3 Ways to Engage Employees in a UCaaS Integration

By EVAN WADE - Contributor

Learning new things can be hard, especially when there's a fancy new software upgrade or a UCaaS integration on the table. While business leaders work to integrate new communications technologies into existing systems and workflows, employees can be resistant, continuing to use old processes and products for their day-to-day tasks.

When you listen to your employees' concerns and meet them where they are, you can secure their buy-in for a UCaaS integration.

Some managers and other high-level stakeholders, irritated that personnel aren't making the best use of the new tools, take punitive measures. Morale slips and takes productivity with it. This chain reaction of frustration is borne from tools that are supposed to bolster the employee experience, improve employee productivity, and make life easier.

Of course, that's the worst-case scenario. Instead of letting frustration simmer beneath the surface or failing to upgrade legacy systems for fear of failure, it's important to take the right steps to make a UCaaS integration successful. Organizations struggling to secure employee buy-in should start with these three steps.

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1. Emphasize the Benefits of UCaaS Solutions for Employees

Of all the points experts advise when dealing with a systems upgrade, the majority boil down to better communication regarding user adoption. If you aren't explaining what the purchase can do to make your employees' lives easier, some employees are guaranteed to view the change with suspicion or outright resistance. Here's where some sales tactics can help gain early adopters.

A key acronym to keep in mind throughout the UCaaS integration: "WIIFM," or "What's In It For Me." Consider this email sent to a sales team:

- The new communication system will tie into the processes we already use, making life easier for us all.

Now notice the differences from this engaged and explanatory email:

- The new communication system directly integrates with our Salesforce installation, which should make lead tracking, targeted messaging, and better data insights available in short order.

In this case, and many others, clearly explaining how the change will make life easier for the employees is key to getting them on board with it. If it's a small change, it's also inherently better at capturing interest, compared to the relative "power" of general promises. Remember: It's human nature to view major change with some suspicion, and it's management's job to change minds.

> *The goal here should be education and guidance, not preaching or lecturing — though some of those may be needed with the strongest-willed holdouts. Leaders should give employees the tools they need to come to the right decision instead of marching them there.*

2. Don't Be Afraid to Accelerate Change

This one's bolder than the previous tip, but it's also bound to improve the employee experience. Simply put, if the old tools are in place, some personnel will use them until they're no longer an option. Putting that eventual outcome on the fast track moves the holdovers to the new way, where they'll have to accept the benefits of a UCaaS integration.

A company can approach this practice from one of two mindsets:

- **Proactive**, best summed up as "we are making the change on this date and old systems will become unavailable at this date."

- **Punitive**, which translates to "we're keeping the old system around for emergencies, but we'll have to restrict access if you all continue to use it under the table."

Company culture will naturally govern which approach to take, but the proactive approach typically helps foster trust and loyalty better than the punitive approach.

Accelerating change must be coupled with an understanding of employee frustration and an openness to hearing their perspectives. Even while being open to its employees, the company should stick to its guns regarding timing and planning. Giving employees a little more time to get ready for the change, but sticking to a structured timeline, is the best way to secure employee buy-in.

Shadow IT may be a concern here, but if the UCaaS integration is coupled with an SD-WAN integration, the latter's usage-monitoring tools can help. Employees found using unofficial solutions should be educated on the new system's features, as it likely does the same job they were attempting but with greater efficiency.

3. Learn the Real Use Cases

Employees engaging in shadow IT is a sign of just how far people will go to communicate their way. However the company decides to handle unofficial usage, stakeholders should pay attention to the real ways employees use tools, then use that information in any educational efforts.

Say employees are found using an unofficial chat program to keep in touch when working remotely (or using the official solution for nonapproved practices, such as file sharing). The company could ensure it makes collaboration and shared workspaces a standard feature of its UCaaS integration, and then emphasize this feature as an alternative to their current collaboration. Alternately, an office where employees misuse out-of-office messages as a presence system — a practice that bogs down email servers over time — can educate new employees on the integration's *actual* presence capabilities.

The goal here should be education and guidance, not preaching or lecturing — though some of those may be needed with the strongest-willed holdouts. Leaders should give employees the tools they need to come to the right decision instead of marching them there.

Give Employees the Tools They Need

The more the workplace can support the way its people want to work, the better the outcome will be. To that end, doing some legwork before and during the UCaaS integration process can yield impressive results: Because the tools are designed to enhance current processes, people are more likely to use them. Today's communications technology tools are easier to integrate into existing workflows than ever before — don't let that human element get in the way of a needed change.