

Hybrid Work

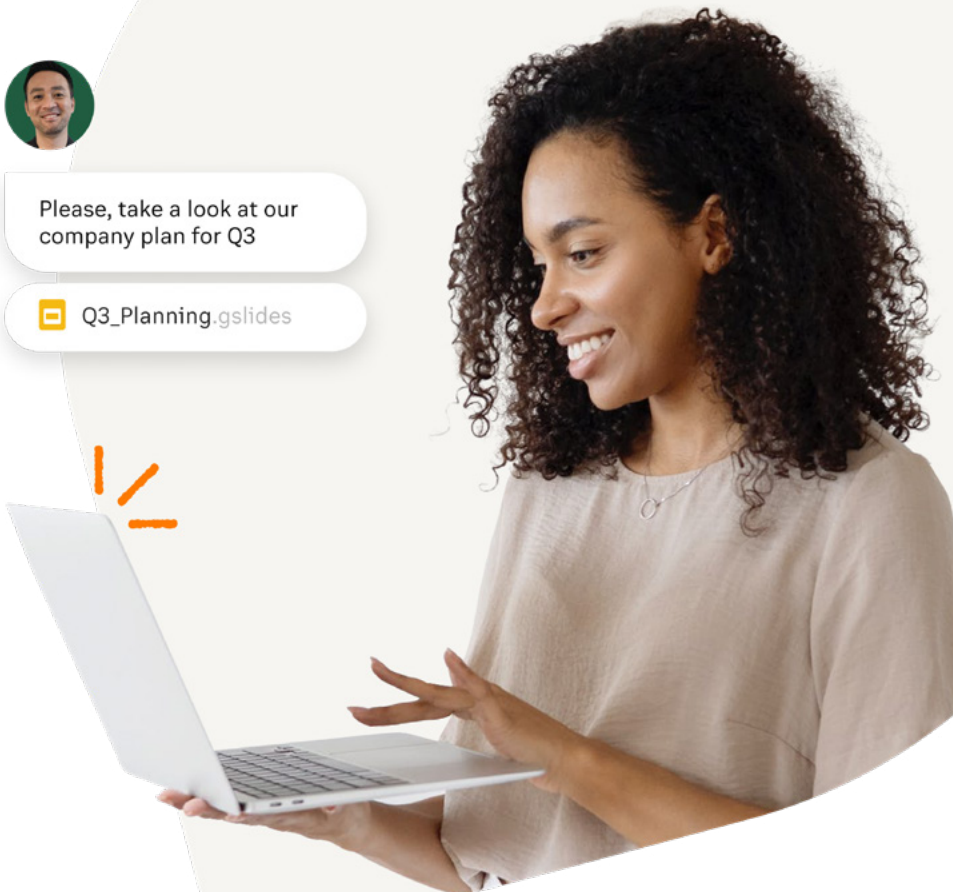
Why it's time to move your on-premises PBX to the cloud



Please, take a look at our company plan for Q3



Q3_Planning.gslides



By Blair Pleasant,
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About the Author

Blair Pleasant is President & Principal Analyst of COMMfusion LLC and a co-founder of BCStrategies. As a communications industry analyst, she provides strategic consulting services and market analysis on business communication applications, technologies, and markets, aimed at helping end-user and vendor clients both strategically and tactically.

She is a frequent speaker and participant in industry conferences, webinars, podcasts and other events to help educate others about the evolving unified communications and collaboration and contact centre markets. Blair's blogs and articles can be found on: bcstrategies.com and commfusion.com, as well as nojitter.com.



It's clear that the future workforce will be hybrid, with some workers in the office, some working remotely, and some a combination of the two. And with these rapidly changing needs, businesses realised just how vital the cloud is to flexibility and agility.

