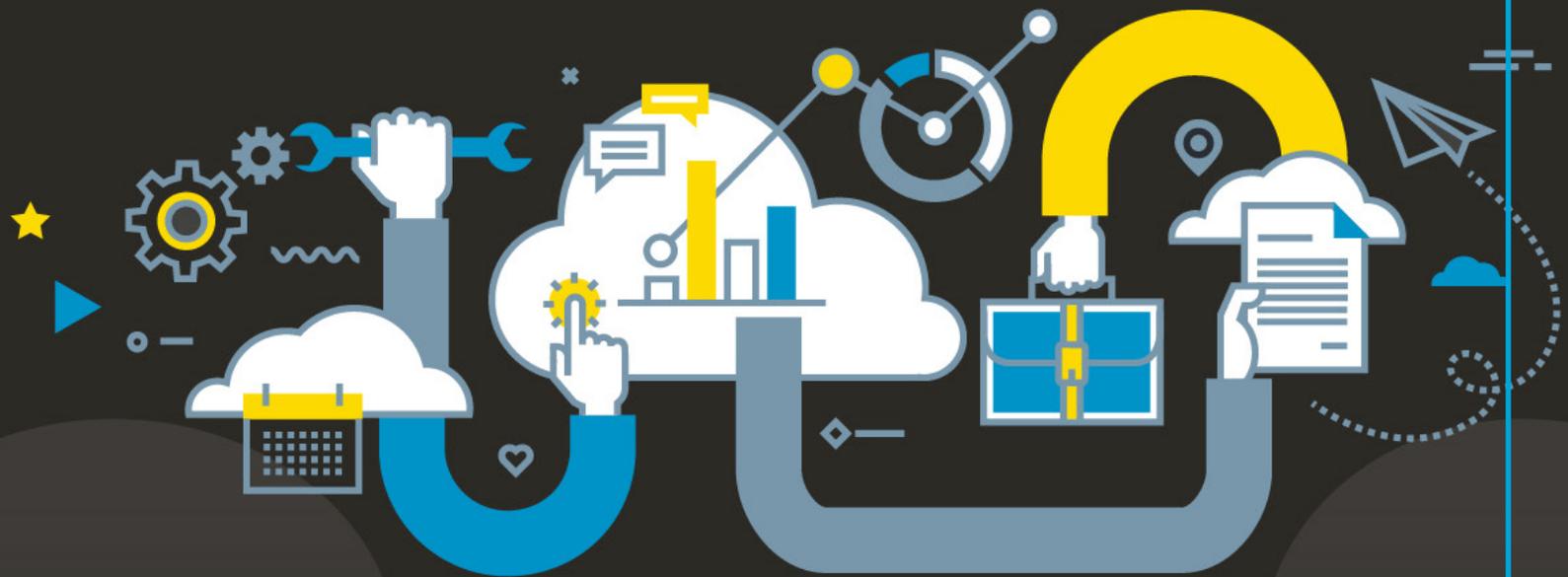


# A Buyer's Guide: Understanding Unified Communications as a Service



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**MASERGY**

## Unified Communications as a Service Explained

Cloud-based Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) brings together multiple communications services into a single, cohesive, and globally redundant platform. By combining familiar communication services such as voice, video, chat and presence-detection with newer services such as virtual meetings and workstream collaboration, UCaaS weaves together productive and easy-to-use collaboration tools that your business can use across all of their locations. In addition, employees can choose the communications and collaboration tools that are the most appropriate for today's mobile workforce and enjoy a consistent user experience across of their devices.

Virtually all vendors are eliminating support for on-premise-based PBX systems, and as the reality of these soon-to-be dinosaurs sinks in, enterprises are increasing their adoption of cloud-based systems. In fact, a Broadsoft survey estimates that 80 percent of IT decision makers are considering moving to cloud-based communications solutions.

## Business Benefits

Beyond simply keeping up with vendors, UCaaS solutions boost business productivity by providing advanced communications anytime, anywhere, and on any device. This also improves the efficiency of communications and increases your staff's level of engagement.

