



**BUSINESS**

# **ARE YOU READY TO WORK FROM ANYWHERE?**

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Learn how unified comms  
can help you adapt to  
the new everyday

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# Bringing things together

## Let's imagine a common workplace scenario.

A call centre manager working remotely needs to speak to a sales engineer to discuss an urgent customer issue. The sales engineer proposes a solution but needs to talk about it first with her director. Once they've agreed on the solution, they need to walk the call centre manager through it visually before he can take it to his customer.

How many tools would the call centre manager need to use to make that happen today in your business? What are the roadblocks he might come up against that stop him from having that discussion quickly and efficiently?

Chances are, he'll need to use more than one of these:

- Desk phones or mobiles
- Video conferencing
- Instant messaging
- SMS
- Real-time collaboration tools

Now imagine a different scenario. One in which unified communications (UC) combines all these tools and makes them available via a single app.

That call centre manager can now speak to the sales engineer, the sales engineering director and his customer, all in real-time, using one app on one device.

We believe UC is the key to enable successful, effective remote working for years to come. And we've created this eBook to help illustrate how it could solve problems you might already be experiencing in your business.

You'll learn how UC can help:

- Keep employees productive and happy, wherever they're working
- Improve your customer experience
- Ensure your data is secure and compliant with global regulations
- Establish a long-term remote working strategy that goes far beyond the pandemic



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# The brave new world of communications

**Put simply, unified communications as a service (UCaaS) allows organisations to access UC as a monthly subscription service from the Cloud.**

**The provider takes care of the platform, upgrades and maintenance all for that one fee.**

## Why consider UC now?

Like any business, you may have remote workers and dispersed teams as a result of the pandemic.

*With UCaaS, because everything's connected via the Cloud, your workforce can communicate with their entire team via voice calls, video conferencing and messaging apps from their computer or mobile phones.*

*Communications become seamless and hassle-free, resulting in a more satisfied workforce that can work efficiently, without being held back by technology.*

As well as dealing with a remote workforce your teams may be making and receiving a lot of incoming and outgoing calls each day.

*UCaaS can empower your people to handle customer communications more efficiently. Employees can use one intuitive interface and communications hub to handle calls and keep track of every customer interaction.*

If you're an enterprise, you may have multiple global divisions.

*A UCaaS platform can connect your teams and customers at low cost. When your workforce is using unified tools – no matter where they are in the world – it makes it easier to manage and monitor their productivity. It can also integrate contact centre solutions to enhance the customer experience by allowing customers to connect with you across multiple channels.*



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# Why does UC matter so much today?

**It almost goes without saying, but the Covid-19 pandemic has had a bigger effect on our way of working than anything else this year, or even this century.**

When we recently spoke to our own customers and C-suite executives across the UK, **63%** of public sector organisations said they will be [continuing flexible working practices in future](#). And **55%** of private sector firms said the same.

It might be the case that you've been 'making do' with your existing tech while your teams adapt to working away from the office.

**If so, you're not alone.**

**54%** of HR leaders say poor technology and/or infrastructure is the biggest barrier to effective remote working, according to [a recent Gartner report](#).

There's never been a more crucial time to lay the foundations for effective, productive remote working that will take your organisation way beyond the current climate and into the future.

## Getting the basics right

The 2020 rise in remote working has highlighted essential business challenges that businesses now really need to take seriously.

Security is always a top priority. But if there's no unified system in place, employees may be communicating with clients and suppliers on unsupported apps on corporate devices.

Flexibility is another. When UC first began, organisations were limited to complex, siloed technologies. UC 2.0 brought convergence, so tools began to align.

Today's UCaaS solutions offer open platforms with pre-built integrations with business tools that companies are already using, such as Google, Microsoft, Salesforce and more.

Employees flow seamlessly between solutions in a single app, saving time and energy that can instead be spent on doing their day jobs.

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# This isn't just an issue for the IT crowd

## UC has plenty of features your technical people will love

You have all your communication, collaboration and contact centre solutions alongside your analytics on one secure platform.

