votacall)))

How the Cloud Promotes Collaboration & Drives Workplace Productivity

A Guide to Leveraging Cloud Technology to Reach New Levels of Business Productivity

A WORD ABOUT PRODUCTIVITY

TECHNOLOGY SHOULD BE AN

EXTENSION OF COMPANY CULTURE

The technology that companies put in place should reflect and cater to the way employees work now, when the workplace is not defined by a physical space and the lines between departments and geographies are increasingly blurred. This involves creating an infrastructure that promotes the sharing of information and real-time collaboration, which are both proven ways to enhance work performance.

Table of contents

When Document "sharing" goes bad
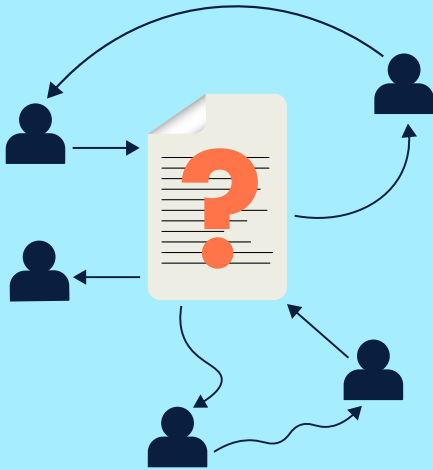
Document Sharing in the Cloud

"It is increasingly clear that the traditional 'create and push' information approach no longer meets employees' evolving needs."

-The Digital Workplace report by Deloitte

Let Technology Reflect Your Company Culture

The technology that companies put it place should reflect and cater to the way employees work now, when the workplace isn't defined by a physical space and the lines between departments and geographies are increasingly blurred. This involves creating an infrastructure that promotes the sharing of information and real-time collaboration, which are both proven ways to enhance work performance.