## Productivity for All

No matter the job function or location, UCaaS provides powerful use cases. Sales professionals can use it to locate contact information for potential customers, place calls and share documents — all with just a few mouse clicks or mobile device taps. Geographically-distributed teams can use meetings and workstream collaboration to work together and complete projects rapidly. Call center agents can use presence-detection capabilities to find subject matter experts fast, then use instant messaging to confer with them, all while assisting customers in real time.

But beyond the buttons and bells, it gets even better.

## Cost Benefits

The development of hosted, cloud-based “as a Service” solutions means businesses of every size can deploy UCaaS for a fraction of the cost of legacy, on-premises PBX systems. Unlike those older systems, UCaaS provides an entire solution from an externally-hosted infrastructure. The only equipment

**Unlike on-premises PBX systems, UCaaS provides the entire solution from an externally hosted infrastructure.**

## Hosted PBX versus UCaaS

Legacy PBX vendors are attempting to adapt their products for the cloud, however, serious differences exist between these adapted-to-the-cloud systems and those that are truly “born in the cloud.” On-premises and hosted PBX systems often make serious compromises around mobility, flexibility and the ability to add new features. This can result in unscheduled downtime and hidden costs. By contrast, UCaaS takes full advantage of modern computing methods, multi-tenancy, and cloud technology, offering complete support for your mobile workers.



residing on your site are telephone handsets and dedicated routing equipment. This means you can reallocate personnel and real estate for other needs. It also means you can enjoy easier set up, less maintenance activity, lower costs, greater spending flexibility, as well as improved agility to change capacity.

## Flexibility, Reliability, and Ease of Management

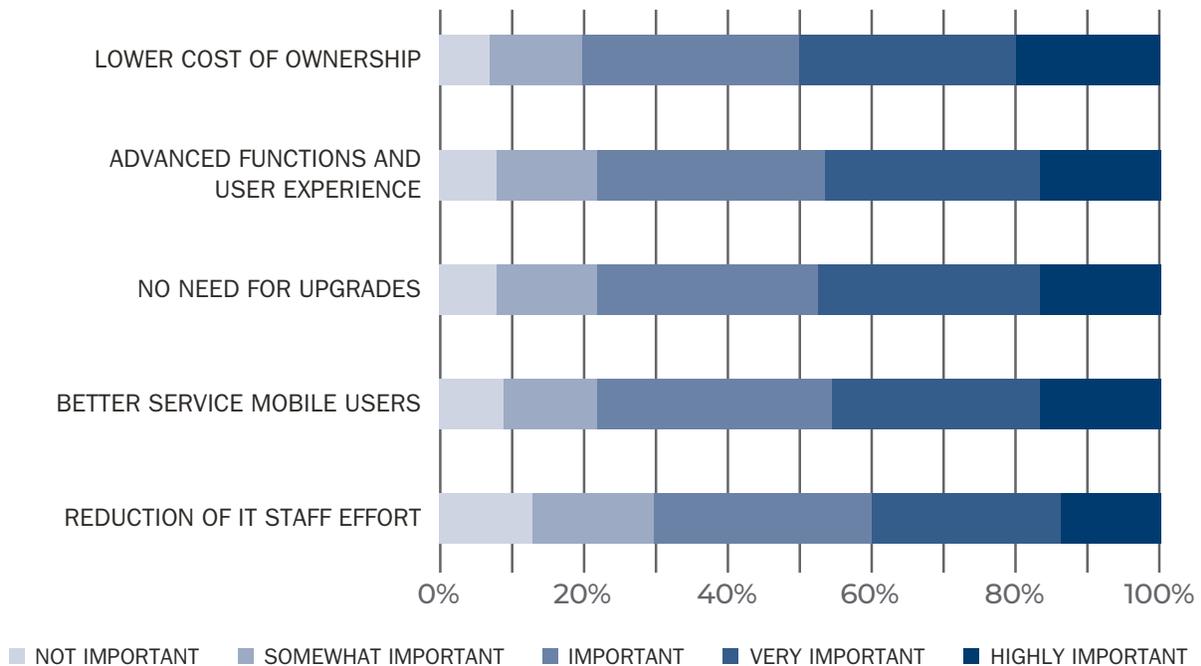
New UCaaS features and functionalities can be implemented in a phased approach as needed. Hybrid deployment models enable you to lay modern UCaaS features over your existing PBX systems, customizing migration paths around your PBX end-of-life calendars. When combined with the UCaaS provider's high-performing network, these solutions deliver always-on reliability and availability backed by service level agreements (SLAs). Plus, advanced web portals enable easy administration with a UCaaS platform, reducing costs associated with complex configuration, management, and optimization.



