8x8 Essentials
eBook Series

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Operate From Anywhere:
The Next Evolution of Remote Work

In 2020, we learned that remote work is no longer a nice-to-have perk—it is an operational pillar that enables employees to serve customers, generate revenue, reduce costs, and innovate at any time from anywhere using any device.

This essential guide will provide you with valuable insights to accelerate your organization's shift to Operate From Anywhere.

Contents

The new corporate imperative.

Build remote work into your enterprise operations to get the full-scale benefits.

Turning the page on work from home

Over the last several months, IT leaders have found themselves in the center of a C-Suite conversation. For many, work from home was not a priority. However, circumstances dictated that they rapidly shift employees—tens of thousands of them in some cases—from working in the office to working from home often in just a matter of days.

While every IT leader had their own journey during this time, overall, the transition has generally worked thanks to a combination of broadband availability, mobile and cloud solutions and many long hours by countless dedicated IT leaders and their teams. Leaders often found themselves improvising tools that were good enough, at least on a temporary basis.

Good enough took two common forms: begrudgingly sanctioning the use of rogue applications, and cobbling together disparate point solutions to address employees' immediate needs—frequently ignoring policies against the use of personal devices. Under the circumstances, acting quickly to support the move to a virtual work environment was the right choice even though leaders recognized this tactical approach would not lead to long-term sustainability.

These temporary solutions left gaps, silos and sustainability questions: gaps between employee communications and contact center agent-customer communications; organizational and application silos as global teams chose different communications platforms; and sustainability questions about technological approach and long-term cost effectiveness under IT budget duress.

"We've historically partnered with on-premises legacy providers for our communications and contact center, which severely limited the way our employees and contact center agents could interact with each other and service customers."

Mark Groveunder
Senior VP, IT & Customer Service at Acer Inc.

See the Interview

But the landscape has shifted again and now, according to a recent Gartner CFO survey, 74% of companies plan to permanently shift to more remote work post COVID-19 and 80% of Customer Service and Support leaders predict that the transition to work from home will have a lasting impact on the way contact centers operate.

What if we could reimagine communication from the ground up? What if we could reimagine the cost structure created by the complexity of your on-premises communication infrastructure from the ground up? How do we move beyond individual, temporary work-from-home and instead empower every team, department and function, regardless of physical location? Beyond just operating our business remotely, how do we operate from anywhere?

To help leaders on this journey, we recommend they think long-term and answer these key questions:

- How can I ensure a consistent, frictionless and more personalized customer experience—all while call volume is increasing and budgets are shrinking?

- How effectively can I support the organization as processes previously performed face-to-face are now handled remotely?

- What tools will best help boost productivity and bring open collaboration to the entire dispersed workforce— without adding complexity and confusion?

- How do I help provide oversight, control and visibility into every area of the business?

Chapter 1 Takeaways

Navigating the next evolution of remote work requires plotting your course. We see this chapter as the beginning of an organization's transformational journey and hope you will take away the following:

- **View operate from anywhere as the next evolution of work from anywhere**, because thinking of remote work in an operational context acknowledges its centrality to corporate governance, enhancing resilience and other competitive advantages.

- **Evaluate what you have learned in the first half of 2020**, and begin applying those lessons to develop a plan for 2021 and beyond.

- **Act with urgency**—The speed and scale with which you act will determine your success. And while you want to make sure you get the solution that best fits your needs, it is important to research and develop your action plan with haste. Engage trusted advisors to help and accelerate the process if needed.

Introducing Operate from Anywhere

Organizations are evolving from the temporary, individual (or departmental) nature of work from home towards a more holistic approach. "Operate from anywhere" recognizes that most business is a team sport with little room for "silo-doing" and "silo-thinking". It recognizes that long-term business survival requires a strategic approach to communications, one that optimizes productivity, ensures customer retention, maximizes revenue generation, and provides visibility throughout the organization.

This is not a quick-fix, IT-only problem. It is a critical component of good corporate governance that must be top of mind for corporate boards and the entire C-Suite. With 8x8 Open Communication Platform, it's possible to bring together your employees, agents and customers. From anywhere. At any time. And from any device. Today, these are the essentials of business. Start with 8x8.
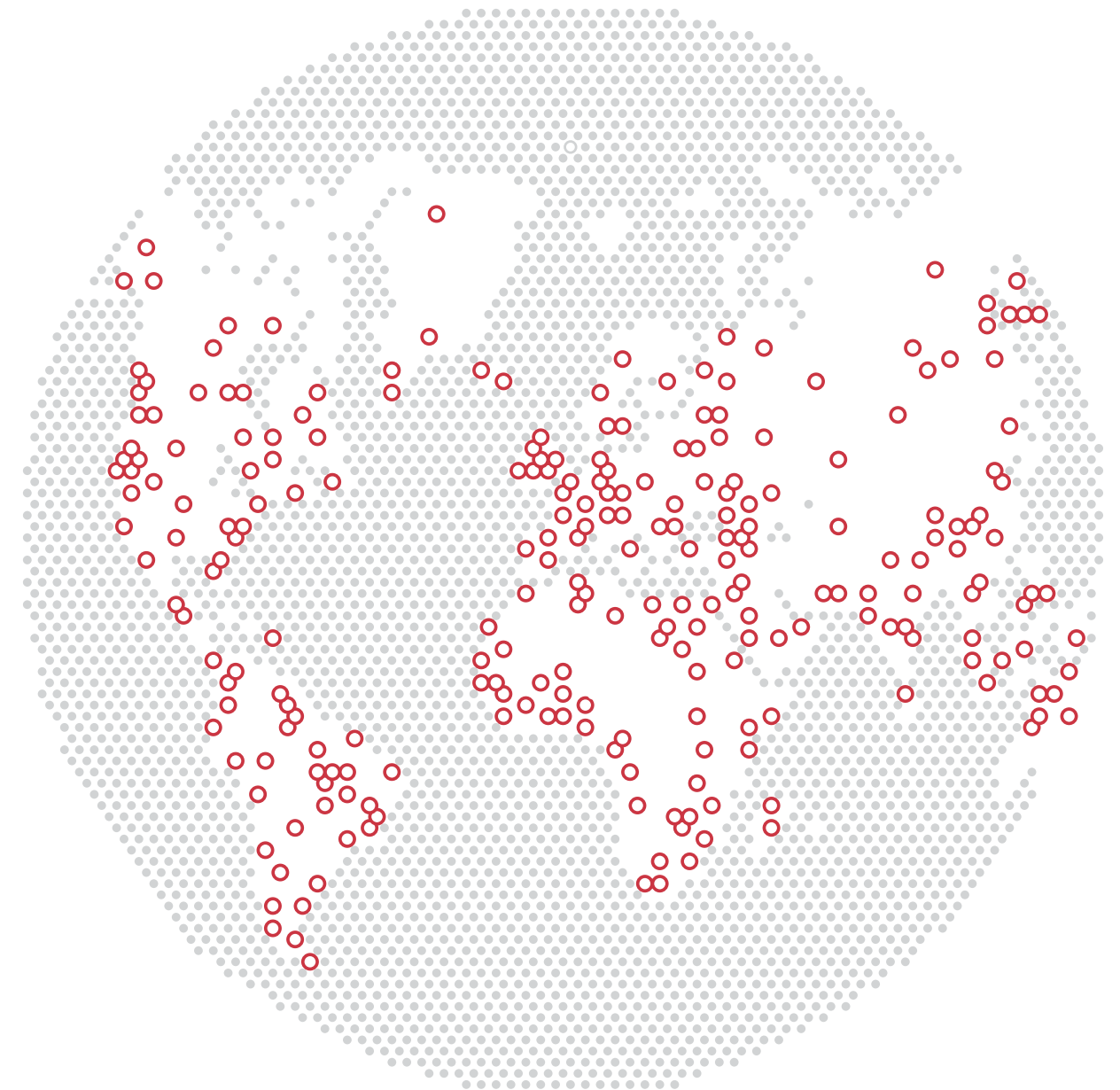
IT Leaders Open Up

8x8 has partnered with leaders to shift their entire operations, from support, to sales, to management and everything in between to a remote working environment, sometimes over a single weekend.
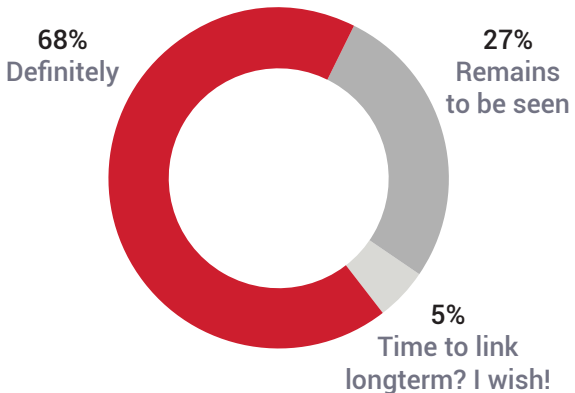
Engage from home: With 8x8, Acer powers remote work and customer engagement across North and South America. They were able to gain actionable insight into customer experience and trends as they evolve enabling them to capitalize on opportunities. Learn More

Service from home: Activate Group LTD fleet management services transitioned their 200 contact center agents to remote work in less than 24 hours, keeping the UK's key workers on the road delivering groceries and operating bus routes. Learn More
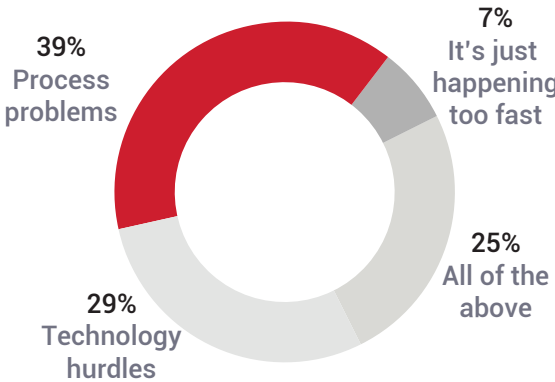
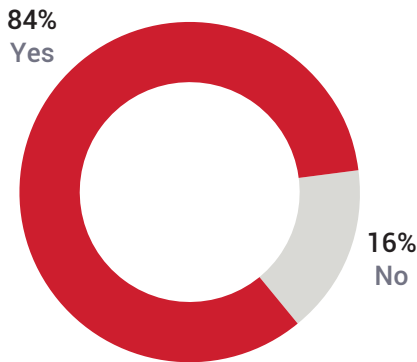### How much of your communication tech is currently on-prem?

10%
Some

68%
None, we operate from anywhere

18%
Most

4%
All of it, sadly
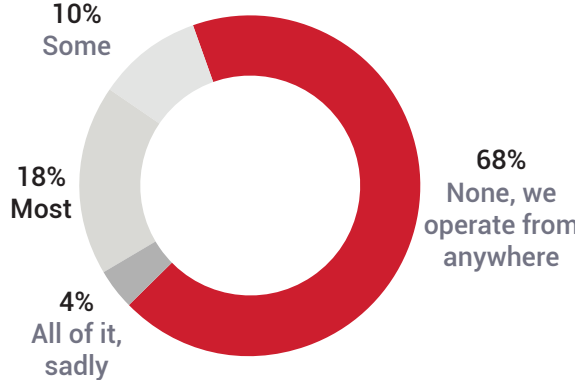
Will work-from-anywhere become a long-term strategy for your org?

68%
Definitely

27%
Remains to be seen

5%
Time to link longterm? I wish!

What's your greatest challenge moving to remote work?

39%
Process problems

7%
It's just happening too fast

25%
All of the above

29%
Technology hurdles

Will your current approach to work-from-anywhere address your long-term needs?

84%
Yes

16%
No

Sources: Facebook, Linkedin, Twitter

The cost/CX high-wire act.

Achieve cost/CSAT balance through intelligent self-service and collaboration.

When times are good, contact centers are CX-centric.

When times are bad, contact centers are a cost center.

Sound familiar? Contact center veterans will agree that this has long been the prevailing wisdom. But today, as the world economy struggles to find equilibrium (and the US deals with the greatest financial setback in 80-90 years), the idea of prioritizing dollars over customer experience seems outrageous. The reality is that business leaders must prioritize both.

Oh yeah. And do it in a way that's never been done before.

Nothing but blue skies

In 2019, Gartner published a survey detailing CEO key priorities and objectives for 2019/2020. At the time—in spite of rising, visible economic challenges—there was no real indicator of impending financial crisis.

In true CEO fashion, mentions related to revenue growth were present, increasing 53% YoY. Mentions of financial controls and cost management were also up. In that same report, however, mentions related to the prioritization and focus on customers decreased 15%. Briefly summarized, CEOs seemed to be focused on revenue growth, profitability, and—in accordance with prevailing wisdom—a little less worried about keeping customers happy.
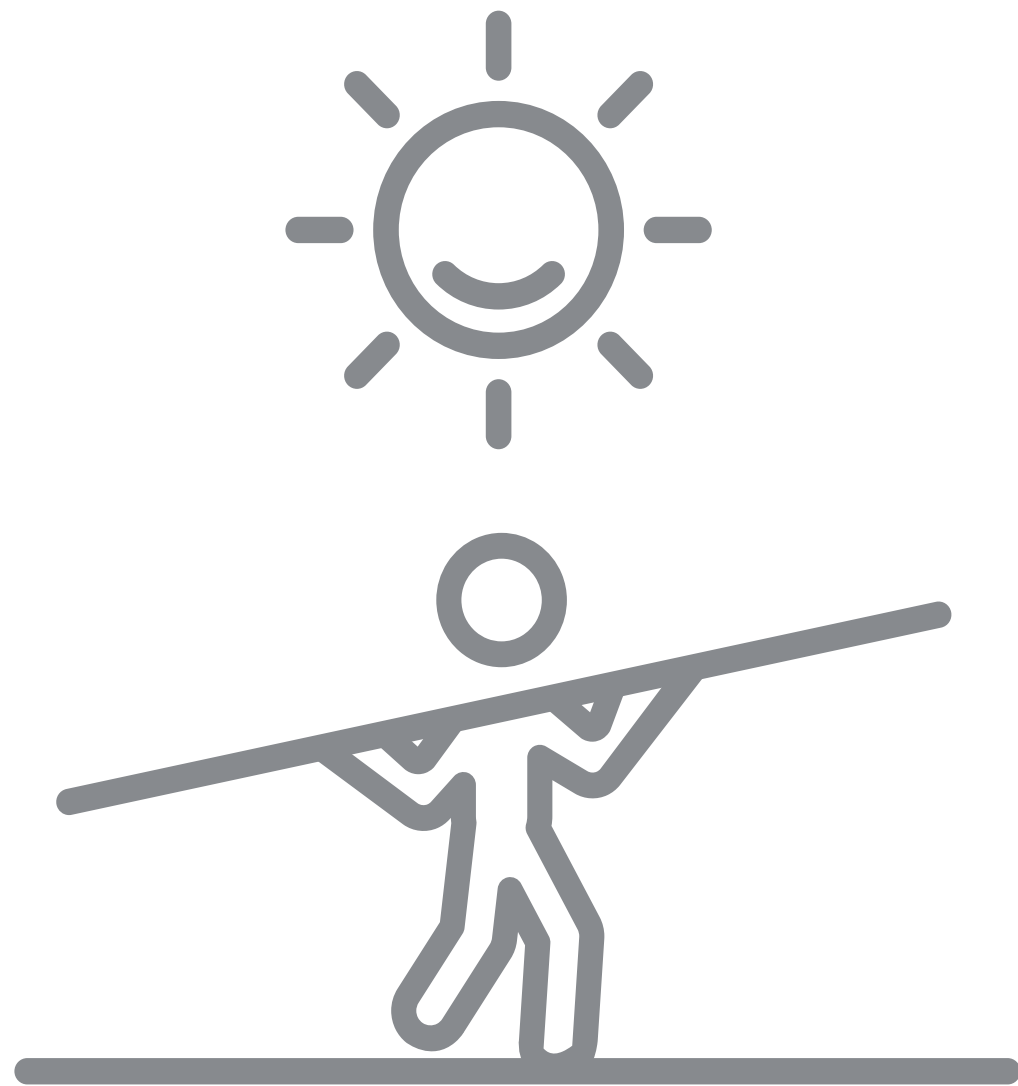
Then, everything changed.
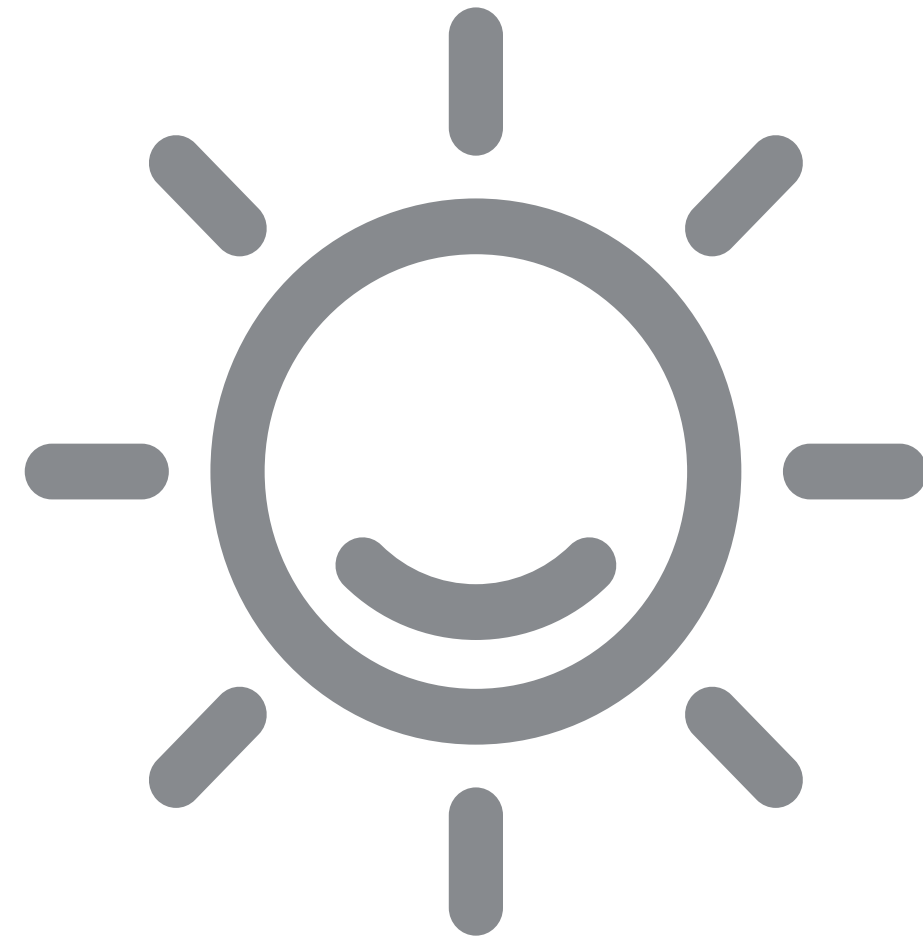
32%