votacall))
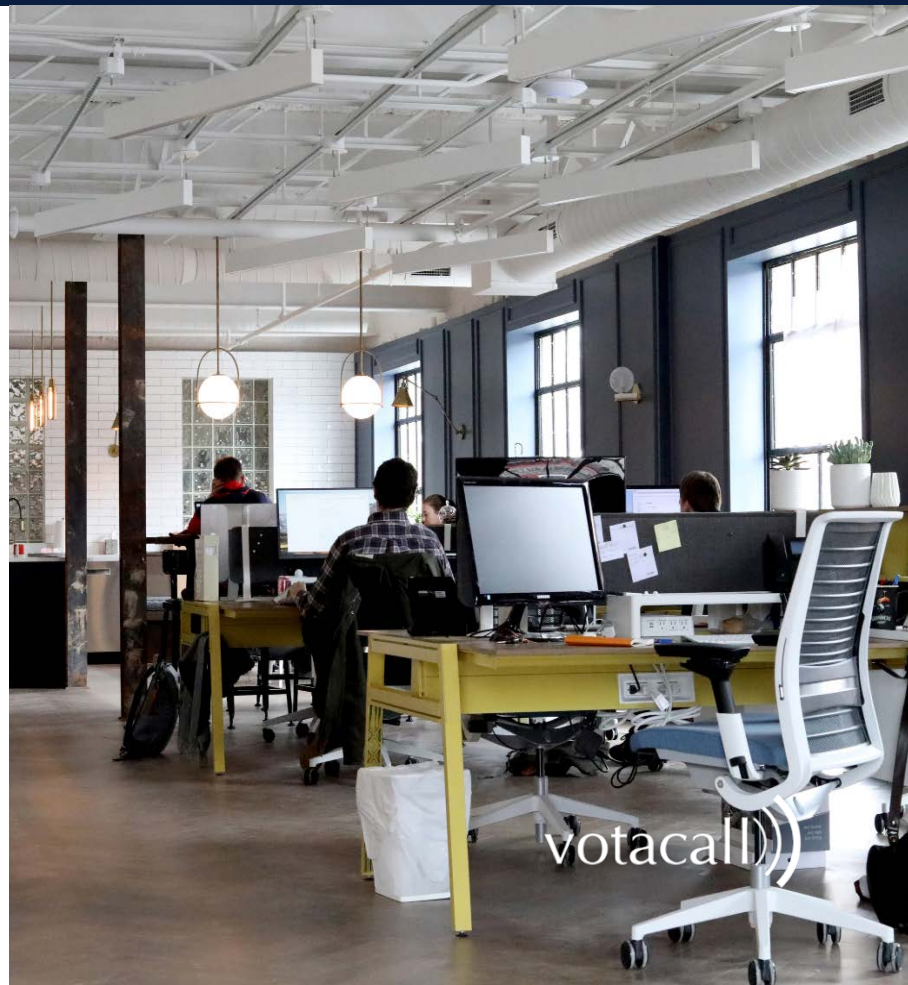
Enter the Cloud

In recent years, cloud-based technology has helped to remove many of the traditional barriers associated with employee productivity. Workers can leverage cloud storage applications to collaborate on projects, make changes in real-time, and access shared resources regardless of where they are or what device they're using. The ability to work together without being face-to-face allows for more flexibility and efficiency, which ultimately makes teams more productive.

Cloud technology has also impacted the way companies communicate. Many businesses have already done away with traditional premise-based phone systems in favor of VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) solutions because of lower ownership costs and improved reliability. Now, cloud communications providers are looking to provide solutions that fit the way people work today, which means going beyond voice and integrating other modes of communication.

Modern Employees Require Modern Solutions

Modern employees require flexibility. They're more mobile, collaborative, and data-driven than ever before. In this guide, we'll look at these trends and discuss how technology leaders can leverage cloud-based communication to open new doors for workplace productivity.

votacall)))

Work Isn't Just for the Office Anymore

It's no secret that our workforces are more dispersed than ever. In fact, Gallup's "State of the American Workplace" report shows that the percentage of employees who said they spent at least some time working remotely increased from 39 to 43% between 2012 and 2016 alone. Surveyed employees also made their desire for increased flexibility clear – 51% said they would change jobs for more flextime, and 37% would move to a job that gave them the ability to work from outside the office at least part of the time.

