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That's the Way You Need It: A Guide to Mobile Unified Communications

Journey's song lyrics "Any way you want it / That's the way you need it / Any way you want it" sum up the typical employee's expectation for mobility in this day and age. Regardless of device type or corporate policy, employees increasingly seek to use their own devices and preferred mobile environment to communicate with co-workers and clients. Aberdeen has tracked this trend toward putting a unified communications environment in the employee's hand. This report puts this trend in context, using Aberdeen's research into wireless expense management, unified communications, enterprise mobility management, and mobile applications to describe the issues, challenges, and options associated with mobile unified communications.

The Changing Face of Enterprise Mobility

The advent of powerful handheld mobile devices has resulted in a new type of employee, who expects enterprise-level technology resources coupled with the ease of the most delightful consumer experiences. These employees expect to have access in any location on any device to high levels of bandwidth, application functionality, corporate resources, and expert advice on-demand. In addition, Aberdeen found in research for the November 2010 report [Helping the Helpless Desk](#) that a majority of employees now seek to fix their own technology issues before accessing their corporate help desk.

The corporate reaction to these trends should be multi-faceted, since it must take into account the business need for usability and robust communications capabilities, cost structure considerations, centralized management, and support tools for an IT department facing its own challenges with multi-vendor technology proliferation.

In light of these countervailing individual and corporate trends, enterprises seek a solution that supports greater individual and corporate productivity while maintaining costs and fitting into the current technology roadmap.

Converge, Secure, and Upgrade Mobility

To translate mobility deployments into greater employee productivity, mobile devices and environments must be optimized to support both employee preference and corporate functionality. To better understand how organizations complete this task, Aberdeen studied over 500 organizations in the October 2011 report [Enterprise B2E Mobile App Strategies](#). This report focused on the best practices associated with building,

Analyst Insight

Aberdeen's Insights provide the analyst perspective of the research as drawn from an aggregated view of the research surveys, interviews, and data analysis

deploying and supporting mobile applications that accelerated time-to-information and operational efficiency for employees.

Three key traits associated with Best-in-Class mobile application usage were:

- a corporate focus on using mobile applications to improve communications and collaboration among employees,
- the ability to provide secure applications that conformed to corporate needs, and
- the capability to update software over-the-air (OTA), which allowed organizations to support and manage mobility more easily.

Each of these traits played an important role in aggregating communications capabilities into consolidated mobile unified communications, but for different reasons.

Although most organizations identify improving collaboration as a key role for mobile applications, only 36% of organizations have deployed unified communications on their mobile devices, and another 26% are considering doing so in the future. A majority of survey respondents say their organization has formalized the use of mobile email, calendars, and contact directories--but by failing to fully integrate smartphones and other mobile devices with the corporate communications environment (including, voice, instant messaging, and presence), organizations focused on mobile applications are missing a clear opportunity to accelerate time-to-action and support synchronous communications. By converging traditional deskphone and PC-based communications capabilities onto the mobile device, they can allow the employee's mobile device to become a more powerful driver for increasing productivity.

Organizations that seek productivity must do so securely and compliantly. Productivity gains are useless if that productivity is either carelessly lost or maliciously taken away from the organization. Companies must secure network connections, and potentially encrypt sensitive or proprietary mobile communications. Although mobility makes work environments more flexible and pervasive, it can also expose organizations to snooping, malware attacks, and other security threats. Enterprises adapted to security challenges for personal computers and networks by using Virtual Private Networks (VPN) and encryption, ideally embedded into the computing environment so that any remote usage is automatically protected. Mobile unified communications requires the same caution, as many transactions traditionally conducted on the PC have moved to the mobile device.

Employees also desire transparent, yet fully up-to-date, support of key technologies--especially on the mobile device, which is expected to have ubiquitous connectivity and access. To meet this need, organizations should be sure they can update mobile applications OTA, rather than requiring these devices be updated at a centralized or fixed location. Aberdeen's [mobile applications research](#) found that Best-in-Class companies were over twice as likely as Laggards to have OTA software update capabilities.

