

10 QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE BUYING UNIFIED COMMUNICATION AS A SERVICE (UCaaS)

Choosing to switch to UCaaS can
allow businesses to unlock cost savings

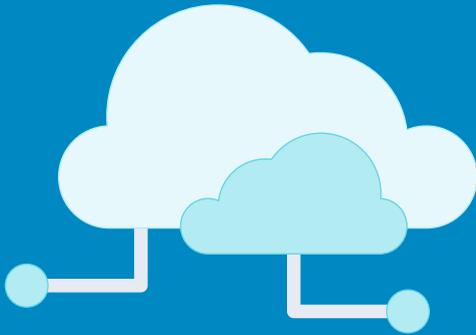


Outsourcing your communication tools to a cloud UCaaS vendor is much more than just saving money

Streamlining business communications and opting for on-demand cloud delivery can allow businesses to unlock new modes of innovation, operations efficiency, and increase productivity through mobility, superior reliability, and advanced functionality. UCaaS offers advantages over well-established cloud communication technologies like VoIP phones and web-conferencing. Countless businesses worldwide are discovering the benefits of switching to cloud-based services and pay-as-you-go pricing model of UCaaS. Businesses making the switch to UC platforms also appreciate better information security, lower IT workloads, and the flexibility to scale their service up or down according to their needs.

It's important to avoid underestimating the flexibility of UCaaS as you consider your options. Beyond VoIP phones and email, the most commonly-selected features include audio conferencing, web conferencing, instant messaging, presence, and screen sharing. While one of the best aspects of UC is the ability to add features as your requirements change, picking the right collaboration tools and platform can enable your business to maximize value from the very first day. Businesses should also evaluate vendors as prospective partners. Implementation support and customer service can have a big impact on your overall experience, just as much as the tools and features you choose.

1. WHAT UC PLATFORM DO YOU USE?



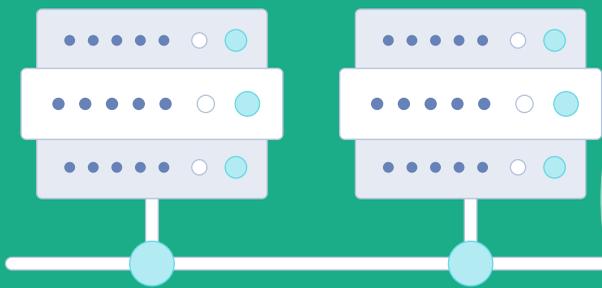
With the UC market predicted to reach a value of \$143.5 Billion by end of 2024, there's been plethora of vendors offering UC software or platforms

WHAT UC PLATFORM DO YOU USE?

The majority of UCaaS providers work closely with one platform. Most of these platform options have similar goal, which is to offer cloud-based communication tools with built-in interoperability.

Selecting the right platform is just as critical to your business's success as selecting any other major technology option like email or customer relationship management (CRM) tools. Not all UC platforms have the ability to easily integrate with your existing software and systems. UCaaS platforms vary in terms of maturity, features offered, and strengths.

2. DO HAVE YOUR OWN INFRASTRUCTURE?



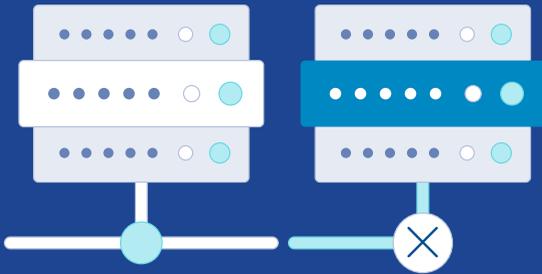
UCaaS vendors with their own instance of UC platform have built-in advantage when it comes to high-quality service and business continuity.

DO YOU HAVE YOUR OWN INFRASTRUCTURE?

This approach also allows leading UC vendors achieve cost savings, which are passed onto the clients. Just because a UCaaS vendor is re-selling a solution to their customers doesn't mean they have their own instance of the platform. While resellers without their own instance may understand the technology they're working with fairly well, they can't necessarily offer the same quality or reliability guarantees as their competitors.

3.

HOW MUCH PLATFORM EXPERIENCE DO YOU HAVE? ARE YOU CERTIFIED?