**Cloud Communications Savings: \$400,000/year**

[Read the Case Study](#)

## How important are the following benefits of cloud unified communications?



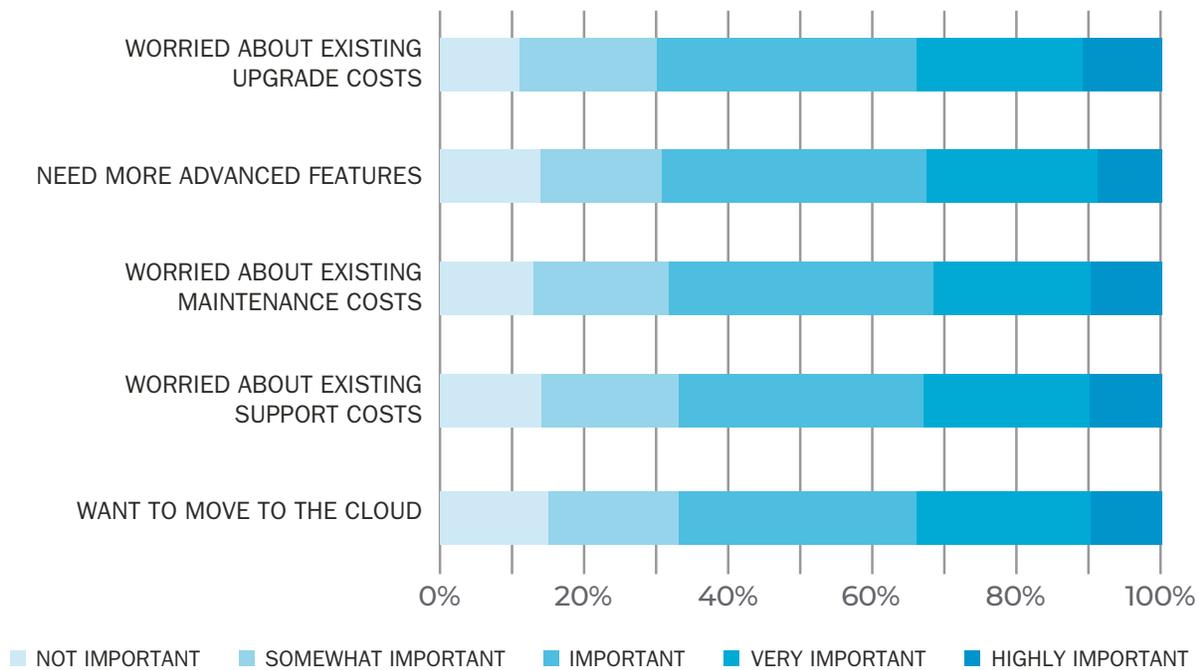
SOURCE: [Broadsoft Cloud Collaboration Survey](#)

## Adoption Drivers for UCaaS

Just by moving to a basic UCaaS solution, you can empower the workforce of tomorrow, fostering greater collaboration among employees, creating a more mobile employee base, and improving communications with your customers. Add a UCaaS solution, and you can gain several other benefits.



