



an NTT Communications Company

Arkadin Unified Communications report
The Missing 'U' in UC
June 2015



Introduction

Arkadin is always seeking to share insights about Unified Communications (UC) adoption and implementation with our clients - a vital element of how we partner for success. In this study of where businesses are in the 'Race to UC', we sought to find out if we are reaching a tipping point on UC adoption and whether a clear consensus is emerging on the business case for UC investment and the key deployment challenges.

We'd like to thank the two hundred businesses that shared their views with us. For them - and us - it seems the race to UC has very much started.

Contact Arkadin:

ucjourney@arkadin.com

[Enjoy Solutions]



1. Stuck on the starting grid or at the front of the pack?

Our UC survey confirms that we've passed a tipping point in terms of UC adoption, with most firms now in the UC race (67%).

However a sizeable minority remain stuck on the starting grid (26%), although only 9% of respondents express no interest in UC, with 17% expressing interest but having no immediate plans to adopt. Of these firms, the majority are confused about the immediate value of UC to their business, leaving them unable to reap the full ROI from their existing digital estate, skills and expertise.

What's caused the tipping point on UC?

UC = Productivity

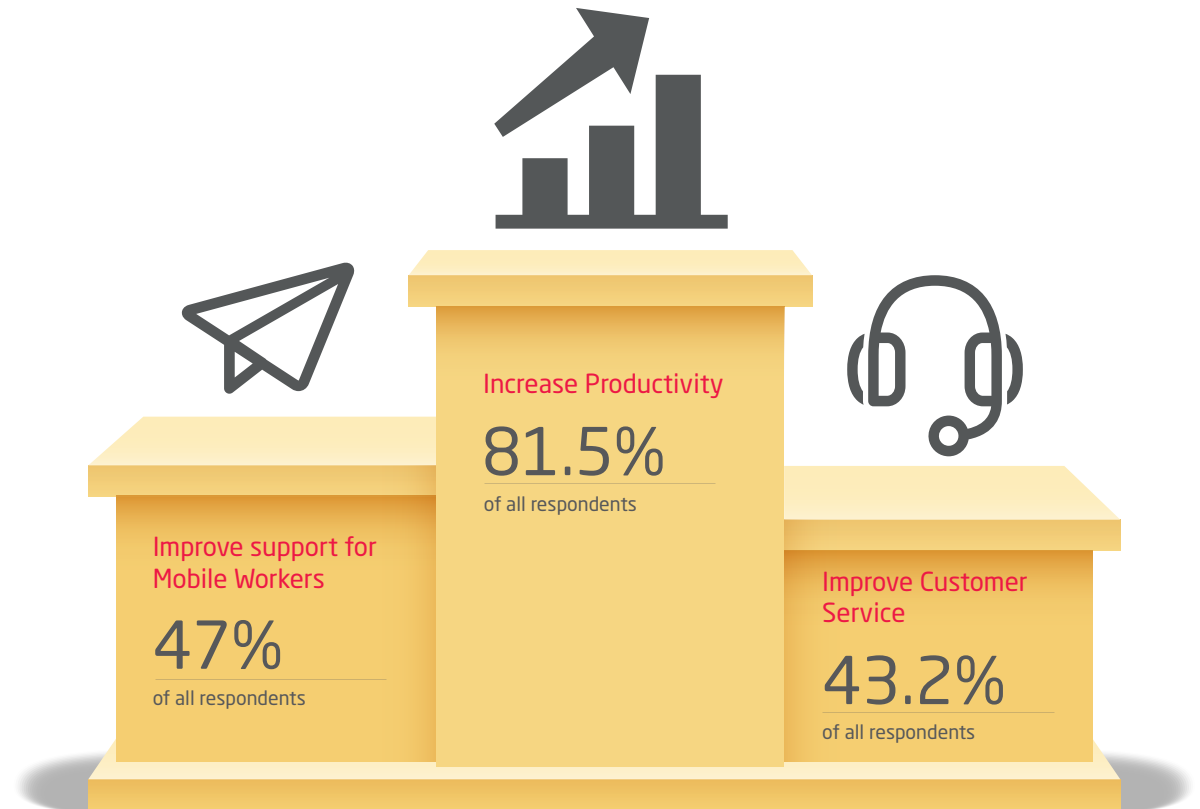
In contrast, the connected businesses at the front of the pack understand that UC is vital to turbo-charging their operational efficiency. We discovered a growing consensus on the benefits of UC, with 70% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the proposition claiming that they understand the benefits of UC and are committed to implementing it. Businesses identify the top three benefits of UC as increasing productivity; improving support for mobile workers and improving customer service