Best-in-Class B2E Mobile Apps

In this September 2011 study, the top 20% of respondents, deemed "Best-in-Class", were defined as those who achieved the following characteristics on average:

- Can access information within required time frame 90% of the time
- 72% year-over-year improvement in "time-to-information"
- 42% year-over-year improvement in operational efficiency

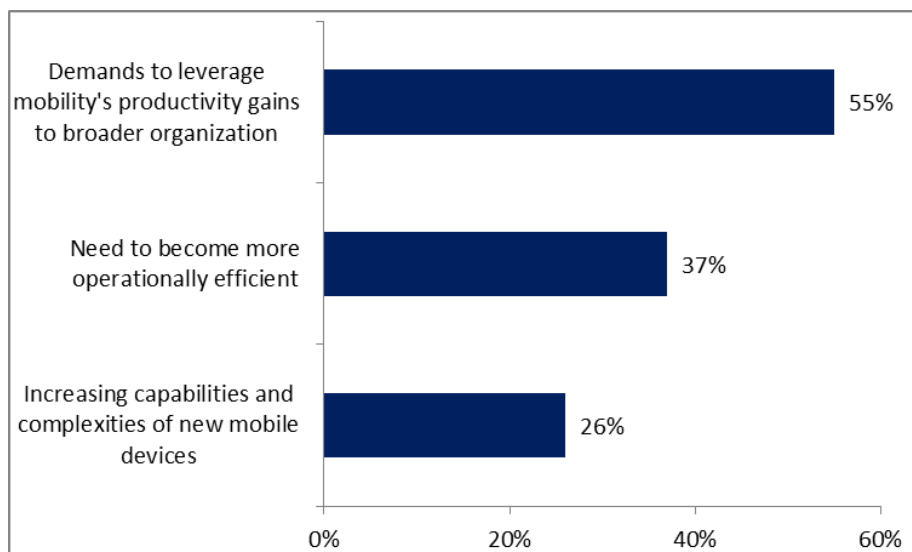
In comparison, the bottom 30% of respondents, deemed "Laggards", had the following performance:

- Can access information within required time frame 56% of the time
- 0% year-over-year improvement in "time-to-information"
- 2% year-over-year improvement in operational efficiency

Managing Many Forms of Mobility

In *Enterprise Mobility Management Goes Global: Mobility Becomes Core IT* (July 2011), Aberdeen established that the top pressure for managing mobility, identified by 55% of over 400 organizations, was to maintain and support employee productivity throughout the organization. (Figure 1)

Figure 1: Global Pressures to Manage Enterprise Mobility



Source: Aberdeen Group, *Enterprise Mobility Management Goes Global*, June 2011

This global demand superseded the desire to standardize on a single mobile platform or control the influx of mobile devices and demand. However, as new operating systems, form factors, applications, and use cases appeared, they came into conflict with legacy organizational strategies. Forty-eight percent (48%) of respondents sought to ensure that all devices met corporate standards, and placed corporate risk above individual convenience. This need for compliance would seem to be in contrast with the demand to expand the value of mobility. However, security and productivity do not have to be diametrically opposed. To achieve both goals, mobility support must be scalable, compliant with corporate security and governance policies, and easy-to-use.

As part of this effort to expand the productivity gains of enterprise mobility, companies have increasingly embraced the trend of Bring Your Own Device (BYOD). Currently, over 70% of Aberdeen respondents claim to have some BYOD policy, ranging from limited use for specific job roles to holistic use of BYOD throughout the organization. BYOD is typically assumed to lead to greater productivity and reduced cost.

The first assumption is based on the employee's ability to personalize their mobile devices with the applications and environment best suited to their needs. As long as the employee chooses an environment compatible with the company's mobile approach, this assumption can be sound.

"[Unified Communications] allows streamlined communication between while in the office or while mobile to respond to our vendor and customer needs much faster.

~ SVP, Telecom Services,
United States

However, the assumption that BYOD reduces costs is highly dependent on how these devices are managed. On average, BYOD actually costs the business \$19 more per month per device than corporate-liable because these personally-owned devices were used in the same way as corporate devices, but incurred processing costs associated with expensing and reimbursing devices and services. To be cost effective, organizations must be strategic in reimbursing and acquiring unified communications technologies to rationalize the cost structure of BYOD in the enterprise.

Controlling Wireless BYOD Costs

Although BYOD is not cost-effective in the vast majority of cases, there are enterprise mobility tools that can significantly reduce the cost of mobility by integrating mobile devices with enterprise phone and unified communications systems. Rather than use desk phones because they represent a traditional method of communications, consider the enterprise ability to optimize international calling and international roaming costs.

