IS YOUR APPROACH TO UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS GETTING THE JOB DONE?
Employees are more empowered today than ever. They’re technologically advanced and have a myriad of communications devices at their fingertips. They expect technology to deliver flexibility and reliability 24/7 to help them connect where they need to and when they need to in order to get the job done.

When the need to connect fails to be a lifeline for employees and instead becomes a barrier to getting the job done, it’s time to reassess your approach to unified communications.

Is your communication technology truly unified? Is a reliable, flexible and scalable network supporting interoperable communication technology? Are video, voice and messaging all integrated with state-of-the-art and on-the-grid collaboration spaces? Are employees misfiring in their attempts to connect, or are they able to seamlessly connect with their colleagues at any time?
The IT Challenge

Everywhere we look, Information Technology organizations are challenged with keeping up with the ever-arcing consumer technology curve. Consumer technology now sets the standard when it comes to what employees expect in terms of accessibility and ease-of-use.

IT is under pressure to provide consumer-like levels of flexibility and service, all within the enterprise-wide infrastructure that has established standards, protocols and firewalls. You have multimillion-dollar investments in current system architectures and platforms, so ripping and replacing isn’t an option.
So how does IT keep up? A successful unified communications strategy integrates the spectrum of communications within an organization. To be competitive in today’s workplace, companies need to ensure all are tightly managed on an IT infrastructure that’s accessible yet secure, flexible yet stable and reliable yet scalable.

Technology management today hinges on the ability to implement and make available the latest in collaboration innovations to employees, while also integrating with existing systems.

This can mean leveraging multiple providers and systems, but also leveraging and managing in a way that means interacting with these systems from an IT support perspective is as seamless as possible. Managed services providers can assume some of these responsibilities, improving efficiencies and allowing IT staffs to focus on core missions.
It used to be that companies had multiple networks carrying traditional data, video and voice independently of one another. Today, it's increasingly common to see everything riding on a single converged network managed by the IT team.

These networks need strong security, deep redundancy and the ability to grow quickly. Companies have to monitor their networks in real time, anticipate problems and respond to crises with hair-trigger speed.

Video especially requires substantial bandwidth, and multiple video software and hardware platforms require expertise to keep the converged network running around the clock. This is an area where third parties can be especially valuable.

Employees want to collaborate among themselves over multiple platforms, devices and locations. Companies are even designing their facilities to be more collaborative. These innovations are profoundly changing the work of IT departments.

In years past, just a handful of providers were responsible for a vast swath of video-conferencing hardware and software. Today, more providers as well as a host of mobile devices are available. These platforms were not designed to interoperate with each other. To ensure that interoperability of multiple devices, platforms and applications requires substantial technical acumen.
Collaboration Spaces

A few years ago, only 50 percent of conference rooms were outfitted with services like high-speed Internet, display systems and video conferencing. Today, that number exceeds 90 percent.

The expectation for room performance has increased exponentially. Saying “Let’s move to another room,” when a problem occurs is no longer an option. People expect every collaboration space to function properly at all times.

This creates a need for dependable collaboration space monitoring and support. IT departments could staff this in-house, but they face growing pressure to legitimize budgets.

Voice and Messaging

Technology is converging. UC ensures you have access to the most advanced and relevant communication solutions (including networking, video and collaboration) that natively tie back to your existing or evolving voice, messaging and desktop platforms.

Rip and replace is not always the answer. You’ve invested millions in existing infrastructure. You need to be able to integrate the new communication options that your employees are demanding while sustaining and gradually evolving existing voice and messaging platforms.

Outsourcing the expertise can give you a cost-effective and scalable means of establishing a unified communications model that increases employee efficiency while streamlining IT processes and providing adequate but fluctuating levels of support.
Why UC? IT Success Equals Employee Efficiency

For employees, UC is about eliminating communication barriers and increasing on-the-job productivity. For IT, it’s about successfully meeting employee expectations by effectively managing technology even while supporting a myriad of systems and providers. Both employee and IT demands exist in the name of driving cost savings and performance efficiencies for the company as a whole.

Judge Case Study: International Chemical Research Company

An international chemical research company experienced inefficiencies in video conferencing. The inability to ascertain system usage and performance hindered ROI assessments. Employees could not self-schedule and launch video conferencing, which led to heavy IT intervention.

The company took a consultative approach, outsourcing its UC strategy. The third party recommended and oversaw the UC integration with multiple leading video-conference providers.

The software integrated with the existing email exchange server used by employees, allowing self-scheduling of rooms and seamless launch of video sessions worldwide. The online scheduling enabled usage tracking, call performance analysis and the ability for IT to more easily monitor and support all room locations.

The UC approach leveraged the latest in communication technology while enabling integration with existing systems. The result was improved IT efficiencies and enhanced employee productivity through easy access to state-of-the-art collaboration technology.
Why UC? IT Success Equals Employee Efficiency

Judge Case Study:
Global Wellness and Nutrition Company

A global wellness and nutrition company required engineers to work closely with system operators and company executives to ensure budget objectives were being met.

