

# Unified communications is not just for the big players

April 2010

### Work is what you do, not where you are

Flexible and mobile working has meant it's more likely than ever for us to be out and about rather than sitting in the office at our desks. To stay in touch, we have access to a range of communications channels – mobile and fixed phones (at work and at home), PDAs and – most probably – several voice mailboxes to capture the messages we miss. All of this can represent a challenge to a co-worker or customer who needs to get in touch – what number do they try to dial first? Missed calls mean frustration and wasted time for customers and extra work for us as we are forced to trawl around picking up messages that should have got through first time.

For small and medium enterprises (SMEs) the situation is particularly acute – the fragile economy has meant that businesses are opting (instead of hiring new staff) to upskill their employees so they can take on more work. It's common for people to have to juggle two or three 'day jobs', making it more important than ever for them to be within reach.

Mark and John – their sad dance in a world of disconnected communications

Mark, trying to obtain a vital piece of information for a customer, sends an email to his colleague John. He then calls John's fixed phone but it's unanswered, so leaves a voicemail message, then tries John's mobile number (or worse still, phones the operator or someone else to get the mobile number) and ends up leaving another voicemail as John doesn't answer that call either.

Mark ends up without the information he needs, and has unwittingly created a trail of work for John who is going to have to spend three times as long on Mark's request as he needs to.

### More work for IT and contracts people

If it's tough at the coal face, spare a thought for the people who keep the lights on. Many SMEs' telecoms infrastructures have grown organically – adding new capabilities piecemeal and opportunistically in response to business and market conditions. The trouble with this is that it creates management complexity – multiple suppliers and support structures, contract issues and ownership responsibilities, payment models, bundled services vs. pay-per-minute – and so on. And with each new feature and point solution, managing all this gets more time consuming and expensive, increasing overheads and ultimately damaging profitability.

How much time is spent on these thankless tasks, maintaining inefficient communications practices where fixed, mobile and desktop communications don't really work together? How much time is wasted when customers and colleagues have to chase around the collection of phones until they find the right one? We can't be really productive if we carry on like this letting communications technologies dictate how we work.

### Being there – being truly mobile

Being mobile isn't simply about using a mobile device when we're out of the office. To be truly mobile, we have to bridge the gap between fixed and mobile communications, so that we're always reachable, on one number, wherever we are, with one voicemail service for those times that we're too busy to take a call. Communications should be one of the foundations of our success, not a millstone around our necks.

### Vodafone One Net – a unified communications solution from Vodafone

Our unified communications solution for SMEs – called Vodafone One Net - puts you back in control, seamlessly integrating your fixed and mobile devices. Reachable on one number, regardless of device, your customers can get hold of you first time, and you'll only ever have to listen to the same message once. As you give your employees the ability to work this way, your business will benefit from improved productivity, deliver better customer service and ultimately look to reduce the total cost of ownership of your communications infrastructure as lifecycle and management costs are factored in. And with your PBX hosted within Vodafone's enterprise network, you no longer have to manage, depreciate and replace ageing hardware, and you also gain a good measure of disaster recovery capability without the pain.

Our plans don't stop with telephony – we will be integrating desktop services such as instant messaging, video, a single accessible corporate directory, file sharing and shared workspaces like whiteboards. 'Presence' information will also allow callers to understand the recipient's status (away, busy, etc) and their preferred contact methods.

### A true competitive advantage

Because there's less chasing up to catch up, unified communications contributes in many real ways towards making your business more efficient, productive and competitive:

- You can work smarter because of reduced decision times – always in reach, you can respond earlier to emerging business situations. Wherever there is mobile coverage, you have access to all of your contacts and with web conferencing and shared desktops, moving large media files around is a thing of the past.
- You can provide better customer service – being able to pick up all your voice messages, and never missing a call means you can provide that vital customer response much quicker.
- Systems management is much easier – with many components of our unified communications offering hosted on Vodafone's resilient network, you can rationalise your suppliers and simplify your support structure. If problems occur you'll always know who to contact and you'll always be able to get through to them.
- Less pressure on vital capital – we offer flexible, per-user charging with no up-front capital investment. This means you can divert financial and other resources towards business initiatives that drive your business forward, not on overheads.
- Opportunity to lower cost of ownership – depending on your existing systems infrastructure, removing layers of ageing hardware and its management will contribute towards driving down your lifecycle cost of ownership.

#### Mark and John - how they fare in the new world of unified communications

Now that John's got just one number for both his fixed and mobile phones, Mark has a better chance of reaching him first time and with one voicemail for both fixed phone and mobile, would only need to have left one message, saving them both time, and making it easier for them both to manage their communications channels. With access to John's presence information Mark would have seen that John was busy on a call and could have sent him an Instant Message instead of trying to call him - exploiting the flexibility provided when presence information is a part of the communications mix.

### The new economy – a balanced case for change

It's no secret that companies are finding it difficult to invest in improvement initiatives in the current financial climate, and for SMEs, it can be even harder, since they rarely have the corporate reserves of the big players. Vodafone One Net helps organisations to face the challenge of improved efficiency, productivity and customer service without having to raid the bank for funds.

"50% of workers experience project delays on a weekly basis because a key decision maker can't be reached."

Forrester Research

With multiple levels of resilience across our corporate networks, unified communications can also strengthen your business continuity capability – you don't have to lose peace of mind to take advantage of what Vodafone One Net has to offer.

Communications is going to carry on getting smarter, faster and more invisible – and successful organisations will be those who recognise the opportunity for these new solutions to drive them ahead of the competition and gain a true competitive edge. And all without a hint of capex in sight.

#### Interested?

If you're interested to find out more how Vodafone One Net can add value to your business and help you to serve your customers better, call us on **08450 727 242** or visit [www.vodafone.co.uk/onenet](http://www.vodafone.co.uk/onenet)

Lines are open from 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday. Calls from a BT landline cost 2p a minute but network charges apply from a mobile phone. Calls may be monitored for training, security or other purposes permissible by law.

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