WHITE PAPER-SHOULD YOU CONSIDER UCaaS?

CURRENT ENVIRONMENT AND CHALLENGE

Organizations spend an enormous amount of money and effort providing effective communications tools for their employees and customers. Most organizations don't have an effective handle on the exact spend, nor the total headcount required to support the various tools that are provided.

This isn't anyone's fault; it's because communications methods have changed over time. No longer is it enough to provide an employee a business phone to use; employees now require the ability to interact in multiple ways to get their jobs done.

This includes voice systems, the ability to use video, messaging with employees and customers, and the ability to share information in a collaborative fashion to get work done.

Add to this the fact that work isn't just a place anymore. Work is the job, and it can be done anywhere. Younger employees grew up with access to modern tools like smartphones, and they demand the ability to do their jobs not just sitting at a desk, but anywhere.

Smart companies are working to get control over all of the communications methods and costs, while reducing the complexity in running and managing these systems.

Here's what most organizations have installed/deployed at this point:

Voice system
Organizations with an on-premises voice system are probably running either an older PBX or a rack-based UC system. Primary vendors for PBX systems is Avaya/their predecessors or Mitel, or some other vendor. Primary vendors for on-premises UC is most likely Cisco.

These systems all require hardware and software, support that has to be kept in force, as well as talented and costly certified individuals to keep it all running.

Video
The vast majority of organizations use WebEx or GoToMeeting for video, although it's rarely used for that. Most use these tools just for collaboration and don't engage video.

Skype is used by some, mainly because it comes with Microsoft Office, so it's effectively free. Some also use Microsoft Lync, but that's seeing reduced importance.

Zoom is growing in popularity as a collaboration tool, even though it was designed to be a video product.

For video, it's not really supported by anyone on-site, because most of the products mentioned above are already Cloud-based services.

Messaging
With the advent of texting, users were looking for an easy way to communicate with others, without having to use email. This is especially true when the messaging is one to many; Slack offers a product that many newer companies have adopted.

The other approach to messaging is individuals using their own smartphones. This presents an issue for companies, as there is no corporate control or record of the messaging. Texting is great for personal use, but for business? Not so much.

Collaboration
Collaboration is mostly about being able to share documents and screens on conference calls. In fact, most meetings are done using WebEx or GoToMeeting.

Does this summary of various communications tools resemble your organization's communication approach? If so, consider this:

- All of these communications methods are distinct and separate; not integrated
- You probably would have a hard time answering the question, "What's your total spend on all of your organization's communications methods?" And that ought to concern you
- The effort required to manage all of this is larger than you think it is, and adds nothing to your organization's bottom line

Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) was created to solve this problem.

WHAT UCaaS LOOKS LIKE

As discussed previously, most organizations have multiple vendors for the different types of communications platforms they use. Each of the vendors has their own way of doing business, their own sales and engineering teams, their own billing approaches, upgrade paths and support requirements, and different people required on your team to tie it all together.

That can be overwhelming at a time when the "Cloud" allows for simplicity and efficiency, and in many cases, lower costs. Think of how your business was simplified when you deployed your organization's email in the Cloud through either Microsoft Office 365 or Google Gmail. Rather than having to "run" the platform, now you get to "use" the application. Much simpler, and in the case of email, much less expensive. IT would take something significant to make you want to move that application back on-premises; it's simply perfectly fit for the Cloud.

UCaaS is having your communications platforms in the Cloud. The intent is for you to no longer have to "run" your organization's communications but rather move to just "using" your communications platforms. UCaaS also allows you to combine some or all of the different platforms, and in one case, you can combine all of your communications platforms into one vendor, **Fuze**.

For the remainder of this White Paper, we're going to focus on **Fuze**, because they are a UCaaS vendor focusing on Enterprises rather than very small businesses, have international presence to support non-US locations, and they combine all of the four (4) communications platforms into one very easy-to-use application.

UCaaS typically starts with moving voice to the Cloud. This means you no longer have a PBX or UC server/software in your data center, nor do you have to handle support, people, and all of the associated challenges with managing an on-premises environment. Voice services are now in the Cloud. This means that **Fuze** is responsible for making sure it all works, and handling all of the back-end infrastructure needed to support this effort.

Next, people will usually add collaboration and video, by simply enabling it on their **Fuze** application. Nothing is required on your side other than deciding to use collaboration and video. You'll no longer need your other collaboration and video applications, so those costs and management effort will be eliminated.

Messaging is usually the last part of UCaaS that's implemented, mainly because people are very particular to their messaging platform, like Slack or Skype.

It's important to note that with **Fuze**, you can start with voice, and then decide which of the other communications platforms you want to add to the platform. **Fuze** can co-exist with whatever you're already using for collaboration, video, and messaging through the use of APIs.

In short, you can combine as much of your communications into one platform as you'd like. Should you choose to use **Fuze** for just voice, that's fine. Should you choose to add other features, that's fine, too. It's your choice.

HOW YOU GET STARTED WITH UCaaS

The best way to get started is to get a good handle on what communications platforms are in use in your organization. This will give us a great base to start from. Remember, we started this White Paper by pointing out that most organizations do not have a good handle on their communications and costs. There's no reason to continue that situation with the UCaaS. Let's start fresh by fixing the entire situation, so that the benefit of **Fuze** UCaaS is as great as we can make it.

Fuze will perform an analysis, free of charge, of your overall communications infrastructure, through a series of interviews with your team and review of your contracts and costs. This analysis will be the start of getting control of your infrastructure and costs related to communications.

During this analysis, **Fuze** and your team will review what applications each type of user will need, so that we'll be able to determine what the right solution would look like.

The analysis presented to you upon completion of the engagement, and again, there is no charge for this work.

Part of the presentation will be the **Fuze** recommended solution, which will include costs and timeframes. **Fuze's** communications services are payable on a monthly subscription basis; it's as simple as $xx/month per user. You can scale up and down very simply as your business changes. Just like you pay for O365 or Gmail. Simple.

MIGRATING TO FUZE

Once you decide you want to deploy UCaaS with **Fuze**, a migration plan is jointly developed. Please note **Fuze** will co-exist with your existing voice service, so there's no need to perform a "heart transplant" to get **Fuze** into your IT infrastructure. The actual migration can take place at your convenience, so as to minimize downtime and confusion.

Fuze can be deployed on the following devices:

- Hardwired desk phone
- Desktop computer
- Notebook computer
- Tablet
- Smart phone

Since **Fuze** is, essentially, an application, it can be deployed on as many of these devices are desired. Also, **Fuze** can be deployed through a browser, so you can use Fuze anywhere at anytime.

The migration can be as fast or as slow as you're comfortable with; your choice. Of course, once you experience **Fuze**, you're going to want the benefits sooner than later.

WORKING WITH ROUNDSTONE SOLUTIONS

Roundstone is a reseller of IT products and services, with over 30 years of experience. Our approach is very hands-on, as we believe it's important to know our Clients and what they're trying to accomplish. Only then can we truly know the right solutions to recommend.

We've kept our costs low, so we are very price competitive. We're knowledgeable and have excellent relationship with both Clients and our vendor partners.

We look forward to the chance to work with you as you consider UCaaS. Feel free to contact us at any time at 925-217-1177or tim@roundstonesolutions.com.