



IP Telephony

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PAPER

# **Avaya Unified Communications**

## **The Business Value of Unifying Communications**



## Introduction

The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of the business value related to Avaya and Microsoft's joint Unified Communications solutions. This article includes valuable information to help readers better understand the elements and steps involved in making the Unified Communications decision and covers some factors that will help make your Unified Communications solution implementation a success. Also, included is a section covering the factors a company should consider when calculating a potential return on investment (ROI) of their Unified Communications solution.

For additional deployment, or solution guide whitepapers, please visit either [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com) or [www.avaya.com](http://www.avaya.com).

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## The Business Value of Unifying Communications

In our previous article titled, “*Extend the Value of Microsoft Office Applications with Avaya Unified Communications*”, we highlighted the Unified Communications products that both Avaya and Microsoft have released to provide an integrated communications platform. The purpose of this article is to provide insight into the elements and steps associated with gaining the business value of Unified Communications based on the following categories:

- Infrastructure Optimization
- Embracing the Converged Communications Trend
- Return on Investment

Through these discussions, we can help decipher the true business value of implementing a Unified Communications infrastructure to support what is now considered the most critically needed enhancement within a company’s existing infrastructure.

### Infrastructure Optimization

Avaya Unified Communications for Microsoft environments brings together the best of two worlds, by combining application-based collaboration and messaging systems with traditional and enhanced telephony services. While this solution presents an awesome opportunity to enhance the way we communicate, there are many underlying dependencies that have to be configured and tweaked to provide such a platform. IT decision makers must work with and link their company’s technicians who service telephony and voice networks with their applications teams, as these two completely different worlds collaborate for the first time.

What happens to these existing systems and how do organizations combine a new team of converged communications experts together to optimize a network to leverage a Unified Communications platform? The answer, very strategically.

### PBX (Private Branch Exchange) Real Estate

Traditional telephony equipment such as PBX systems have been around since the 1970’s and even updated IP-based PBX systems

have been in house since the 1990’s, managed by telephony consultants who may have been working with the company for 10-20 years. With the recent convergence of existing PBX technology with this newly enhanced communications user interface, many IT decision makers who are embracing Unified Communications are unsure what to do with their existing telephony equipment and are as equally unsure as to how to optimize their existing systems which includes telephony/voice, data, and application infrastructure.

Avaya Unified Communications for Microsoft environments enhances what already exists. There is no need to update or rip and replace existing PBX equipment. The intended goal of this solution is to absorb the services of the PBX to improve communications provided to the desktop via a layer of integration. This layer of integration includes media gateways, routing tables, and rules to allow the Microsoft Office desktop tools such as Communicator and Outlook to communicate with existing PBX equipment. The key to this integration lies within a technology protocol known as SIP (Session Initiation Protocol). Leveraging SIP and media gateways allows application servers such as Microsoft Office Communications Server and Microsoft Exchange Server, to communicate to a PBX to expose functions such as placing or accepting a call, putting parties on hold, handling voicemail, and providing enhanced conversations such as conference calls or using VoIP (Voice over IP) for global communications. SIP provides the Rosetta Stone between these services to allow for an experience that a business user can depend on.

To ensure your infrastructure can support a Unified Communications solution, there are three tests that should occur during a pre-installation/pre-sale process. These tests include a voice, data, and network test. These tests usually include the assistance of an outside Unified Communications architect who has experience implementing the full Unified Communications solution with additional expertise in advanced telephony services. The UC Architect should work with a series of representatives from your company to run specific tests on your voice, data, and network infrastructure and out of these tests, provide



a analytical report to confirm the ability to support a Unified Communications solution.

### Voice Analysis

During a Unified Communications voice test, a UC Architect and a representative who understands your voice services inclusive of traditional telephony and VoIP services, will inspect items such as existing dialing plans, PSTN (Public Switched Telephony Network) integration, SIP and PSTN trunks, and any existing SIP integration with existing applications to provide a report to the appropriate decision maker that presents a scorecard of areas where the network is supportive of the new UC solution or areas that need to be improved before a UC solution can be implemented.