Mobile international calling is expensive, controlled by carrier tariffs, and typically represents one of the highest per-minute charges that can be initiated from cell phones. However, by routing international calls through a PBX, organizations can effectively shift these calls from wireless carrier-billed calls to calls going through the landline or network carrier. Depending on the routing options available, this could turn an expensive mobile call into a call with virtually no cost. Considering the proliferation of BYOD mobility and the difficulty of controlling associated costs, the ability to give employees an option to reduce international calling costs can improve the bottom line. This is especially true if this process is transparent to the employee and this cost routing can be automated to provide a cheap and easy solution while maintaining employee flexibility and productivity.

Even more important than routing international calls is the need to control international roaming. In Aberdeen's September 2011 report [Wireless Expense Management](#) (WEM), international roaming placed second only to the BYOD trend as a top concern for respondents. On average, organizations concerned with international roaming paid an additional \$60 per employee per month just from international roaming charges. Multiple respondents saw bills as high as \$3,000 to \$4,000 for an individual trip. To avoid these unexpected charges, one of Aberdeen's recommendations to achieve Best-in-Class wireless expense management status was to take calls off the cellular network and take advantage of existing LAN and WAN resources. Currently, only 15% of Best-in-Class companies use fixed mobile convergence, but Aberdeen sees this as an opportunity to offload these expensive costs by taking advantage of ubiquitous connectivity and moving these calls to Voice over WLAN calls that avoid carrier tariffs.

The Reality of Supporting Unified Communications

Although supporting multi-platform mobile deployments can be challenging in itself, mobile unified communications also includes integration with the PBX. Enterprise telephony and communications have often been managed in

Best-in-Class WEM

In this September 2011 study, the top 20% of respondents were defined as those who achieved, on average:

- \$27 per user per month for data costs (31% less than Industry Average)
- \$31 per user per month for voice costs (26% less than Industry Average)

an ad-hoc manner, resulting in many different types of solutions existing in the same organization. To solve this problem, organizations should seek technology management overlays that support multi-vendor telephony environments. Rather than repeatedly worrying about whether a specific mobile platform will be compatible with a specific PBX, organizations focused on the productivity aspects of mobility should focus on supporting the technology environments that are best for employees.

In the June 2011 study *Conquering the Fear, Uncertainty, and Doubt of Managing Integrated Communications*, Best-in-Class organizations were four times as likely as Laggards to have a multi-vendor solution for configuring and managing unified communications (UC). This capability provided organizations with increased productivity in supporting communications and contributed to Best-in-Class results (see right sidebar).

Technicians and telecom analysts will especially appreciate the importance of a consistent and managed dial plan. Although end users do not typically think about the challenges of managing a phone extension and identity, this work can take up IT's time with supporting employee orders on multiple systems for multiple devices, and threaten the department's ability to innovate and support new technologies. By adding mobile devices to the dial plan, organizations can provide corporate communications benefits in a centrally managed way. Mobile unified communications should ideally provide all the benefits of being in the office, regardless of whether the employee is actually there or not, which is why integrated dial plan management for all devices was a key capability associated with Best-in-Class support of unified communications.

Questions Regarding Mobile Unified Communications

To effectively mobilize your unified communications environment, ask yourself the following questions, based on Best-in-Class practices reviewed in this document, as you evaluate internal or third-party solutions. To use this table effectively:

Consider the strategic questions in context of your organization's current capabilities and note the level of maturity, which indicates the highest Aberdeen technology Maturity Class where this concern is still felt by a majority of companies (Table 1).

Table 1: Your Mobile Unified Communications Concerns

	Strategic Questions	Your Company's Answers	Maturity Class Pain Point
Mobile Strategy Concerns	<i>Is your current mobility strategy focused on supporting multiple device types and operating systems?</i>		Laggard

Best-in-Class Managing Comms

In this June 2011 study, the top 20% of respondents (Best-in-Class) were defined as those who achieved, on average:

- 98% of employees centrally managed for UC (compared to 42% for Laggards)
- 99% of locations centrally managed for UC (compared to 29% for Laggards)
- 98% of outage-based SLAs met for UC (compared to 44% for Laggards)
- 1.2 hours of significant communications impairment to one or more locations (less than 1/30th the downtime seen by Laggards)

