



DIGITAL WORKSPACE SOLUTIONS

The Journey to UCaaS Adoption: A Roadmap to Success

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Microsoft



Morgan Stanley



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UCaaS: The Road Ahead

Let's talk about work. The average worker spends nearly four hours per day talking, texting, videoconferencing, and reading/writing emails.¹ Communication and collaboration are a big part of what we do at work, but that's not always the same as getting a lot done at work. The fact is that the quality of your communication and collaboration tools has a direct impact on employee productivity. In fact, nearly one in three workers report that technology issues with their collaboration tools have negatively impacted their productivity.²

Which brings us to Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS). By combining communication and collaboration tools—including existing tools such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom—into a single, integrated solution, UCaaS makes it much easier for employees to communicate, collaborate, and share information. There's no toggling between multiple applications or jumping through endless security hoops; UCaaS puts all your communication and collaboration tools at your fingertips in one simple-to-use application.

UCaaS isn't a new idea, but it has received a lot of new updates and features in recent years. Today's UCaaS solutions boast stronger security, better support for mobile devices and remote workers, tighter integration with popular tools such as Microsoft Teams and CRM applications, and built-in artificial intelligence. Even the pricing for UCaaS solutions has become more attractive as new UCaaS vendors enter the market, creating greater competition for customers.



¹ [“New Data: Workers Spend Almost Half Their Day Communicating, Making It Difficult To Actually Get Work Done”](#), GlobeNewsWire.com, April 27, 2023

² [“That Meeting Probably Should Have Been An Email”](#), HRTech Cube, April 11, 2022

Boosting Employee Productivity from Anywhere

Between 2019 and 2021, the number of employees working from home tripled.³ And while some businesses have begun to bring workers back to the office, the hybrid home/office worker is here to stay. The massive shift to a remote workforce didn't occur without growing pains—unless you were one of the businesses that had wisely invested in a cloud-based UCaaS solution. For those companies, communication and collaboration continued to run smoothly.

By moving communication and collaboration tools into the cloud and unifying them in a single platform, businesses can provide the same user experience and the same set of features to employees whether they're working at the office, at home, on a mobile device, or through a VPN-connected laptop. UCaaS also allows

employees to enhance their mobile experience and adjust communications settings such as ringing through to their mobile device via self-service web portals.

Managing a remote workforce is easier with UCaaS because it provides visibility into employee usage. For example, a business may wish to track remote customer agents for metrics such as time to resolution. UCaaS can provide that visibility at an individual agent level and, more importantly, give agents fast access to the tools and information they need to deliver great customer service.

³ ["The Number of People Primarily Working From Home Tripled Between 2019 and 2021"](#), Microsoft.com, Sep 7, 2023