It's also flexible. You can upgrade and scale your network easily and pick and choose the licences you need.

Security is taken care of, so data is secured in the cloud and helping you comply with global regulations and standards including ISO27001 PCI-DSS, Privacy Shield and Cyber Essentials.

## But how else can it help your organisation?

Using one flexible, cloud-based communications platform has benefits for the whole organisation:

- **For knowledge workers**  
Giving them a range of unified communications tools so people across different teams can work together efficiently.
- **For supervisors and administrators**  
Smart scheduling, tailored performance plans and coaching tools bring supervisors and agents together, without impacting the customer experience.
- **For contact centre agents**  
With a single intuitive interface and a complete communications hub, contact centre agents can keep tabs on each and every customer interaction.
- **For multichannel contact centres**  
To deliver a differentiated customer experience across web, chat, SMS, social media and video channels – all from one platform.

So you can see that UC goes way beyond the IT function of your business – the ripple effect into the whole organisation can spread far and wide.

But how can UC help you address one of the core challenges of a disparate workforce – bringing your people together so they're working productively, wherever they are? In the next chapter we'll find out.



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# What happens when we lose connection?

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20-25% improvements in productivity when organisations ensure employees are connected<sup>1</sup>

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*McKinsey Global Institute*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.8x8.com/8/ebook-2020-summer/ucaas-ccaas-essentials/chapter-3>

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# What happens when we lose connection?

**In one of our recent articles we cited a study that found only 29% of people are happy with the technology they use at work, with some even prepared to quit their job over it.**

**This issue is thrown into even greater focus in 2020, with a newly dispersed workforce at risk of feeling disconnected from their colleagues.**

**54% of people say their primary challenge when working from home is feeling disconnected or alone, according to a recent study.**

## Why is a connected workforce better for business?

While there are benefits to remote working for employees – including better work-life balance and more time to look after physical fitness – it's often human interaction that many people thrive on. Some conversations, like creative brainstorming or sensitive discussions for example, will have more productive outcomes face-to-face.

UC enables access to enterprise grade collaboration tools, such as high-definition audio and video quality over high-speed broadband connections. So it's almost as good as physically being in a room with someone.

Giving all your workforce access to these shared collaboration tools:

- Makes it faster and easier for them to engage with each other
- Reduces frustrations caused by needing to flip between screens and schedule multiple calls when connecting
- Can result in a lower staff churn when frustrations boil over

Unifying the tools that teams use also simplifies the management and monitoring of the workforce. Which means you get better insights into what makes your teams tick. So whether your employees' new desks are in their bedroom, kitchen or the local coffee-shop, you can be sure they're not just being productive – they're happy in their roles.

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# What happens when we lose connection?

## Boosting engagement with a modern network

Giving people a workplace technology experience that meets their expectations begins with your network. When considering a move to UC, it's worth taking the time first to fully understand how flexible your current network set-up is.

If you're trying to manage an ever-increasing number of apps and sites, hauling streams of data in different directions with a complex legacy network, you may find things are grinding to a halt.

Using a modern network like SD-WAN means you can connect to the cloud from any location without having to go through traditional infrastructure. It's the starting point when you need true futureproof flexibility.

SD-WAN is a wide area network – or WAN – architecture that works through a centralised platform, detaching the management of the network from the hardware itself and then steering traffic across the WAN in an intelligent way.

## What are the benefits of an SD-WAN network?

- You can quickly test and build new digital communication tools and apps
- You can keep up with the rapidly changing needs of your workforce without the headache of overhauling your entire infrastructure
- Your people are closer to the apps and tools they need to effectively do their jobs and – crucially – connect with the people they need to

And when [study after study](#) highlights the positive effect of engagement on productivity, it becomes clear that a modern network ultimately has an impact on the bottom line.

So before you make any decisions, consider whether an upgrade to a modern network should be part of your long-term remote working strategy. You can read more about the effect of SD-WAN on different overlay networks [here](#).