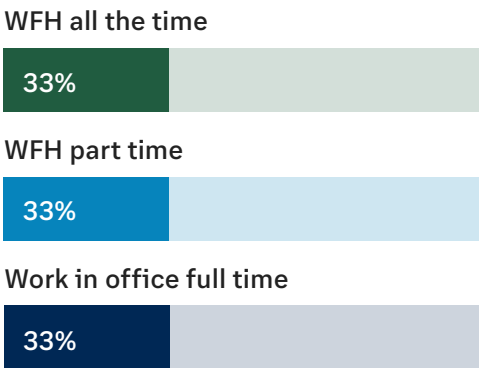
For years, the shift to cloud-based communications services was gradual, with some organisations going full force and others cautiously dipping their toes. This all changed in 2020 as employees moved en masse to work from home (WFH), bringing their business phone systems and other communication tools along with them.

Of course, organisations that already had their workflows in the cloud were poised for such a change. Employees simply took their work home, keeping operations afloat and staying productive throughout the pandemic.

Now that businesses have returned to work, the question becomes: **what role will the cloud play in the future of work?**

Remote and flexible work:
The new normal

The hybrid workforce



Source: COMMFusion

Successful work-from-home strategies developed during the pandemic have encouraged companies to hire more full-time remote employees. And after experiencing the benefits of WFH, many workers prefer the ability to work remotely at least a couple days a week.

A [study](#) by McKinsey found that three-quarters of 5,000 employees surveyed want to work from home twice a week, with more than half choosing three days a week.

COMMFusion expects 33% of workers will be in the office full time, 33% will be working from home or remotely full time, and 33% will be hybrid, or a combination of the two. For the most part, hybrid workers will be in the workplace two-to-three days a week and remote the rest of the time.

In hybrid and remote work, cloud flexibility matters

Until recently, businesses had one choice when it came to PBX and UC technology: **on-premises solutions**. The problem is, on-premises solutions are expensive and resource intensive, requiring a significant amount of IT staff to deploy, manage and maintain.

On-premises communications solutions are also more difficult to upgrade or scale, often requiring new hardware and software. As a result, on-premises solutions are slow to implement newer, advanced capabilities in the market.

But perhaps most importantly, they also can't support the needs of today's hybrid and remote workers. Distributed and mobile teams demand flexible solutions for communicating and collaborating across locations and time zones.

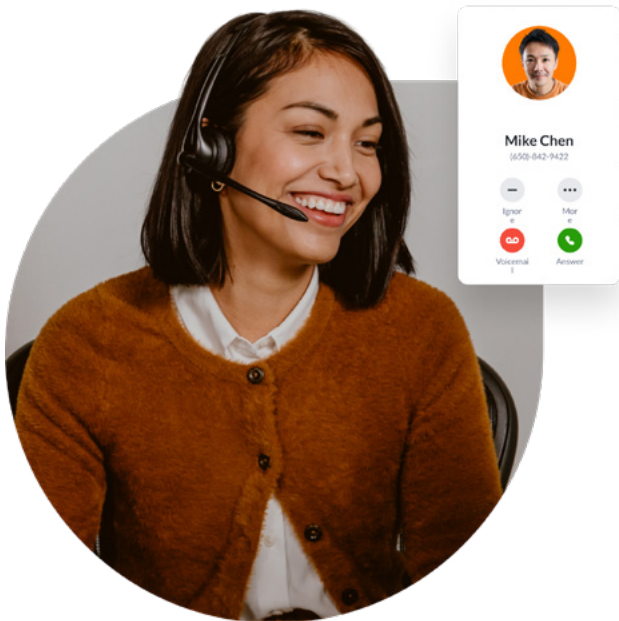
As a result, cloud-based communications and collaboration services have seen tremendous growth in recent years as companies recognise their many benefits. This was further accelerated in 2020 and 2021.

Cloud solutions have overtaken premises-based solutions as organisations look to replace outdated legacy PBXs. According to Synergy Research, there's a **\$100 billion plus** market opportunity for on-premises PBX users migrating to the cloud. Synergy estimates the addressable market cloud penetration is still at **less than 10%**. This means there are hundreds of millions of employees at the cusp of a generational transformation to the cloud.