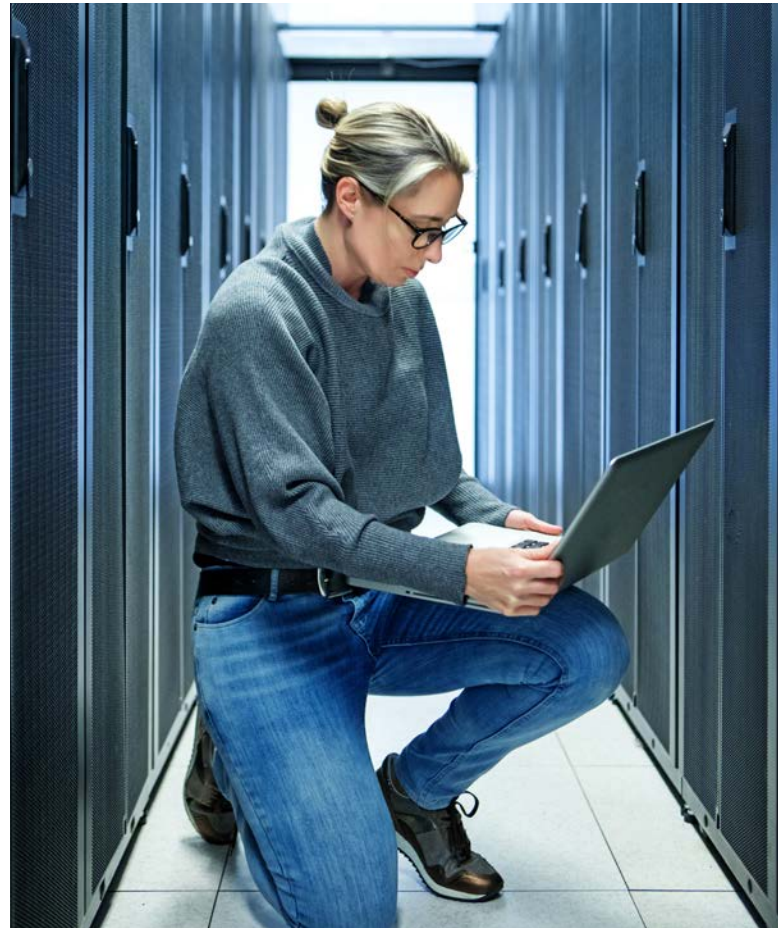


Merging UCaaS with Your Existing Infrastructure

One of the first decisions to make when considering your UCaaS architecture is whether or not there is an opportunity to consolidate and reduce costs. Many businesses already have multiple communication and collaboration tools in place, such as Microsoft Teams, Ring Central, Slack, Zoom, and legacy phone systems. In these cases, there are plenty of opportunities to consolidate to a single UCaaS platform. The next decision is how to integrate the UCaaS platform with critical business applications. The common best practice is to integrate popular business apps into the UCaaS platform so that workers can continue to use the tools they're most familiar with while augmenting them with collaboration features in a unified solution.

UCaaS solutions often include APIs to support this integration, but the reality is that out-of-the-box integration is rarely as simple as it sounds. Businesses need to approach integration strategically; e.g., identifying which applications can truly benefit from UCaaS integration. Bringing telephony into Microsoft Teams, for example, or combining CRM applications with messaging can make workers more productive by reducing silos of information and eliminating the need to manage and toggle between multiple applications.

An experienced technology partner can help businesses identify integration points that deliver real business value, configure the APIs to create a seamless workflow, and test those workflows to make sure they support user requirements. One example of an integrated workflow might be the ability to auto-schedule meetings from your instant messaging platform using Teams. Another could be creating call logs with customers from your CRM application. As you can see, there are many different ways that combining UCaaS with your existing tools and application can create new and more efficient processes.