### Data Analysis

The main purpose of a data analysis is to provide a similar report/scorecard to the appropriate decision maker that includes an assessment of your organizations data services. Your existing data network needs to be sufficient enough to allow for large data transfers. A data analysis also must be completed in detail if your organization decides to use existing server equipment to host Microsoft's application servers to ensure that each server meets the appropriate storage, memory and processor requirements. If a decision to purchase new equipment is made, then the data report will provide an understanding of what server equipment should be supported that will also integrate within your existing infrastructure. Another important role of the data assessment is to understand the current configuration of Microsoft Active Directory within an organization. Microsoft provides existing data requirements online via the Microsoft Unified Communications website at <http://www.microsoft.com/uc>. The UC Architect should assess the data network of your organization with the appropriate internal resource to match these requirements to ensure that the UC solution can be implemented.

### Network Analysis

A network assessment is quite common for all organizations and is usually already queried on a daily or weekly basis to ensure the proper support for existing communications. Inside an organiza-

tion, external, intra-firewall, and internal network systems exist. These separated and integrated environments provide the appropriate bandwidth needed for a Unified Communications solution as the solution covers both internal and external communication between employees/colleagues, partners, and external parties. Usually, an organization provides a detailed Network Area Request (NAR) report to a UC Architect so that the Architect can match the existing network bandwidth limits to the ranges required by Unified

Communications solution. A successful and complete network analysis should be completed before any decision is made to purchase or implement a Unified Communications solution.

For more information on optimizing an infrastructure in preparation of an integrated Avaya and Microsoft Unified Communications platform, please visit <http://www.avaya.com/uc>.

## Embracing the Converged Communications Trend

Unifying Communications requires a convergence on many fronts including systems, applications, consulting staff/expertise, and most importantly, a mind-shift change for business users, who are used to picking up a phone to communicate and collaborating separately with Instant Messaging and E-Mail applications. The challenge of introducing a converged communications solution to a sometimes very stubborn host of business users, is the primary obstacle standing in the way of counting the UC deployment as a success. So how do you ensure that your deployment is a success? Marketing and Training!

Once deployed, your responsibility to your organization is to provide the most effective training and IT marketing campaign that you have probably ever embarked on since introducing E-Mail. Many documents in the form of magazine and online print articles, whitepapers, and help guides currently exist on Avaya's and Microsoft's respective Unified Communications websites to support this effort. Leveraging video training web casts and demos as well as marketing demonstrations provided by both Avaya and Microsoft will also help business users embrace this technology. Regardless



how this information is divulged a clear process of marketing and communication of this new UC solution is mission critical in ensuring your deployment success.

With this plethora of information, a phased approach is usually the best method of distribution. Your post-deployment messaging strategy should include the following phases of marketed communication and training:

- **Phase I—Departmental Hands-on Training.**

The purpose of this phase is to collect a series of representatives from specific business units within the company and provide a half day training session so that these representatives can re-train their colleagues on the solution. This session can include an instructor-led session and should walk each business unit representative through the business user features that are available as part of the deployment. It is also good practice to put together an online resource website to point the representative student to post-training to brush up or point others to online training tutorials.

- **Phase II—Widespread Training and Documentation.**

The most efficient way to provide widespread training, especially for geographically dispersed organization, is by utilizing online training tools. This type of training is extremely effective as it is typically difficult to obtain actual business users for an on-hand on-site training seminar and this kind of training can be archived online for later viewings.

- **Phase III—Online Support Resources.**

Compiling a list of documentation provided by Avaya and Microsoft as well as customized help information that you provide including online webcast training provided through Microsoft Office Live Meeting 2007 and publishing this information via an online website that is accessible to business users of even global organizations will prove to be extremely useful in the long run for on-demand training and resource guidance.

Through these phases of communication and training, your business users will receive the proper education on how to use an Avaya and Microsoft

Unified Communications solution in their day to day working environments.