Selecting a UCaaS vendor with deep knowledge of UC software is an important tool for avoiding unanticipated implementation mistakes

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Verifying that a vendor knows how to operate a platform matters, but certifications are one of the most important ways to evaluate a provider's expertise with UCaaS solution. UCaaS providers who are reselling a solution should have obtained the necessary certifications in UCaaS design, deployment, and maintenance to become a registered reseller. Maintaining these certification is an important way for UCaaS provider to prove their commitment to technical expertise with solutions and their commitment to the customer experience.

4. IS UCaaS SERVICE DELIVERED OVER A DEDICATED CIRCUIT?



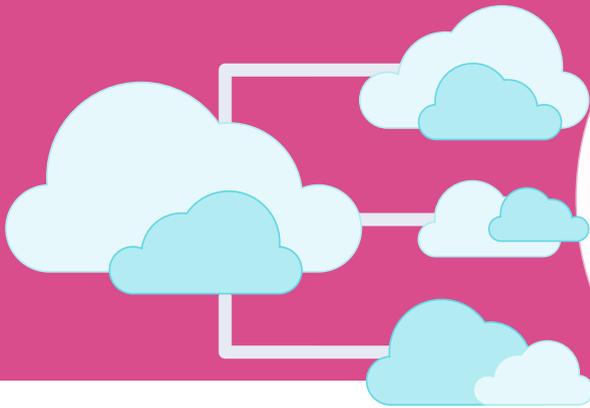
Many UCaaS vendors promise to offer a full suite of business communication tools, but they leave out one important component: Internet Connectivity.

IS UCaaS SERVICE DELIVERED OVER A DEDICATED CIRCUIT?

Customers are expected to "bring their own bandwidth" and use their new cloud communications platforms over public Internet connection. Unfortunately, signing with UCaaS vendor who doesn't offer dedicated circuit connectivity can result in downtime risks, quality issues, and more. Businesses who are using UCaaS vendor and a public Internet (commodity) provider share resources with home Internet users. Their data transmissions share bandwidth in-transit to their Internet provider and UCaaS vendor. During periods of peak demand for Internet bandwidth, it's common to experience delayed data transmissions, voice call quality issues, or even service unavailability.

5.

IS YOUR BILLING TRANSPARENT AND CUSTOMIZABLE?

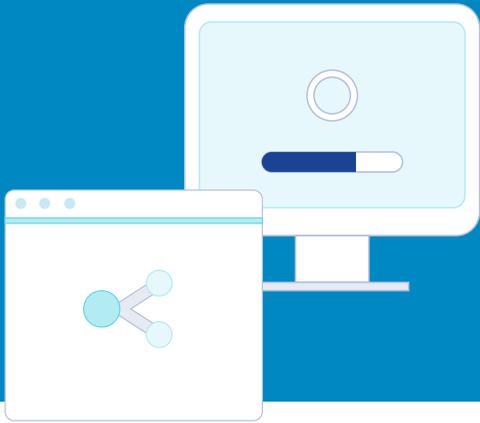


Switching to UCaaS can result in much simpler billing statements than what you're used to receiving from your local phone company.

IS YOUR BILLING TRANSPARENT AND CUSTOMIZABLE?

Some UCaaS bills are very difficult to understand. While bills are typically calculated by number of users and features, the charges may be categorized by numeric codes instead of plain English. Price doesn't always equal value in the world of UCaaS. If you're unsure whether a potential vendor offers clear, transparent billing, ask to see a sample copy of customer invoice. If your business needs customizable billing, be sure to inquire whether your vendor has flexibility to modify your monthly statements according to your needs.

6. WHAT PHONE HANDSETS ARE OFFERED?

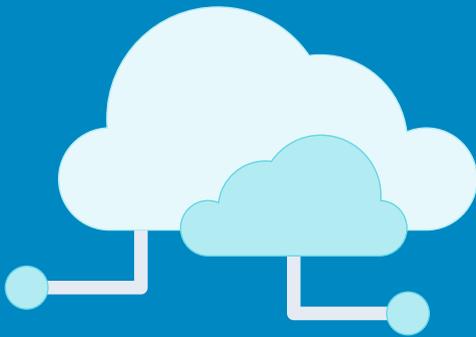


Selecting a vendor who can help shop for handsets or better yet offer handsets as part of their UCaaS package matters the most.

WHAT PHONE HANDSETS ARE OFFERED?

Vendors who offer handset sales can offer expert recommendations on the best phones for your business's requirements, and may even help you access premium products at the best possible price. Opting for a vendor who acts as a one-stop shop for UCaaS and handsets may not only help you maximize the quality you receive for the price paid, it may also help you mitigate information security risks. Your vendor's equipment experts should help ensure your VoIP phones are adequately password-protected at the time of installation to avoid vulnerabilities in your network security.

