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White Paper

How the Cloud Stops Tech Tug-of-Wars

Managing a multigenerational office can be hard. Different age groups have different communication styles.They also have very different opinions on which collaboration tools work best.

A Baby Boomer might be most comfortable picking up the phone. But, most Millennials dread phone calls. They're much more likely to text. For companies who need to modernize their communications software, meeting all the expectations of their workforce can seem impossible.

DIFFERENT GENERATIONS = DIFFERENT COMMUNICATIONS

A company is more than just a business. It's a collection of individuals. Each has their own merits, talents, and working styles.

Every generation has unique skills they contribute to their workplace. Seasoned coworkers bring experience and knowledge to the table. They understand what worked well in the past and what's likely to succeed in the future. Younger workers bring enthusiasm and new ideas — a fresh perspective on how to problem-solve.

These younger workers, specifically Millennials aged 18 to 34, currently make up 35% of the American workforce, according to Pew Research. Generation X (about age 35 to 50) makes up an additional 35%. Baby Boomers (about age 50 or above) are aging into retirement, and fill the other 30%. [1]

Older and younger employees have very different expectations when it comes to team collaboration.

But companies can't let this challenge delay their search for a new, modern, communication solution. In today's world, one of the keys to recruiting and retaining new talent is to give them cutting-edge technology. Let colleagues get their work done quickly, from anywhere.

Millennials and Generation Zers value seamless, mobile-friendly tools. This is because they're much less bound to the office than Baby Boomers were at their age. Other businesses are competing for these new, creative, talented employees.

It's important to draw them in with the best available team chat tools out there, before the competition does. Companies can attract new hires by highlighting that they use integrated messaging, social, teamwork, and other applications.

At the same time, long-term colleagues with fewer expectations still need their standard tools. Email, voicemail, and desk phone calls have been staples of businesses for decades. Baby Boomer workflows are based on traditional tools like voicemail, call waiting, and caller ID.

Suddenly removing them will disrupt work, not to mention alienate and disturb employees. The good news is, you don't have to do that.

5 WAYS UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES CONNECT WORKPLACES

Companies need to seamlessly connect their whole company.

On one extreme, you have employees who mainly use a desk phone in the office. Maybe sometimes they use a softphone on a laptop when they travel. Their mobile phone or tablet runs a basic set of communications apps that they may or may not use.

On the other extreme, you have workers who are highly adept at switching among multiple messaging apps. Here's how to support all the persistent chat, desktop and mobile video-conferencing, microblogging, and enterprise social functionality they need.

BRIDGING GENERATIONS

It's an overgeneralization to say all older employees shun the apps their younger colleagues embrace. Not all young employees are enthusiastic about live-sharing their messy desktop, videoconferencing from home, or constantly updating their i.m. status. **It's all about an individual's working style, job requirements and personal preference.**

Don't count them out - for some, using and loving their new tools just takes time.

Just because a coworker sticks to desk phones and email for now doesn't mean they won't change their mind later. Eventually, they might want to explore new ways of working, or show their company their growth potential. Whatever the case, internal communication is what you're investing in. So, make sure colleagues know how and when to use each feature as they work together toward common goals.

Your company needs to provide leadership and training so everyone can effectively collaborate. An aggressive internal marketing campaign can help promote adoption when the new tool is first rolled out. Raising awareness of the new tools, as well as promoting the ways others use them to better their work life, will help bring everyone on board.

5 Ways Unified Communications (UC) better connects your company:

You decide what colleagues get only the basic features, and who gets the full package. UC supports both traditional desk phone and advanced mobile/tablet communication apps, desktop sharing, and more.

One platform delivers all your phone, web, and video internal and external communications. It makes deployment and provisioning simple.

24/7 availability (even when something goes wrong.) Natural disasters won't stop your work.

User adoption is simple when there's **a single look and feel** between your videoconferencing, instant messaging, phone calls, and more.

Simplified accountability. This means one provider is responsible for the delivery and availability of your company's entire communications experience.

Essential Age-Friendly Features:

Standard (voice connectivity, desk phone, voicemail, conferencing, video calling) for workers that don't need a full unified communications solution, but still need a business-class phone service.

Advanced (voice connectivity, desk phone, voicemail, conferencing, video calling, smartphone pairing, desktop sharing, instant messaging) for those who have more precise needs and/or are comfortable using multiple devices.

Pioneering the Change

A highly flexible unified communications platform is key. This way, you can let workers start out with a basic, familiar set of features. Then, you can smoothly migrate them to more advanced capabilities. Some examples include simultaneous ring, call pulling, and hunt groups.

