

A woman with curly hair is looking at a tablet in a modern office setting. In the background, other people are working, and large windows let in natural light.

Why Small Businesses Need to Accelerate Communications

3 Ways to Get Your Business Up to Speed



Savvy Businesses Embrace New Communication Trends

Small businesses that fail to embrace new communication realities risk falling behind. Traditional phone systems don't offer enough capabilities to meet customer and employee demands for instant, on-the-go communication. At the same time, voice remains an important aspect of customer and employee relations—68% of fast-growing small businesses say phone calls are “very effective” at providing customer service.¹

The prevalence of mobile technologies adds another wrinkle. Customers not only expect to be able to communicate with businesses over mobile platforms—in certain cases, they actually prefer it. Seventy-eight percent of U.S. consumers say a text message is the fastest way to receive information regarding important service updates on purchases.² While general cell phone usage is on the rise, younger generations,

in particular, are more likely to have a favorable view of businesses that communicate over text.

It's not just consumers who are changing the face of business communications. With 20-25% of the U.S. workforce telecommuting at least some of the time,³ employees expect access to services that let them communicate and collaborate from nearly anywhere in the world.

Small businesses need to adapt to new communication trends in order to keep both customers and employees engaged. Cloud communications provides the phone, messaging, meetings and contact center capabilities that small businesses need to compete in today's fast-changing environment.

Here are three ways small businesses can leverage cloud communications to keep up with evolving trends in business communications.

¹8x8, Dialing Up Success: How Fast-Growing SMBs Stay Ahead of the Pack, 2018

²Vibes, Transactional Messaging Consumer Report, 2016

³GlobalWorkplaceAnalytics.com, Latest Telecommuting Statistics, 2017



1. Messaging: instant connections on any device

Some customers prefer text and instant messaging in certain cases because it's less intrusive than phone calls and more immediate than email. They still may want to talk over the phone for service and help desk questions, but for information such as order tracking, appointment reminders or updated business hours, a text message is a fast, easy way to get information. With cloud-based business SMS and texting, team members can send and receive messages on their computers, just as if they were texting on a smartphone.

The modern workplace is characterized by mobile and distributed workers, which has forced companies to rethink how their employees communicate with one another. Adopting a company-wide messaging platform simplifies communications and breaks down the barriers that stand in the way of true collaboration. Now, everyone within the organization can instantly connect with one another, no matter where they are located. Faster internal communication results in better customer care because employees can spend more of their time assisting customers.

Of course, there may be times when your team members need to connect with someone who uses a different messaging platform. Rather than switching between platforms and losing conversation history, look for a cloud communications provider that lets you send and receive messages, share files and preserve conversations across messaging applications.



2. Video conferencing: when face-to-face isn't possible

Phone calls and messaging are powerful communication tools, but they can't take the place of face-to-face meetings. However, meeting in person isn't always practical.

Many communication apps and services support video conferencing, which for many people is as effective as speaking with someone who's in the same room. For smaller businesses, video conferencing has additional benefits, such as reducing travel costs for training and hiring.

Video conferencing has become an indispensable collaboration tool for countless organizations. No matter where employees are located or what device they use, they can hop on a video call to touch base with coworkers. Unlike phone calls, video conferencing allows participants to see facial expressions and pick up important body language cues. From a morale standpoint, video conferencing helps remote employees stay connected and grants all team members the flexibility to work outside of the office.

Sales and support calls with customers can also take place over video. Features like screen sharing allow you to show customers how to use a product or walk them through an issue. The same advantages hold true for business partners and suppliers. Video calls are not only effective and convenient, but these calls help build stronger relationships with those outside of your organization.



3. Collaboration: the secret to success

Small businesses need to think about collaboration just as much as large corporations. Companies that embrace collaboration technology realize the benefit of a more productive workforce. Mobile devices, messaging applications and video conferencing have opened the door to deeper collaboration at smaller organizations.

Technology plays a central role in collaboration—83% of knowledge workers say they depend on technology to collaborate.⁴ But the advantages of a collaborative workforce extend into every business, no matter its size or the industry it's in.

Messaging and video conferencing are crucial collaboration tools, but these aren't the only ones. Other kinds of collaboration tools needed to excel in today's hyperconnected world include desktop and mobile applications that let employees work anytime, anywhere; a reliable business phone system with unlimited calling; calendar integration that syncs calendar applications with your communications system; and a dynamic contact center fueled by data-rich insights.

All of these—plus the many other collaboration features available with cloud communications—contribute to your ability to achieve your business goals.

⁴Dimensional Research, Collaboration Trends and Technology: A Survey of Knowledge Workers, 2015



8x8—Thrive with Cloud Communications

8x8 helps small businesses meet demands for fast communications by providing one cloud solution for voice, video, chat and contact center. With 8x8, businesses can improve customer experience and streamline operations.

Through features like messaging and video conferencing, 8x8 empowers employees to connect with coworkers, partners and customers faster and easier—even if they are using different applications. Advanced phone and collaboration capabilities amplify your reach and make every connection more meaningful.

Ready for the Next Step?

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