This is a business trend that has gained momentum in recent years, but it's not without its detractors. Many managers and executives have concerns about the effect working from home would have on their employees' performance, specifically because no one is physically there to hold them accountable. However, research has shown that companies can benefit greatly from embracing and offering more flexible working arrangements - doing so not only makes employees happier, but also more productive.
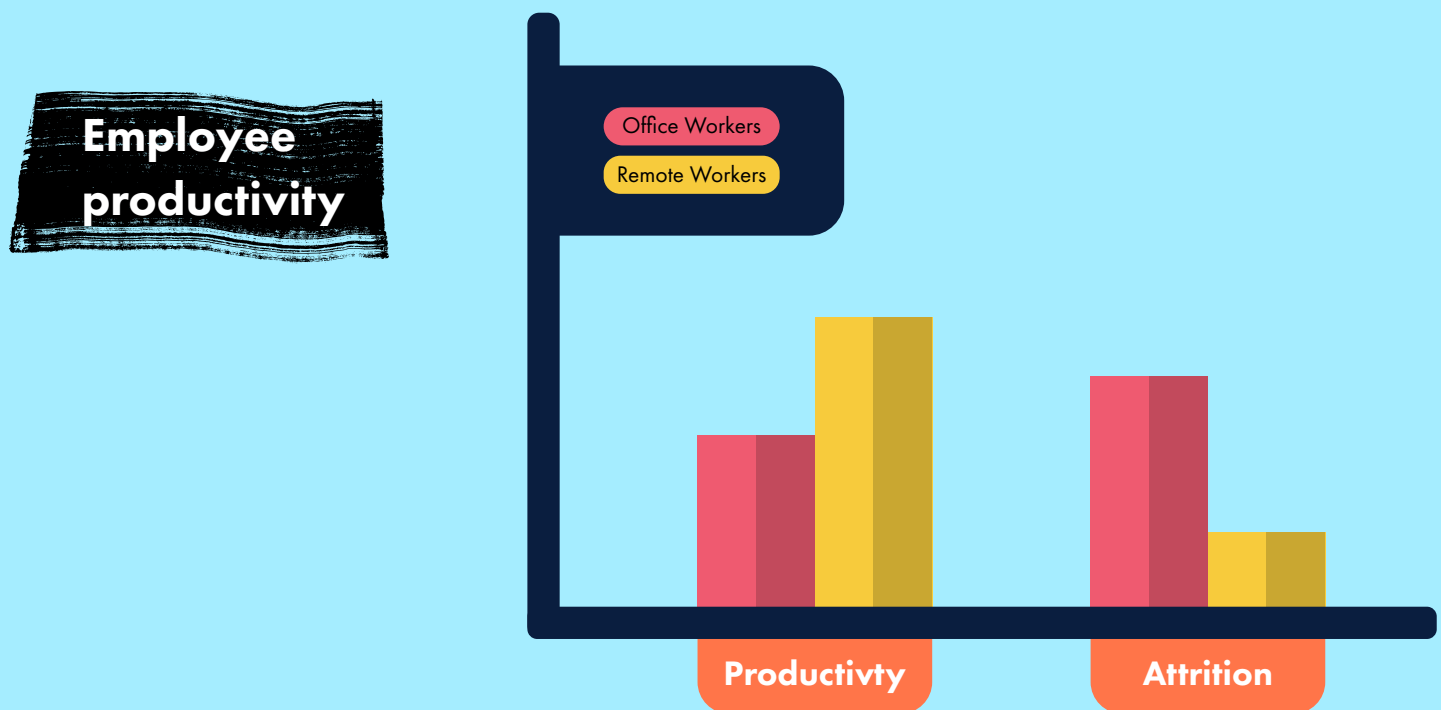
A study led by Stanford University economics professor Michael Bloom found that working from home created a number of business advantages. Over 2 years, Bloom worked with CTrip (China's largest travel agency) to implement a work-from-home program for its employees. While he initially expected the pros and cons to balance each other out, results showed that the remote employees actually increased productivity by 13.5% over those working in the office while also taking fewer sick days and time off. Perhaps most importantly, employees that worked from home showed a 50% lower attrition rate than those who went into the office.

votacall)))

Flexibility is Key

Providing employees with work-from-home options allows them to reduce or eliminate commute times, start work earlier, and have the flexibility to handle family obligations. This impacts productivity in the long run by giving workers their time back, and also impacts the bottom line because companies can save money on office space. The benefits also extend to hiring, not only because an increasing number of workers are more apt to take a job with flexible work arrangements, but because companies that embrace this aren't limited to hiring within specific geographies.

By empowering employees to get projects done on their time, companies make themselves a more appealing place to work for both existing and potential employees. Because working from home is increasingly common and expected, businesses have to focus on providing the technology infrastructure that remote workers need to do their jobs effectively. When they don't, their teams experience lapses in communication which lead to late or missed meetings, project delays, and even missed deadlines if the problems are consistent enough.

"We need to take a more flexible approach to both the workplace and the work we do; one that provides us both the physical and cognitive space to harness the incredible power, insight and experience we offer, but focused not on the individual processes but instead on the overall outcomes our organizations are seeking to achieve."

- David Coplin, Chief Envisioning Officer of Microsoft

votacall)))

Business is More Competitive Than Ever

The modern business landscape is growing increasingly competitive. Most companies, including those that operate in industries that are considered "niche," face more outside threats than ever before. To effectively compete, companies need to back their products and/or services with well-defined strategies around customer acquisition and retention.

Regardless of industry, research shows that increased competition and buyers' access to information has created the need for faster response times. This is true for any employee that's customer-facing, whether it's support teams for existing customers or sales teams for potential ones. For all the value your company provides, customers and prospects can have a hard time seeing it if their needs aren't addressed in a timely manner.