They also expect to secure these benefits quickly, with 40% anticipating a positive return on UC investment in year one, and 70% by the end of year two.

"UC is about doing the job a lot quicker and slicker, allowing me to interact with my clients and colleagues much faster, and knowing where everyone in the organisation is at any given time"

'UC EXPO 2015 Delegate'

What are the main benefits of implementing UC?



Our analysis also suggests that UC momentum is likely to grow, with only 7% of respondents completely unconvinced by the ROI case of implementing UC. This reflects the growing maturity of UC solutions and a growing business understanding of how they can use UC within their businesses.

[Enjoy Clarity]

 Clarity

67%

Are clear about what's in a UC solution

 Uptake

65%

Are seeing their employees using basic UC software

 Impact

60%

Understand how UC will affect their business

Growing Executive Attention

It is also noticeable that the decision to invest in a UC solution is increasingly becoming a 'whole business decision' and therefore a visible C-suite issue. CEOs were involved in the UC implementation decision in half of our respondent organisations, alongside nearly a third of senior line of business executives. Unsurprisingly, Senior IT leaders remain at the heart of the shift to implement UC (some two thirds of respondents).



2. Bumps in the UC Road

'UC projects risk stagnating if only driven by IT. What starts in IT, and is piloted only in IT, stays in IT.'

Sophie Allen, Skype for Business Product Marketing Manager at Microsoft

So far, so favourable, in terms of the central role of UC in creating more connected businesses. But our results also highlight a number of bumps in the road in the race to UC.

2.1. The Missing 'U' in UC

Firstly, the voice of the user is missing in the UC implementation decision - the vital missing 'U' in UC. Only 12% of our respondents involve users in the decision. Why does this matter? Because our findings also confirm that unless you put the user at the heart of the UC implementation and roll-out process, you will not reap the full benefits of a UC deployment.

"I like things just the way they are"

Our respondents revealed that that biggest barriers to a successful UC launch were employee resistance to giving up existing tools (41%) and established ways of working (50%). So securing a fast ROI on a UC deployment requires an organisation to encourage new UC behaviours quickly and decisively

'We work with clients to ensure a user-driven focus around UC. There is a precious short window in embedding UC deployment in terms of user engagement, because after a few short months, if the experience isn't working and responding quickly to user needs, frustrations will soon emerge

and employees will go back to old tools and methods. If employees don't want to or can't use the new tools you've provided them, your ROI is in serious trouble.'

Hugues Treguier, Arkadin's Director of Products - UC

If the right end user experience is vital to effective adoption and productivity gain, how do you get that right? We interviewed Sophie Allen, Microsoft Skype for Business Product Marketing Manager, for her key insights and advice. Her starting point is that successful UC implementation and deployment depends on the relationship between IT and the rest of the business. A user-centric approach requires IT to forge strong relationships across the business, particularly with the functional Heads of HR, Marketing and Communications. As Sophie Allen commented:

'HR will care about UC because they care about flexible working, supporting a diverse workforce, and retaining talent. They don't want to talk about networks.'

Therefore it is vital for the IT department, and ideally the cross-functional implementation team rolling out the UC solution into the business, to think about the different personas who will be using the UC tools. They must get into their shoes so that they can turn business pain points into technical requirements. Sophie Allen notes:

'The key is to understand your user patterns - are your key user groups on the road or at a desk? Using two ears or one ear? Working in a noisy or quiet environment? You're half way there if it you get this user modeling right.'

The uncomfortable truth suggested by this study is that too many businesses are struggling to connect around the user, and across silos and functions, in their UC implementation efforts.