7. DOES YOUR PLATFORM INTEGRATE WITH MY EXISTING CLOUD APPS?



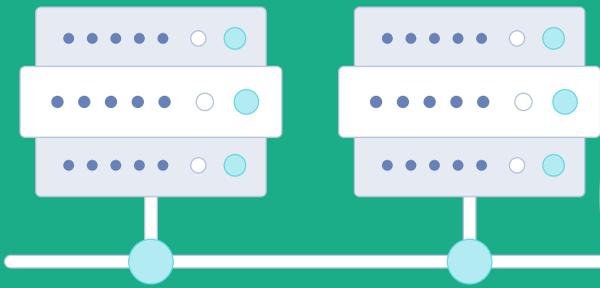
UCaaS can allow businesses to integrate data across applications and provide an omnichannel customer experience that feels seamless.

DOES YOUR PLATFORM INTEGRATE WITH MY EXISTING CLOUD APPS?

Understanding whether a potential UCaaS vendor's service can integrate with your existing applications is crucial to driving the best customer experience and employee productivity possible from your new investment. Asking if a potential vendor's UCaaS solution will integrate with your existing collaboration apps is important to achieve seamless integration of your communication tools. Some best-of-class UCaaS platforms offer built-in integration with cloud CRMs such as Sugar, Hubspot, Salesforce etc.

8.

DO YOU HAVE TRACK RECORD OF SUCCESS?



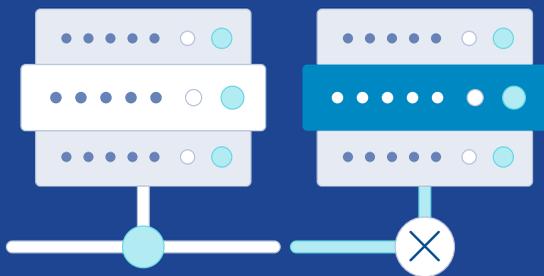
Evaluating a vendor's prior track record of implementations can be important if your business has unique requirements.

DO YOU HAVE A TRACK RECORD OF SUCCESS?

No one wants to be a UCaaS vendor's first test case. Selecting a provider with years of expertise in telecommunications and UCaaS can help you ensure a smooth implementation and ongoing satisfaction.

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9. DO YOU GO ABOVE AND BEYOND TO PROVIDE SUPPORT?



Ask the UCaaS vendor to provide client references that can verify their commitment to going above and beyond to provide customer support.

DO YOU GO ABOVE AND BEYOND TO PROVIDE SUPPORT?

Leading UCaaS vendors are committed to meeting their customer's needs. While a commitment to exceeding client expectations isn't always the cheapest or easiest way for UCaaS vendors to operate, it's a sign of vendors who form long-term client relationships.

Finally, make sure that your UC vendor's customer service is available 24/7/365, even if your business primarily operates during 9 to 5 hours. Communication outages can be devastating and expensive for any size business.

10. ARE YOU ABLE TO SEAMLESSLY TRANSITION US TO UCaaS ?



Downtimes, outages, and failures are a massive expense for modern businesses. Period of times without connectivity are also surprisingly expensive.

ARE YOU ABLE TO SEAMLESSLY TRANSITION US TO UCaaS?

Implementation requirements can vary significantly according to the business needs, number of sites involved, and even factors like training requirements. Ideally, any vendor should be prepared to work carefully to understand your requirements and design a custom-built plan for implementation. Avoiding the risk of downtime for your business could mean a unique approach to implementation such as batched porting of numbers or using a hybrid phone system for a short period of time, which is defined as an implementation where both old and new phones are used during the transition.

Getting the most value from UCaaS

Making a successful switch to Unified Communications as a Service is more complex than selecting the right communication tools at a price that fits your budget. Knowing the right questions to ask to select the right technology and vendor can help you ensure that you are able to design the best UCaaS solution for your budget, achieve a seamless implementation, and form a long-term relationship with a vendor that you trust.

By understanding the complex factors that can shape your total experience as a UCaaS client, from dedicated connectivity to customized billing and application integration, you can position your business to realize the most value from your investment possible.

To learn more about how VOIMAR can assist you with your UC journey contact our voice experts (010) 599 6199 or email info@voimar.co.za

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