### How important are the following reasons to move to a cloud unified communications service?



SOURCE: [Broadsoft Cloud Collaboration Survey](#)

## UCaaS Features: Seamless User Experiences

Key Functionality:

- **Mobility:** Seamless, consistent communication across disparate devices regardless of location
- **UCaaS Analytics:** On-demand call statistics and management, including custom reporting for key functions
- **SIP Trunking:** Phased migration paths, allowing you to create hybrid solutions with your existing systems
- **Easy System Integration:** Workflow automation with hundreds of SaaS applications
- **Managed Security:** Some providers offer managed security services too

UCaaS systems also offer:

- **Cloud Contact Center:** Omni-channel customer interaction management with real-time predictive analytics and workforce optimization
- **Unified Messaging:** One inbox for voice, email, and fax
- **Instant Messaging & Presence:** Contextual communications with real-time status
- **Video:** Visual collaboration with exceptional clarity and reliability
- **Conferencing:** Pre-scheduled meetings or instant ad hoc collaboration
- **Call Recording:** Fully integrated and unlimited with secure web-based storage and playback
- **WebRTC:** real-time audio, video, and data streaming from any web browser

## Technology Benefits: Lower Your TCO

A unified communications system can lower your total cost of ownership (TCO) when compared with a traditional PBX. The main factors include improved employee collaboration and higher productivity, leading to job satisfaction and employee loyalty, as well as savings on travel costs.

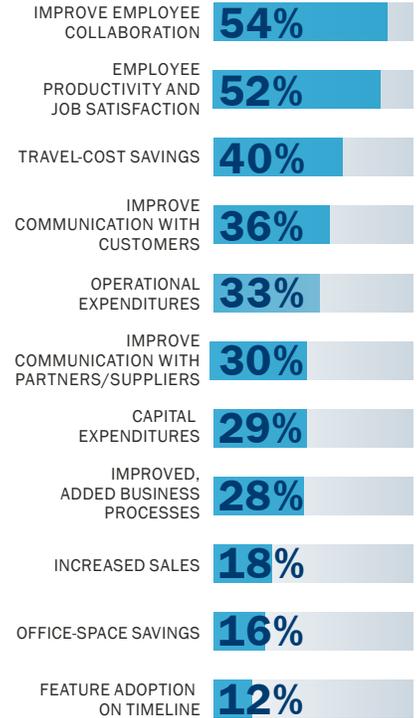
By moving to UCaaS, you can gain even more benefits and enjoy the latest technology-driven communications features without breaking your budget. No expensive telecommunications equipment is needed; you supply only VoIP-ready handsets. And you can save even more, since you no longer need to support either traditional telephone or data lines.

Because UCaaS services are charged on a monthly, usage-based model, you pay for only the capacity you use. A full-featured UCaaS system can also reduce your need for costly and time-consuming travel. Finally, while an on-premises PBX system requires costly training — estimated at more than \$4,000 per year per employee — UCaaS systems are easy to use and require far less training.

The following are tangible ways UCaaS can lower your costs:

- **Focus on Your Business — Not Your Technology:** With the complexity, hassle, and cost of running telecommunications systems shifted to your supplier, you're free to focus on what matters.
- **Improved Telecommuting and Higher Productivity:** Rather than tethering workers to their desks, UCaaS gives employees the mobility freedom of videoconferencing, workstream collaboration, and online meetings.

### Top Factors for Calculating Unified Communication's ROI



Cost of on-premise PBX training:  
**\$4,000** per employee per year

**Learn more about how UCaaS lowers your TCO**

- **Strengthened Business Continuity:** The UCaaS model is not tied to a single location and, as a result, is inherently resilient and redundant.
- **Simplified Deployment for a Faster Time to Market:** Instead of each location having its own system, UCaaS is delivered from the cloud to any location, making implementation and management easy.
- **Lower IT-Support Requirements:** UCaaS shifts support tasks to the managed service provider, reducing the burden on your staff.
- **Capital Expenses Become Operational Expenses:** Monthly services and fees based on the number of users means you can eliminate the capital expense of telecom switches and routers.
- **Greater Scalability:** When you need to add or subtract staff for peak seasons and events, your supplier can increase the number of lines and lower your capacity once peak times are over.
- **Automatic Upgrades:** A UCaaS system frees you from the hassle of upgrading hardware and software, and making sure all your employees' devices are keeping up with the onslaught of security patches.

