

EXPAND YOUR STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE WITH UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS AS A SERVICE



On behalf of Novatech customers, I often evaluate tech solutions to see how well they will generate strategic advantage and drive profitability. One technology that's often overlooked by organizations is **Unified Communications-as-a-Service (UCaaS)**.

What exactly is Unified Communications? Research firm Gartner¹ has a great definition I think you'll find helpful.

Unified Communications (UC): "Software and services that provide and combine multiple enterprise communications channels, such as voice, video, personal and team messaging, voicemail and content sharing. UC products and services can also be integrated with networks, IT business applications and, in some cases, consumer applications and devices."

For unified communications-as-a-service, a Managed Service provider delivers and manages the technology for businesses.

Corporate Phone "Extensions" for Remote Workers

Given the established popularity of cloud communications, UCaaS is a perfect fit for many enterprises, especially those with remote / mobile teams.

Businesses can deploy a standardized communications solution across their entire operation. UCaaS also **enables corporate "extensions" for remote offices and workers** (even globally dispersed employees), with all extensions accessible to callers through the main company phone number directory. This simplifies a vital business service into a single communications platform and provides more convenience for callers.

UCaaS also supports **deep configuration functionality**, meaning extensions are set up to roll over to other lines/workers, or to send messages to intended call recipients that someone is trying to reach them.

UCaaS Complements Major Business Drivers

Now that I've shared what UCaaS is, let's dig a little more deeply into why I recommend it. First, some background. At Novatech, we've identified The four key business drivers across our customer base. These are the benefits that technology delivers to drive more profitability, if business leaders and their teams make the effort to evaluate, deploy and use it effectively.

The four business drivers are:

1. Increasing productivity
2. Boost availability
3. Ensure security
4. Achieve mobility

UCaaS satisfies all four business drives on the list, and this article covers how UCaaS maps directly to these key business drivers.

Increase productivity with UCaaS

With UCaaS, employees can use a mobile device -- company-issued or their own (BYOD) -- for communications wherever they are. It can even support auxiliary cloud-based equipment such as Air Pods and USB handsets.

UCaaS also incorporates “find me-follow me” services that eliminate place-based communications requirements and support productivity anywhere. In an era where hybrid work environments have become the norm, that one benefit alone can be invaluable.

Boost service availability with UCaaS

Top-rated UCaaS providers maintain all their resources in the cloud, with multiple redundant cloud data centers to ensure availability and business continuity. The best of them, including the provider we recommend to clients, have geographically, physically, and logically hardened data centers. These features **ensure service availability** for companies that operate 24/7.



Ensure security from cyberattacks

The escalation in the number and complexity of cyberattacks is truly horrifying, and phone systems are not immune. In fact, one of the newest attack vectors — called a “Gen V attack2” — is a large-scale, multi-vector attack designed to infect components of an information technology infrastructure, including endpoint devices like phones. Gen V attacks are characterized by their ability to cause very large data breaches, something no business leader wants.

Keep pace with mobility

UCaaS removes the complexity and restraints of on-premises equipment. No worrying about carrier reliability; no phone lines to run; no telephone closets, and no concern about telephone outages if wires are accidentally cut or damaged. The system is in the cloud, enabling calls to be taken from any location — an advantage in today’s hybrid work environment.

A Benchmark for Evaluating UCaaS Security Capabilities

To illustrate how UCaaS can address security, consider the RingCentral communications system as an example. RingCentral provides UCaaS security that protects customers from cyber threats, eavesdropping on voice communications, and other security risks.

RingCentral’s multilayer cloud-security approach incorporates a few capabilities like:

- Intrusion detection systems (IDS)
- Data centers that are: hardened, geographically dispersed, audited, Tier 4-certified, SSAE 16, SOC 2-compliant
- All data traveling across the RingCentral platform is encrypted in transit and at rest.

This is the UCaaS provider we recommend to clients, and I suggest RingCentral as a benchmark for what any good provider should offer. In our experience, we’ve found the firm does an great job of meeting the greatest array of needs and covers all four of the key business drivers.

Six Proven Benefits of UCaaS for Business Enterprises that embrace UCaaS to support their business drivers typically see these six benefits:

- 1. Strong security groups and rules:** Security groups, which act as virtual firewalls, safely control inbound and outbound traffic.
- 2. Proactive fraud mitigation:** Toll fraud is prevented through access control, detection controls, and usage throttling. You have granular control over who can make international calls and to where. A global security department actively monitors customer accounts to detect irregular calling patterns and prevent fraudulent charges.
- 3. Regular system audits:** All systems are audited on a periodic basis, and audit reports are available to customers by contacting their account manager or sales representative.
- 4. Solid personnel practices:** Background checks are conducted on all prospective employees. Once hired, all employees receive initial security training and additional training on an ongoing basis. All employees must read and sign a comprehensive information security policy covering the security, availability, and confidentiality of the UCaaS services.
- 5. Compliance:** All call recordings, call logs, fax exchanges, SMS, MMS, audio and web conferencing, and instant chat messages meet Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) cybersecurity requirements. RingCentral also supports specialized settings to ensure voicemails, faxes, and call recordings don't conflict with HIPAA, Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX), FINRA or PCI requirements.
- 6. Dedicated Security Support:** Customers are provided with dedicated security and fraud teams that protect them around the clock.

1 <https://www.gartner.com/en/information-technology/glossary/unified-communications-uc>

2 <https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/gen-V-attack>

UCaaS: All-in-One Business Communications Solution

A UCaaS cloud-based phone system covers most business communication needs, from text and chat to video conferencing and beyond. As a strategic tool, it addresses four fundamental drivers of corporate success. UCaaS will also enhance your IT department (or IT provider). It's cost-effective, confers security, simplifies management and control, and delivers the features and ease of use your employees want.

What often unleashes the full power of UCaaS is working with a third-party provider for design, proactive management and quality support and service. If you're considering a move in this area, we can share the experiences of our own UCaaS customers. But don't hold off too long if you think UCaaS could be the change you need now.