of contact centers had a goal to reduce operating costs without compromising the quality of customer care.

Source: Aberdeen, "The Intelligent Content Center Survey," June 2020

Read Related Research

The digital transformation tightrope

No one could have prepared for 2020. But for companies behind on digital transformation, IT leaders found themselves walking a precarious tightrope.

Employees were sent home. Call volumes spiked while reduced staff availability (whether due to layoffs or remote work challenges) resulted in increased wait times. Gaps in business communications, customer support and popular meeting platforms grew into large chasms. Overnight, IT leaders found themselves struggling to successfully and securely connect employees and customers. Hybrid models and siloed solutions were pushed to the limits. IT was walking a tightrope, and for many, there was simply no safety net.

27%

of those respondents cited outdated technology infrastructure as a roadblock.

Source: Aberdeen, "The Intelligent Content Center Survey," June 2020

Read Related Research

The customer experience high-wire act

Customers today expect fast, frictionless, personalized service. In the midst of a global crisis, the stakes are even higher, and businesses recognize this. According to a June 2020 survey conducted by Aberdeen, **66% of contact centers today still rank improving customer experience results and consistency as their top goal.**
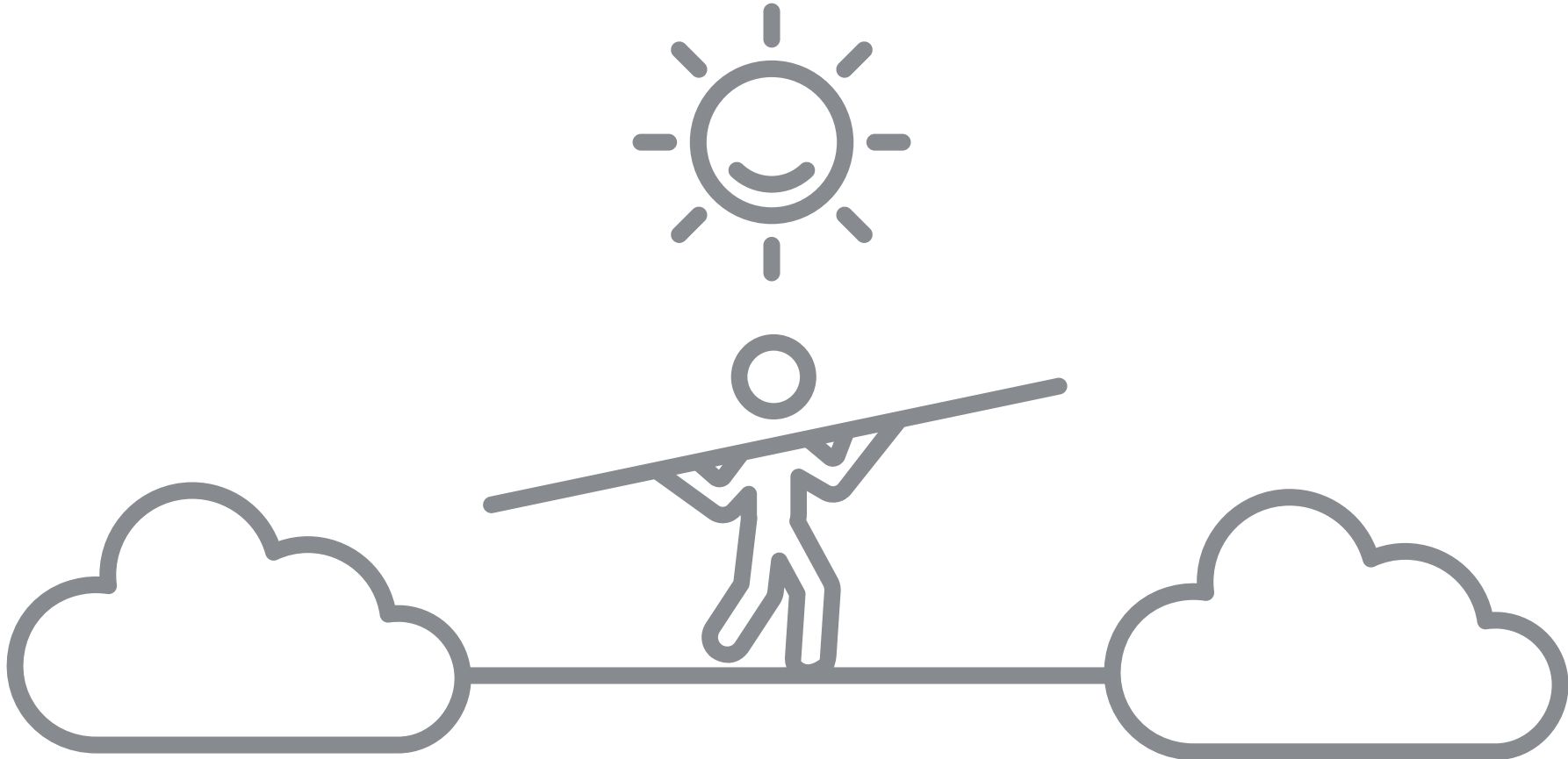
Typically, organizations look to tackle this first through automation. Historically, this is not uncommon. The Brookings Institution reports that for each of the three recessions that have occurred over the last 30 years, the pace of automation has increased.

Fortunately, we are at a unique time in which self-service and the use of automation no longer detracts from a contact center's ability to provide exemplary custom experience. In fact, self-service is now the preferred form of service.

But self-service of the past is not the same thing as the AI-assisted self-service options we see today. We have evolved from auto attendants to basic IVR to a full, intelligent conversational exchange. In June 2020, Gartner updated its "The Use of Conversational AI for Customer Service" report, projecting that **20% of customer service interactions will be handled by conversational agents** by 2022 and that 30% of all organizations will utilize AI-enabled process orchestration and intelligence.

It's fairly easy to quantify the benefits and ROI of conversational AI technology. It's also easy to understand why IT leaders would feel especially pressured during this time. They were already walking the digital transformation tightrope, when increased pressure to meet customer expectations during a time of crisis elevated that rope to a high wire. AI assisted self-service is all about options; the question is, where to start?

Customer self-service tipping point

98%

would prefer NOT to have to interact directly with a person.

Source: Adobe, "The State of Voice Assistants".

85%

will start with self-service in 2022, up from 48% today.

Source: Gartner, "How to evaluate what customer self-service options your customer want".

A.I. Usage in Contact Centers
Areas of Improvement

3.2%		**10.5%**

Customer retention

2.9%		**10.1%**

CSAT

1.1%		**8.8%**

Customer effort score

0% 11%

■ Not using A.I.   ■ Using A.I.

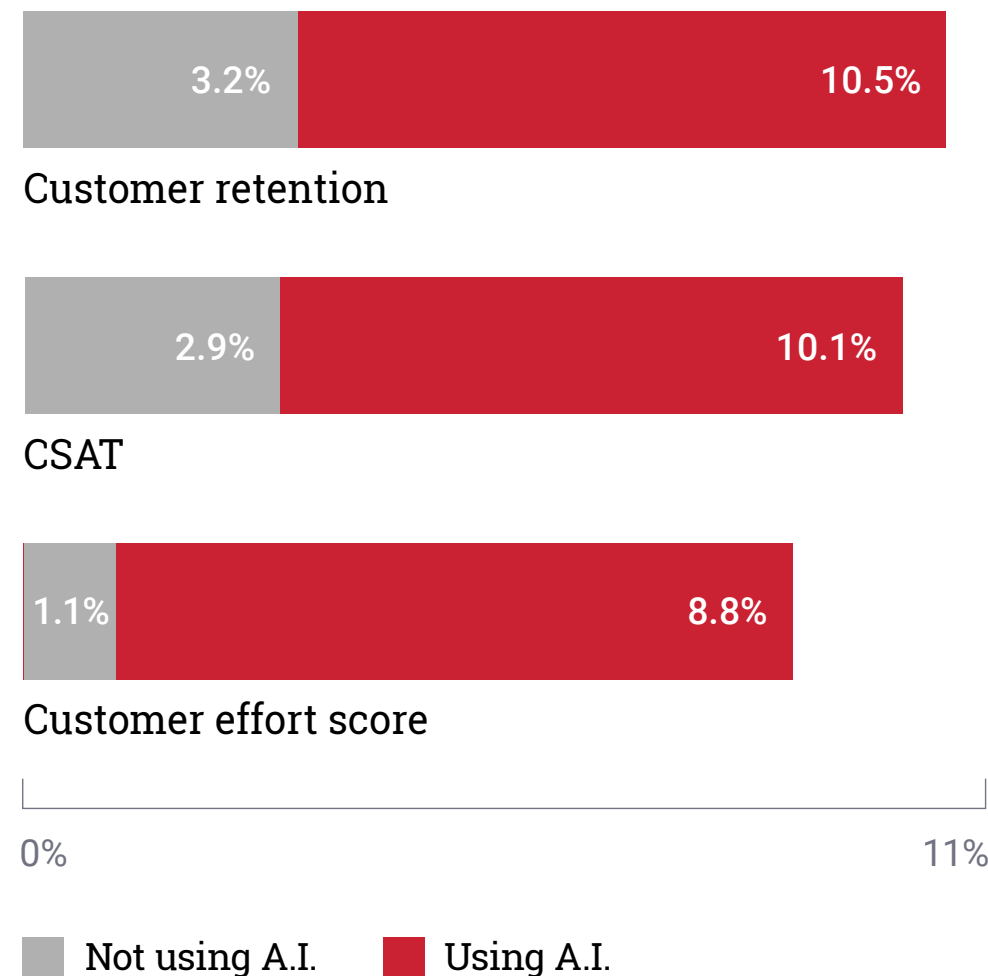Source: Aberdeen, "The Intelligent Contact Center Survey," June 2020

The intelligent answer

To take advantage of these powerful technologies, you must first start with a cloud solution. Establish what problems you are trying to solve and evaluate how, for example, an intelligent IVR or virtual assistant can help: whether that be to enhance current traditional self-service options, ensure 24/7 availability, or improve efficiency by automating routine calls while freeing up agents time for more complex interactions. The operational and financial benefits can be easily quantified.

When it comes to customer experience, Aberdeen's June 2020 research shows that adopters of AI-enabled contact center technologies demonstrate clear improvement in customer retention, CSAT, and customer effort score.

Remember, the use of AI assisted self-service doesn't mean zero live agents, it means better, more effective live agents and faster resolution.

Beyond the high-wire: The communication-collaboration skywalk

While most customers today first look to self-service to resolve issues, live agents remain a critical second line of defense. Done right, automation frees up those agents to deal with more complex interactions.

Connecting communication and collaboration

To successfully resolve complex issues, agents often rely on the input and involvement of other individuals, teams and departments within an organization. First call resolution (FCR) is an important KPI for contact centers and is directly correlated to CSAT improvements.