100B



The many benefits of Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS)



The shift to the cloud becomes even more clear when you look at where investments are being made. From artificial intelligence to advanced mobility and video capabilities, almost all vendor investments are directed at cloud solutions. In fact, solutions such as team collaboration are entirely cloud-based, with no on-premises options in the market.

Speed to innovation takes place much faster in the cloud since open cloud-based platforms make adding new capabilities easier – from persistent chat to video conferencing to omnichannel contact centre – enabling organisations to digitally transform.

In addition, competitive pressures and the need to “disrupt or be disrupted” are driving the push to UCaaS solutions. Businesses need to be nimble and flexible while accessing the latest technologies and innovations – however, this is only possible with cloud solutions such as UCaaS.

The growth of the UCaaS market is in large part due to the many benefits the cloud provides to organisations, including:

1. Simplicity

Deployment, management and maintenance of communications solutions are greatly simplified, saving time and money while enabling your IT staff to focus on other things that may be closer to your core business.

Without the need for servers or ongoing maintenance and upgrades, cloud services are generally much simpler to deploy and manage, with built-in scalability, redundancy, security and disaster recovery.

2. Cost and scalability

The cloud’s pay-as-you-go model means you only pay for the communication services and licences you need, providing an immediate return. Businesses can easily add or remove users as needed.

This is especially important for seasonal businesses, such as florists or tax accountants, that have high

volume communication needs at certain times of the year. With little or no capital expenditures, organisations pay only for what they need and can scale up or down to best meet their needs.

3. Reduced risk

Companies are guaranteed to have the latest and greatest features as they're deployed while automatically staying current with new releases, reducing the risk of technology obsolescence and sunk costs.

As new capabilities and functionality are added – AI, voice biometrics, end-to-end security – organisations can access them right away.

4. Global reach

Multinational organisations can more easily access services around the globe at lower costs, making it easier for geographically dispersed workers to interact seamlessly. Workers around the world, regardless of geographical location, can be on the same platform, enhancing communications and collaboration throughout the organisation.

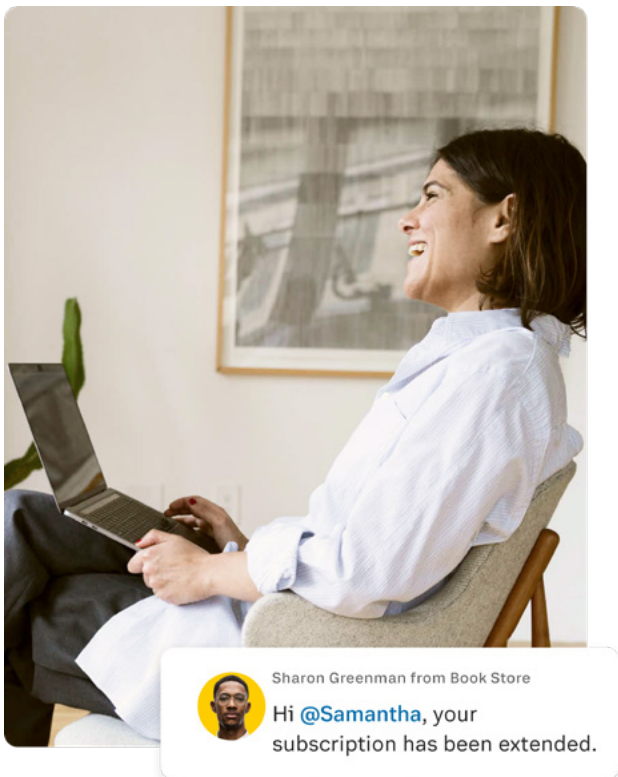
5. Business continuity

The need for business continuity became exceedingly clear in the past two years.

Based on capabilities such as mobility, conferencing, web collaboration, single-number reach and others, UCaaS allows workers to work from any location and remain productive in the event of a disaster. In addition, cloud providers offer off-site backup, redundancy and disaster recovery, which is too expensive or hard to do on premises.

6. Mobility

With no software to download to the desktop, workers just need an internet connection and a headset to access their communication tools. On-the-go workers can receive calls, send and receive IMs, and have web and video conferences from anywhere and on any device.



