



Achieving Digital Transformation through **Unified Communications**

FROST & SULLIVAN EXECUTIVE BRIEF

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The Digital Transformation Imperative

To remain relevant and competitive in today's business climate, organizations must embrace digital transformation. It's a process that delivers necessary dividends in a digital-first economy. Digital transformation helps organizations better leverage data, improve decision-making practices, streamline processes, increase agility, and deliver an improved customer experience (CX).

A communications strategy in general, and unified communications (UC) specifically, is fundamental to successful digital transformation. Giving employees UC tools for collaboration and real-time communication is transformative and equips them to better serve customers and each other. This is especially true in today's hybrid work environment. Frost & Sullivan research reveals that 88% of organizations in North America will practice remote work at some level by 2026, including 40% that will have half or more of their employees working remotely at least once per week. UC is required to keep this distributed workforce connected, productive, and responsive to customers.

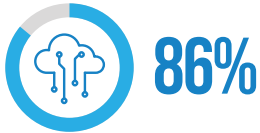
The Move to Unified Communications

UC transformation is well underway because many organizations are recognizing its value. Most organizations indicate to Frost & Sullivan that current economic conditions are either causing them to solidify or accelerate their investment plans. The COVID-19 pandemic has forever reshaped information technology decision-makers' view of communications and the need for cloud-based UC, which gives them the ability to pivot and better support communications needs in changing market environments.





Digital UC transformation includes the following adoption trends:



By the end of 2025, at least **86%** of organizations will have adopted some form of cloud or mobile communications solutions.



Eighty-two percent of organizations indicate they either must have or would like to have a fully integrated UC solution that includes calling, meetings, and messaging.



More than half of the organizations currently using cloud or mobile communications services plan to increase their investments by the end of 2025, which may be due to workforce expansion, an overall increase in licenses provided to employees, or migrating more users/devices from premises-based solutions to cloud-based solutions.



Mobile business calling apps are seeing strong adoption, with at least **86%** of the organizations Frost & Sullivan surveyed either using or planning to use such apps. This may be partly driven by the growing adoption of cloud-based communications and unified-communications-as-a-service (UCaaS) solutions, which generally include mobility as a standard feature.

Delivering a better CX is a key goal of digital transformation. Customers have high expectations that often include communicating with businesses through their preferred channel, whether voice, video, email, messaging, or a mobile app. Satisfying these expectations requires a holistic embrace of digital UC technology that empowers employees to meet customers where they are and efficiently connect and collaborate with teammates and subject matter experts on demand.

Companies should not limit UC access to knowledge workers; access should include frontline and field workers. Frontline workers are generally customer-facing, directly impact product and service quality, and operate as key brand ambassadors. Equipping them with the right digital communications tools to handle customer interactions efficiently and to collaborate with teammates is a key contributor to a great CX. Frost & Sullivan research shows that of the communications tools most commonly used by frontline workers today, video meetings are growing in importance and rank second after email, but ahead of phone calls.



A Process for Digital UC Transformation

Developing the appropriate transformation strategy includes important considerations. With a variety of employee demands and organizational requirements, combined with a wide range of UC technology and platform options, organizations will need to remain vigilant about avoiding the creation of multiple technology silos within their communications environments.

A formal digital transformation project plan is recommended. An organization can develop a plan internally or externally with consulting services provided by a telecommunications company, such as Verizon, or other qualified vendors. Key steps in this process often include assessment, design, integration and implementation, and adoption.



Assessment:

Key to any successful digital transformation project is to first have an accurate assessment of the current situation. This includes establishing a baseline by assessing and documenting all current communications technologies and identifying and engaging all appropriate stakeholders. Essential components of this stage include:

- Discussing and achieving stakeholder alignment regarding why a project is needed
- Identifying and documenting desired business outcomes
- Establishing a budget
- Identifying and documenting current and future/desired feature sets
- Identifying and documenting current and future/desired requirements (e.g., compliance, security, collaboration, workforce, footprint)

The outcome of the assessment phase is a technology recommendation that satisfies as many of these requirements as possible.



Design:

Once the assessment is completed with an approved recommendation in hand, detailing the solution design is next. This phase should begin by establishing a project governance document that outlines the overall mission, stakeholder involvement, agreed-upon requirements and features, budget management, and timelines.

Components should include:

- Identification of technology platform(s), telecom network vendor, and consulting services (if needed)



- A matrix that maps business requirements and technology features to the identified solution
- An integration matrix outlining and governing all required system integrations and APIs
- Road map generation detailing the project steps
- Identification of all required resources and stakeholder responsibilities
- Selection of outside vendors
- An approved timeline

The outcome of the design phase is an approved solution and detailed project plan.