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# The benefits of UC for the customer experience

**Although ways of working have recently changed – perhaps forever – customer expectations haven't.**

**As customers, we still expect our online purchase transactions to be completed in seconds. We want any issues to be resolved quickly, and we expect to be able to communicate with experts within a business when we need to.**

So how can you achieve customer service excellence in a remote working culture?

1. Give staff the right tools and resources to resolve customer queries or reach the right expert quickly
2. Tailor customer interactions and make them relevant and personal
3. Understand the customer experience from start to finish

How can UC help you achieve this 'holy trinity'?

- Provide various platforms where your customers can engage – from social, SMS and ChatApp, to video interaction and voice APIs. This helps create a unique brand experience that increases engagement and satisfaction as customers can always get in touch with you

- Track and analyse your customer data.

A real-time analytics dashboard can provide deep insights into your customer's journey, their buying habits and trends – information you can use to optimise customer experience and push people to increase their spend



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# The benefits of UC for the customer experience

## Making security a priority

Nothing hits customer confidence harder than a data breach.

As workers handle sensitive data from home, or connect over insecure networks from an increased number of endpoints, it's more important than ever to balance digital agility with security.



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# The benefits of UC for the customer experience

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**23%** of global cybersecurity professionals said cyber incidents had increased in their organisation since transitioning to remote working, according to a [recent survey](#).

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*McKinsey Global Institute*

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# The benefits of UC for the customer experience

UC solutions offer multiple tools to help businesses ensure that their users, customers and networks stay secure including:

- Endpoint management services for central IT teams including real-time security status updates
- Tools that provide the ability to manage end point devices in the network – for example, to ensure that WiFi routers are set up securely
- Certified cybersecurity training for staff members on security best practices
- Advisory services to identify potential security vulnerabilities and mitigate them rapidly
- Tools that enable organisations to monitor their workforce usage and track productivity and vulnerabilities

And compliance with security standards is guaranteed, so that's something else taken care of.



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# Preparing your business for a long-term remote working strategy

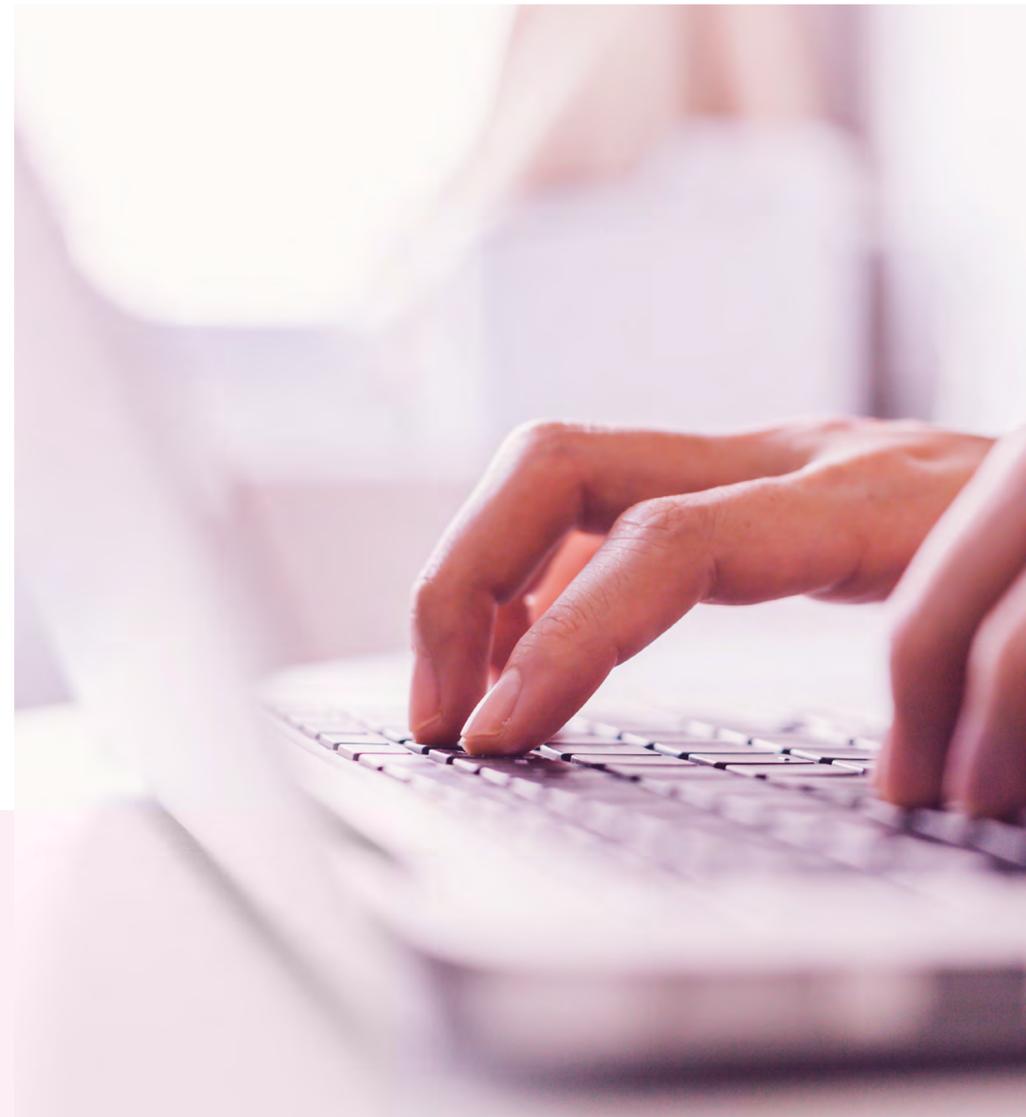
**If you want to create a successful remote working strategy now and in future, there's a lot to consider. Here are some tips from organisations we've worked with who've made the digital transformation to UC.**