A hot topic among sales & marketing teams is the concept of lead response time – simply put, how fast are your reps getting back to potential customers? This is with good reason. Many studies have been done around this subject, and they all point to the same conclusion: if your company is not available and responsive to potential business inquiries, you will lose the business to competitors.

This doesn't even mean responding during the same business day – the bar is actually much higher. In fact, companies that don't respond to sales inquiries within just 5 minutes decrease their chances of converting leads by 80%. A study by Lead Connect showed that 78% of customers buy from the company that responds to their inquiry first, which means that even if your product is the best fit, you need to be first in line to prove it.

lead conversion

Lead Conversion

80%

5 minutes

Once an Inbound Lead exceeds the **5 minute** follow up threshold, the chances of converting decrease by 80%.

customer acquisition

75%

75% of the people polled buy from the 1st company to respond to an inquiry.

votacall

Responsiveness Matters

Availability and responsiveness are extremely important for companies to acquire new customers, but they're equally crucial to retaining them. Existing customers usually have a number of competing products or services to choose from, but they're less likely to do so if your team is attentive and helpful.

A study conducted by Forrester Research found that 71% of customers say that the most important thing a brand can do to provide good customer service is value their time.

Therefore, companies should seek to provide several points of access, remain accessible during outages, and keep resolution times as low as possible. By handling existing customer inquiries quickly, companies can impact their bottom line by limiting churn.

Technology leaders should aim to arm their customer-facing teams with the tools they need to be productive – from a communications standpoint, this means giving them the ability to be as available and responsive as possible.

Retaining Existing

Recruiting New

Recruiting new customers costs

5x

more than retaining existing ones.

votacall)))

We Have More Ways to Measure Performance

For a company to effectively gauge the performance of its' employees, business leaders have to think about how to measure productivity using quantitative metrics. This naturally varies across different job functions (a salesperson wouldn't be measured by the same metrics as a software developer) but the amount of information that managers have access to today allows them to make more informed decisions. Outside of measuring employee productivity, leveraging data also allows companies to establish best practices.

Let's look back at the two customer-facing functions from the previous section: sales and support.

Traditionally, salespeople have been measured based on qualitative attributes such as their tone, persistence, and ability to deliver compelling pitches & presentations. While those qualities are still important indicators of sales performance, sales managers can now create metrics around performance that help measure a rep's productivity.

For example, sales leaders can measure their team's effort by keeping track of metrics that

show activity such as call volume, number of proposals sent, and quoted revenue. Having real-time access to this kind of data allows companies to evaluate their sales staff in more ways than just revenue, which helps to identify areas that reps can improve. In the past, it was more difficult to pinpoint the source of a rep's success or failure – today, managers can leverage data about activity levels and account targeting to help point their sales teams in the right direction.

Not only does this impact the bottom line by better arming reps to generate revenue, but because a successful salesperson is less likely to churn, organizations can avoid the costs associated with employee attrition.

Establish and Track Metrics & Key Performance Indicators

Hosted VoIP Integrations allow businesses to:

- **Track productivity in real-time**
- **Spot trends - good or bad - and adjust**
- **Establish a framework for performance predictability**

votacall))

