Fostering Effective Collaboration
with Mobile UC

Some of the most efficient technologies for today's businesses are mobility solutions, and the organizations that will excel in the new and dynamic business environment will be those who learn how best to integrate mobility into their overall Unified Communications (UC) strategy. Businesses are becoming flatter and more distributed, yet they still must remain productive and responsive to customer needs. If used intelligently, UC and mobility can deliver the type of efficient, collaborative work environment that fosters success.

The idea of UC is to integrate all of the various real-time (voice and video) and near real-time (text, email and fax) communication tools into an integrated solution that not only makes communications more efficient, but provides more value to users by integrating corporate directories, user presence status and context. While the focus of UC is often constrained to the office environment, what early adopters are finding is that these capabilities are even more valuable to mobile workers who rely on smartphones and tablets to boost their productivity outside the office. This is a significant benefit, considering that by 2020, millennials will represent the bulk of the workforce, and they want to work wherever, whenever, and with connected mobile devices that are functional, powerful and easy to use.[1]

Matching Technology with Need

There are a number of different ways that mobility can be integrated with UC, but the key will be to understand the business processes, define the use cases and apply the most appropriate and effective solution to address the need. So in the end, the key to a successful mobile UC deployment is not the technology, but the skill in understanding user needs and applying the right technology to the right problem.

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In determining what that most appropriate solution should be, it's important to first focus on what benefits mobility can bring to the organization. Key among those would be:

- **Accessibility** — Making critical people accessible at critical times. Just like businesses, customers expect real-time results, and gathering the experts needed to address an issue at a moment's notice is crucial to the customer's experience.

- **Information** — Having access to information when and where you need it is key to quick and effective decision making.

- **Productivity** — Allowing people to do their jobs efficiently and effectively no matter where they are located.
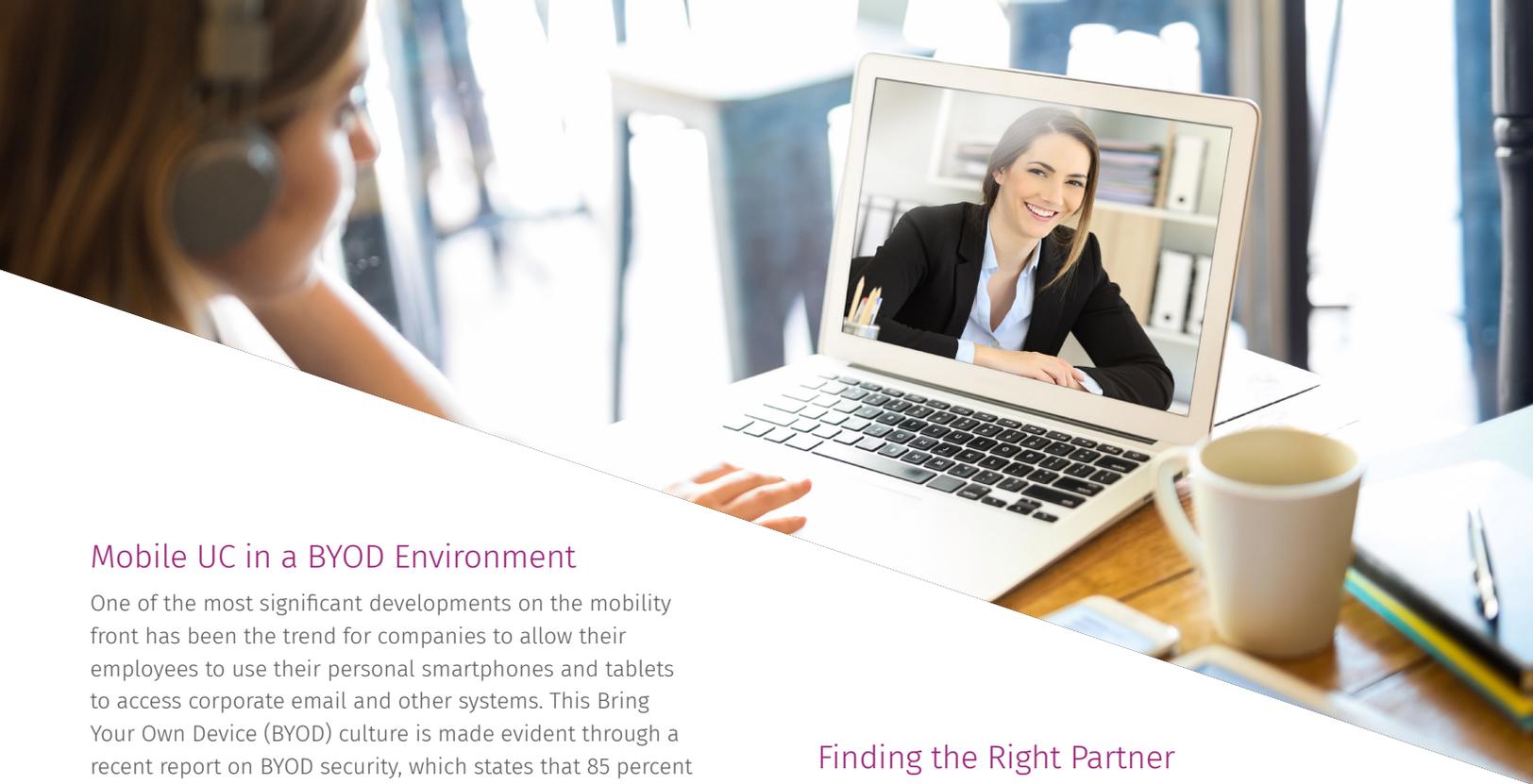
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Probably the most widely used mobile UC capability is find me/follow me or a simultaneous ring, which automatically forwards calls from the user's desktop phone to a number of mobile devices or landlines. This capability not only makes the person instantly accessible at a single number, it also allows access to voicemails, emails and faxes in a single unified messaging system.