Never before has the ability to communicate and collaborate across an organization been so important in resolving customer issues. When agents are not working physically side-by-side, rapid knowledge-sharing and collaboration become more challenging. According to Aberdeen, more than one in three research respondents cite the lack of collaboration between the contact center and other parts of the business as a roadblock to achieving their customer experience goals.
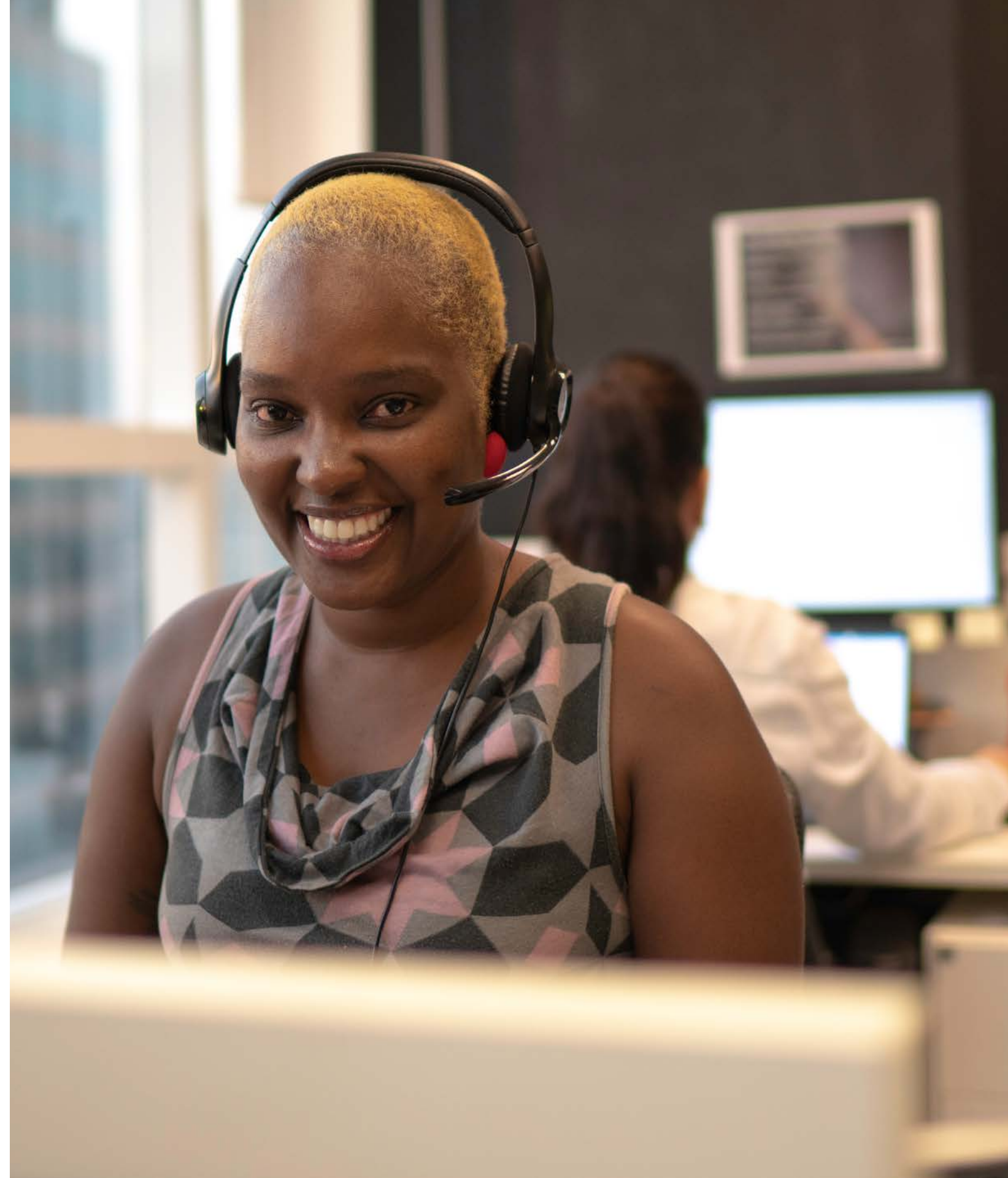
So why do so many organizations find it difficult to support collaboration? There is certainly no lack of tools, apps or targeted point solutions. But for IT leaders, success depends on connecting these technologies across the organization in a unified, seamless, and secure way.

This is where a single platform approach to communication and collaboration makes sense. By integrating native voice, video, chat, contact center, and enterprise-class API solutions into one global, secure, reliable cloud communications platform, people are more connected, collaborative and productive no matter where they are in the world.

"Our ticket sales and service team are working at full capacity and function just as if they were sitting next to each other in the offices…"

Brian H.
Senior Director of Tech, Kansas City Royals

Chapter 2 Takeaways

To walk the high wire of cost, quality, and customer experience, IT leaders need to eliminate silos, facilitate collaboration, and provide intelligent self-service. And they need to do this in a secure, reliable, grounded way that supports the unique requirements of remote agents. Bring business communication, collaboration, contact center, and AI assisted self-service together, and you can effectively operate from anywhere and ensure long-term business survival.

Resources

Check out these resources to help you evaluate your current customer service environment:

Whitepaper

The ROI of Uniting Unified Communications and Contact Center

Blog

Rethinking Video Meetings to Increase Customer Success

Resource
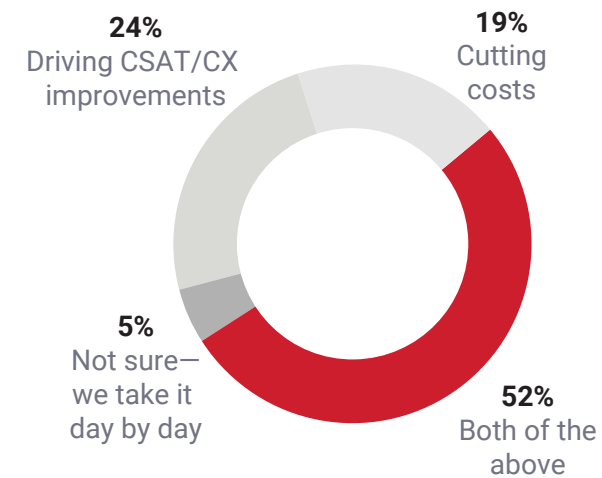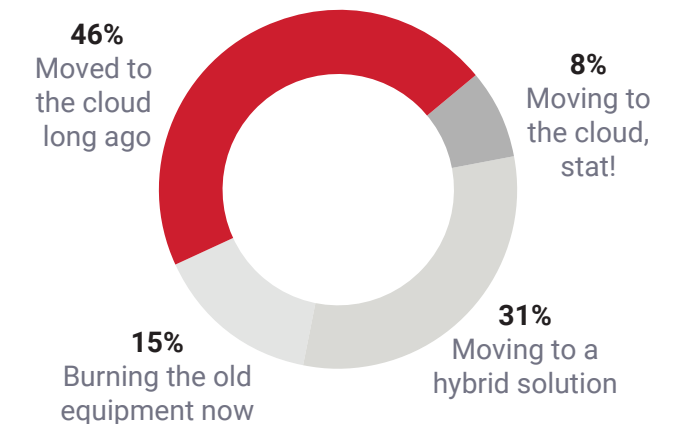
Contact Center Work from Home Checklist

Interview

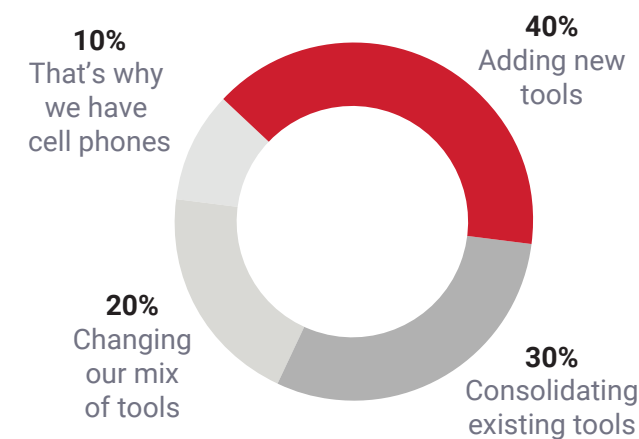Acer balances customer experience and costs with 8x8

8x8 Poll Results

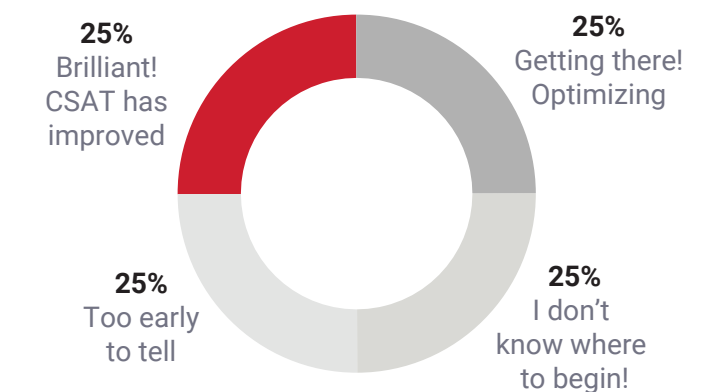**What's most important to your long-term business survival?**

- 24% Driving CSAT/CX improvements
- 19% Cutting costs
- 5% Not sure—we take it day by day
- 52% Both of the above

What is the status of your digital transformation initiatives in 2020?

- 46% Moved to the cloud long ago
- 8% Moving to the cloud, stat!
- 15% Burning the old equipment now
- 31% Moving to a hybrid solution

How has your use of collaboration tools changed in 2020?

- 10% That's why we have cell phones
- 40% Adding new tools
- 20% Changing our mix of tools
- 30% Consolidating existing tools

How effective are AI tools in handling your customers' inquiries?

- 25% Brilliant! CSAT has improved
- 25% Getting there! Optimizing
- 25% Too early to tell
- 25% I don't know where to begin!

Sources: Facebook, Linkedin, Twitter

3

The productivity paradigm.

Create a culture of productivity
with a tech-first approach.

The shift to remote work has presented both challenge and opportunity, and business leaders are looking for more permanent strategies to boost employee productivity.

But what if, rather than a declaration made by leadership, productivity is actually a byproduct of culture? Simply put, steadfast productivity cannot be demanded. And research is proving that productive workforces have something in common: employees are engaged and connected. According to The McKinsey Global Institute, productivity improves by 20%-25% in organizations where employees are connected.

If productivity is a proven byproduct of connectedness and collaboration within the culture, how can organizations work to cultivate this kind of environment? And what does this look like for businesses supporting highly distributed, remote employees? How do we create a culture that drives productivity and transforms the concept of work from home to a successful operate-from-anywhere business model?

20-25%

Improvements in productivity when organizations ensure employees are connected.

Source: McKinsey Global Institute

Start with the right foundation for success.

To help illustrate, let's use a sports analogy. Basketball players, for instance, are typically required to do a variety of drills and performance enhancing activities that will never be seen on the court. The speed ladder agility drill, for example, would most likely look absurd if all of a sudden you watched your favorite ball player move up and down the court in such a way. But this drill helps players become more agile, quick to respond, and build endurance. It builds a solid foundation for the player, and therefore the team, to excel. And without these key building blocks, it will be difficult for the team to thrive.

Messaging

CC

QM

Video

Analytics
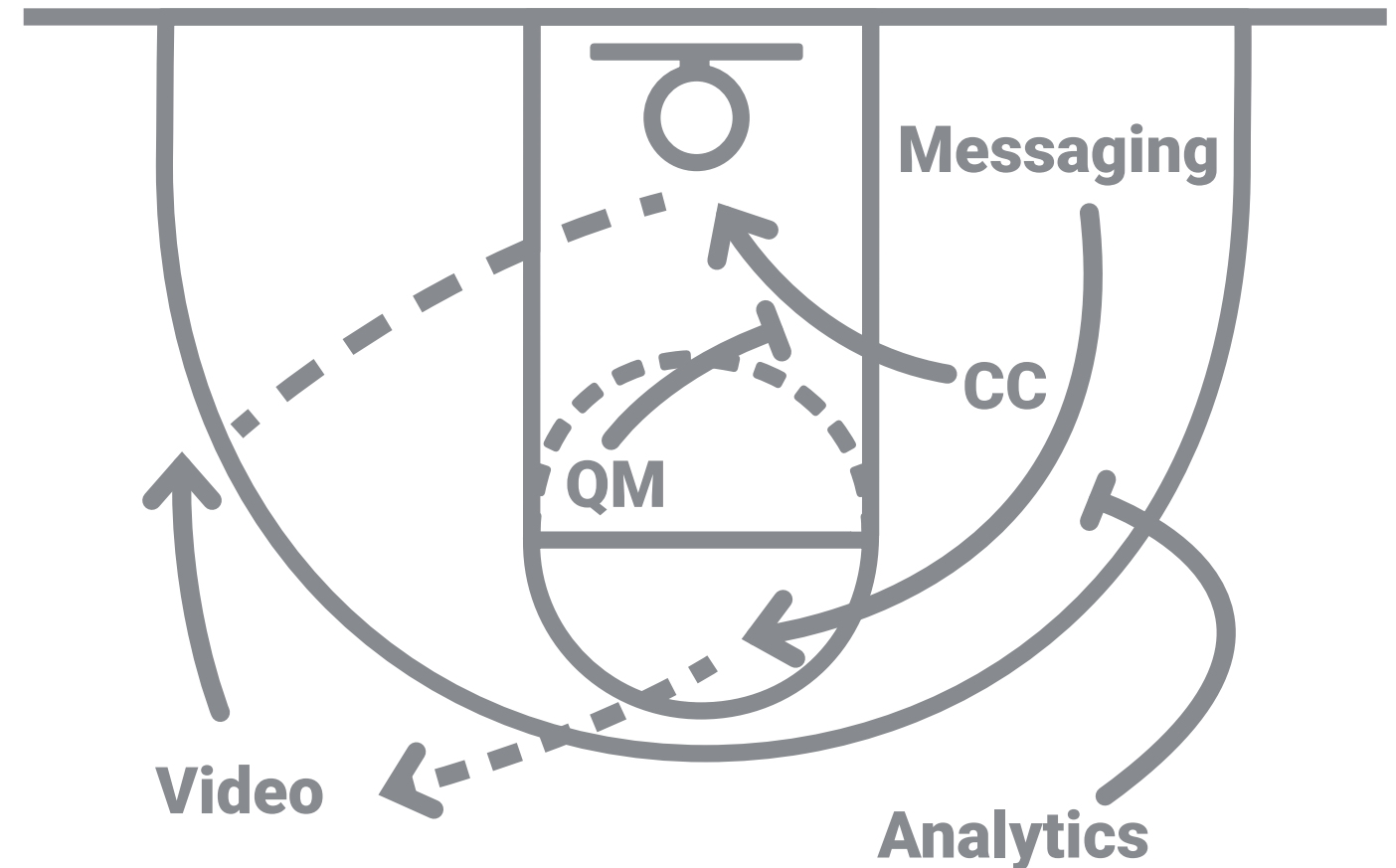
The same is true for organizations. Employees need the fundamentals, the basics—the drills, if you will—in order to be effective. By providing the right drills, organizations build a foundation for productivity to flourish.

Collaboration and connectedness are an established part of the fabric of high-performing organizations. So for today's dispersed organizations, these drills must include stimulating a culture around connectedness.

Streamlined technology is the catalyst for productivity.

Sadly, most remote workers do not currently feel connected or collaborative in their current environment. A recent study looking at the impact of remote work since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic found that roughly 54% of respondents said their primary challenge in working from home was feeling disconnected or alone.

54%

Respondents said their primary challenge in working from home was feeling disconnected or alone.

Source: ServiceNow's "Work From Home Productivity Study" June 2020

It's easy to look to technology as a panacea for productivity woes, but rapid uptake of fragmented communications tools in recent months hasn't led to sustainable improvement. There's a reason many of us continue to feel like we're working on remote islands, despite access to several communications apps across our devices.

The problem is not that those communications tools don't work, it's that they don't work together. When faced with an overflowing home screen of apps, employees are bound to get overwhelmed, becoming more frustrated and disconnected. The truth is businesses can't just add more disjointed communications and collaboration tools and expect productivity to increase. Check out this infographic.

To create a real culture of connectedness that fosters productivity, it's time to unify that toolset and eliminate app confusion. By bringing the technology together, you'll set the business up to naturally increase productivity, much like basketball drills become the tightly knit fabric of the team's skill set. The tools become less of the focus, and instead you are left with a ripple effect of strong communication and engagement flowing throughout your organization. Distance melts away as you naturally feel connected to employees that may be sitting 50, 500, or 3,000 miles away.

A single platform for communications, collaboration, and contact center empowers your employees to operate more independently and more productively. Unifying these tools also provides greater organizational transparency simplifies the management, monitoring, and tracking of a dispersed workforce to understand the dynamics that contribute to productivity.

Chapter 3 Takeaways

We've established that a single platform approach is crucial to building a foundation for connectedness and productivity. Let's take a closer look at the benefits organizations can realize.

Communication and collaboration

Instant 1:1 and group messaging are powerful tools to bring people together. We've clearly seen the limit of email, with 96% of workers saying unnecessary emails waste their time.

Live video meetings go a long way to recover some value lost when face-to-face meetings aren't possible, providing connection through body language, eye contact, and other non-verbal cues. A unified communications suite should make video meetings an integral part of its interface and functionality.

Quality management and coaching

Quality management (QM) can have a profound impact on agent empowerment and engagement. Agents are typically highly monitored, which can create a feeling of micromanagement and negatively impact productivity. QM programs can help the agent to feel a greater sense of connection to the end goal. As you share feedback, coaching, and offer new transparency to your agents, this builds trust and connectedness in ways that contribute to productivity. You can also check out these additional seven tips to help boost agent productivity with QM.