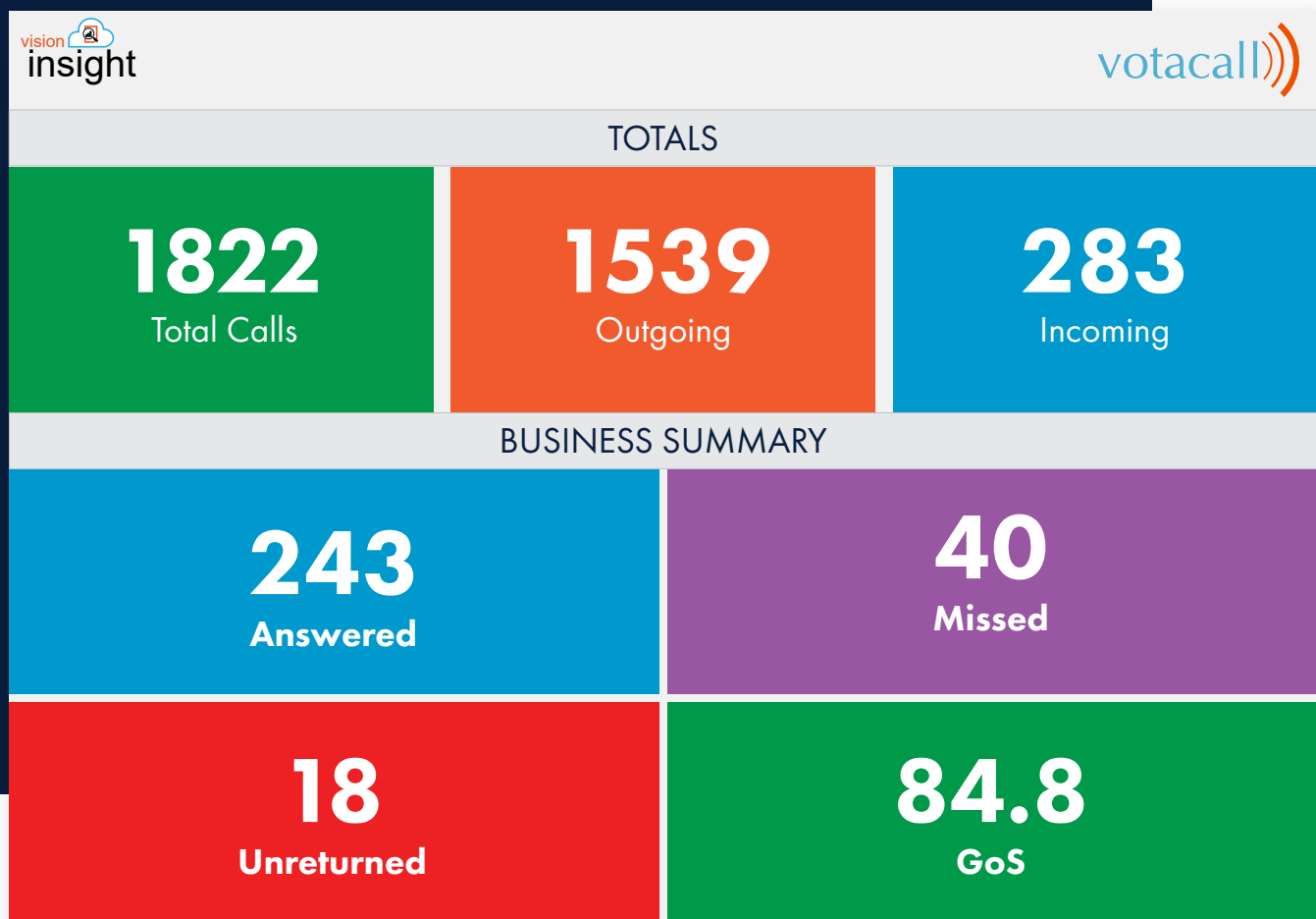| Rep Name	CV	Q	QR	MTD SSP	Projected SSP	Projected Revenue
Chad Smith	▬	▬	$▬	1.52	1.60	95% above Quota
Kyle Schmidt	▬	▬	$▬	1.33	1.37	75% above Quota
Max Fischer	▬	▬	$▬	.93	1.01	50% above Quota

votacall))

Visibility: Measuring Productivity is Required

Measuring the productivity of support teams is extremely important, because their efficacy directly impacts customer satisfaction and retention. Support managers typically know who their best reps are, but can't always pinpoint the source of their success or how to replicate it. Fortunately, there are now ways to monitor a support rep's performance in real-time, which allows for more dynamic evaluation and coaching.

InsightSquared points to open cases, resolutions, and time to resolution as three key metrics that help to identify a productive rep.

Paying attention to this type of data allows support managers to effectively measure effort and success rate, which can help lay a foundation for training new and existing reps.

