



Communications Transformation is the Foundation of Digital Transformation

A Frost & Sullivan White Paper

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Many organizations are looking inward to find ways to improve not only the bottom line but also find opportunities to improve employee productivity and streamline business workflows. These renewed efforts, commonly referred to as digital transformation, are shining a light on many of the legacy or outdated technologies still in use. Digital transformation is defined as the process of using digital technologies, including advanced communications, to remove cumbersome obstacles to growth that have built up in an organization over time. One of the most prominent obstacles in any organization is communications burdened by antiquated phone systems and the often manual process of communicating with customers, suppliers, partners and colleagues.

Powerful, cloud-based communication and collaboration tools deliver unprecedented possibilities to connect with colleagues, customers, and partners. Frost & Sullivan believes that effective business communications, tightly integrated with core business workflows and applications, are fundamental to the success of every company. While this fact should encourage businesses to make communications a focal point of their digital transformation efforts, communications solutions are frequently overlooked when businesses launch their transformation projects.

While implementing a consolidated unified communications and collaboration solution can increase employee productivity and business agility, business communications that are tightly integrated with the business applications that employees use every day push the ultimate goal of digital transformation efforts. Revenue growth driven by customer satisfaction and loyalty, customer relationship management (CRM), enterprise resource planning (ERP), and vertically focused solutions, such as those for practice management applications for markets like legal and healthcare, can gain an added level of context and engagement when paired with an organization's communications services.

Communications and collaboration are further enhanced with the addition of communications platform as a service (CPaaS) solutions alongside UCaaS offerings. CPaaS provides an additional layer of business application integration through published application programming interfaces (API), enabling voice calling and short message service (SMS) capabilities to be embedded within business applications. When combined, UCaaS and CPaaS deliver contextual information across applications and help drive deeper customer relationships and better business outcomes.

Understanding the link between the use of advanced communications and overall digital transformation efforts is best seen in real-world scenarios, as follows:



Healthcare — Innovative healthcare services now frequently leverage mobile applications and text messaging or SMS services to communicate with patients, send appointment reminders and notify patients of prescriptions. This interaction can go beyond notification, as the combined platforms can even ask the patient to confirm the reminder or accept the appointment.

Machine-to-person interactions spare both the patient and the medical office staff the manual and time-consuming process of delivering phone reminders. In addition, when a patient does have to

call in to schedule an appointment or simply ask a question, the communications platform identifies the caller to the business, enabling the office staff to automatically have full visibility into the patient's health and appointment history. This improves the time-to-issue resolution for the patient, the staff's efficiency, and their ability to handle more calls.



Retail — Establishing a strong relationship with shoppers is a critical factor in the success of today's retailers, as is creating a friendly experience inside the store. A communications transformation can help retailers achieve both. Technology-savvy retailers are integrating communications platforms with their customer management systems and loyalty programs to deliver personalized, targeted marketing and promotional campaigns directly to customers via SMS. In addition, by leveraging SMS and other collaboration tools, in-store staff or contact center agents can more effectively address customer questions or concerns, escalate issues to managers, or even better coordinate work schedules to ensure proper coverage.



Legal — For law firms, regardless of size, every interaction with a client is a billable opportunity but one that is often bogged down by manual logs and data entry. A communications cloud that is integrated with the firm's billing application can automate this process, associating every inbound and outbound call with the specific client. Furthermore, UCaaS enables the firm's staff to stay connected and reachable, whether in the office or on the way to court. In addition, law firms can leverage machine-to-person interactions with SMS reminders to ensure that clients are kept abreast of approaching deadlines or scheduled meetings.

Tight integration between cloud-based UCaaS/CPaaS services and the organization's chosen business applications can drive these types of positive business outcomes in nearly every vertical market or industry and within businesses of any size or organizational structure. Transforming how a business communicates is a key first step in revamping and digitizing core business processes. As such, it is incumbent on businesses to carefully consider their existing communications infrastructure and services as a particular area of emphasis when undertaking digital transformation efforts.



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