The company elected to outsource its UC strategy. The third party recommended and oversaw the integration, design and build of all audio visual and unified communications systems for the headquarters.

Call-Center Communications. The call center now employs a digital signage system with more than 50 screens, simultaneously serving all floors throughout the facility. Vital in-house communications include menu-driven screens for sales messaging, up-to-the-minute phone activity, including calls in queue, RSS feeds with call data and late-breaking product development information.

Executive Boardrooms. The executive boardrooms feature full audio as well as HD video teleconferencing capability. Systems feature custom touch-panel controls that allow for remote IT support and technical help desk assistance on a 24/7/365 basis.

Company-wide. A sound masking and facility-wide paging system, digital signage system and custom closed-circuit multimedia delivery system completes the company-wide unified communications network.

This unified communications approach provides consistent distribution of vital company statistics, status, product updates, trends and successes to all employees immediately throughout the entire complex. Executives are looped in 24/7 to operational status, and managers and employees are continually collaborating as the system provides ongoing crucial inter-office communications support.
UC Success Methodology: Design, Build, Service

Every UC undertaking should achieve a return on investment that justifies the time and resource allocation. The goal is to appropriately scale IT support to the seemingly insatiable employee demands for enhanced communication, collaboration and productivity.

You need experienced UC strategy and implementation professionals to ensure your vision of cost-effective, efficient and easy-to-use UC becomes a reality. A well-established methodology fully defines and delivers functional requirements in light of needs, budget and infrastructure realities.

The design process translates functional requirements into technical system design. The build process enables technicians to establish which elements remain in-house or are outsourced, select providers and facilitate implementations and migrations. The service phase provides scalable support to keep systems running at optimal performance.

**Design Phase.** A survey and assessment process should thoroughly audit current-state as well as future requirements for UC. Goals are set for overall UC system implementation with key along-the-way milestones defined (systems and technology reviews, support requirements, outsourcing considerations, etc.). Change Management is also addressed in this phase. The success of your UC implementation ultimately rests with your users. Employee education and buy-in at this phase is critical.
Build Phase. The UC installation process incorporates all elements necessary to professionally execute the final systems design, including pre-build, testing and migration planning. Control programs are simulated to eliminate as many variables as possible during the testing phase in order to improve the efficiency of the final on-site build. Time for collaboration with cross-functional teams is built in to ensure migration planning is on target.

Fully trained technicians execute migration planning, staging and installation with disruption to actual sites kept to a minimum. Project managers should readily communicate processes and procedures, including any downtime that may be required at the time of UC installation.

Service Phase. Upon completion of the build phase, end-user training and orientation is conducted, along with activation of the service and maintenance plan. System reliability is foremost, and, from the moment of project sign-off, service technicians should be fully trained and certified in all products and be ready to assist in trouble resolution on a 24/7/365 basis.

Your UC system and its support service should be able to scale with your business as it grows. Managed services providers can assume these responsibilities, improving efficiencies and allowing IT staff to focus on other missions, all while controlling costs.
Successful UC: Choosing a Provider

Fundamentally, your provider has to understand how you use UC and be able to ensure your technology is encouraging collaboration and not breeding frustration. Here are three things to expect:

**Reliability.** Managed services providers should have substantial experience on multiple technology platforms. They must be able to ensure redundancy and security and have deep knowledge of wireless technologies. You want a provider with global reach and multiple data centers around the world for redundancy. If you lose a link to one data center, you want to be able to go right to another without missing a beat.

**Flexibility.** Support from multiple software and hardware providers is a must. You want access to various products, and you don’t want a provider that is limited only to one platform. The key is to understand that evolving technology is moving providers to bring people together with a holistic video, audio and text experience.

**Scalability.** Managed services providers offer real-time monitoring of network traffic in tiered levels so companies have just what they need — not too much and not too little. Monitoring can be accomplished remotely or on-site. Cloud services are becoming much more popular because they save companies the capital expense of purchasing hardware.
Innovation & Efficiency

Technology is bringing people and companies together like never before. Innovative technologies allow face-to-face conversations around the clock and around the world. Yet, these advances represent significant challenges to company IT departments that have to add new responsibilities to their already substantial workloads.

Managed services that support networking, videoconferencing and collaboration systems lighten the load on IT departments, control costs and give people the real-time accessibility they need to improve efficiency and drive work forward.

Is your approach to unified communications getting the job done? Let’s find out.

Call Judge Technology Solutions at 610-825-7040 or visit Judge.com
About The Judge Group

The Judge Group is a leading professional services firm specializing in technology, talent and learning solutions. Our services are successfully delivered through a network of more than 30 offices in the United States, Canada and China.

Privately owned and headquartered outside of Philadelphia, we serve more than 30 Fortune 100 companies and are responsible for the placement of more than 4,500 professionals annually across a wide range of industries.

Working at the crossroads of people and transformative technologies, The Judge Group delivers innovative business solutions – powered by top talent – to help organizations reach their strategic goals and realize opportunities now and in the future.