.





Experiences That Matter