

A man with dark hair and a light beard is shown in profile, looking towards the right. He is wearing a light blue button-down shirt and a black Jabra earpiece in his left ear. He is holding a black smartphone in his right hand. The background is a soft, out-of-focus indoor setting.

Jabra®

**OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS
TO ADOPTION OF UNIFIED
COMMUNICATION**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Unified communication (UC) offer today's global enterprises an unprecedented way to unite globally dispersed workers and increase productivity, all the while reducing infrastructure costs and earning a rapid return on investment. Yet despite the promise UC offers, employee adoption of UC technologies remains low. Many workers remain resistant to giving up established tools and ways of working. This brief document outlines the strategies you, as an IT professional or Project owner, can pursue to increase employee adoption of UC and positively impact the return on investment. These include thinking beyond deployment to adoption, focusing more clearly on end-user needs, new training methods and embracing a proven behavior-modification strategy known as nudging. This brief also includes a discussion of the two most popular forms of UC deployment and the pros and cons associated with each.

As an IT professional, you're fully aware of the business-building benefits that unified communications (UC) can provide your organization. By seamlessly blending voice, video, instant messaging and other technologies, UC enables your company to unifying disparate teams and workers while reducing infrastructure costs.

With UC's vast transformative power - and the rapid return on investment it promises - it's no wonder that many enterprises are embracing it.

At the same time, you've undoubtedly heard a few tales of woe associated with global UC deployments: After a size-

able investment and years of planning and implementation, workers dig in their heels. Instead of embracing new technologies and ways of working, they shun both and demand the return of their now-beloved desk telephones. Absent that, they begin using their personal smartphones for company business instead of UC. Meetings that were supposed to be conducted via videoconference are still done face-to-face. New and empowering technologies go unused.

It's our job as IT professionals to redefine success as that time when UC technologies are actively enabling new and better ways of communication, collaboration, conversation and concentration - and not just whether the deployment was launched on time or within budget.

In short, all the glowing benefits of UC seem like a distant memory.

If this has happened in your UC deployment - or if you're afraid it might - take heart: There are actions you can take to increase UC adoption and begin realizing its benefits faster.

Over the years, Jabra has been a key player in hundreds of UC implementations, including many involving large, global enterprises. Some deployments have been spectacular successes; others, well, less so. But all have offered both valuable insights into the challenges organizations face when deploying UC and eye-opening ways to address these challenges.

DON'T SECOND-GUESS

But first, let's get something straight. Your decision to roll out UC was the right one - and for a lot of reasons. Implemented correctly, UC can deliver on the promise of productivity and innovation by driving increased engagement and superior interaction between people and information. It ties disparate workers together seamlessly and at a fraction of the cost of traditional telephony.

Let's also acknowledge that UC adoption rates aren't where they should be - not by a long shot. One study shows adoption rates at an anemic 10% or so. Stories abound of organizations that have implemented UC only to revert back to their "old" ways of doing things or being forced to run both new and old technologies in parallel as they frantically work to get employees to embrace UC.

So why are workers so resistant to adopting UC? Why do they persist in fighting technologies that have been proven to make their jobs easier? The reason is simple: Human nature. People, as rational beings, want to exert control over their environment. And when they lack control, they resist. You see it every day. In fact, in a Jabra survey, 44% of IT professionals like you said that employee resistance to giving up established tools is one of the biggest obstacles to employee adoption of UC.

As a result, established ways of doing things - even seemingly old-school ones - can be hard habits to break. Which is why the simple act of replacing a desk telephone with a UC headset can cause great angst among employees.

There are some strategies you can employ to increase adoption levels of your UC implementation. They require you to change your users' behaviors by seeing things in new ways, thinking outside the box - even playing amateur psychologist for a while. The list of recommendations is by no means exhaustive. But if just one or a handful could tilt your deployment toward faster adoption.... your organization could save untold budget and plenty of potential heartburn.

THINK BEYOND DEPLOYMENT... TO ADOPTION

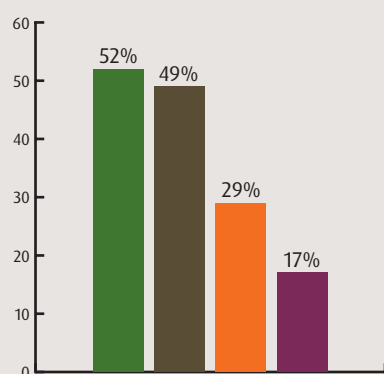
Just as it's human nature to fight change, it's our nature as IT professionals to view a project as finished when the last of the software's been uploaded, the final UC headset enabled and the remaining box ticked off the project plan.

Organizations that have deployed UC successfully are ones whose IT professionals take a more expansive view. They understand that UC is more than a mere IT project; it's fundamentally a productivity enhancement project. Furthermore, they know that their job isn't finished until workers have adopted the new technologies and are actively using them to their full potential.

It's our job as IT professionals to redefine success as that time when UC technologies are actively enabling new and better ways of communication, collaboration, conversation and concentration - and not just whether the deployment was launched on time or within budget.