2.2. Partnering for bespoke UC deployments

The second major bump in the UC road identified by our survey respondents (65%) as the biggest obstacle to successful UC roll-outs, is the fact that 'there is no single solution that is suitable for all employees.' This suggests some recognition of the need to tailor UC to user needs, but also an overestimation of this factor as a potential obstacle to UC implementation and deployment. Indeed, businesses need to embrace the idea that there is no 'off the peg' UC deployment if they are to reap ROI quickly.

For example, Arkadin is continually working with our clients to show how cloud hosted services can be quickly bolstered to accommodate new users and new features in a bespoke enhancement. As Arkadin's Hugues Treguier notes:

'We take great vendor solutions such as Skype for business) which we host, and then actively meet client needs by adding in services, components and features that fill in any gaps or additional requirements they may have from a UC solution (for example higher-end needs in terms of content sharing or speed for a company specialising in 3D modelling)'

3. Next Generation UC - Simplicity, Service & Security

The businesses in our study were very clear about the priorities they expect UC service delivery partners to fulfil in the future, with a strong emphasis on simplicity (usability) and security. Value for money is a driver for all successful IT solutions but the strength of response to the other categories is striking. They reflect in part a

Q: Which of the following initiatives are likely to be in your companies top strategic priorities over the next 12 months?



Usability

87%

Single sign in between environments and applications



Data Security

86%

A stat or statement about our the security we have in place*



Value for Money

86%

Are clear about what's in a UC solution



Roadmaps

79%

Future proofed roadmaps for their products

frustration that we picked up on from the people that wrote on our 'Brain Board' at the UC Expo event, where over a 100 IT professionals, business leaders and service providers identified the key factors hindering quicker progress on their pursuit of a UC solution.

Their overriding message was:

"Why can't this be made more simple?"

Some of the most used phrases on the Brain Board were 'too many options', 'complexity' 'keep it simple' 'integration' and 'operability.' For some there was also an underlying and unfounded concern that the flexibility of UC is sometimes bought at the cost of reduced security.

3.1. Putting the User in UC

How to respond to this customer clarion call? Having discussed these observations further with some of the delegates and industry experts at the event, part of the necessary response is about making UC solutions and tools more intuitive and the technology as invisible as possible

But we also need a mindset shift. UC transforms the way we communicate and work, but only if we put the user at centre stage. We need to talk a lot less about Unified Communications and a lot more about user-driven communications, and develop a simpler vocabulary better adapted to key users groups and business challenges.

In response, Arkadin is working hard to establish clearer accounts of use cases, benefits, and future possibilities that come with clever UC solutions and deployment. We are beginning to be able to describe how the ROI returns on UC will really take off as we move to a mobile-first world, allied to the increasing scalability of UC tools in terms of anytime use and reach.



*Collation of answers from over 100 clients at UC Expo answered the question, 'UC: **What is stopping you getting there?**' on our interactive whiteboard



We also need to help businesses see UC implementation as an opportunity for them to turbo-charge their workplaces. As Arkadin's Hugues Treguier notes:

'UC is very much at the front line for transforming the way businesses work. We've now got four generations of employees contributing in our workplaces, all of whom have grown up consuming very different communication tools. Arkadin tries to support organisations to turn every UC user into an advocate and new ways of working into deep-seated productivity improvements.'

This user engagement is the vital part of the race to UC. The tipping point around UC deployment we have identified in this study needs to be met by vendors and service delivery partners like Arkadin, raising our game in terms of creating and helping deploy UC solutions that are personal, simple and secure.

The next stage in the UC race will be an era of infinitely flexible provision driving more intuitive and widespread everyday use of UC tools. Arkadin looks forward to sharing new insights with you about the next steps on that journey to becoming a more connected business.

Contact Arkadin:

ucjourney@arkadin.com



Contact us:

Arkadin
ucjourney@arkadin.com

—

United Kingdom
26-28 Hammersmith Grove
London W6 7HA
+44 (0)20 8742 6350



[Blog](#)

www.arkadin.com

arkadin[®]
COLLABORATION SERVICES

an NTT Communications Company