## End user adoption

UC isn't just a new technology – it's a new way of working. So it's key to get workers embracing the collaborative possibilities from day one.

Drive end user adoption by:

- Getting buy-in from the top, using C-level execs to set an example by using UC for internal communications
- Identifying power users who can advocate for the UC solution and help others see the benefit of the tools
- Focusing on training, showcasing the features and capabilities of the solution and how it can help employees with their day-to-day



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# Preparing your business for a long-term remote working strategy

## Integrating with other apps

You may already be using collaboration tools like Microsoft Teams as part of your communications stack. But adding voice capabilities with Microsoft Calling Plans may not be the most cost-effective or streamlined solution, especially when you have a global workforce.

Connecting a third-party provider like 8x8 to Microsoft Teams using Teams Direct Routing is a cost-effective, flexible alternative with the benefits of a global cloud communication platform.

But whatever the solution you choose, it should:

- Ensure the Teams user experience remains unchanged
- Achieve Direct Routing on a single integrated platform, rather than multiple platforms and hardware investments
- Offer true global communication reach and coverage and not just local calling
- Provide value-added benefits that go beyond just providing PSTN calling from Teams
- Offer business tools such as call or speech analytics, fully secured contact centre capabilities, and integrated call recording for business compliance employees with their day-to-day



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# Preparing your business for a long-term remote working strategy

## Make sure ROI is included in your strategy

Making changes to your network is a big financial consideration.

But the benefits of one unified all-in-one cloud platform enable employees to operate from anywhere, increasing potential productivity, innovation and revenue. Not to mention the potential increase in revenue from improving your customer service interactions.

Beyond cost saving, ROI now means being able to run your business no matter what's happening around you. Being able to innovate, and deliver for your customers. Keeping employees engaged and generating revenue for your organisation, no matter where they're working.

Use tools like this [8x8 ROI calculator](#) to help you estimate your cost savings if you move to a UC solution.

And if you're looking to work with a partner, define what success looks like during the RFP process. How can your potential partners help you achieve all your digital transformation goals?



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# Are you ready to invest in your remote future?

If you would like some help achieving all the above and more in your organisation, we'd love to help.

Get in touch now to find out more about our 8x8 solution.



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