To make this happen, we need to construct an implementation plan that includes measures of success that reflect the value of the UC implementation to the overall organization. These metrics should include such things as overall user adoption percentage, amount of technology adopted per user, level of functionality actively being utilized and other similar measures.

WHAT LESSONS HAS YOUR COMPANY LEARNED FROM IMPLEMENTING UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS?



- Communicating and educating staff about the benefits of the technology clearly is most important.
- Buy-in from staff is most important.
- Buy-in from management is most important.
- Phased implementation is most important.

Source: Jabra and Frost & Sullivan study of 302 companies



MAKE USER ADOPTION A TEAM EFFORT

As you know, it takes more than mere technology expertise to conduct a complex deployment project such as UC. The organizations that have been most successful with UC are ones that have cut across organizational silos and built diverse and robust project teams that reflect the importance of UC adoption to the enterprise.

To overcome resistance to UC while helping end users understand and embrace the transition to it, your planning and implementation team should include experts in such diverse areas as corporate communications, human resources, training and more. Bring representatives of these functional areas into the project at the beginning, solicit their input and expertise throughout and ensure they function as valued members of the team.

STAY FOCUSED ON END USERS

Your all-star team is in place. Now it's time to make them active participants in designing and implementing your UC adoption plan.

The place to start is by focusing on your end users, and all activities must reflect their needs. Sure, it sounds like common sense, and it is. But we can all admit that as critical IT projects stack up and implementation timelines grow shorter, the needs of the end user often take a back seat. "When an implementation loses focus on the end user, that's when things start to go wrong," says Duane

Redelsheimer, a Jabra global account manager who has advised several global organizations that have implemented UC.

Keep in mind, too, that bigger the perceived change among your end users, the more communication, training and coaching your team must provide. As we've seen from the current low UC adoption rates, UC qualifies as a big change and your plan will need to reflect this to drive necessary behaviors for adoption.

To build understanding and reduce resistance to the change, your communications team must develop a plan for communicate early, often and clearly. They should be able to explain why the change is being made and clearly spell out the benefits of adopting UC. "A lot of organizations simply forget to explain to their employees why they're making this change," says Sharon Michno-Horst, a Jabra global account manager who has also participated in global UC deployments. "They just take it on faith that employees will know what UC is and understand why it's good for them. That's usually not the case. You need to connect the dots for them."

At the same time, your HR team members should engage in employee profiling to evaluate workers' job responsibilities and then identify the optimal technologies for them to perform their job duties faster, easier and more collaboratively. When specifying technologies, take time to observe users in their daily environment to understand how the technology can best support their work processes. Then query end users about the right technologies for them. In this case, the key question to ask isn't "What is it you want?" but rather "What is it you need?" From there, you can specify the right technologies for each employee's role in the organization, which helps you avoid a one-size-fits-all approach to deployment, which often acts as a barrier to adoption.





TO ENSURE ADOPTION, DON'T PUSH; NUDGE

Your deployment plan and associated tactics need to focus on changing end user behaviors. And as we know, that's easier said than done. So take a page from the playbook many organizations are using to steer users toward greater adoption of UC through a technique called "nudging."

Nudging is the informal name for a behavior modification theory often known as "choice architecture." It involves using indirect suggestions and positive reinforcement to influence the choices people make, and it's found acceptance in many areas of society, including politics, economics and sales.

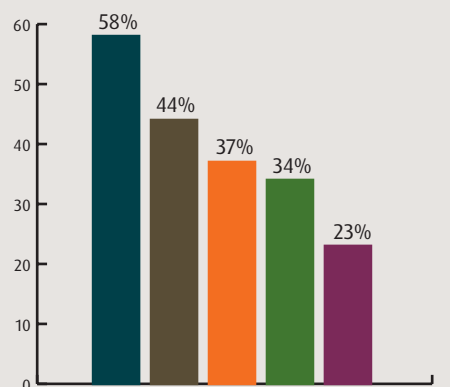
Nudging works because we as humans behave largely based on standards of what is socially accepted and enforce norms when someone steps outside the bounds of what we deem acceptable behavior. When someone talks while in a library, for instance, others frown and sharply rebuke the behavior.

A good example of nudging in a technology environment comes from a large international organization that wanted to foster additional collaboration across borders by using more virtual meetings to capture input from remote colleagues. To nudge workers into the virtual meeting room, the company gave each employee 100 meeting room points at the beginning of the year. It then imposed a cost for each physical room booking - two points for each large meeting room and one for each small room. At the end of the year, any leftover points were converted into cash employees could use in the company store. The competition had the desired effect, and the organization found that employees worked diligently to conserve points by holding as many virtual meetings as possible.

In the work environment, nudging is less about mandating a specific behavior and more about gently guiding a worker toward one. You can incorporate nudging into your UC planning and deployment in many ways:

- Foster competition. Workers enjoy competing with each other. Increase adoption by setting up competitions between employees or various departments to begin using various UC tools.

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE TWO KEY CHALLENGES HOLDING BACK YOUR USERS' ADOPTION OF UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS?



