What is Unified Communications?

Today people find themselves in situations or places where they are required to use different communication channels, platforms, or media. For instance, email, telephony, audio and/or video conferencing, social media, and fax. For a long time, organizations have had to invest a lot of time and money implementing parallel communication channels; one for voice carrying networks (which include, telephony, voicemail, video conferencing, etc.), and the other centered on data carrying networks (such as, email, fax, instant messaging, etc.). Unified communications (UC) refers to a technology that integrates real-time communication services with non-real-time communication services.

It is worth noting that UC is not a single tool or product, but rather a collection of solutions that forms a strategy for ensuring that nearly all technologies within the firm work together, smoothly, and securely. UC does a great job in terms of effectively blurring the lines between different communication channels. One fundamental aspect of UC is that it facilitates flexibility. An individual can send information using one medium, and the anticipated recipient can retrieve it using any medium of their choice. An example is a user who receives a voicemail message; he or she can decide to access it via email or mobile phone.

As aforementioned, UC is a collection of several elements that aid in the integration of multiple communication channels. One of the milestones of UC is that it adopts the concept of presence in the way communication occurs. Presence is a tool that expresses the readiness and availability of a party to communicate. Allowing someone to, for example, identify the location of an intended recipient before sending a message. An information sender can use this to know in advance, weather it is best to communicate in real-time or non-real-time. In business, that is a valuable concept. A great example is where a customer calls a call center to troubleshoot a problem. As opposed to engaging in rounds of back-and-forth emails after the initial call, the call center can just forward the call to an expert on the real-time list who will provide timely answers to the customer.

Unified Communications Offers Flexibility

UC also features mobility. Mobility means that a user can remain connected regardless of their location. Mobility features, which include extension mobility and single number reach, are vital to UC. An office extension, for instance, can enable a person to call, receive calls, chat, and other factors using softphone apps. Moreover, some UC platforms also feature a web-based user interface that facilitates call control on web browsers and management of different aspects. The other features include unified messaging, fax support, conferencing, collaboration, and advanced notification. Collaboration, particularly, is essential as it expands communication capabilities as well as presents employees with more flexible work options.

UC has brought about numerous benefits, especially for businesses. Firstly, by making it possible for users to communicate and collaborate flexibly and intuitively, UC augments employee productivity and improves

collaboration. Additionally, UC lowers costs by reducing the number of independent platforms that a business or an individual needs to communicate. By facilitating mobility, UC also enables unrestricted employees, who can work in any location with UC. With all these benefits, UC automatically empowers businesses to improve their customer's satisfaction.

Wondering if a Unified Communications system is right for you? Give us a call and we will work with you to create a system that meets your business needs.