The same metrics, combined with data about backlogs and call center flow, allow companies to evaluate their support teams as a whole. By arming support managers & administrators with the tools they need to access this data in real time, companies effectively improve their support experience and retain more customers because of it.

vision
insight

votacall)))

TOTALS

1822	**1539**	**283**
Total Calls	Outgoing	Incoming

BUSINESS SUMMARY

243	**40**
Answered	**Missed**

18	**84.8**
Unreturned	**GoS**

votacall)))

Promote & Monitor Collaboration

As we mentioned at the beginning of this guide, workplace productivity requires collaboration between employees. A team's ability to delegate tasks, form established processes and work together to make decisions is important to its success. By creating opportunities for open and frequent communication between employees, companies give their teams a better chance to achieve desired business outcomes.

While the need for workplace collaboration isn't a new concept, the ways in which we collaborate have changed. While phone and email are still popular,businesses are embracing different modes of communication like instant messaging (IM), video, and cloud-based task management applications. This allows employees to choose the most effective communication channel depending on context –example: rather than sending an email to let your team know that you'll be a few minutes late to a meeting, it's easy enough to send an IM so they know ahead of time.

The need for contextual communication has

opened the door for new companies like Slack and Trello to offer software solutions that improve team communication and task management.

This has been a largely positive shift in the way teams collaborate, but it hasn't come without its own set of side effects. Having access to a variety of communication channels has also led to information overload – because employees can be contacted in numerous ways, it can be difficult to stay on top of everything. Communications company Dynamic Signal conducted a survey on to dig into this a bit deeper, and found that over half of workers say they're overwhelmed by the use of multiple platforms. Even more concerning is the fact that two-thirds of employees said they waste between 30-60 minutes per day looking for important information.

The result? A negative impact on the bottom line. 52% of surveyed senior level-executives said that ineffective communication had negative financial implications for their companies.

Technology leaders should focus on finding ways to streamline employee communication. This doesn't necessarily mean removing channels, which could ultimately hinder your teams' ability to work together. Instead, companies should look for ways to control communication overload.

How?

Establish guidelines and protocols that dictate information flow while looking for solutions that make monitoring communication channels a manageable task for employees.

votacall)))

The Case for UCaaS

As the above trends have emerged in business, communications providers have looked for ways to deliver value that go beyond the basic ability to make and receive phone calls. This initially led to the rise of IP telephony, which refers to the practice of running calls as packets of data over the internet as opposed to using traditional landlines. By utilizing VoIP, companies have been able to mitigate some of the traditionally expensive elements of telephony including usage charges, long distance costs, and monthly maintenance fees.

The focus has now shifted to providing communications solutions that cater to the way we work today. Cloud providers have built features that have allowed for more flexibility, mobility, and performance management. Because of that, the decision to switch to a Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) model allows companies to not only impact the bottom line by saving on infrastructure – it's a way to drive workplace productivity by improving your employees' ability to collaborate.

Improved Remote Productivity

In a more traditional communications environment, working from home can be a real challenge due to a lack of accessibility. If co-workers or clients want to reach you, they either need your cell phone number or rely on you to check your inbox consistently. This often causes employees to miss emails and confuse their work and personal calls, which negatively impacts their productivity.

Companies that move to a UCaaS solution

provide their employees with the technology infrastructure they need to do work remotely while communicating just as effectively as they would in the office. In this environment, workers can access their work numbers from wherever they are, and using the device of their choice. As long as they have a computer and an active internet connection, they can sign in to their workspace remotely allowing them to call, email, message, and video conference when needed.

votacall)))

Mobile Enablement

In order to be as responsive as possible, employees need the ability to make and receive calls while they're on the go. This is true for management-level workers that need to be accessible to their teams, as well as the client-facing parts of any organization.

Based on lead response time data, it's clear that companies should be providing their salespeople with the ability to remain available to prospects regardless of where they are. Using cloud-based mobility applications, reps can not only respond to sales in-quiries in real-time, they can also an-swer calls on their work numbers us-ing their cell phone when they come in. This can be useful during commutes, or when a rep receives a call outside of normal business hours from a potential customer in a different time zone.