Connecting business users and contact center agents

Break down communications silos between business users and contact center agents to accelerate issue resolution and improve experience. Imagine your contact center agents are presented with a question they are unable to answer, but know for certain a different department or individual could easily help. Provide a unified platform to help bring people together, and you'll cultivate a culture of rapid and open collaboration.

Always be improving: Manage through analytics

For agile, data-driven organizations, the real power of a unified communications platform lies in the ability to manage, track, and gain deep insights across the business and contact center. With easy access to analytics, dashboards, and admin tools from anywhere in the world, you can make better decisions, faster.

Technology is no cure-all, but streamlining the technology that brings your employees together will foster a culture of connection and collaboration and supercharge productivity. Think about productivity with a technology-led approach to set your organization up for collaborative success.

Next Steps

In the next chapter, our series explores the existential urgency to expedite your cloud communications planning and implementation. We'll uncover some ways to quickly achieve lasting ROI and some of the principal benefits associated with adopting cloud communications. Until then, check out some of these helpful resources to continue enhancing productivity in the workplace.

Resources

White Paper

Proving the Value of a Collaborative Approach to Your Contact Center

eBook

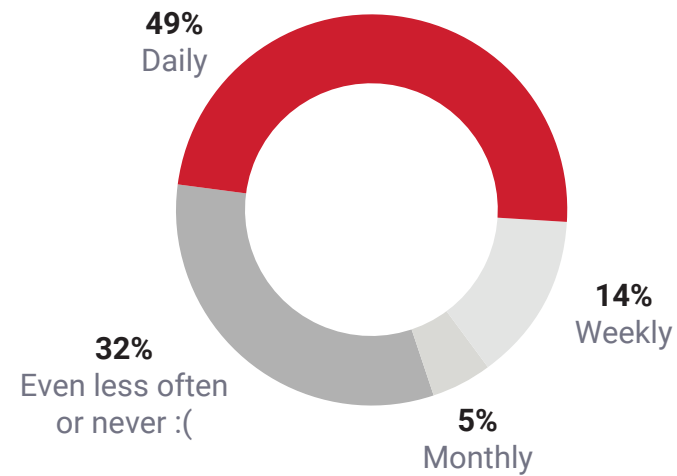Best Practices for Connecting a Remote Workforce

eBook

How to Leverage Quality Management to Transform the Customer Experience

Infographic
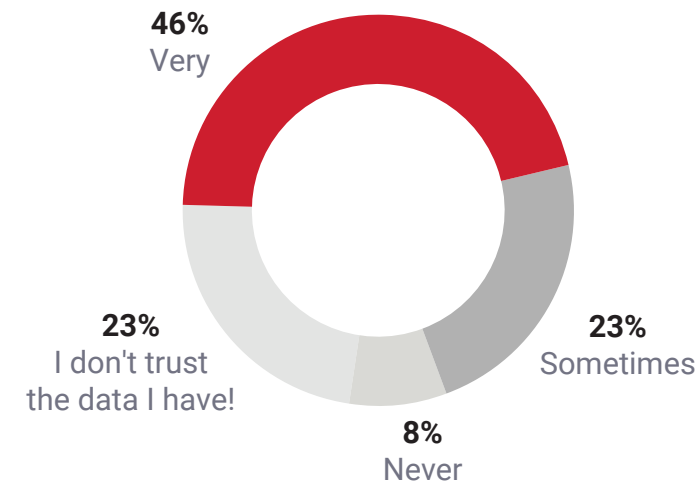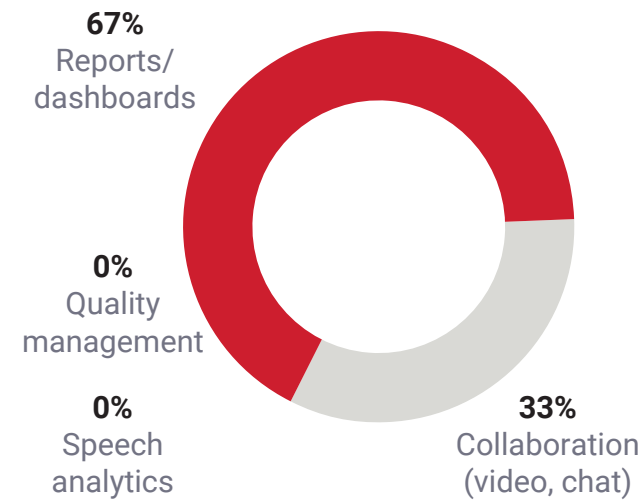
7 Tips to Keep Remote Agents Engaged

8x8 Poll Results

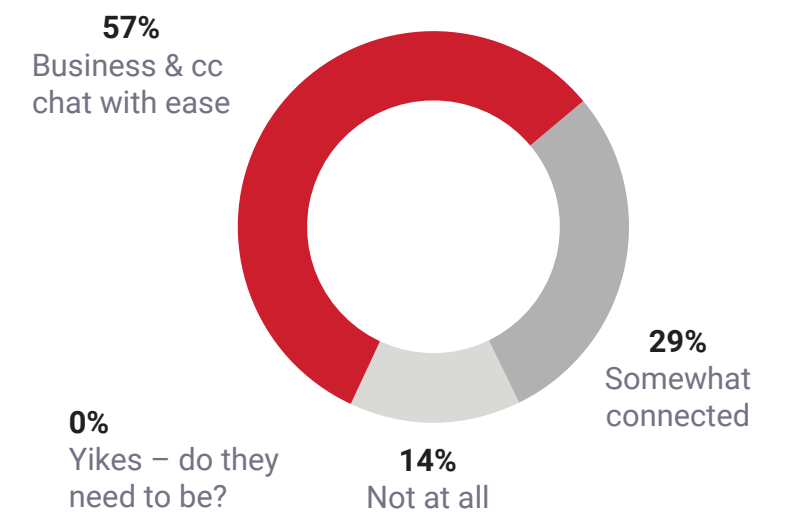### How often do you look at communications data?

49% Daily
14% Weekly
5% Monthly
32% Even less often or never :(

How likely are you to take immediate action based on your communications data?

46% Very
23% Sometimes
8% Never
23% I don't trust the data I have!

What do you find most helpful to manage agent productivity?

67% Reports/ dashboards
33% Collaboration (video, chat)
0% Quality management
0% Speech analytics

How connected is your contact center to the rest of your organization?

57% Business & cc chat with ease
29% Somewhat connected
14% Not at all
0% Yikes – do they need to be?

Sources: Facebook, Linkedin, Twitter

The time is now.

Get better ROI for your communications investments by leveraging a single cloud platform.

There is more urgency than ever to make your move to cloud communications.

This chapter examines ROI factors and business benefits of moving to cloud communications on a single platform. It is the summer of 2020. Leaders must act boldly to invest in these services that can keep their businesses open in normal times and in crises like we are in today. Jobs and businesses are at stake. The time is now to make that transformation.

With few exceptions, on-premises business telephony is headed to the island of cassette tapes, compact-disc players, VCRs, and flip phones. Gartner Research has predicted that "by 2022, four cloud-based UCaaS seat licenses will be sold for every premises-based UC license, driven by an expanding list of cloud communications capabilities in UCaaS solutions. (Source: Top 3 Considerations When Moving From Premises-Based Unified Communications to Cloud-Based UCaaS, 4/3/2020)" That is a quadruple number of licenses for cloud, and the disparity will only grow. This does not mean certain hardware such as handsets cannot be reused. It just means that all infrastructure innovation is happening in the cloud.

Cloud services pay for themselves through elimination and consolidation.

If you say you have no budget to add cloud communications—like telephony, video conferencing, or chat—ask yourself what you could do with extra funds from reducing reliance on other services. What if you could dramatically cut on-premises maintenance costs and reduce global phone bills, all while consolidating licensing agreements? Many of 8x8's customers start realizing positive ROI during their first year of implementation. We see an average of a 30% drop in total cost of ownership over three years compared to premises-based, siloed legacy solutions.

If this latest transformation caught you unprepared, another key advantage of cloud-based communications is that new innovations and updates are delivered automatically so you'll be ready for future challenges and opportunities. And thanks to automated and remote support and administration, no more 4-hour scheduling windows waiting for a field technician.

As you transform more aspects of your business, a unified communications platform positions you to take advantage of the next big thing: embedding communications channels directly into your enterprise applications. We'll learn more about Communications Platform as a Service in subsequent chapters, along with potential for even more ROI thanks to personalized customer interactions.

We would argue that consolidating all business communications—phone, video, fax, SMS, and contact center—to a single vendor can generate the highest, fastest ROI. Cloud communications have evolved to offer an all-in-one platform enabling employees to operate from anywhere, increasing potential productivity, innovation and revenue.

TIP: To get the ROI you deserve, when crafting an RFP, remember to define what success looks like. Listen to a diverse set of end users about their communications and collaboration needs. Press your vendors on how they can help you satisfy those needs.

Calculating ROI

ROI
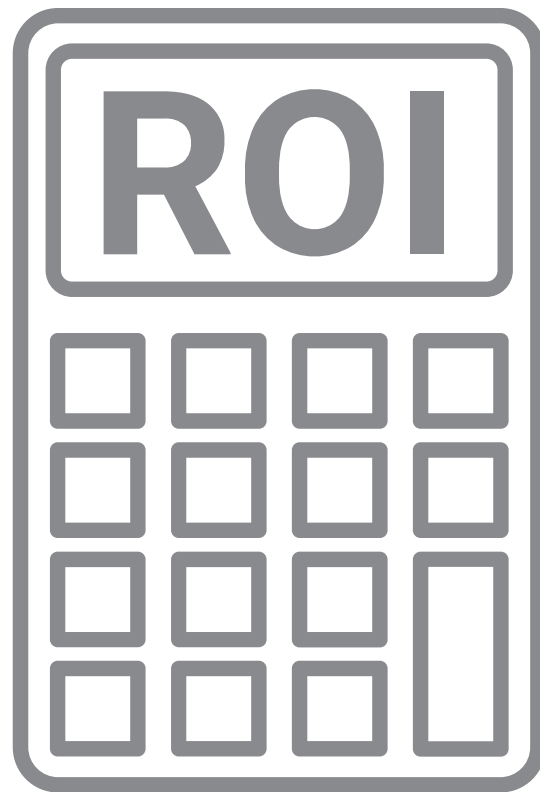
Because ROI is such an important part of discussions about whether and how to migrate to a cloud communications solution, we have created the 8x8 ROI Calculator to give you confidence about what you can save and from where. This tool is a companion to our VoIP Speed Test service that tells you how fast your Internet connection is to the nearest 8x8 server. Having employees use this service can help you plan your networking requirements.

Using the Web-based tool, you enter profile information like the number of main and branch offices plus any contact centers. After you plug in information about your current phone and online collaboration costs, the tool generates a report that estimates your potential monthly and annual cost savings.

TIP: Resolve networking and security requirements before any cloud communications implementation. Part of your experience will be dependent on having the right networking and security capabilities, and user experience is an important element of overall ROI.

Why does single-platform cloud communications beat individual cloud apps?

This is a common early question when beginning to evaluate vendors. Naturally, we believe a unified platform offers customers more flexibility, cost savings, innovation and other benefits over the a-la-carte approach.

While people often say a unified cloud platform offers the benefits of a single vendor, what does that really mean? In reality, those benefits go far beyond volume discounts, licensing consolidation, and streamlined tech support.

Things like:

- Capturing analytics across multiple apps like video conferencing, contact center and voice to gain better insights that can improve operations and performance

- Transitioning seamlessly between multiple channels — for instance, when users are in a voice call and want to switch to a video meeting, to perhaps share a screen, they can do so in a click.

- Making a new world of data available across apps, facilitating AI/machine learning

- Giving users a unified mobile communications app covering voice, video conferencing, chat, SMS, and fax

The 8x8 Open Communication Platform was designed to extend the value of our core communications and collaboration tools through services like our new direct routing solution for Microsoft Teams. It follows a raft of other app integrations like Salesforce, ServiceNow and Office 365. The Open Communications Platform is a clear path to realize the full potential of cloud communications.

"Our research finds significant ROI, on the order of double digits in many cases, across the spectrum of benefits in offering workers a more integrated communications experience. The key is in ensuring that as many communications channels are integrated as native, first-class citizens in a primary hub or in existing communications/meeting solutions."

Dion Hinchcliffe
VP and Principal Analyst, Constellation Research

Going beyond cost and time savings.

Each organization has its own transformation business objectives. Where we see cloud platforms helping customers the most is with speed and scale. Speed is important because you need to adapt quickly to changing conditions. How quickly can you onboard new employees, open new offices or initiate a remote work program when needed? Beyond hard dollar savings, these are important considerations when evaluating cloud communications.

The cloud was made for scaling benefits regionally and globally—even if most of the administration is based out of headquarters. Combining speed with scale leads to:

- Setting up new offices faster

- Reducing product time-to-market

- Improving employee collaboration by breaking down communications and data silos

- Simpler user administration

- Making and receiving lower latency, higher quality calls

- Paying less money for international calling

- Integrating quickly with business apps and CRM tools

- Safeguarding business communications

- Giving employees the flexibility to work from anywhere

- Reducing office space as more staff opt to work remotely

Your organization can accrue these benefits for office employees and contact center workers. Combining cloud-based unified communications with contact center solutions enables even more benefits and ROI opportunities. To get a deeper view of these benefits, check out the research, The ROI of Uniting Unified Communications and Contact Center.

Especially now, ROI goes beyond saving money. It is about keeping your business open and continuing to innovate, providing great customer service and generating revenue as much as it is about saving money.
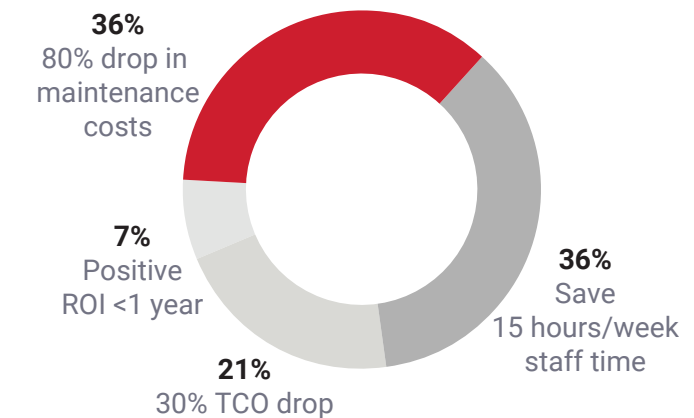
Chapter 4 Takeaways

- The economics of legacy on-premises communications platforms are worsening.
  To be a resilient business, one that is agile with speed and scale, it needs to adopt cloud communications.

- Be sure to factor expected time savings in your ROI modeling.

- Try our ROI Calculator and our VoIP Speed Test service.

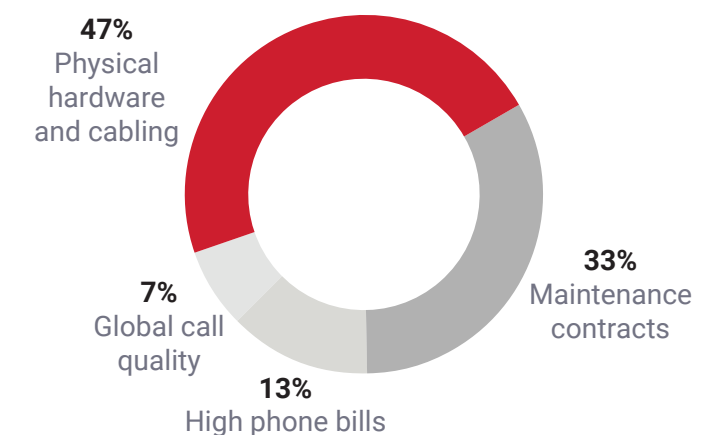- Examine the benefits of using a single cloud platform over a-la-carte apps.

