VOICE SERVICES

FLIPCONNECT
Better . Connected

Driving business performance in the connected workplace

Driving Business Performance in the Connected Workplace

Connectivity and flexibility

The world is entering an age of full connectivity. In this new era, the significance of geographical boundaries is fading away, knowledge is being liberalised, and previously distinct elements of life – such as the workplace and home – are coming together.

Communications technologies have of course been the catalyst for the age of full connectivity. Mobile phones, social media, cloud hosting and the internet in general have enabled freedom, flexibility and choice for people, while engendering new behaviours. This has in turn propelled development of the technologies themselves.

But of course the implications of the fully connected age for businesses are far more wide-ranging. The implementation of highly productive, transparent and collaborative ways of working have been enabled. Barriers of entry for business newcomers across industries have been shattered.
A true global economy has emerged – one that allows for the explosive growth of companies in months rather than decades.

Against this backdrop, agility is paramount for companies. They must be ready to exploit emerging communications technologies, stay ahead of developments, and continually adapt.

The agile workforce

Employee behaviours are evolving in the connected age. And it is having a huge impact on how businesses procure their IT and communications infrastructure.

The right to work flexibly has been guaranteed by legislation across Europe. The workforce is becoming increasingly empowered, mobile and globally dispersed. Employees now expect to be able to work at home, in the office, or on the move. And they expect to be able to seamlessly use all of their professional tools wherever they are.

An agile workforce has emerged. Living close to an employer's office, or even in the same time zone, is no longer necessary. Talented workers are increasingly able to choose employers from all over the world. Enterprise social tools and other digital platforms are facilitating global collaboration.

There is a growing demand for flexible working environments that goes far beyond the bring-your-own-device trend or providing laptops over deskbound PCs. Consequently it is no longer viable to rely upon on-site communications

infrastructure and hosting. The requirements of a global, diverse workforce have outgrown traditional technology, so a switch to cloud hosting is not just necessary, but vital to the prosperity and success of any modern business.
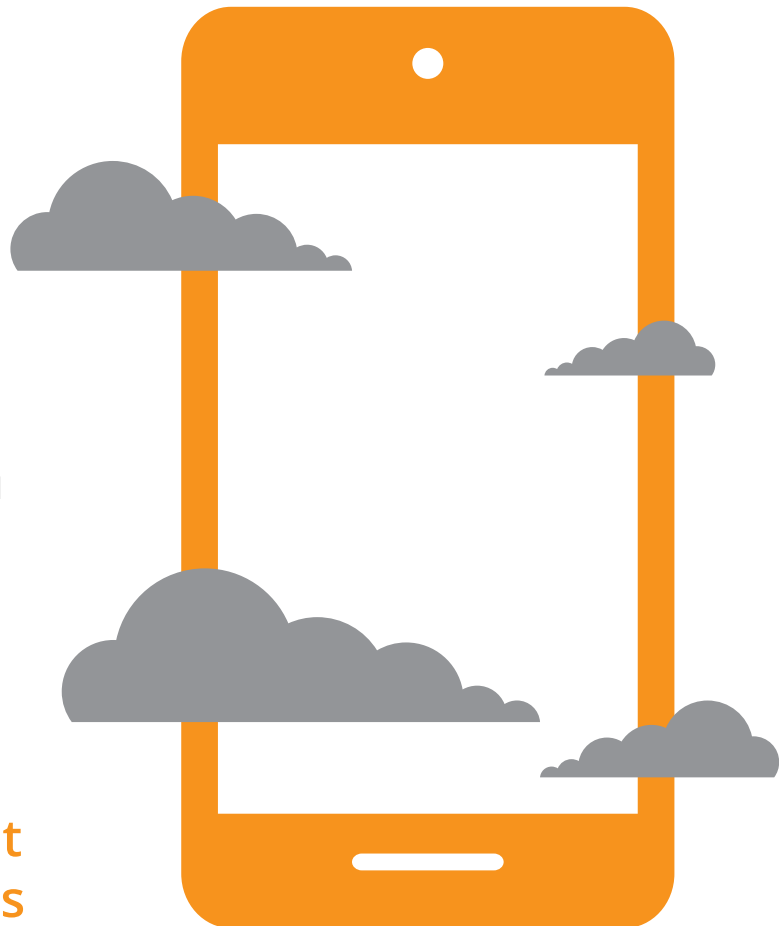
Put simply, to exist as an agile business in an age of perpetual change, technology infrastructure must be agile too. It must be capable of accommodating changing working patterns. It must scale with growth ambitions so that it is not prohibitively expensive to immediately expand capacity. But most importantly, it must allow companies to react quickly to change – especially those companies that seek rapid growth.

Change represents opportunity. But if organisations can't scale with the immediacy needed to seize an opportunity, growth ambitions can be compromised. IT and communications infrastructure need to be able to keep pace with growth. It can be the difference between success and failure.