7. Advanced capabilities

Organisations can access advanced features and capabilities, such as video conferencing, call analytics, and team messaging that may otherwise be cost-prohibitive with a premises-based solution.

8. Integration with third-party applications

Open cloud platforms allow companies to connect communications to a wider set of business applications by using APIs and integrations.

These include integrating with CRM, ERP, productivity applications (such as Google Workspace and Microsoft Office 365), and other third-party applications. It also includes integrating capabilities, including messaging, video and analytics.



9. Flexibility

Perhaps the biggest benefit of a cloud-based service is flexibility, which makes organisations more nimble and agile. When it comes to flexibility, premises-based solutions don't hold a candle to cloud-based services, which make it easy to add new functionality in minutes.

Changing at a rapid pace, much of today's on-premises communications technologies will be outdated or even obsolete within the next two to three years. As new services and functionality are developed, whether they are artificial intelligence or enhanced mobile or video capabilities, cloud users can access these capabilities immediately without having to deploy new servers or software.

The time to move to cloud UC is now

Lifecycles for PBXs have gone from 10 to 15 years, to 7 to 10 years, and then down to four years or less. With resources being focused on newer cloud solutions, many vendors are end of life-ing older legacy PBXs at a rapid pace.

When a PBX system is no longer supported by the vendor, it becomes challenging to get the proper service, replacement parts and expertise needed. Challenges such as fewer trained workers to support legacy equipment make maintaining aging PBXs even more costly. Adding new capabilities such as messaging, video and collaboration become more daunting, and upgrading older systems is often more costly than replacing them.

If your PBX system is aging and no longer supported by your vendor, it's time to look at new options that meet today's business needs while taking advantage of new UC capabilities that may have been previously out of reach.

Rather than simply replacing an old phone system with a new phone system, use this transition to provide enhanced unified communications capabilities, including messaging and video meetings, that make your workers more productive and effective.

UCaaS: More than the sum of its parts

Today's workers are more collaborative, requiring tools that make it easy to share information. A complete Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) solution goes beyond telephony, which is core, to include messaging, team collaboration, document sharing, screen sharing and advanced video conferencing.

The right UCaaS solution should offer APIs and SDKs to provide customisation and seamless integration with an organisation's line of business productivity and CRM applications.

Additionally, integration with Contact Centre as a Service (CCaaS) unlocks new use cases, such as enabling contact centre agents to collaborate with subject matter experts throughout the organisation.

Mobile devices have changed the way we work and communicate

the global mobile workforce is expected to increase to

1.87 billion people

The global workforce, in 2022

42.5%

UCaaS solutions provide mobile workers with the communication applications that fit their mobile work styles by seamlessly integrating multiple locations and connecting mobile workers with advanced call forwarding, single number reach, desktop extension and mobile clients.

With an open platform that integrates UCaaS and brings various cloud services together, including contact centre, video and team collaboration, organisations can enhance internal and external communications and collaboration, increase efficiency and effectiveness, and better serve customers.



Mobility:
mobile app



Conferencing:
audio, web, video



APIs,
integrations



Collaboration:
screen sharing,
doc sharing



Meetings



Messaging and chat



Voice, VoIP

Choosing the right type of cloud

Hopefully by now you're convinced that UCaaS is the way forward, but what's the best cloud approach and migration strategy?

First, it's important to understand that there are various cloud options. Is it private or public? Are there multiple instances? Does it accommodate multiple tenants? Is it a hybrid deployment? Depending on the configuration, here are some key considerations:

Multi-tenant or "pure cloud":

Multi-tenant cloud services, considered "pure cloud," are the fastest-growing architecture. As the most economical option, a multi-tenant architecture takes advantage of the true benefits of the cloud, including economies of scale, fast deployment, business



continuity and redundancy, automatic updates and more.

Most experts agree that a “true” cloud is a multi-tenant, shared, on-demand platform providing scalability and elasticity based on a shared pool of resources that are rapidly provisioned with minimal IT requirements. Organisations benefit by using shared resources, capacity, and costs within the service provider’s data centre.