### Factors in Calculating Unified Communications ROI

According to an IDC Tele-briefing in June 2006 titled, "Making the Short List", the top four organizational goals influencing IT decisions are solutions that enable business growth, improve competitiveness, increase staff efficiencies, and reduce costs. Unifying Communications is one way businesses can start meeting these goals.

Avaya Unified Communications for Microsoft Environments helps organizations be more productive and improve service to their customers and stakeholders by increasing their efficiency and effectiveness. Key Unified Communications elements that enable these gains include desktop telephony, mobility, conferencing, video, messaging and business communications consulting. These solutions can enable employees to improve customer interactions, increase productivity, enhance collaboration, mitigate risk and lower costs.

Considering all of the elements of planning a UC solution, a level of complexity begins to arise when you need to calculate the potential ROI for your UC plan. Since, unified communications can lead to improved business outcomes, your UC solution should be tied to supporting your businesses current and future strategy.



As all businesses differ, quantifying the benefits of a UC solution will differ from company to company. However, there are some categories which companies can use to help quantify the benefits of their UC solution. These categories include:

- Increased Revenue
- Reduced Labor Costs
- Reduced Operating Costs
- Strategic Value

Multiple factors influence the results of the above list. Some factors to be considered when measuring increased revenue include increased close rates, reduced customer attrition, and reduced time to market. Examples of factors that should be considered when measuring reduced labor costs include reduced travel time, reduced employment costs and increased employee productivity. A few factors associated with reduced operating costs include reduced travel expenses, reduced facility expenses, and reduced telecom expenses. Finally,

some factors that help quantify strategic value include customer satisfaction, corporate performance, and business continuity.

Though daunting and a bit complex, using the above information can help you determine the potential ROI of your UC solution. For those who are considering deploying an Avaya Unified Communications solution for Microsoft Environments, Avaya has created the Avaya Business Value Analysis tool (Sample Figure 1). Utilizing this tool, users can input information based on their UC solution plan, as well as input information on the many factors touched on above. The result of this tool is a report that highlights the potential ROI of deploying an Avaya Unified Communications solution. For more information on this tool or Avaya Unified Communications for Microsoft Environments please visit Avaya at [www.avaya.com](http://www.avaya.com).

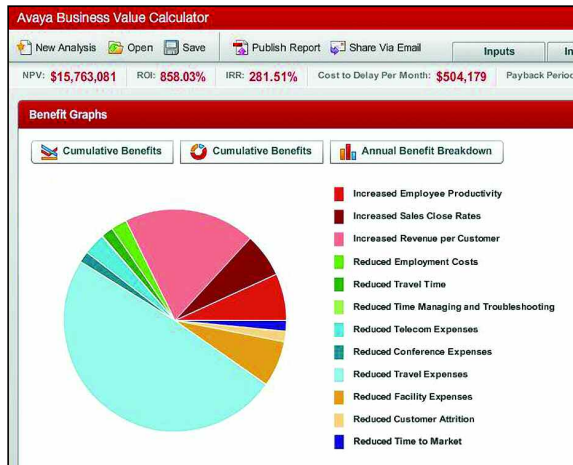


FIGURE 1: Sample Data for Demonstration Purposes Only

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INTELLIGENT COMMUNICATIONS



### About Avaya

Avaya enables businesses to achieve superior results by designing, building and managing their communications infrastructure and solutions. For over one million businesses worldwide, including more than 90 percent of the FORTUNE 500®, Avaya embedded solutions help businesses enhance value, improve productivity and create competitive advantage by allowing people to be more productive and create more intelligent processes that satisfy customers.

For businesses large and small, Avaya is a world leader in secure, reliable IP telephony systems, communications applications and full life-cycle services. Driving the convergence of embedded voice and data communications with business applications, Avaya is distinguished by its combination of comprehensive, world-class products and services. Avaya helps customers across the globe leverage existing and new networks to achieve superior business results.

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