Business Requirement	Features	Potential Business Solutions
Business Communications	Voice calling	Webex Calling, IP Trunking, One Talk
	Video conferencing	Webex Meetings, Blue Jeans, Microsoft Teams
	Instant messaging	Webex Messaging, Microsoft Teams, Slack
	Mobile accessibility	Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile
Collaboration	Document sharing	Webex Meetings, Google Docs
	Virtual whiteboards	Webex Meetings
	Real-time authoring	Webex Meetings, Google Docs, Microsoft Office 365
Unified Messaging	Chat	Webex Messaging, Microsoft Teams
	API Integration	Vendor specific tools (i.e., CRM)
Contact Center	Multi-Channel	Webex Contact Center, NICE
	AI Chat Bots	Webex Contact Center, NICE
	Self Service Tools	Webex Contact Center, Genesys, NICE
	Outbound Calling	Webex Calling + Webex Contact Center
Security and Compliance	Multi-factor authentication	Vendor specific authentication tools
	Data encryption tools	End-to-end encryption in communications platforms
	Data loss prevention	Data loss prevention software



Integration and Implementation: _____

This is the primary execution phase and usually involves engagement with outside vendors. Special attention should be given to project governance to ensure the project remains on schedule, is within scope and budget, and meets stakeholder expectations. Components should include:

- System configuration
- Establishment of call routing, call control, and multimodal communications workflows
- Integration testing and execution
- Beta testing
- Phased turn-up
- Establishment of feedback loops

The outcome of the integration and implementation phase is a successful launch of the platform(s).



Adoption: _____

Arguably, one of the most important phases is engaging the user base to adopt and use the UC platform. A phased internal launch followed by an external launch is recommended. Components should include:

- Provisioning of services
- Training end users
- Establishing reporting and analytics functions and cadence
- Obtaining and acting upon feedback

A key outcome of the adoption phase is determining if the platform is delivering the desired value to the organization and adjusting it if required. That may mean making changes to the feature set or fine-tuning system requirements to meet compliance objectives.



A UC Transformation Case Study – National Retailer Transforms Its Communications Infrastructure

Successfully undertaking and completing a UC transformation is a complex project, and enlisting experienced industry partners is recommended. The right partners will ensure the transformation is done efficiently, with limited disruption, and leverages the most advanced technology. It also means businesses can continue to focus on their core competencies during the transformation, which was the case for a major national retailer.

Challenges

A national retailer with more than 19,000 employees in 1,450 locations across the country needed a digital transformation for its communications infrastructure. The company relied on a legacy PBX phone system with two vendors supporting its communications network. Operating the system was expensive, and it lacked the functionality needed to help deliver a winning CX and position employees to efficiently connect and collaborate. The company desired a new solution that would:

- Reduce network and usage costs,
- Improve CX,
- Provide network management and oversight, and
- Enable employee collaboration.



Solutions

After an exhaustive search, the retailer decided to replace its legacy system with a modern UC platform. It selected the Webex Suite combined with a network of IP trunking access across its footprint. To lower costs and lessen complexity, the retailer selected a single telecommunications vendor to develop the solution and manage the network. The solution set included:

- A cloud-based Webex UC Suite with voice, video, and conferencing for improved collaboration in all locations across the company
- IP trunking from Verizon that delivers shared trunking in the cloud that is scalable and less costly
- Professional consulting services from Verizon that provide on-site support for ease of planning, deployment, and management

Benefits

The digital transformation has provided a robust and scalable communications solution at a lower overall cost. The retailer now has a more secure and reliable digital infrastructure, and its employees have the tools to better engage customers and each other. Additional benefits include:

- A new cloud-based infrastructure with the most important features required to deliver a great CX and improve employee productivity
- A single vendor partner to turn to for everything, eliminating multiple vendor finger-pointing
- A secure and resilient network that can maintain business continuity
- A single contract that takes advantage of multi-product spend and term discounts
- A single portal to simplify administration of all services from a desktop or mobile device

Bringing Digital Transformation Home

Organizations, large and small, are now prioritizing improvements in CX and digital enhancements to keep employees connected and engaged. Achieving digital transformation better positions organizations to reach these goals. Momentum is growing among them in adopting UC solutions that help equip their workforce with the tools needed to leverage the collective knowledge base and apply it toward exceeding customer expectations. As organizations plot their digital future, adding a well-integrated and scalable UC solution should be a top priority.

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