- Inadequate training
- Resistance to giving up established tools
- Lack of integration with existing tools
- Resistance to giving up existing ways of working
- Incomplete roll-out of all features

- **Build community.** Because nudging is about harnessing the influence of peers, create an online community that end users can visit to share their UC experiences, tout their successes, ask questions and give and receive advice.
- **Recognize positive behavior.** Seek out, reward and highlight workers or departments that have embraced new UC tools. Share their success stories through company newsletters, corporate-wide intranet, YouTube videos and more.
- **Model the change.** Employ change leadership, in which you highlight ways that executives and other influential company leaders are successfully embracing and UC technologies. Change leadership can be a powerful push toward UC acceptance.

TAP INTO YOUR TRAINING ASSETS (INCLUDING HIDDEN ONES)

Sure, training budgets everywhere are stretched to the limit and resources are hard to come by. But providing robust end user training is critical to widespread adoption of UC. In fact, in a Jabra survey*, 58% of IT professionals reported that inadequate training was the biggest obstacle to employee adoption of UC.

Or in the words of Duane Redelsheimer, of Jabra, “You’ve made a big investment in UC technologies. You need to back that up with an investment in training if you’re going to achieve the ROI you’re expecting.”

One Fortune 100 organization took that advice and initiated a long-term deployment that has resulted in high levels of UC adoption. To start, the company conducted extensive user profiling, which enabled it to identify the right technology options for workers based on their specific job needs.

Employees who work desk jobs, for instance, received different UC headsets and other tools than mobile workers, who needed more flexible technologies.

The company kicked off its training efforts with regional roadshows in which workers were invited to see and test the new technologies before receiving them. The organization acknowledged workers’ different learning styles by providing a variety of training options, including classroom sessions, manuals, peer-to-peer instruction, online video tutorials and more.

Equally important, the organization augmented its internal UC training efforts by tapping into additional training resources from its vendor partners. It set up a genius bar in its headquarters and invited UC vendors to spend one day a month there, showcasing product features, demonstrating functionality and fielding employee questions.

The organization also organized a “train the help desk” session, in which UC vendors conducted an interactive, deep-dive training session for help desk employees. Armed with that knowledge, help desk staff were better able to train company workers, resolve issues and answer questions.



*Source: Jabra and Frost & Sullivan study of 302 companies, 2012

WEIGHING YOUR DEPLOYMENT OPTIONS: SOFT TRANSITION VS. RIP-AND-REPLACE

Transitioning from a traditional phone or IP telephony system to a UC solution is a major undertaking, especially for large, complex, global organizations. In the rush to reap UC's many benefits, organizations are increasingly embracing one of two dramatically different implementation models: Soft transition versus rip-and-replace.

Here is a closer look at each:

SOFT TRANSITION

Using this method, the organization deploys the UC suite over a long timeframe, typically months or years, by gradually introducing functionality in steps: instant messaging and presence, then conferencing, followed by internal telephony and external telephony.

Adherents of soft transition argue that its slower initial return on investment is more than offset by more time to calibrate the system, generate employee buy-in and provide training, thus resulting in higher overall adoption.

Pros:

- IT is better able to control the rollout pace, including more time to thoroughly test and troubleshoot the solutions.
- End users have time to become trained on and accustomed to using the new tools.
- Increased functionality is added as workers are ready to adopt it.
- Licensing costs for various components are incurred only when they are rolled out.

Cons:

- Higher costs and slower return on UC investment because two systems - UC and existing telephony - must be maintained in parallel.
- IT resources must be committed to the project for a sizeable period of time.

RIP AND REPLACE

In this model, employees typically arrive in the office on a Monday morning to find that their deskphone is gone and has been supplanted by an entirely new UC system. While the change likely has been communicated, it still represents major adjustment. Proponents of rip and replace argue that forcing a new way of working on workers is necessary to speed implementation times and earn a quicker return on investment.

Pros:

- Faster return on UC investment because workers have essentially no choice but to use the new technology.
- Reduced costs through the need to maintain only one system.
- Ability to more quickly shift IT assets toward other corporate initiatives.

Cons:

- Can cause resentment from employees who did not foresee the magnitude of change.
- Often places heavy stress on the network to accommodate increased traffic.
- Downtime and the need to fix bugs can lead to end-user skepticism toward the system.
- Generally less time dedicated to training or communication, resulting in lower adoption.
- When compelled to use a new technology, users may create workarounds including using personal smartphones to conduct company business.



CONCLUSION

New technologies are key enablers in connecting today's modern knowledge economies. At the same time, these new tools require entirely new behaviors. And as has always been the case when introducing new technologies, we need to find ways to ensure that end-users adopt these new tools on their own terms.

The journey toward new ways of working is filled with potential pitfalls. This document provides guidance and strategies today's enterprises can use to overcome the barriers to end-user adoption of new unified communication technologies. To read more about Jabra's thoughts and ideas on new ways of working, refer to blog.jabra.com or contact your local Jabra representative for a conversation on how to increase UC adoption.

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