More Reading

- X-Series Solution Brief

- Benefits of a Cloud-Based Business Phone System

- Eliminate Avaya risks: how to move to the cloud with 8x8

- The ROI of Uniting Unified Communications and Contact Center

- When to Move My Contact Center to the Cloud?

- Successful UCaaS adoption requires reliability, analytics and integration

- Cloud Communications Migration Pitfalls — How to Avoid Them

- Maintain Business Readiness with 8x8

- 5 Reasons Why Your Business Needs 8x8 Voice for Microsoft Teams

8x8 Poll Results

Which of the metrics would make your cloud communications successful from a financial perspective?

36%
80% drop in maintenance costs

7%
Positive ROI <1 year

36%
Save 15 hours/week staff time

21%
30% TCO drop

Which aspect of your on-prem phone system are you most excited to say goodbye to?

47%
Physical hardware and cabling

7%
Global call quality

33%
Maintenance contracts

13%
High phone bills

Sources: Facebook, Linkedin, Twitter

Assess your landscape.

Defining the essentials of cross-company collaboration and communication in work's next evolution.

If someone in late 2019 told you that a global pandemic would soon send most work and education home for months on end, you probably would have kept sipping your latte and returned to ordering summer 2020 concert tickets on your phone.

Of course, that's exactly what happened. But as we look at which organizations adapted more effectively, we see agility and resilience as their most common trait, not foresight. Agility and resilience most often supported by deep investment in cloud communications and collaboration. Forward-thinking leaders are now taking steps to build upon this, driving sustainable transformation of people, process and technology, and allowing them to operate, govern, and yes, even educate from anywhere.

Be prepared.

Following on the heels of the first-ever virtual Enterprise Connect conference, *No Jitter* Editor and Enterprise Connect co-chair Beth Schultz published *Enterprise IT on COVID-19: 'I Came, I Saw, I Conquered'*. In it she recapped a roundtable she had moderated with Gary Kohlheim, Director of Services at Laureate International University, a private, online university committed to expanding access to higher education and empowering the greater good. As the 50-year-old university moved online, digital experience became the foundation for engagement between students, staff, and support resources. Laureate International University was early to adopt a cloud-first approach to communications and contact center, initially driven by the desire for a superior student experience across phone, email, SMS, and chat. This shared IT and business goal led Laureate International University to 8x8 and its Open Communications Platform. By implementing a unified cloud platform for CCaaS and UCaaS, they laid the foundation for a consistent student experience, a holistic view of that experience, and a sustainable platform for agility and resilience.

Moving forward.

When discussing Laureate International University pandemic experiences, Kohlheim said its adoption of the 8x8 cloud platform "put us in a really good position to be ready for an event like this." In fact, they were able to transition their professors and staff as well as their contact center specialists to remote work with zero impact to student/professor/staff interaction. Kohlheim emphasized that their adoption of a cloud platform was particularly beneficial from a student perspective. Recent research from Frost & Sullivan, *Communications Platforms: Reaching the Next Innovation Front of Enterprise Communications* compares the platform approach versus standalone applications, finding that "ultimately, a communications platform offers a centralized and complete view of how both people—employees, contact center specialists and customers—and machines (applications, bots, automated marketing campaigns, etc.) interact with customers, prospects, suppliers and partners."
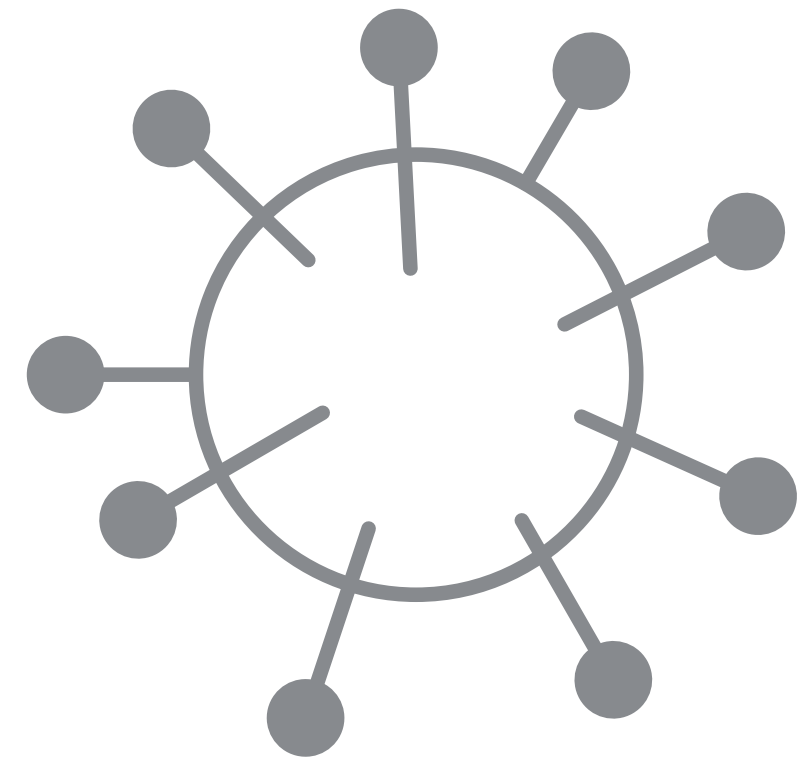
Now, Kohlheim is looking forward to other ways he can support the university and its 50,000+ students. For Kohlheim, that means focusing on experience, "getting [students] information as quickly as possible and being consistent across channels, whether it's a phone call or chat. Providing that same level of service [across channels] is pretty exciting, and we're fortunate that we've been able to stay on that path." Kohlheim credits the communications platform choice with enabling his team to focus their time on "turning things on" to meet organizational needs rather than be mired in development work.

We've seen Laureate International University experience replicated by other 8x8 customers, and IT asset management firm Snow Software found further evidence in its poll of 250 global IT leaders about how the onset of the pandemic had affected their cloud adoption plans. **82% of respondents said they had ramped up their use of cloud** in direct response, and **60% said their use of off-premises technologies had continued to grow since then**. Most businesses now acknowledge that there is no going back, and the benefits of cloud communications platforms extend even beyond agility and resilience.

60% said their use of off-premises technologies had continued to grow since the onset of the pandemic.

Source: Snow Software poll of 250 global IT leaders, June 2020

Assessing the landscape.

In reality, success was not universal. Riverbed's recent Future of Work Survey found that most businesses lacked the appropriate technology, with 69% saying they were not completely prepared to support extensive remote work at the start of the COVID-19 outbreak. Even for those organizations where most employees were already remote, more than half said they were still not completely prepared. Gartner's July 2020 Hype Cycle for Unified Communication and Collaboration Strategies recognized COVID-19's impact on the digital workplace, saying "organizations must reassess their UCC strategies to support the growing importance of remote work and business continuity."

For every successful organization, there's another organization who survived the short-term transition but now recognizes it lacks the capabilities and technical agility to prepare it for the next phase.

69%

of businesses were not completely prepared to support extensive remote work at the start of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Source: Riverbed, Future of Work Global Survey, June 2020

Leaning forward.

Most organizations recognize the value of cloud communications and contact center solutions, but struggle with how to make the move. Legacy phone and contact center solutions can be complex, with no easy rip-and-replace solutions for those on-premises PBX systems.

Successful organizations began preparing for this day several years ago by creating cross-functional teams of contact center, finance, IT and business representatives to drive the analysis and evaluation process for their communications and contact center solutions. This alignment between business and IT is key to long-term success. There is strength in partnerships with business teams able to focus on defining requirements while IT focuses on implementation, operation, and administration, ultimately choosing a solution that meets the needs of both, serving the organization well in challenging times.

Taking the lead.

Laureate International University selected a future-ready communications platform, avoiding the "islands of collaboration" that stem from point solutions. Kohlheim sees their decision as a key success factor over the last six months and what will allow them to quickly advance in the future.

Going forward, the university is expanding its usage of the 8x8 platform to leverage intelligent self-service capabilities. More and more organizations are advancing their use of artificial intelligence—a topic we explore further in our AI Assisted Self Service in the Work from Home Era webinar and in Chapter 2 of our eBook series. The promise of these capabilities is proving critical to overall business continuity and resilience.
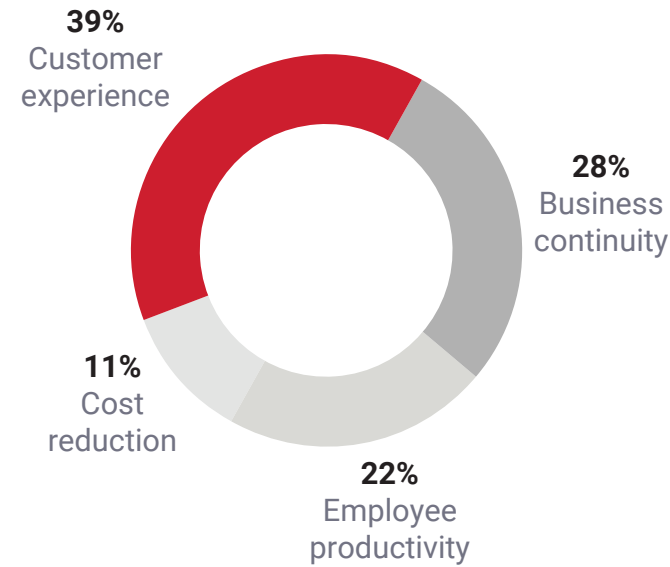
Chapter 5 Takeaways

Many forward-thinking organizations are taking advantage of a single, integrated cloud communications platform to unify voice, video, chat, and SMS, including contact center agents.

You have a choice on your journey to communications centricity. Laureate International University, like thousands of other organizations, chose to invest in the 8x8 Open Communications Platform, providing them with voice, video, chat, contact center, and enterprise APIs.
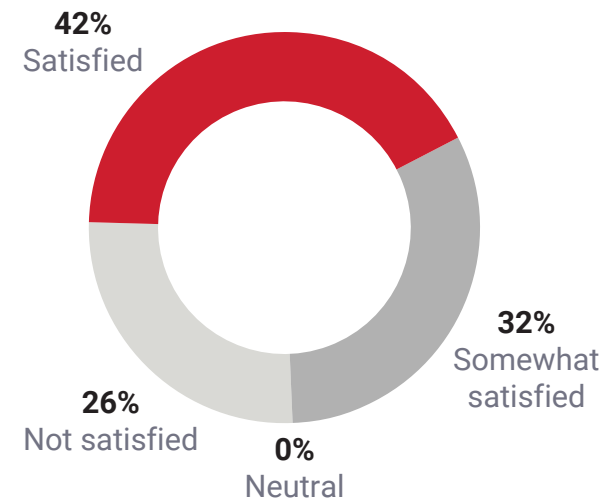
One of those other organizations is Acer. To hear Acer's unique journey, watch our on-demand webinar detailing their lessons learned about enabling their global workforce and pivoting to an operate-from-anywhere mindset.

8x8 Poll Results

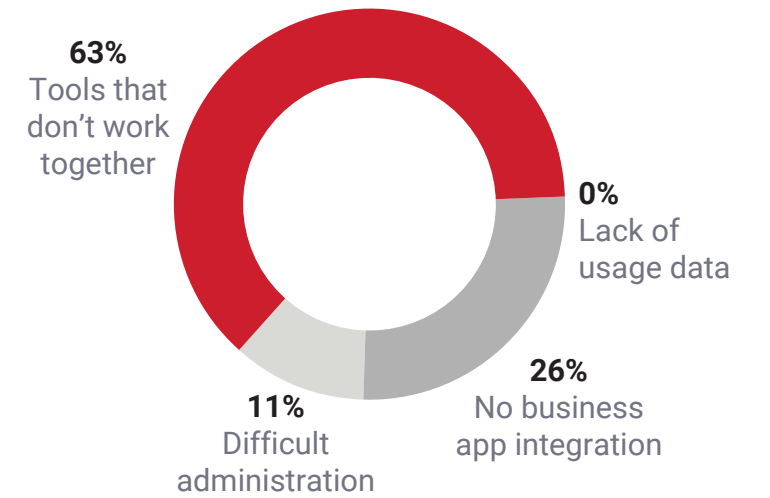### What is most important to you when selecting digital communications tools?

39% Customer experience

28% Business continuity

11% Cost reduction

22% Employee productivity

How satisfied are you with your organization's digital communications tools?

42% Satisfied

32% Somewhat satisfied

26% Not satisfied

0% Neutral

How confident are you in the security & governance of information shared via digital communications tools inside & outside of your company?

50% Not confident

25% Very confident

0% Somewhat confident

25% Only slightly confident
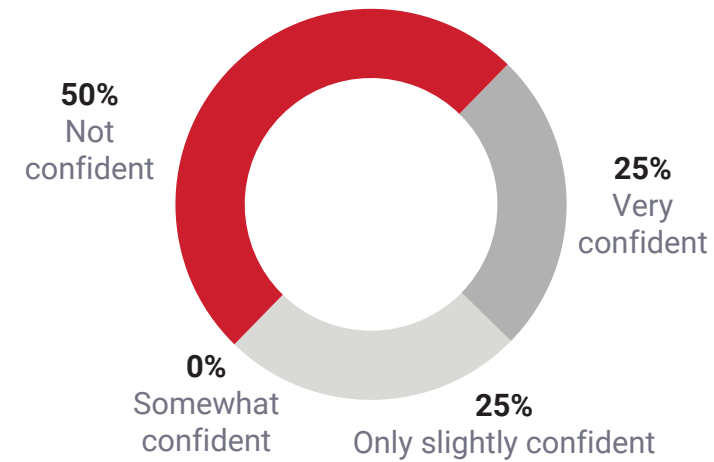
What's the most significant pain point your organization has with communications tools? (e.g. email, Slack, Teams, chat, video conferencing)

63% Tools that don't work together

0% Lack of usage data

11% Difficult administration

26% No business app integration

Sources: Facebook, Linkedin, Twitter

Don't lock down your growth.

Zero to running in the cloud in as few as 48 hours.

Go from zero to running in the cloud, in as few as 48 hours.

Communication is essential for customer experience and employee productivity. Getting it right means having the right combination of technology and technique. It's time to look to the experts: **professional services can help deploy your cloud communications solution fast, and get it done right the first time.** Read on to learn how to augment your IT team's capabilities and connect your business faster, better.

Specialists vs. generalists.

In an all-too-familiar movie scenario, an unsuspecting jumbo-jet passenger—who may have flown a two-seater prop plane years ago—is tossed into the cockpit and must safely land a plane full of panicked, screaming passengers. While one of the engines is on fire.