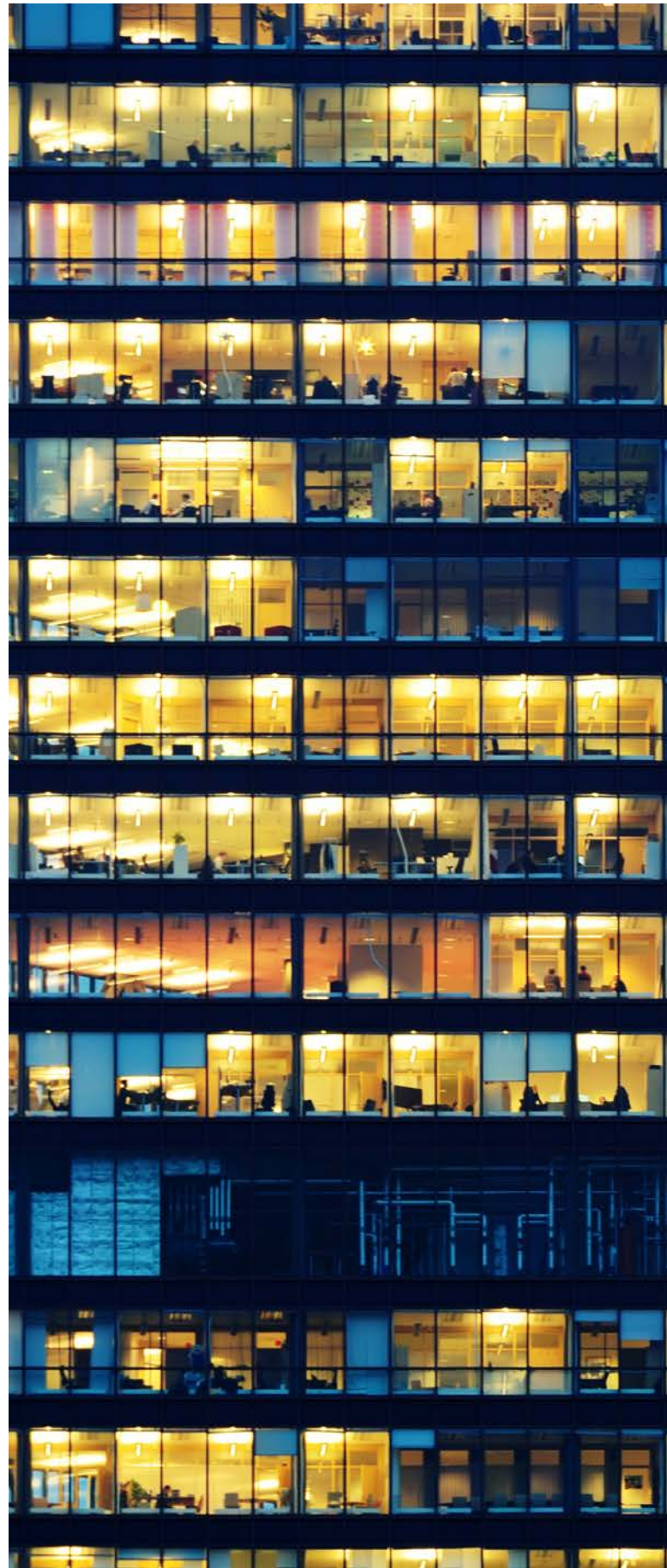


Reducing Costs

It's no secret that telephony and collaboration costs can quickly add up. There are subscriber fees, connectivity fees (including dedicated lines and circuits), hardware fees (PBXs, routers, and switches), software licensing costs, and the list goes on. One of the main reasons that businesses find UCaaS so attractive is that it reduces or, in some cases, completely eliminates these costs. In our own experience with customers, we've seen that moving to a UCaaS platform can reduce total communications costs by as much as 30 to 50 percent!

In addition to saving money, UCaaS solutions also save businesses time through higher worker efficiency and fewer IT resource requirements. Moving to a centralized UCaaS platform can save businesses a significant amount of time in IT management. How? Fewer machines to manage, easy-to-use self-provisioning portals, automated software updates, and built-in redundancy are just some of the advantages of moving to a cloud-based solution.

By replacing CapEx costs such as dedicated circuits and PBXs with a predictable monthly bill, UCaaS can quickly pay for itself. Many of our customers achieve their return on investment within the first 18 months after adopting UCaaS. And savings is just one side of the coin. There's also the increased revenue that comes from more productive workers, more satisfied customers, and the flexibility to onboard new workers quickly.

