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## Better Customer Service with Mobile Employees: Moving Beyond Traditional Unified Communications

Unified Communications (UC) is the hot buzz-phrase when trying to boost the productivity of mobile employees. But the latest Unified Communications tools accomplish more than just enhanced communication with the office. You can use new UC capabilities to drive customer loyalty and retention by interacting with clients in a whole new way.

Let's start with the base functionality of Unified Communications, specifically FindMe/FollowMe. With FindMe/FollowMe, if an executive is away from their desk, they can specify how they want to be contacted. If a customer dials in, instead of receiving a voicemail an automated message is played that details the executive's current status, where that person is located, and whether the call can be taken. If the executive is available, the call is routed to wherever that person may be (to a cell phone or other specified number).


Now let's look at the next generation of Unified Communications. With customer-centric UC, a mobile employee can log on to the Internet and access an interface where they are shown inbound calls dialing their office extension. The employee can then route that call to their cell phone, hotel phone, or anywhere else they wish. They can also forward the call to another employee if they feel that is the best way to handle the call. The best part is the caller goes where they need to go, has their need addressed, and never knows what went on behind the scenes.

With the UC interface, staff on the road can view their personal call log to see what calls they've missed. When they make outbound calls, they can set their options to make the call look as if it is coming from their desk extension, even if they are calling from a different phone. That way, the customer will always recognize the call as coming from your business. And the call can be logged and recorded just like any call going out through your phone system.

With text-to-speech applications, remote employees can have their email read to them over the phone automatically. They can verbally respond to emails and have that response emailed to customers as an audio attachment. Faxes can be redirected to any printer or fax local to the employee's location. And all of this functionality can occur without the cost of a Smartphone. The best Unified Communications applications have this capability already embedded.

### Customer Empowerment

Unified Communications can also deploy several strategies to make customers feel empowered rather than frustrated when they call your business. FindMe/FollowMe can often accelerate the time it takes for a caller to find the resource they are looking for. But often there is hold-time that cannot be avoided. That's why your system should be



configured to make your customer feel like they can control what happens next. The caller can be given the option to wait for their call to go through, or they can be directed to automated information that may address their need. The option to go to voicemail should also be present if the customer simply cannot spend time on the phone. By presenting the caller with options other than wait or hang up, you can build up their patience level.

### **Tips to remember**

Before deploying UC, you'll want to examine how to provision your users. Power users should have access to the full breadth of communication possibilities that are available. However, if you operate in an environment such as manufacturing, you may want to consider limiting usage. Offering full communications capabilities to your assembly line workers may actually be counterproductive and a drain on system resources.

Empowering the mobile workforce is one of the strongest benefits that Unified Communications can deliver. But you'll definitely want to control and protect remote access to ensure the privacy and security of all your important corporate communications. Done right, Unified Communications can enable remote users to work as if they were all in the same office. Done wrong, it can open up some security vulnerabilities with your company.

Finally, user adoption rates must always be of primary concern. If the solution puts a burden on the normal daily workflow of your team, they will not accept or use it. Remember, with the right vendor your employees should not have to adapt to using any new hardware, and the system should easily integrate into their daily workflow.

### ***The Customer Advantage Series***

This article is the final installment of a three part series on how to build your phone system into a driver for customer loyalty and retention. Be sure to sign up for our Webinar on building positive customer service for more information.

Date: Thursday, March 27, 2008

Time: 9:00 am, Central Daylight Time (GMT -05:00, Chicago)

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Date: Thursday, March 27, 2008

Time: 11:00 am, Central Daylight Time (GMT -05:00, Chicago)

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