You can provision a select set of features or applications to specific users, if you'd like. You can also create user profiles with a predetermined set of features available to groups of employees, depending on their category. These user profile groups can be based on job function or experience level.
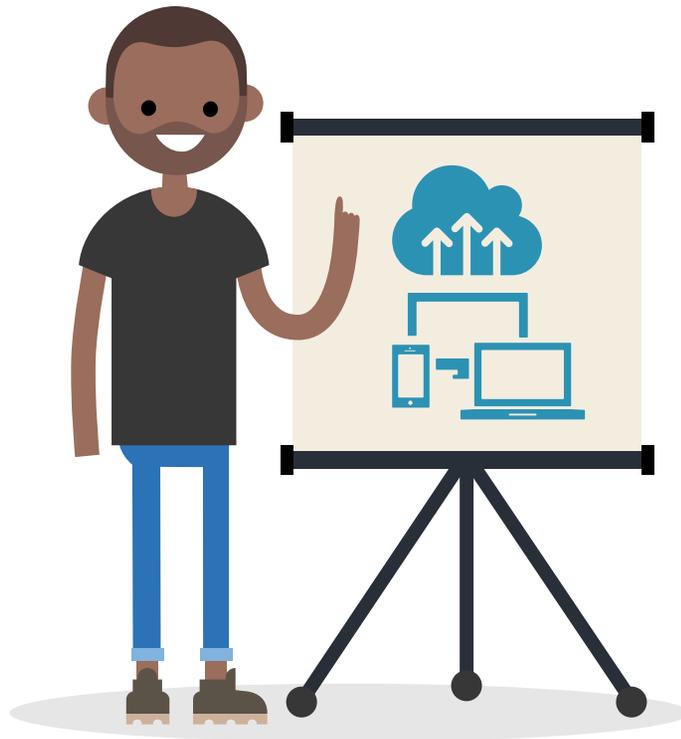
THE ROLE OF THE SERVICE PROVIDER

A single provider who can deliver a simple, integrated communications solution is central to supporting your multigenerational workforce.

The provider should deliver communications services that can:

Scale up and down to meet seasonal staff size changes.

Limit the capital investments (CapEx).

Provide greater (or fewer) **advanced feature sets** that meet the needs of specific employees. (For example, leveraging part-time workers' or decentralized workers' existing phone systems.)

Create a seamless experience regardless of whether you're on a cell phone, desk phone, PC, or Mac.

A single provider also serves as one point of contact for the entire company's suite of services. This is vital to giving employees a consistent user experience. It also provides a single source of support and troubleshooting. Whether the service suffers technical problems, or changes need to be made, the company has a single partner they can rely on for help.

The Right Tools Help You Succeed

Finally, the provider also plays the crucial role of advisor. As the expert, they're positioned to help your executive leadership team best support their unique needs. The provider is well-suited to help you down the line, as different groups of employees join your company.

With the provider's help, a company can easily build out training and internal marketing programs to promote more modern, effective communications technology.

Whether your employees closely conform to or widely deviate from their generation's stereotype, your company will be well-positioned to provide its multigenerational workforce the tools they need to work together.
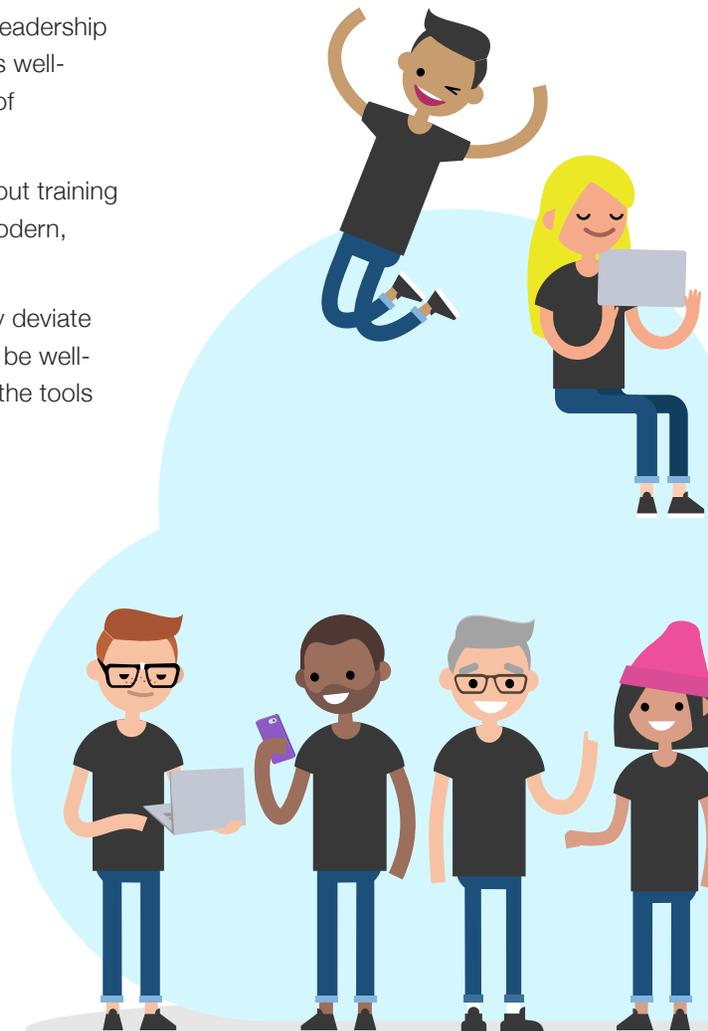
IT'S TIME TO UNIFY YOUR TEAM.

TPx is the premier managed services carrier that delivers comprehensive communications solutions to 75,000 business locations nationwide. Businesses trust TPx to manage their mission-critical network services. TPx's award-winning, enterprise-grade unified communications, managed IT, and network connectivity services empower companies to unleash productivity by streamlining processes, proactively monitoring systems, and staying current with rapidly changing technology. TPx backs its services with a zealous commitment to Customer Care, including a network uptime guarantee and 24/7/365 live-answer technical suport.

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