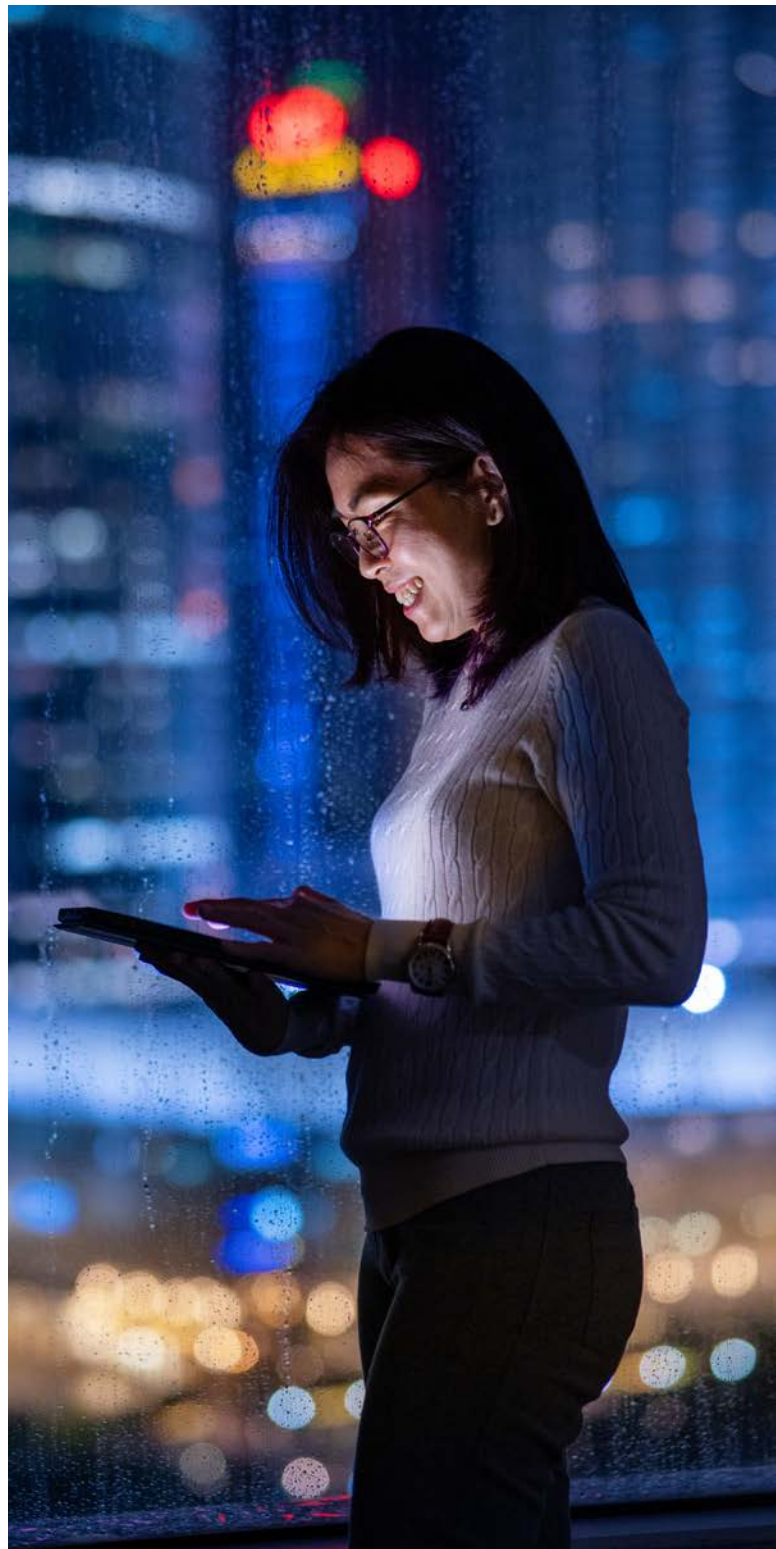


Ensuring Reliability, Availability, and Disaster Recovery

No one likes to wait in traffic, and network traffic is no exception. Dropped phone calls, frozen video screens, and large file downloads that take forever can frustrate employees and customers alike. These problems occur because business networks are using finite resources. Too many users accessing the same server or too many sessions during an all-hands videoconference can quickly push your physical network past the breaking point. The cloud, however, offers almost infinite scalability.

Moving telephony, video, and other collaboration tools into the cloud with a UCaaS solution provides businesses with the flexibility they need to quickly and easily scale their network capacity up or down. Cloud networks are built to scale as needed while providing pricing flexibility to businesses so that you only pay for the capacity you're using (a model known as pay-as-you-go). This approach is far more efficient than building an on-premises system based on worst-case scenarios, where costly resources go underutilized most of the time.

