

Unified Communications and Collaboration – The Questions You Need to Ask



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UC&C: What's in it for your people and your business?

Giving end users the IT infrastructure they need to perform at their best can be a challenge. Striking the balance between flexibility and control isn't easy – especially when it comes to providing the communication and collaboration capabilities your users need. That's where Unified Communications and Collaboration (UC&C) technologies can help.

UC&C is an evolution of Unified Communications that integrates context, processes and applications to help people work together more productively. UC&C solutions give users a single point of access to a broad range of advanced communication technologies – connecting people with information and with each other.

Here we look at the key questions you need to ask to uncover the workplace communication and collaboration issues in your organization.

By answering these questions you will begin to identify the opportunities and challenges of integrating unified communications and collaboration into your existing IT infrastructure – and get a clearer idea of the next steps you need to take.



Where do you want to be?

Any implementation needs a clear set of goals to ensure everyone is working to the same objectives – and that you can measure your success.

What are the key drivers in your business for collaboration and communication?

Do your users struggle to access the information they need when they need it, get hold of colleagues wherever they are, or work with customers, partners, suppliers? Are your communications costs spiraling as your organization expands its global reach?

Whatever your organization's situation is, it's probably the reason you're reading this guide.

Which are the business priorities for implementing UC&C?

Is it about getting control of costs, or is enabling employees to collaborate more productively your top priority? Maybe several priorities have equal weight – but it's essential to be clear about them from the start.

What are the business objectives you need UC&C to help you meet?

Once you've identified your business drivers, you can link them to objectives for the future. From cost reductions and productivity gains to increased user satisfaction or a smaller carbon footprint – UC&C solutions can help you deliver against a wide range of business goals.

Have you built a business case for UC&C solution implementation?

With your drivers, objectives and priorities defined and documented, you can start to build a solid business case for UC&C adoption.

It could be helpful to work with a strategic partner with the implementation experience and expertise to create a strong business case and accelerate time to value for your solution.

Where are you now?

You know where you're trying to get to, but first you need to establish exactly where you are today. Assessing the current state and the readiness of your network infrastructure, workplaces, and workforce is critical to ensuring you meet your business goals.

What's the current state of your network infrastructure?

How successful have any UC&C solutions been that you have already implemented?

If you've had success in the past, capture any repeatable elements or best practices that you can replicate in future implementations. And if previous initiatives have met with problems, there's an opportunity to ensure any lessons learned have a positive impact on new deployments.

How have you consolidated the number of communications and collaboration tools your workforce uses?

If you've already undertaken some consolidation activities, to what extent have they achieved what they set out to? Are there areas where you could consolidate further to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of communications and collaboration?

How are you currently using audio, video and telephony for collaboration?

Many organizations currently have islands of communication, with multiple devices, support teams, and strategies for different communications channels and business units.

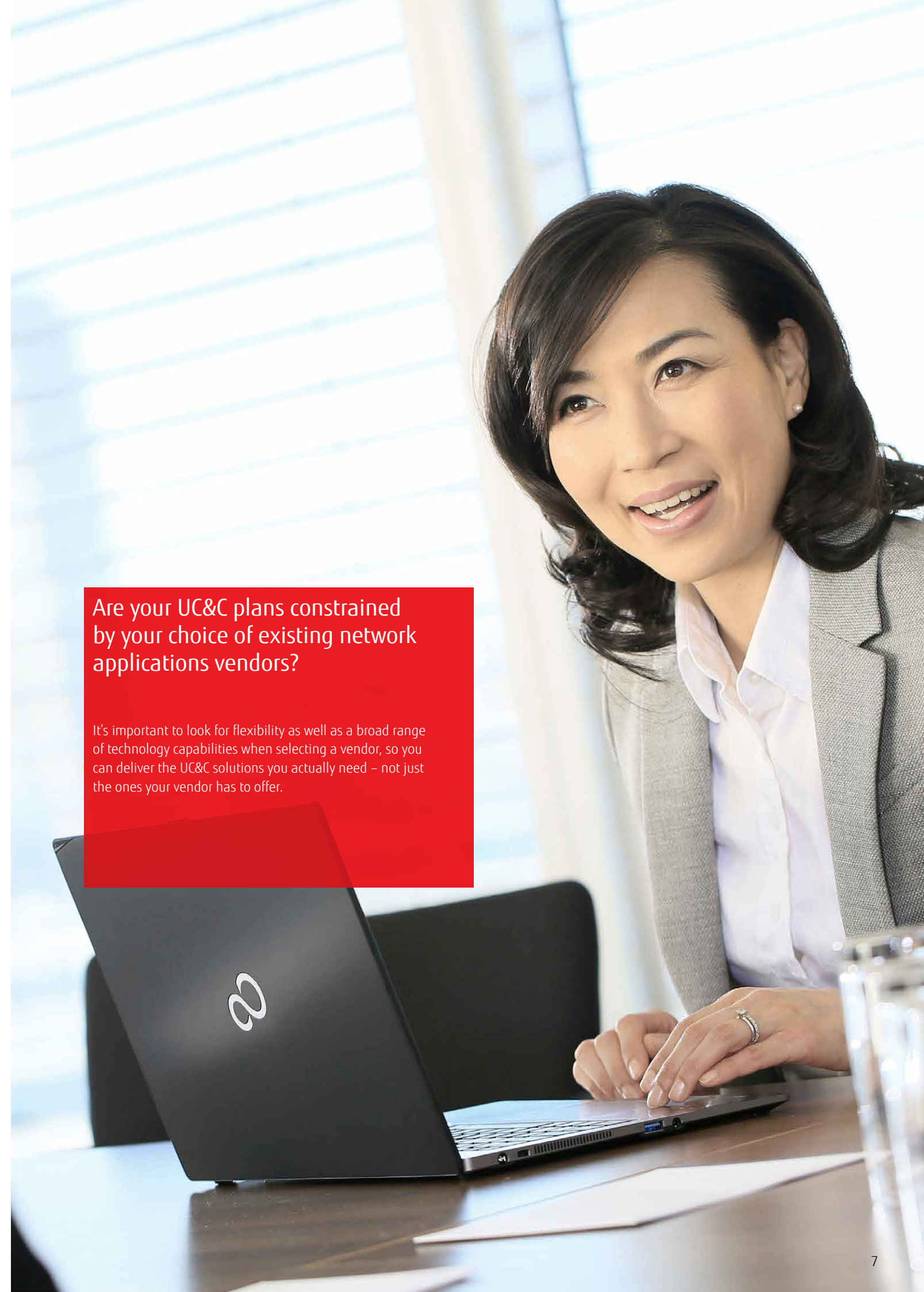
To really enable productive, cost-effective collaboration you need a unified strategy and a simple, consistent user experience throughout the enterprise.