Moving to cloud/hosted systems

Moving business functions to cloud-based hosted services can be seen as one of the most important steps to becoming an agile business that is ready to grow. Decreasing reliance on a network and proactively moving towards a model in which employees can access social media, programmes and apps through an external data centre demonstrates ambition and a forward-thinking attitude. Also, when servers (or even the entire IT infrastructure) are moved off-site, astonishing efficiencies can result. And having these functions optimised for – and easily accessible from – mobile devices, can greatly increase a business's agility.

Yet there is still an entrenched view that a business's telecoms system must be hosted on-site.

This predilection is understandable – for a long time on-site hosting was the only option to businesses. But with a variety of hosted telecommunications options now available, attachment to an on-site system no longer makes business sense.

On-site systems have limited capacity that can't scale alongside business growth, as increasing capacity requires disruptive expansions of infrastructure. The necessary purchase, installation and configuration of physical hardware can be time-consuming and costly.
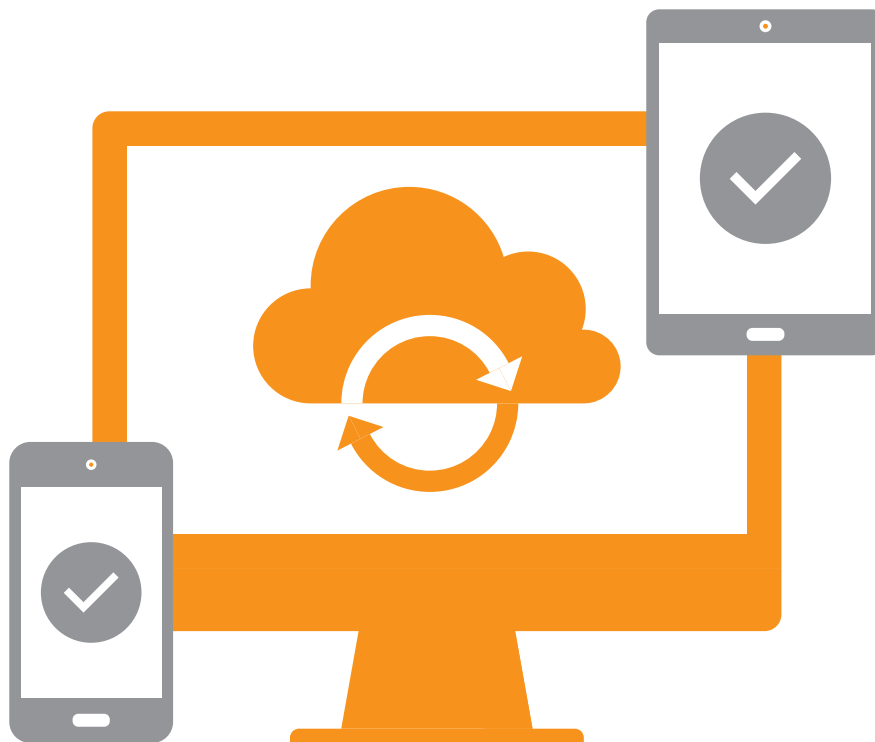
It also makes running a unified telecoms system across multiple sites complicated, as each site needs its own infrastructure. And when the subsequent cost of maintaining that physical infrastructure is considered, it becomes hard to achieve an acceptable return on investment.

A hosted solution

A hosted communications solution removes many of these complexities. New extensions and users can be brought online in a matter of minutes. New locations can simply be added to the network too - whether it's a whole new office or one remote worker. Any employee can access their calls remotely and calls can be routed to an emplyee's mobile device or office using a mobile app.

This facilitates the agility that employees and businesses need in order to respond to the enduring disruption faced in the connected age. And it frees companies to deliver higher orders of value across the business.

In the connected age, business systems need to run 24 hours a day. Yet it can take days or even weeks to restore full functionality to on-site telecoms systems in the event of a power cut or other damage to office premises. During that time, leads grow cold and customers lose patience.

In the connected age, business systems need to run 24 hours a day. Yet it can take days or even weeks to restore full functionality to on-site telecoms systems in the event of a power cut or other damage to office premises.

During that time, leads grow cold and customers lose patience.

Enabling change

Businesses that change IT and comms infrastructure have a healthy fear of the domino effect. Changing one piece of infrastructure can affect systems that affect processes that affect job descriptions. The domino effect goes on.

But a well-designed hosted telecoms solution can integrate, evolve and scale alongside existing systems with minimal disruption. And there should be no loss of control over how it runs. Companies can decide which services and features are needed, then control them through a simple online interface. It becomes so easy to reconfigure requirements that telecoms providers don't need to be contacted to make a change.

In the ultra-competitive connected age, businesses need to regularly adjust processes to maintain efficiency - and to maintain profit margins - without significantly increasing prices. To achieve this, businesses and the systems they rely on must be agile at the core.

It starts with agile technology.

Customers, employees and shareholders demand it.