The cloud's native scalability and built-in redundancy also provide a failsafe communication and collaboration environment. Because there is no single point of failure, such as a PBX or application server malfunction, UCaaS delivers a natural resiliency that makes it ideal for applications where business continuity and disaster recovery are critical, such as telephony.



Sharp AI Learning Curve Ahead

Artificial intelligence (AI) is already transforming the way the world communicates and collaborates, and it's just getting started. Those businesses that can effectively harness AI to optimize processes, drive innovation, and deliver better customer service will be the leaders of tomorrow. Knowing this, UCaaS providers have created a convenient onramp to AI by integrating it into their communication and collaboration tools so that business users can begin using AI capabilities right out of the box.

Much of the early focus of AI has been on Generative AI (GenAI) tools that can generate text and images using a series of simple prompts. But this is just the tip of the AI iceberg. In the world of UCaaS solutions, AI plays a much larger role. For example, AI can be used to automatically summarize the key points

contained in videoconferences and phone calls. AI can also analyze customer calls, emails, and social media posts to determine the sentiment behind those communications (known as sentiment analysis). And AI-powered chatbots are fast becoming a first line of customer service for many online and mobile interactions.

Today, there are dozens of flavors of AI available. Cloud providers have their own AI tools. Mobile device manufacturers have their own AI tools. And many UCaaS providers offer their own tools as well. The advantage of using AI in a UCaaS environment is that the intelligence is already integrated into the application and designed to be easy to use. Instead of having to craft an AI query to capture the key points in a phone conversation, UCaaS solutions can do this through the simple click of a button.

Getting the Help You Need to Reach Your Destination

As you can see, there's a lot to think about on the road to transforming your communication and collaboration platform for the future. Along the way, you'll likely encounter numerous "billboards" advertising various UCaaS vendor solutions as the best choice for your business. But communication and collaboration tools are too important to your business to make the pick based on your gut feeling or a marketing campaign. It takes a trusted and experienced advisor to help you choose the right path forward.

When choosing a technology partner, here are some questions to ask:

- **Which UC solutions do you support?** The more choices they offer, the more likely you are to find the best combination of features and price.
- **Are you a licensed Microsoft partner?** This is a critical question if you plan to integrate Microsoft Teams into your UC platform.
- **Where can I leverage AI to improve communication and collaboration?** AI technology is evolving at a rapid pace, making it hard for businesses to keep up with the latest features and use cases. The right technology partner will bring extensive AI knowledge to the table during the initial solution design stages to ensure that AI fits into your future UC plans.
- **What if I want to deploy my solution in a public cloud?** Your technology partner should be able to support a variety of cloud deployment options including private, public, and hybrid cloud environments.



Choosing the Express Lane to UCaaS Success

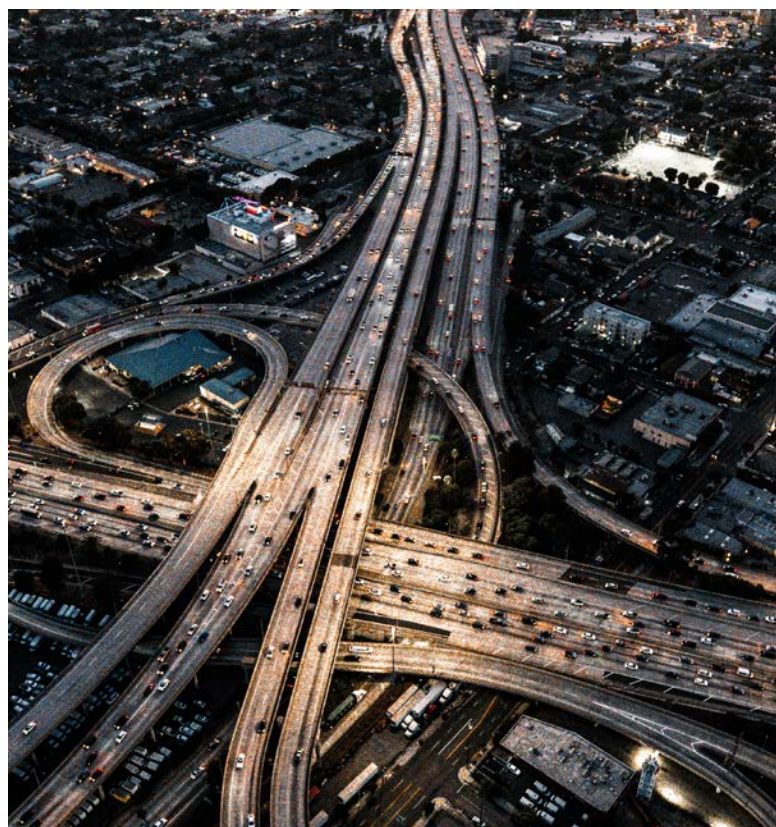
The fact is that migrating and integrating UCaaS into your business can be a long road. That's why you need an experienced guide to show you how to get there quickly and safely. Connection is your express lane to UCaaS success. We provide honest recommendations based on your best interests, not ours. We have the best and most experienced team to help you implement and customize those solutions. And we work with the best technology partners in the industry to ensure that you have a wide range of great UCaaS solutions to choose from.