	Strategic Questions	Your Company's Answers	Maturity Class Pain Point
	<i>Are your employees content to use corporate mobile devices or do they use their own mobile devices at work?</i>		Industry Average: Best-in-Class track mobile access to data for employee-liable devices and have an inventory of all personal-liable devices
Mobile Support Concerns	<i>Do your employees already support a home technology environment on par with corporate-provided services?</i>		Industry Average: Best-in-Class organizations support multiple types of devices, including those that maximize employee productivity
	<i>Can you update communications software on mobile devices OTA?</i>		Industry Average: 71% of Best-in-Class companies have OTA support
	<i>Are all work-related mobile communications secure and compliant?</i>		Industry Average: 70% of Best-in-Class enforce security policies for all corporate mobile devices
	<i>Does the mobile security currently used for your devices require the end user to turn it on or is it automated?</i>		Best-in-Class: Only 43% of Best-in-Class even have anti-malware solutions.
Wireless Expense Management Concerns	<i>Are mobile communications conducted in a cost-effective and fiscally optimized way?</i>		Laggard: Best-in-Class organizations reduce direct costs by over 25% compared to average companies
	<i>Are international calling or international roaming expenses a concern?</i>		Industry Average: 58% of Industry Average companies identified international roaming costs as a key concern.

	Strategic Questions	Your Company's Answers	Maturity Class Pain Point
Convergence Concerns	<i>Does your mobile deployment take advantage of landline network investments?</i>		Best-in-Class: Only a third of Best-in-Class companies used Fixed Mobile Convergence compared to 14% of Laggards.
	<i>Can your mobile devices currently access the dial plan, voice mail, and unified communications features associated with your PBX?</i>		Best-in-Class: Only a third of Best-in-Class companies used Fixed Mobile Convergence compared to 14% of Laggards.
	<i>Do the mobile devices used for work have access to corporate instant messaging and presence?</i>		Industry Average - Instant messaging and presence are two of the top differentiators for gaining value from Unified Communications
	<i>Do you currently support multiple PBX or telephony vendors in your communications environment?</i>		Best-in-Class: Only 40% of Aberdeen's Best-in-Class have a formal process to integrate multiple vendor solutions.

Source: Aberdeen Group, November 2011

Key Takeaways for Mobile Unified Communications

As mobility has become a core aspect of the employee's technology portfolio, organizations have gained a new opportunity to improve employee productivity. However, these desired productivity gains require companies to improve collaboration by integrating mobility with enterprise communications. Aberdeen offers the following advice based on Best-in-Class end user experiences associated with business value:

- Develop a solution that takes end user support and self-service trends into account. Employees are more demanding, and expect more personalized technology support as their own technology consumption habits become more mature. This may mean providing more flexibility for end-user configuration, supporting BYOD, or providing self-service capabilities for employees.

[Mobile Communications] have allowed different means of communication where immediate 24x7x365 responses have become the norm. Additionally, it has increased employee productivity without increasing overhead.

~ IT Manager, Computer Equipment, United States

- Mobile unified communications should not be limited to the device. Aberdeen considers Social, Mobile, and Cloud to be part of one integrated whole called SoMoClo™. Although mobile devices already have their own unified services, they are typically specific to the device. To provide the greatest business value, mobile devices must be connected to corporate communications solutions that tie together the mobile device, cloud-based data, and applications.
- Wireless expenses are controllable and reducible. Rather than take thousand-dollar roaming expenses and international calling charges for granted, organizations can offset these calls onto cheaper networks. By doing so, the employee can still make calls, without charging a premium to the company.
- Mobile unified communications should be secure and ubiquitous. Although this statement seems obvious, only 20% of Aberdeen's respondents have a security solution for unified communications, and only 21% of employees at Industry Average organizations in Aberdeen's February 2011 [Enterprise Mobility Management](#) study have secure remote mobile access. Most organizations still have significant steps to take before their mobile communications and landline communications are as secure as their landline networks.

For more information on this or other research topics, please visit www.aberdeen.com

Related Research	
Helping the Helpless Desk ; November 2010 Enterprise Mobility Management 2011: Mobility Becomes Core IT ; February 2011 Conquering the Fear, Uncertainty, and Doubt of Managing Integrated Communications ; June 2011	Enterprise Mobility Management Goes Global: Mobility Becomes Core IT ; July 2011 Wireless Expense Management ; September 2011 Enterprise B2E Mobile App Strategies ; October 2011
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