What SIP-based infrastructure is currently in use?

The Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) is the foundation for much of the Unified Communications technology in use today, from multimedia distribution to VoIP and instant messaging, so it's vital to know where your current infrastructure can already support it – and where improvements are needed.

Are your UC&C plans constrained by your choice of existing network applications vendors?

It's important to look for flexibility as well as a broad range of technology capabilities when selecting a vendor, so you can deliver the UC&C solutions you actually need – not just the ones your vendor has to offer.



Who are your users – and what do they need?

Have you undertaken a thorough workflow analysis to establish where UC&C solutions would deliver the greatest workplace improvements?

If you don't know what's broken, you won't know what to fix. With a comprehensive analysis of workflows throughout your organization, you can build a picture of any recurring issues and understand where and why communications bottlenecks or broken process chains are slowing your people down.

Which workers could benefit the most from a UC&C implementation?

Your workforce ranges from mobile salespeople who spend their working lives on the road, to highly-skilled power users who devise the innovations that drive your business. It's vital to understand your workforce profile to establish which types of employees have the most to gain from UC&C solutions.

That way you can design a modular, targeted adoption strategy that will deliver the maximum benefit to your employees – and to your business.

How dispersed is your workforce?

Perhaps you have hundreds of small global branches, or maybe your organization is concentrated in large premises across a smaller geographical area.

Whatever the case, it will influence the type and scale of UC&C solutions that your business needs.

What are your workers' current attitudes to workplace communication and collaboration?

Are they happy with what they've got, or do they constantly clamor for improved systems and processes?

Change management can be a key issue in any new implementation, so it's important to have an insight into how people feel about the current situation.

How many users do you need to consider in any UC&C implementation scenario?

User numbers will have an impact not just on the scale of your implementation, but also the type of UC&C solutions you choose to implement. It's also important to keep in mind how your solutions will grow as your company expands.

Which types of UC&C solutions could be prioritized to deliver the quickest improvement to your workplace collaboration and communication?

It could be Unified Communications technologies like video conferencing or telepresence, or it might be innovative collaboration tools such as skills finders, corporate social networks, or virtual workspaces. Identifying which solutions will deliver the fastest wins is essential to a successful UC&C deployment.

In which ways would you like to encourage workers to choose their own workplace communications devices?

Organizations worldwide are adopting a range of strategies to manage the consumerization of IT and the rise of Bring Your Own Device (BYOD). It's up to you to decide how best to balance the choice and flexibility your employees expect with the security and control your business demands – while ensuring the devices employees use fit with your overall UC&C strategy.

Planning for UC&C

When you've assessed where you are and where you want to get to, there are a few more elements to keep in mind when planning your UC&C implementation.

Are there other planned upgrades or improvements to existing communications infrastructure or applications?

If there are already plans in place, it's important your UC&C implementation doesn't conflict with them.

There may also be opportunities to combine planned upgrades with your implementation to realize further cost-savings and efficiencies.

Who is owner of the business issue of communication and collaboration within your organization?

Clear leadership is essential for a successful implementation, so establish which business function is responsible for communications and collaboration – and ensure you have a C-level champion for your UC&C strategy.

How might UC&C solution implementation affect other network infrastructure investments?

Assessing the impact of UC&C solutions on your overall network infrastructure is vital to reduce management complexity and costs and to maximize the return on your new and existing investments.



Take the next steps

Fujitsu Workplace Assessment can help you identify the issues you're experiencing, discover which UC&C solutions are the best fit for your organization, and clearly define a viable, coherent adoption path.

And Fujitsu's wide range of workplace products and solutions can be configured to deliver your workplace collaboration and communications objectives and help you expand your capabilities beyond your organization to collaborate with ease with customers and partners.

Get in touch today to learn more about how we can help you transform the way you do business.



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