At Connection, our consultative approach to collaboration connects businesses of all sizes with the right technology solutions at the right price. But, more than that, we help ensure that the technology you choose delivers value to your business from day one by providing consulting, integration, training, and managed services for the life of your solution. So, if your solution should ever hit a bump in the road, we're there to get you back on track.

The value of a relationship with Connection starts with consulting. We'll help you surface your solution requirements, budget challenges, and potential risks and rewards before selecting the best fit for your business from a wide range of leading partner solutions. Then we'll work with those partners to ensure you get the most competitive pricing. Next, we help you implement your solution and integrate it with your existing communication and collaboration tools. For example, if you're looking to bring telephony features into Microsoft Teams, our Microsoft-certified experts can help you seamlessly connect your UCaaS telephony services with Teams.

More than integrating technology, we also help businesses integrate UCaaS with their day-to-day business processes. This means reviewing communications policies, streamlining internal workflows, and ensuring that users have the training they need to take advantage of everything that their UCaaS solution has to offer, from cool collaborative features to embedded AI capabilities. Once users are comfortable driving your UCaaS solution, Connection is there to help ensure it keeps running smoothly with managed services, disaster recovery services, and more.

When you're ready to make the move to UCaaS, contact Connection and schedule a [free consultation](#).





How Connection Can Help

Connection is here to partner with you on your UCaaS journey. We offer consulting on UCaaS best practices, along with both customized and off-the-shelf UCaaS solutions.

Our Microsoft 365 Copilot Technical Readiness Assessment helps prepare your organization's data for use with Copilot, Microsoft's new productivity-enhancing AI tool. To learn more read [Readiness Assessment solutions brief](#).

Featured Partners:

Microsoft has been a trailblazer in Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS), delivering innovative solutions to businesses around the globe. At the heart of its UCaaS offering is Microsoft Teams, a platform that integrates chat, video conferencing, and telephony, significantly improving collaboration and productivity. Microsoft's all-encompassing approach guarantees that every communication and collaboration tool works together seamlessly, offering a robust and dependable solution for organizations of any size. Moreover, Microsoft's dedication to security and compliance empowers organizations to adhere to industry standards while fostering a flexible and scalable environment for future development.

Fusion Connect stands out in the UCaaS sector, providing innovative and scalable solutions to address the varied needs of contemporary enterprises. Their platform integrates voice, video, messaging, and data services into a cohesive, unified solution that improves communication and boosts efficiency. With a strong emphasis on reliability and customer support, Fusion Connect enables businesses to trust their UCaaS solutions for constant connectivity and operational continuity. By leveraging strategic partnerships and cutting-edge technology, Fusion Connect offers tailored and affordable UCaaS solutions, empowering organizations to reach their communication objectives.

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