For many IT leaders, this Hollywood situation feels all-too-real, having been burdened with the sudden responsibility of migrating business and contact center communications to the cloud. In-house IT expertise is typically broad, not deep, and for good reason: many IT functions, like security and governance, are too important to trust in the hands of generalists. And IT leaders are learning overnight that communications and collaboration technology falls into this same category.
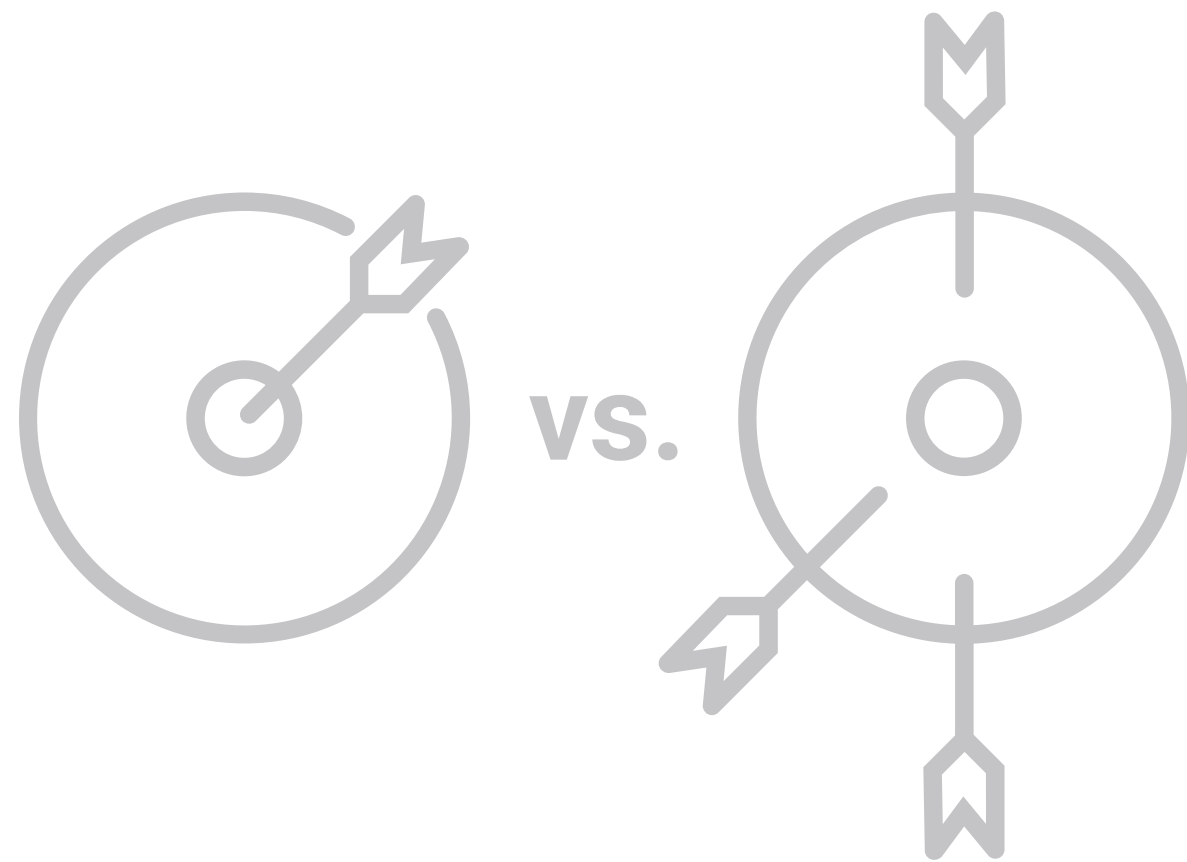
YouTube DIY videos and out-of-date PDFs are no safe way to land in the cloud. Your company's business and contact center communications are far too important to risk on maybe getting it right. After all, will your customers patiently wait while you work out the bugs? Are your competitors already in the cloud, waiting to take that business from you?

Evaluate your IT staff's capabilities. Are you confident they can plan, execute, and optimize a cloud communications migration without business disruption, all while keeping up with day-to-day responsibilities? If you are unsure whether you and your team can do it on your own, it's time to have a discussion with your prospective cloud communications provider.

75%

of businesses surveyed by Frost & Sullivan say migration represents a top hindrance to cloud.

Source: Cloud Migration Services and Software - Which Approach Best Fits Your Enterprise Needs?

Risky business.

Would you take a chance with your infrastructure or security? Why gamble on your company's entire inbound and outbound communications? DIY is great when you have plenty of time. But we're past the early bread-baking, urban gardening days of lockdown. As businesses transition to long-term adaptation, being late to the game means not staying in business.

We asked our Central Region Director of Professional Services Brian Myers why people use 8x8's rapid deployment services. "The main reason clients want professional services is because they want their solution done right the first time. The risk of do-overs is too great, because you could lose ground to competitors or diminish your customer satisfaction rating." Kind of simple, when you think of it that way.

Peace of mind.

What keeps you up at night? Is it the burden of keeping your whole organization running? Is it staying ahead of your competitors? Is it being profitable? If you could confidently, cost-effectively hand off some of that burden, would you do it? Bringing in the experts is not a sign of weakness. In fact, partnering with specialists will make your business stronger—ensuring the job is done right, on time and on budget—and let you focus on leading. More restful sleep probably won't hurt, either.

Speed.

When speed is critical to project success, whether for saving money or lives, teaming up with cloud communications consultants can make a big difference. Qualifacts, a Tennessee-based electronic health records provider for behavioral health and human services, determined it needed a more resilient and flexible communications platform following a devastating tornado in its hometown of Nashville, in the midst of COVID-19. They partnered with experts from 8x8 and Resource Communications Group (RCG) to get it done right and fast. Read the whole Qualifacts story.

"We rapidly engaged RCG, and together we engaged 8x8. In a matter of five days, they achieved the near-impossible. In parallel to executing our plan to transition our workforce to fully remote operations, we were able to stand up, roll-out and train on the 8x8 cloud communications and contact center solution, all without disruption to our team, our customers or our business."

Tom Keen
Chief Technology Officer, Qualifacts
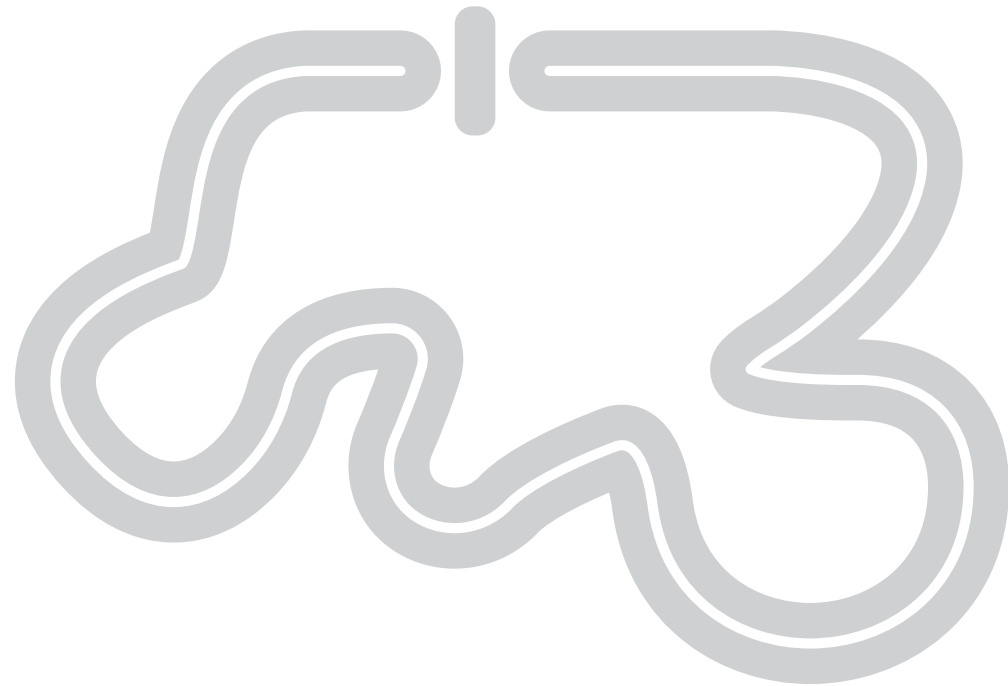
Course correction.

In light of COVID-19 and the UK Government's mandate to work from home where possible, the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Council needed to take swift and unprecedented action to protect its contact center staff, all while keeping vital services running for its residents. And its legacy, on-premises contact center system wasn't up to the task. The council selected 8x8 to rapidly transition its entire contact center operation onto a cloud platform. In just two weeks, Barking and Dagenham Council had migrated all of its office-based agents to remote work. And while 8x8 rose to the short-term adjustment, it also prepared the organization for long-term change. Read the whole Barking and Dagenham Council story.

Also in the UK, Activate Group Limited (AGL) fleet management services transitioned 200 contact center agents to remote work in less than 24 hours. Read the full AGL story.

30%

Average savings that organizations realize when switching from on-premises communications to cloud communications.

Savings calculated by looking at 3 years of total cost of ownership. Assumes savings from consolidating multiple services: phone, video, fax and SMS to a single vendor.

Coming out on top.

Deploying cloud communications and contact centers is not about cookie-cutter solutions that promise low price but sacrifice long-term value. These business-critical applications require a migration methodology with a personalized approach—one that won't interrupt your business or your customer engagement. Getting it right means building a system that rapidly addresses what you need today, and then building a platform that can adapt to whatever the future might bring.

Integral to the 8x8 migration methodology:

- Deliver clear short-term and long-term value

- Assess and deliver an agreed upon set of needs

- Do it all on (a very rapid) schedule and on budget

Read more about 8x8's Professional Services, including implementation and deployment, integrations and à la carte services, and learn more about 8x8 Contact Center.

Chapter 6 Takeaways

With the world changing rapidly, so must your business. As you look towards the cloud for communications and collaboration, know that it truly can be done in days when you work with experienced professionals. We hope you will take away the following:

- How fast do you need your cloud communications or contact center up and running? Does your internal IT team fully understand how to map call flows from your legacy system to a new cloud-based solution?

- Before you sign a contract, make sure you understand what is required to deploy your cloud solution and whether you need extra support to get it done correctly and fast.

- Not every scenario requires a full set of managed services. Learn about different services tiers and options to match what your needs are.

- Educate and be honest with your c-suite. Paying up front for expert installation could save time, money and a lot hassle down the road.
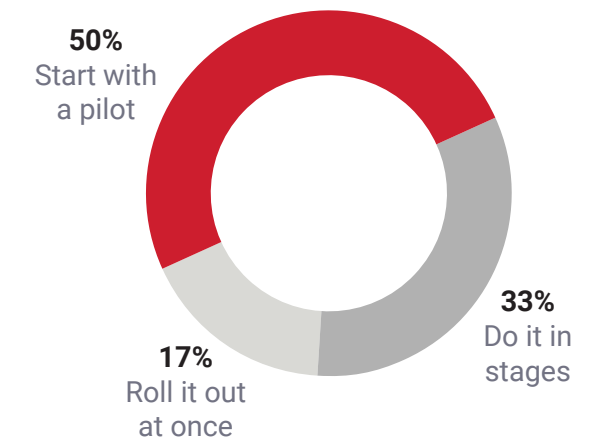
- COVID-19 is a watershed event accelerating digital transformation for everyone.

- If you haven't moved your communications and contact center to the cloud—do it now. Your competitors have or will, by 2021. New leaders are being created today.

- Experienced professional services consultants have access to lots of templates that accelerate migration. Line mapping and defining call flows are among the trickiest parts of a migration. Doing these from scratch can be very complicated.

- Professional Services can give you peace of mind.

8x8 Poll Results

How long would you expect it to take to move from on-premises communications platform to the cloud?
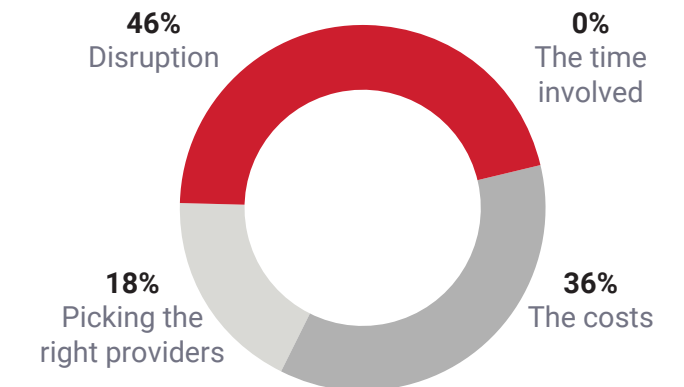
47% 6 months to a year

23% Less than 2 weeks!

15% 3-6 months

15% 1-3 months
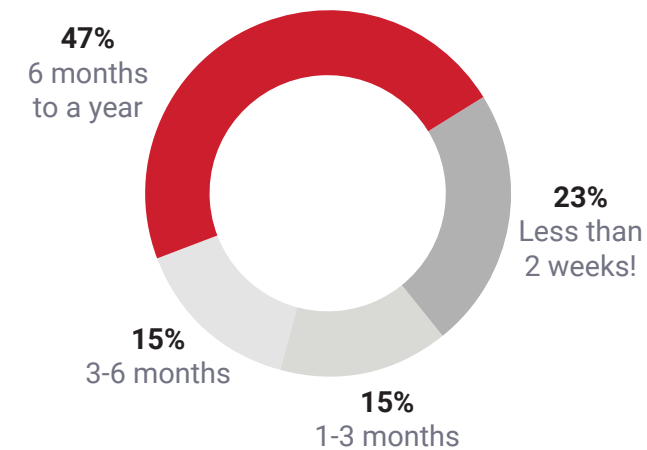
What is your preferred approach for migrating business technology to the cloud?

50% Start with a pilot

33% Do it in stages

17% Roll it out at once

Where are you in the process of moving your communications to the cloud?

67% Already completed

0% Considering providers

25% Not considering a move

8% Ready to do this!
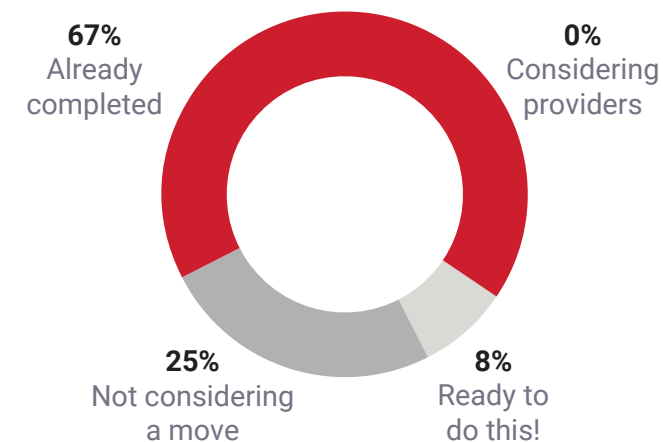
What is the scariest part of moving your communications to the cloud?

46% Disruption

0% The time involved

18% Picking the right providers

36% The costs

Sources: Facebook, Linkedin, Twitter

Leaders open up.

How Acer transitioned to
Operate from Anywhere.

In 2020, business leaders had to rethink the way things (and people) work.

What worked before wasn't working anymore. In-store, in-office, on-premises, huddles, handshakes: these staples of business life can't happen from the kitchen table, home office, or spare bedroom many of us now consider our workplace.

But remote work—once considered a cushy tech company perk—suddenly became serious business.

For thousands of corporate offices, Zoom turned itself overnight into a verb and a free quick fix for virtual engagement. But for traditional contact centers tethered by physical real estate and hardware, but forced to work remotely, they had to call on an entirely new way to work.

15% of a contact center agent's time is spent trying to get information from siloed communications channels.

Source: Aberdeen, The ROI of Uniting Unified Communications and Contact Center

No small change.

Often considered a cost center and the Rodney Dangerfield of departments, the contact center has historically been overlooked and underfunded during waves of digital transformation. But doing nothing today means driving costs even higher—to the tune of millions of dollars—as disconnected agents lose time trying to find information. Aberdeen VP and Principal Analyst Omer Minkara estimates that a 200-agent contact center loses $1.5 million annually in labor costs from siloed agents. Read the research.

$1.5 million is spent annually in labor costs from siloed agents.

Leaders are seeing investments to connect the contact center are paying off, though. According to Minkara's research, unified communication-enabled contact centers see the following:

- 50% increase in agent productivity

- 2.9x average handle time improvement year-over-year

- 80% decrease in customer complaints

That's no small change. In addition to improved CX metrics, employee experiences change too. Improved engagement rates and reduced turnover are just two of the benefits digital transformation leaders are seeing.

Leaders open up.

Technology leader Acer has seen its own set of benefits unifying communications across its Americas-based contact centers and corporate offices. At the start of COVID-19, this made all the difference as Acer was able to respond to the pandemic as a transitional event rather than a digital transformation forcing function. Preparedness proved profitable as demand for Acer's computers and peripheral equipment for professionals, students and gamers skyrocketed.

"We already had everything ready for our contact center agents to have access and operate from anywhere," recalls Marcella Prieto, Senior Manager of Customer Service for Acer's Pan-America Region. "We were able to manage the situation very quickly."