From a support standpoint, the ability to remain productive when at home or on-the-go is equally important. Using cloud-based communication, administrators can set their teams up in virtual call centers, which allows support reps to make themselves available to answer queued customers regardless of their location. This allows companies to avoid shutting down their support functions during inclement weather, and also allows available agents to sign in to call centers remotely when they're experiencing an unusually high call vol-ume. This makes call centers more effective, which in turn keeps customers happy.
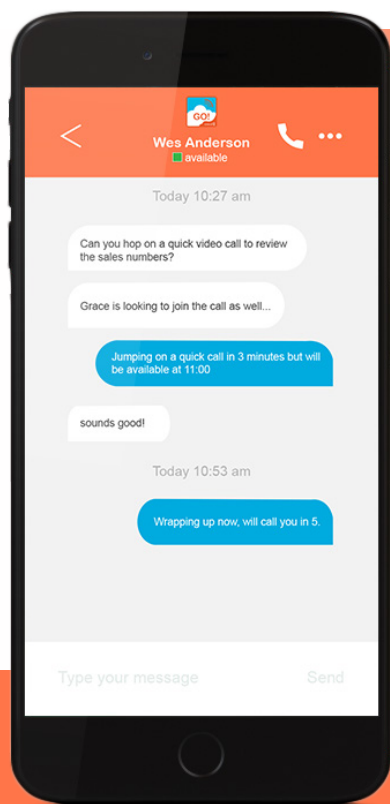
VoIP mobility apps allow employees to...

• **Make/receive business calls seamlessly across all devices**

• **Access business contacts anywhere**

• **Stay connected their way!**
-Voice, Video or IM- they choose what works best in the moment

• **Be accessible & reachable even when not at their desk**

votacall)))

Performance Management

As discussed above, managers that have the ability to access performance metrics in real-time have a better chance at impacting their employees' productivity.

Cloud-based communication platforms provide several integration options that can provide that type of visibility. IP phone systems allow companies to create dashboards that can monitor call activity and allow managers to make adjustment when necessary. For example, a support administrator that notices that one rep is handling the majority of open tickets can route calls to different reps in order to ensure high-quality customer touches and maintain the efficiency of their support teams as a whole.

In the long run, this enables management teams to establish processes that have proven to be efficient, and that enable individual employee productivity.

The same holds true for sales managers – the insights gained from call activity (response times, call duration, rep call volume) can be used to establish best practices across the board, which not only allows companies to standardize around a common process, but also measure productivity based on that process.

Integration of Communication Channels

While facilitating open communication is a must, there is a point that employees can feel overwhelmed by the number of channels they need to monitor. It is important to provide different communication options based on context, but doing so indiscriminately can lead to information overload and lost productivity for workers.

UCaaS is a technology that focuses on integrating communication channels – companies that adopt this type of model connect voice, email, IM, and more using one application. The benefits of this are two-fold – employees no longer have to manage several communication channels, which can be a time-consuming and inefficient task.

Additionally, technology administrators only have to monitor and maintain the performance of one platform, which frees up their time as well.

UCaaS is the communications solution that's tailor-made for the way employees work today. It allows workers to connect using the most effective method for the situation they're in (voice, video etc.) and does so by providing them with one, easy-to-use platform that they can access no matter where they are or what device they're using.

votacall)))

Effective Collaboration Enhances Productivity

In today's business landscape, productivity is defined by results. Whether that means meeting project deadlines or generating revenue, an enhanced ability to leverage data and create performance-based metrics allows companies to distinguish between the groups that seem to be doing the most, and those that are the most effective. As a result, companies are able to better evaluate their overall health and performance while creating more tangible short-term goals.

Today, meeting business goals takes more than just knowing which steps to take – it requires employees to work effectively in teams. Companies who facilitate open communication and the free exchange of information between workers improve team collaboration, which gives them the best chance to achieve desired business outcomes.