Some mobility solutions take this a step further by utilizing an application on the user's smartphone, which enables that device to act as an extension of the UC core. In addition to having the ability to place voice and video calls, these apps provide access to corporate directories, dynamic presence status (e.g., out of office, on phone, with a client—changed with the push of a button), corporate email, text and conference management—all performed seamlessly over Wi-Fi or cellular networks from a device of their choosing.

The use of mobile productivity apps that help to streamline other business processes such as submitting expense reports and tracking time is also on the rise, ultimately leading to improved employee productivity and job satisfaction.

Mobile UC in a BYOD Environment

One of the most significant developments on the mobility front has been the trend for companies to allow their employees to use their personal smartphones and tablets to access corporate email and other systems. This Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) culture is made evident through a recent report on BYOD security, which states that 85 percent of organizations are embracing BYOD and many are even allowing contractors, partners, customers and suppliers to access corporate data on their personal devices.[2] In addition to improved productivity, another key benefit of BYOD is that organizations can eliminate the costs of providing equipment to employees, which can lead to hundreds of dollars in savings per year for each employee using their own devices.

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From a planning standpoint, that means IT staff will have to start thinking about how they can best deliver mobile UC functionality in an environment where the device is user owned rather than company provided. A large part of that planning will revolve around how corporate information residing on that personally owned device is secured, and how to remove it if the device is lost or stolen or if the employee leaves the company. However, regardless of who owns the device, access to UC capabilities from a mobile device can make employees more productive while on the go.

Finding the Right Partner

While UC and mobility hold the promise of increasing productivity, business agility and, ultimately, business transformation, the skills required to assess the options may not be available internally. The dizzying array of UC and mobility solutions available, each with a multitude of features and functionality, can cause confusion and distract employees from their primary business objectives.

The key will be to find a provider with the right solutions and the ability to scale from the small five-person office to a multilocation organization with hundreds of employees. Equally as important will be finding a partner that has the expertise to understand how your business processes work and identify the best solutions for your organization.

Advanced Solutions from the Experts

In order to compete in this changing business environment, organizations must have the tools that will allow them to effectively communicate and collaborate regardless of whether their associates are in the office, around the campus or across the country. Kinetic Business by Windstream is a trusted communications partner that delivers solutions that simplify new technologies and yield the greatest productivity gains for businesses.

[1]https://www.apnews.com/95e124fd1d52a21df7bdd3fbd90e5521

[2]https://www.apnews.com/95e124fd1d52a21df7bdd3fbd90e5521

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