## Integration and the Voice-Powered Enterprise

Operationalizing UCaaS tools empowers digital transformation and maximizes ROI. Solutions often include flexible cloud-based APIs that enable rapid integration of communications functionality into business processes and other cloud applications including critical CRM and ERP systems. Most integrate with office apps, business apps, and social media apps.

Cloud-based APIs and Integration Platform as a Service (iPaaS) technology also help enterprises automate complex workflows and create "Alexa-like" experiences in the workplace. iPaaS connects UCaaS platforms with all your other primary business applications, uniting voice-recognition tools with enterprise applications like Salesforce, Microsoft Dynamics, and Slack.

This union creates the opportunity to build voice-powered workflows. By automating back-end functions and setting up voice commands, employees can use their headset (cell phone or any other voice tool) to trigger automated business processes. The best part is the fact that integration is easy. iPaaS drag-and-drop integration builders connect hundreds of applications without the need for professional developers.

## Implementation Strategies: You Don't Have to Rip and Replace

Your business is unique. So is your path to a cloud communications infrastructure. The most effective UCaaS solutions will empower your company to use advanced UC features — even if you have legacy infrastructure.

A hybrid deployment model lets you keep your current infrastructure while gradually easing onto the cloud on your timetable and your terms. This is ideal for companies with existing PBXs that want to slowly migrate towards a fully hosted solution. SIP Trunking capabilities allow you to start reaping the benefits of UCaaS while leveraging one dial plan. Consultants can create a customized migration strategy for your company, resulting in a seamless integration for your global workforce.

## Evaluating UCaaS Networks?

**Seven metrics for evaluating the network behind your UCaaS solution**

[Download the White Paper](#)

## A Three-Step Process for Cloud Migration

**STEP 1.** Strategic evaluation: The providers, in partnership with your own staff, will assess your current setup. They will examine your existing voice contracts, number and location of offices, network connectivity requirements, integration use cases, threshold for change, and more.

**STEP 2.** Customized solution: Next, the service team will develop your migration strategy leveraging these approaches:

- **Global UCaaS:** Ideal if your company wants a single, globally available cloud communications solution that eliminates maintenance costs, reduces administration complexity and costs, and adapts and scales to changing business needs.
- **Hybrid Deployment Model:** Have existing PBX systems and want to slowly migrate toward a hosted solution? This path leverages a SIP Trunking solution while letting you migrate selected users to UCaaS.
- **Flexible Connectivity:** Run your existing and future implementations over the vendor's high-performance network, over your existing network, or over any broadband connection.
- **Integration:** Design a plan to connect and extend the benefits of UCaaS into cloud applications and business processes.

**STEP 3.** Successful implementation and management: Once your solution is live, your service provider can help you create a communications migration roadmap, optimizing your solution for today and future-proofing it for tomorrow. Ongoing success will include lifetime employee training, 24/7 technical support, and visibility and control tools that simplify billing, administration, service management, and performance optimization.

## About Masergy

Masergy owns and operates the largest independent Software Defined Platform in the world, delivering hybrid networking, managed security, and cloud communication solutions to global enterprises. Our patented technology, customizable solutions, and unmatched customer experience are why a growing number of leading organizations rely on Masergy to deliver performance beyond expectations.

## Additional Resources

- [Unified Communications: The Buying Trends of 1,000 IT Decision Makers](#)
- [The Hidden Iceberg: Seven Metrics for Evaluating the Network Beneath Your Unified Communications Solution](#)
- [Contact Center Trends: Delivering Better Business Results](#)
- [5 Ways Cloud Communications Can Lower Your TCO](#)
- [Cloud Communications: Proven Implementation Strategies](#)