Multi-instance cloud:

With a hosted or multi-instance architecture, each user has its own virtualised software instance on shared hardware. This option may be able to offer greater levels of customisation, but at higher costs for software licences and professional services. Deployment and activating services take longer than multi-tenant services.

Private cloud:

Private-cloud services use virtualised software in the company’s own data centre, which means they can provide a higher level of customisation. This is the most expensive option and doesn’t provide economies of scale, flexibility and other cloud benefits.

Private cloud is generally seen as an option for regulated businesses and businesses requiring the highest levels of security, although this is changing as public cloud services have become more secure and are increasingly used by government agencies and regulated businesses.

Hybrid cloud:

Hybrid cloud services combine elements of on-premises and cloud services, with some core functionality remaining on-premises.

This model is often used as a way of transitioning to the cloud from older legacy PBXs, where a segment of workers continue to use the premises-based PBX, while others move to the modern unified communications cloud service.

Hybrid systems may also be useful for regulated businesses that require some on-premises equipment in order to meet security requirements or for large organisations with many branch locations that can't migrate to cloud services all at once.

Private cloud	Single-tenant public cloud (multi-instance)	Multi-tenant public cloud	Hybrid cloud
Virtualised software in company's own data centre.	Company has its own virtualised software instance of app on shared hardware.	All users share a common (single) software instance on common hardware platform.	Mixture of on-premises and cloud-based platforms or apps.
Most expensive, longest deployment time, not as scalable, requires significant IT staff.	More expensive than multi-tenant, not as scalable, longer deployment than multi-tenant, may require more professional services.	Most cost-effective, scalable, requires less IT staff than other options, easiest to deploy globally.	Gives up some benefits of the cloud but uses customers' existing solutions.
Provides high level of reliability, security, customisation, control over operations.	May provide more customisation, security, and privacy.	Least able to customise and integrate with apps and systems.	More expensive to manage than multi-tenant.

Migrating to the cloud – start with a strategy

As you prepare to migrate to the cloud from a premises-based PBX, having a migration strategy is essential.

First, define your goals and priorities. The new solution must meet your unique business needs, which requires understanding of why you're moving to the cloud. Prioritise what's most important, whether it's flexibility, scalability, cost management, advanced functionality, etc. From there, it's easier to identify the right solution and potential providers.

Next, determine the best migration approach based on business priorities and/or strategic locations. There are many options, and working with a professional services organisation can help identify the best approach for your specific needs.

For small and mid-sized businesses, a immediate switch to the cloud approach is generally best, providing fast access to the benefits of the new cloud solution.

For large organisations, a phased approach is generally recommended. Options for a phased approach include deploying based on user type, geography or technology/features.



Migrating a group of users, such as the C-suite or IT organisation, is a way to understand the features and functionality of the new service and set the stage for company-wide user adoption. Alternatively, starting with specific locations, such as branch offices or regions, may make sense. Look at when PBX service contracts for different locations expire and migrate those first.

Some organisations opt for hybrid cloud solutions as an intermediary approach. While the hybrid-cloud approach lets organisations use their existing communications technology while migrating to the cloud, it's often seen as a stop-gap approach, and there are some challenges that organisations need to consider.

Managing hybrid solutions and getting them to work effectively is often difficult, as cloud and premises-based communication platforms have different security and administration models, different dialling plans that need to be integrated, and different compliance and security methods.

With a duplication of costs, hybrid options generally end up more expensive. Without feature parity, employees on different systems will have different user experiences, making it more challenging to effectively collaborate.

To attain the scale and cost benefits of the cloud, a coexistence approach that includes migrating to an open platform in the cloud is often the right approach.

Finding the right UCaaS partner

The next step in the migration process is to select a vendor and cloud service. Here are some key attributes to look for in a platform vendor:

Unified platform:

Working with a vendor that offers a full solution, including telephony/PBX, unified communications, team collaboration meetings, and contact centre, makes it easier to get the capabilities you need without having to interact with multiple vendors.