Prieto says she's impressed by how quickly Acer's agents embraced Contact Center as a Service (CCaaS) technology. "One of the most surprising things about the transition was that the softphone solution (over traditional telephones) was amazing. It was a seamless transition, and it has allowed us to keep moving and move the entire team to working from home."

Even on-the-fence contact center supervisors are sold. "At first, many of the call operations managers were concerned that they were not going to be able to supervise their agents like they had done in the in-office setting," says Prieto, "but 8x8 has allowed them to monitor agent performance and run reports any time."

"I feel like the agents are more productive using 8x8. In the past, we couldn't see the productivity of our agents because we were using a partner. Now our management has access to all of the monitoring and measurement tools we need—and we can access them at any time."

Marcella Prieto

Senior Manager, Customer Service, Acer Pan-America Region

Watch the Interview

Leaders bring people together.

Mark Groveunder, Senior Vice President of IT and Service for Acer's Pan-American Region, says that their organization was fortunate to have their unified CCaaS and UCaaS solution in place prior to the pandemic. But this forward thinking didn't just prepare Acer for 2020; it provided sustainable agility for the future.

"In 2019, we implemented 8x8 Contact Center, and along the way we moved our business users off of old PBX technology and onto 8x8 X Series. Now we have the employees at all seven offices on 8x8 for enterprise communications, and that's not counting the contact centers," notes Mark.

"It worked out great for our San Jose office move in 2019 because we didn't have to move that old PBX," Groveunder recalls. "During the move, employees used their laptops and the 8x8 Desktop App for calls and chats. 8x8 made our office move a lot easier."

And in turn, it made the move to remote work during the pandemic easier. Fortunate for Acer? Yes. Forward thinking for Acer? Also yes.

"We've seen the data and we've proven that work from home can work," says Groveunder. "We've actually known that in the contact center for a long time, but in other parts of the business we've just never done it. But now that we're doing it successfully, the expectation is that, even when we do return to offices, we'll have a lot more people working from home."

"Moving to the cloud has made us more nimble and agile. It makes it easier for us to adapt to changing business conditions. But along with that we've benefited from some technology upgrades and new capabilities, especially on the contact center side."

Mark Groveunder
Senior VP, IT & Customer Service at Acer Inc.

Watch the Interview

Leaders extend their lead.

Thanks to the benefits of UCaaS and CCaaS, leaders like Acer have been able to extend their lead. "Acer, like many other companies, now sees the potential to reduce operating expenses by reducing their office footprint," says Groveunder.

Consolidation is also leading to more seamless communication and collaboration. "We've pretty much eliminated our conference bridge technology. We were using Zoom for virtual meetings. We've now eliminated Zoom. We're also moving to chat with 8x8."

Acer's senior manager of customer service also believes their technology investments will help attract the best talent: tech-savvy agents who can meet tech-savvy customers' high expectations, and more experienced employees who want long-term remote options with the ability to collaborate just like they're in the office.

Says Dion Hinchchiffe, VP and Principal Analyst at Constellation Research, "Our research finds significant return on investment, on the order of double digits in many cases, across the spectrum of benefits in offering workers a more integrated communications experience.

"What we're talking about now is that we'll never go back to where we were before," says Acer's VP of IT and Service.
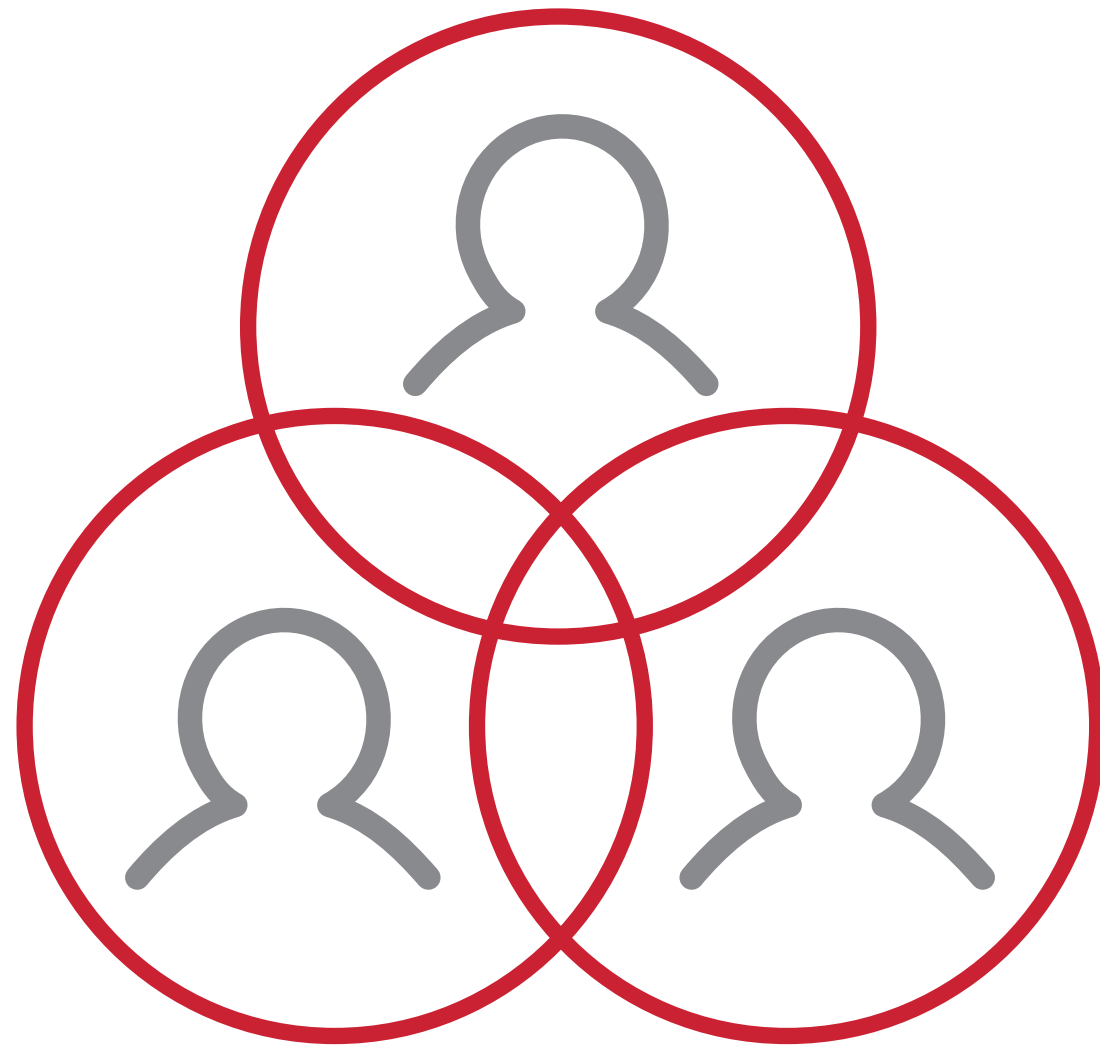
The overall benefits of a more integrated worker communications experience are:

- Higher adoption of communications solutions

- Improved productivity

- Less training/support

- More team cohesion

- Less cognitive overload

- Lower operational costs

Source: Reducing Team Communication Silos for Better ROI, Constellation Research

Chapter 7 Takeaways

In-office, on-premises, huddles and handshakes: we may not be going back there, at least not anytime soon. But leaders like Acer will tell you embracing that is not just okay, it can be a competitive advantage.

- Leaders are bringing people together through UCaaS and CCaaS technologies and transforming the contact center into a connected, operate-from-anywhere environment.

- Leaders are extending their lead through unified communications, increasing profits and productivity while reducing real estate and technology costs.

More Resources

- Watch the Webcast: Leaders Open Up - Acer

- Learn more about 8x8's All-in-One Communications Platform

- Request more information on 8x8 or a demo

- Unified Communications ROI Calculator

- Blog: 8 Reasons Why the Time is Now for Contact Center Digital Transformation

- Research Note: The ROI of Uniting Unified Communications and Contact Center

8x8 Poll Results

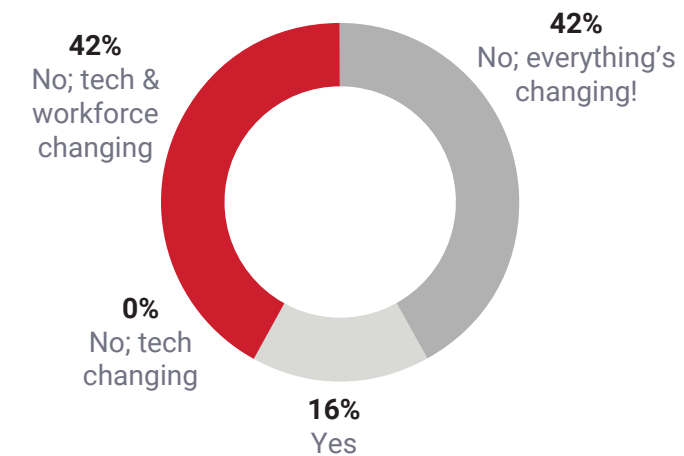**Gartner believes by 2022, CCaaS (Contact Center as a Service) will be the preferred model in 50% of companies. Thoughts?**

62% More than 50% will be CCaaS

17% 50% sounds right

21% Less than 50% will be CCaaS
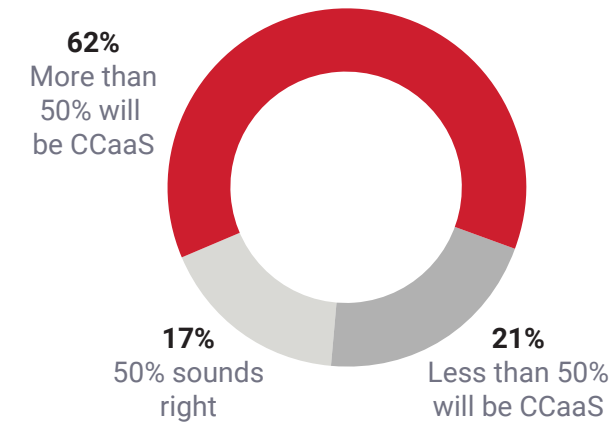
How important is it for customer service agents to use the same communications tools as others in the business to collaborate?

84% Very important

8% Somewhat important

8% Not important
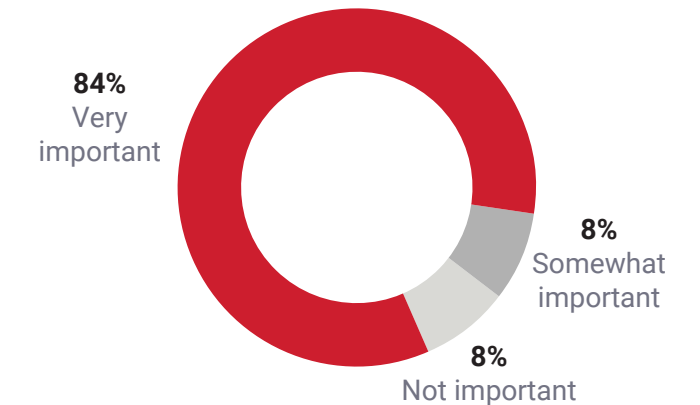
Do you consider a return to pre-pandemic business operations (business as usual) an option?

42% No; tech & workforce changing

42% No; everything's changing!

0% No; tech changing

16% Yes

Sources: Facebook, Linkedin, Twitter

Put it all together.

Now it's your turn to apply what you have learned to build Operate From Anywhere in your business.

Chapter

8

Recently, Forbes shared a survey that everyone can relate to:

Who led your digital transformation?

A. CEO
B. CIO
C. COVID-19

If you picked C, you're in good company. But now it's time for executives to take back the reins and lead a proactive, sustainable digital transformation.

One of the first and biggest steps in digital transformation is establishing effective communication and collaboration, and for most, that probably means moving away from disparate tools employed as a quick fix and choosing a cloud communication platform that can really do the job right.

Dion Hinchcliffe from Constellation Research recently published research which recognizes the heightened need for "the best digital communications tools to be not only available for their far-flung talent base but situated as effectively as possible for their newly remote workers to remain, and in many cases become even more, productive." Constellation points to its research over the years which has shown that, "the digital communications experience has grown ever more fragmented and complex, to the considerable detriment of effective engagement and collaboration both between workers and between them and other key stakeholders such as customers or partners/suppliers."

The events of 2020 didn't help in this regard. IT leaders had to improvise digital communications solutions that were good enough, at least on a temporary basis. But these temporary solutions uncovered several issues: gaps between employee communications and contact center agent-customer communications; organizational and application silos as global teams chose different communications platforms; and sustainability questions about technological approach and long-term cost effectiveness under IT budget duress.
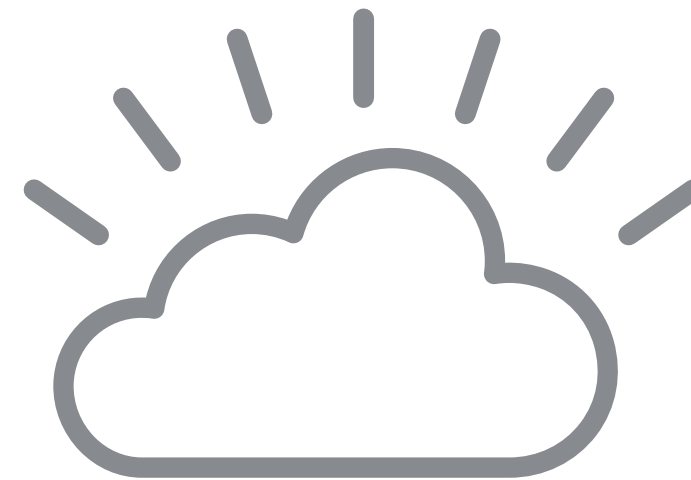
The average team currently uses 6 approaches to support project collaboration and at least 4 different communication tools. 48% of organizations say their top collaboration hurdle is ineffective communication between team members.

Source: This is What Communications Silos are Costing Companies

Time for an integrated communications plan.

Constellation Research's work points to several key elements of value that digital transformation leaders derive from **more integrated communications**, including:
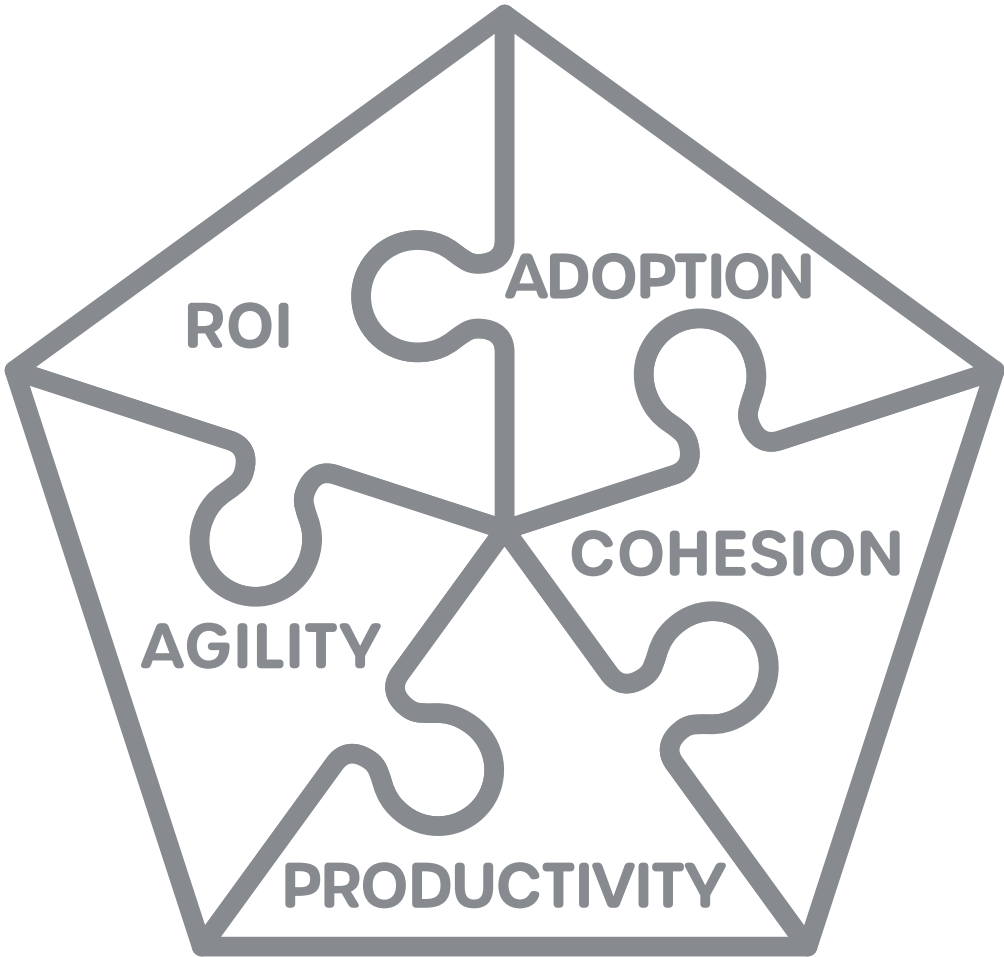
Improved productivity.

A single platform for communications, collaboration, and contact center empowers employees to operate more independently and more productively as individuals or as part of a team. Unifying these tools also provides greater organizational transparency as it simplifies the management, monitoring, and tracking of a dispersed workforce to understand the dynamics that contribute to productivity. Read more about productivity gains.

"The Key to gaining these benefits is not to acquire more point communications and roll them out to workers, but instead think about them in a more organized and consumption-focused away."

Dion Hinchcliffe
VP & Principal Analyst, Constellation Research

Lower operational costs.

In addition to vendor consolidation, a cloud platform dramatically cuts on-premises maintenance costs and reduces global phone bills. 8x8 customers see an average of a 30% drop in total cost of ownership over three years compared to on-premises, siloed legacy solutions. Read more about cost savings and ROI.

Less training/support.

An integrated solution significantly reduces the time and effort associated with implementation, learning, management and troubleshooting. This approach allowed Laureate International University, for example, to transition their professors and staff, as well as their contact center specialists, to remote work in 2020 with zero impact to student/professor/staff interaction. But their adoption of a cloud platform was particularly beneficial from a student perspective, as their services team was able to focus on the student experience and organizational needs instead of being mired in development work. Read the university's story and learn how to assess your own technology landscape.

Higher adoption of communications solutions.

At the start of 2020, 90% of IT leaders declared they'd cease purchasing on-premises communications tools within a year. The need to be agile and untethered has only accelerated the move to the cloud. And the cloud has only accelerated the adoption of innovative, integrated solutions, as organizations can easily go from zero to up and running within 48 hours—especially with a little help from their technology partner. Read more on how to get teams up and running quickly.

More team cohesion.

Gains associated with teams communicating and collaborating more easily can be seen on both the employee and customer side. For example, when corporate and contact center teams use the same communications platform, those contact centers see a 50% increase in agent productivity, a 2.9x average handle time improvement year-over-year, and an 80% decrease in customer complaints according to Aberdeen Research. Acer is a company that has proven success when it comes to connecting corporate and contact center employees through an operate from anywhere platform. Check out their story here.
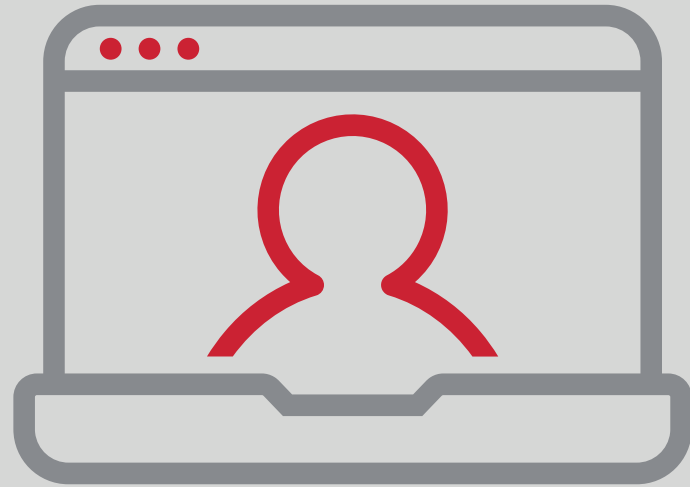
"Moving to the cloud has made us more nimble and agile. It makes it easier for us to adapt to a changing business conditions. But along with what we've benefited from some technology upgrades and new capabilities, especially on the contact center side."

Mark Groveunder

Senior VP, IT and Customer Service, Acer

Watch the Acer Webinar

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The final benefit of more integrated communications that Hinchcliffe notes in his research is less **cognitive overload**. He reasons, "when too much mental effort needs to be put into finding the right tools and/or channel to communicate in, the quality of work itself suffers. Creating more centralized, streamlined, and usable communication experiences can offload workers to focus better on their business activities."

Time to go beyond good enough.

At the start of the pandemic, "good enough" point solutions appeared to offer quick relief to the many organizations struggling to support a new remote workforce model. Communications tools were rolled out quickly. But then, almost as quickly, new costs and associated risks were identified. What is the impact on employee performance and productivity? Will shadow IT spiral out of control? If so, how will we ensure consistency, manageability and the right behaviors across the organization? How do we measure the effectiveness of these tools? How do they impact our customer experience? What about reliability, scalability and security?

Time to turn to the future.

The answers to these questions—and peace of mind—come from a platform approach with a technology partner you can trust. Work is no longer a place. Employees now work in applications, not offices. And forward-thinking IT leaders are looking to all-in-one collaboration apps like 8x8 Work to support all of their communications needs, from voice, to video, to messaging, both within an organization, and externally with customers through a collaborative contact center.

At 8x8, we've thought about the intersection between communications and how you work—and how you operate your business. So we've future-proofed our solution with the flexibility to extend current and future capabilities onto new business processes via plug-and-play integrations.

"If IT and communications teams focus on enablement and usability through better underlying integration of communication tools, they will produce eminently more satisfied workers and better business results."

Dion Hinchcliffe
VP & Principal Analyst, Constellation Research

Read the Report

We've thought about AI-driven team messaging so every employee can quickly find the right expert to answer a tough question. We've thought about how to embed communications into your existing business applications and systems of record like Salesforce.com or, as we highlighted recently, fully embedded voice communications for Microsoft Teams.

We've thought about how to support remote agents and how you can monitor, coach and train them in a remote work environment. We've thought about how to adhere to the strictest security protocols and compliance requirements.

Time to come together.

You have a choice on your digital transformation journey: peace of mind, or just pieces.

At 8x8, we've put it all together: the solution your organization needs to communicate and collaborate more effectively, delivered through an essential app that allows you to take back the reins in your digital transformation.

From technology retailers, to government agencies, to higher education institutions, forward-thinking brands are empowering their organization with voice, video, chat, contact center and enterprise APIs to enable tremendous growth.

The benefits of an integrated communications solution are clear. 8x8 provides the essential all-in-one application. Let's get started together.
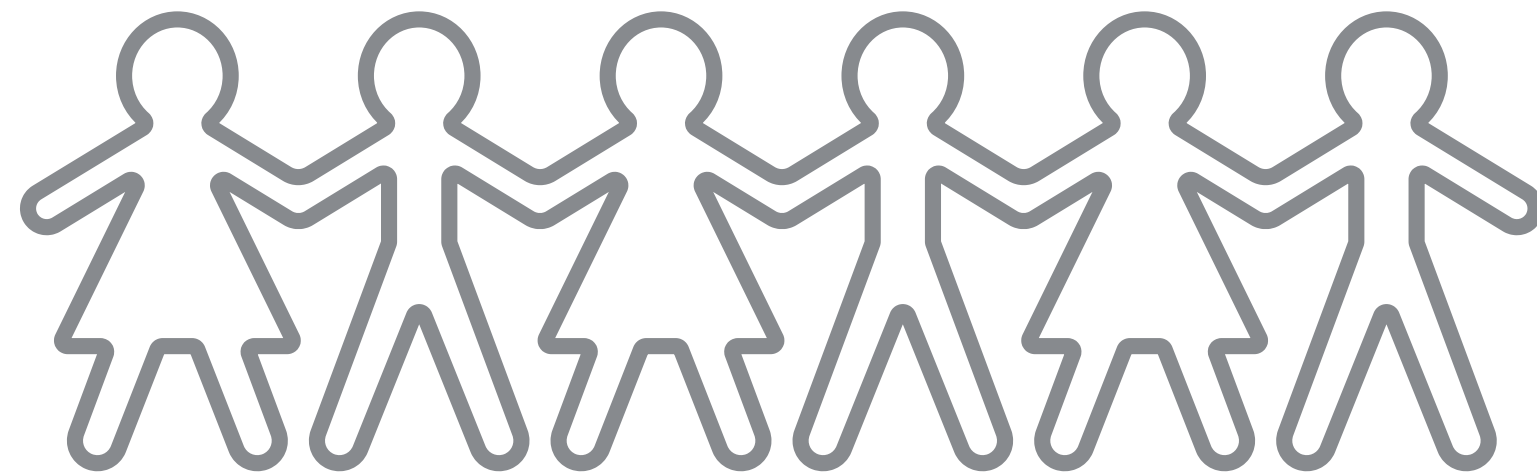
More Resources

- Learn more about 8x8's All-in-One Communications Platform

- Request more information on 8x8 or a demo

- Unified Communications ROI Calculator

- Watch the Webcast: Leaders Open Up

8x8 Poll Results

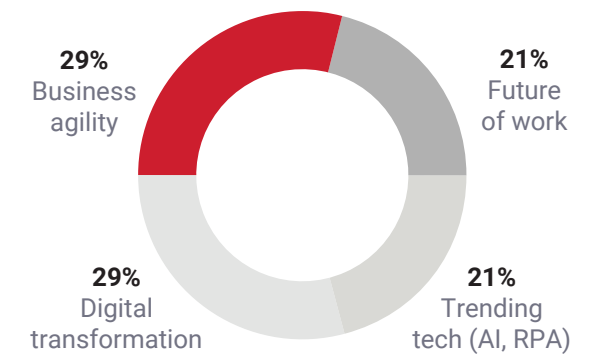**Where does your organization currently stand in its digital communications experience?**

- **50%** Using a single platform
- **0%** Using many tools (fragmented)
- **25%** Evaluating platforms for 2021
- **25%** Starting to consolidate tools
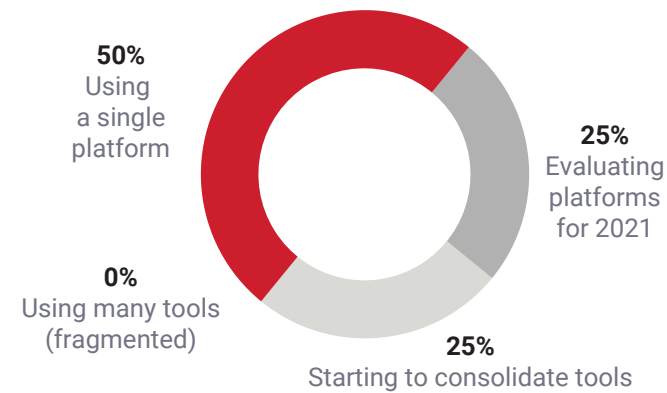
What is the biggest benefit of a cloud-based unified communications solution?

- **40%** Business continuity
- **20%** Preparedness for future
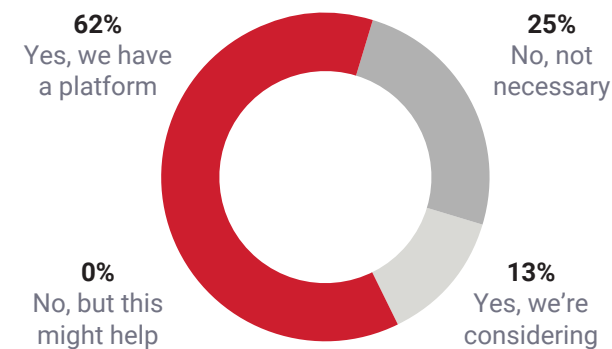- **20%** Remote capabilities
- **20%** Fewer silos/ More collaboration
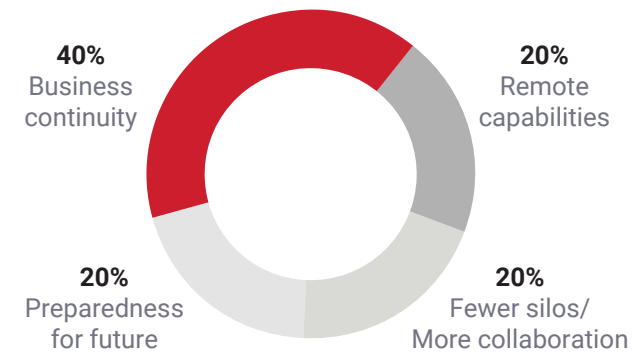
In 2020, business conversations focused on COVID-19 & the move to remote work. What do you think the next big focus will or should be?

- **29%** Business agility
- **29%** Digital transformation
- **21%** Future of work
- **21%** Trending tech (AI, RPA)

How important is it for organizations to have a unified digital communications platform that spans corporate offices and the contact center?

- **75%** Very, a competitive advantage
- **0%** Not important
- **25%** Somewhat important
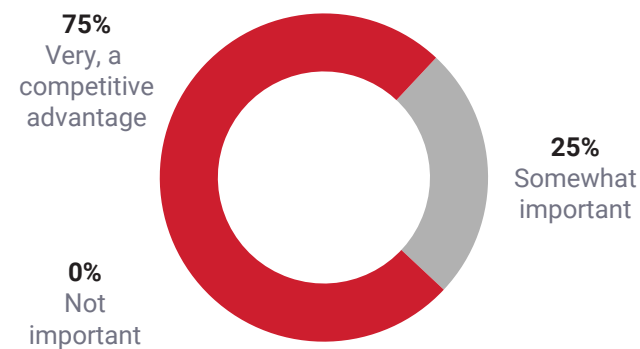
Have you considered using a communications platform that can integrate with your CRM or other applications?

- **62%** Yes, we have a platform
- **0%** No, but this might help
- **25%** No, not necessary
- **13%** Yes, we're considering

Sources: Facebook, Linkedin, Twitter

Explore the other titles in our Essentials eBook series.

Don't settle for app-switching to bring people and apps together. Learn how to supercharge Teams and other apps with integrated global voice communications capabilities.

Read the "Connect Everywhere: Better Voice Communications for Microsoft Teams" eBook.
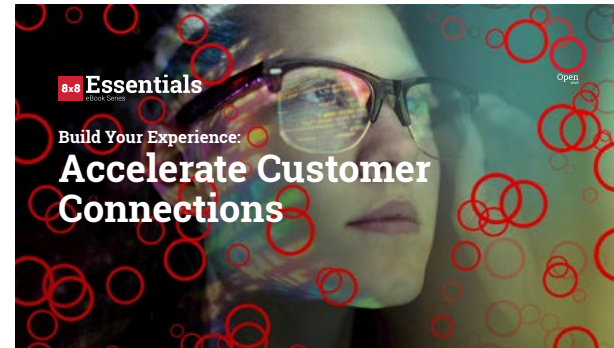
It's time to reimagine how you connect with customers and embrace a digital-first world. This eBook will give you a step-by-step guide to build and customize your customer experience using transformative APIs, SMS, chat apps, and embedded video.

Read the "Build Your Experience: Accelerate Customer Connections" eBook.

For smaller businesses, a failed customer or employee interaction could be the last. Find out what it takes to streamline communications, maintain and grow customer engagement, and save money while doing so.

Read the "Open for Business: Enterprise-Grade Communications for Businesses of Any Size" eBook.