Using the same vendor and platform for contact centre, team collaboration and UC reduces management requirements and provides end-to-end support with no finger-pointing between vendors.

In addition, a single vendor has more control over the product, including new feature releases and the ability to keep features current on both platforms.

Reliable and secure:

It goes without saying that reliability, security and support are crucial, so look for a vendor that can provide high availability and quality of service.

For international organisations, working with a company that has global reach with geographically dispersed data centres and support centres is an important consideration.

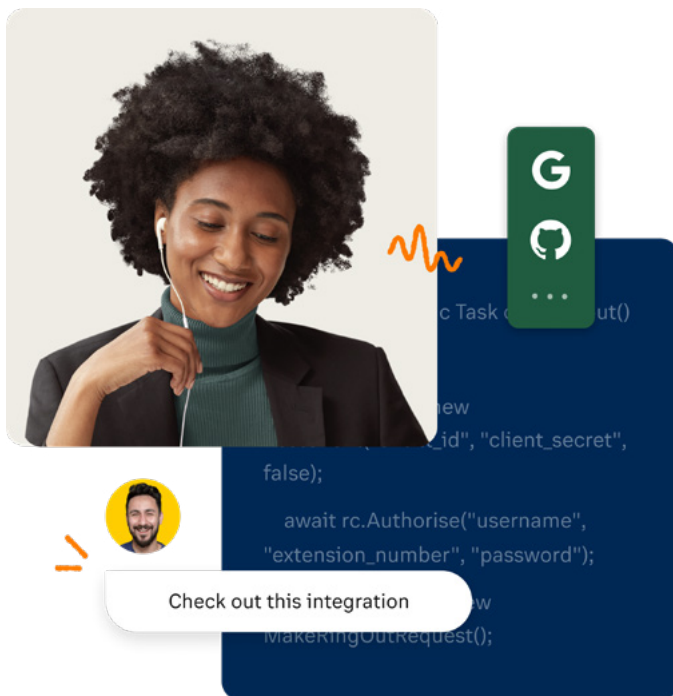
Integrations:

UCaaS doesn't exist in isolation, and integrating well with third-party business applications has become a key area of differentiation. APIs are today's building blocks for integrating a wide range of applications and capabilities that your organisation uses.

Look for a vendor with an open platform that offers out-of-the-box integrations, as well as APIs that will make the UCaaS solution a part of your business' day-to-day workflows.

Experience:

Choose a vendor that has lots of experience migrating organisations from premises-based PBXs to the cloud.



In many cases, a professional services engagement will be necessary, providing industry expertise and experience in network assessment, as well as designing, developing and architecting the right solution.

Don't take chances with a new player without a long track record or strong financials – look for a provider with the experience needed to help you succeed today and with the vision to prepare you for tomorrow.

Conclusion

While organisations' digital transformation strategies, including the move to cloud services, have been in the works for years, the pandemic dramatically accelerated this transition.

Both businesses and employees recognise the benefits of remote work, and hybrid work is here to stay. Communication systems have to support workers, allowing them to work how and where they prefer.

Legacy premises-based phone systems don't provide the flexibility demanded today and in the future. Only modern cloud-based services can support mobile, remote and hybrid workers' needs, along with the business continuity that organisations require.

It's time to move to the cloud.

For more information, please contact a sales representative. Visit ringcentral.com/gb/en/ or call 0800 098 8136.

RingCentral, Inc. (NYSE: RNG) is a leading provider of business cloud communications and contact centre solutions based on its Message Video Phone™ (MVP™) global platform. More flexible and cost effective than the on-premises PBX and video conferencing systems it replaces, RingCentral helps employees communicate across devices from wherever they are. RingCentral offers three key products. RingCentral MVP combines team messaging, video meetings, internet phone and other functionalities in a single interface. RingCentral Video™, along with its team messaging feature, enables Smart Video Meetings™. RingCentral Contact Centre gives companies the tools they need to connect with customers across channels. These are available on an open platform that integrates with hundreds of third-party apps and makes it simple to customise workflows. RingCentral is headquartered in Belmont, California, USA, and has offices around the world



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