



**Building A Business Case For UCaaS:**  
*Moving To Scalable Cloud Communications*

# Scalable Cloud Communications: The *Right Choice* For Your Business?

Business communications used to be easy. Companies were able to expand their basic communications needs by provisioning a new line to their PBX, adding a new email address, and dropping off a desk phone and a computer to the new employee's cubicle. Everyone worked in the same building from nine to five.

Today's business environment is much more complex. Companies may have multiple offices and employees scattered across the globe—all of whom need to function as a single unit. Businesses depend on remote workers who must be able to get work done at home or on the road. These workers use their mobile devices as often as they use the phone on their desk.



According to recent data, at least 25 million U.S. workers telecommute at least 50 percent of the time. Salespeople who are constantly on the road need the same services as those in the office, such as access to voicemail and fax. Employees need to be reachable whether they are working from home, at a client site, or at headquarters. Videoconferences often need to be scheduled with just a few minutes' notice - frequently without knowing how many people will join the call.

Today's companies need a boost in capabilities when it comes to their communications systems, but they also need to control costs. Unified Communications (UC) solutions allow companies to incorporate different modes of communications into one toolset, working alongside or entirely replacing their legacy systems. UC features include telephony services, presence monitoring and management, Find-Me/Follow-Me call forwarding, text chat, voicemail, unified messaging, and audio and video conferencing.

Today's UC systems are designed with four major goals in mind:

- **Increased productivity:** By having access to a full feature set of communications tools regardless of their location, workers can remain highly productive. For example, employees can use features like Find-Me/Follow-Me to locate mobile co-workers without having to dial multiple numbers, text, and message.
- **Collaboration:** Employees can use conferencing, screen sharing, and whiteboarding capabilities to communicate in real time, regardless of location. In the past, the same level of collaboration could only happen in the boardroom..
- **Mobility:** Workers are increasingly mobile, using smartphones and tablets to work on the go. Regardless of whether they are in a hotel room across the country or in a coffee shop down the street, workers need to stay connected. UC naturally lends itself to a highly mobile workforce.
- **Cost savings:** By investing in one platform with numerous solutions instead of individual services that solve a single part of the equation, UC systems can offer considerable savings over legacy solutions.

Many companies are taking these benefits a step further and embracing another major trend: cloud computing. As more and more applications move to the cloud, it's a natural evolution to look at the cloud for UC services as well.

## The Cloud Changes Everything



UC as a Service (UCaaS) refers to the delivery of communication and collaboration applications and services by a third-party service provider over an IP network. UCaaS solutions provide high levels of availability, flexibility, and scalability for core communications functions. There are a few approaches to UCaaS such as:

- **Single-tenancy:** An architecture in which a single customer uses a single instance of a software application and/or the infrastructure that supports it.

- **Multi-tenancy:** Several businesses share a single software platform.
- **Hybrid:** Some providers place a physical box on-premise and deliver UC applications in the cloud. Others provide SIP trunks to existing on-premise PBX systems.
- **Blended Architecture:** Star2Star's Blended Architecture combines an on-premise Cloud Communication Manager with a suite of cloud-based services—hosted at highly-reliable, redundant data centers—to create a complete, feature-rich communications system. Star2Star's award-winning, patent-pending cloud architecture overcomes the quality and reliability limitations of other technologies.
  - Self-monitoring capabilities with guaranteed 99.999% reliability
  - High quality, cost savings, and ease of use
  - Features set in the cloud, such as voicemail, auto-attendants, find-me/follow-me call routing, conference calling and ring groups
  - One provider, one monthly bill, one number to call

Business drivers for moving to the cloud vary from customer to customer, and it's no different when considering UCaaS. But regardless of their motivations, businesses are embracing UCaaS solutions at an increasingly high rate. The research firm Infonetics forecasts the VoIP and UC services market for North American business to grow to \$88 billion by 2018, with UCaaS pegged at \$49 billion in the same timeframe.

So why is the cloud so attractive for UC? Cost savings and management are two key drivers, but let's take a deeper look at some of the inherent benefits of deploying Scalable Cloud Communications Solutions:

- **Centralized management functions:** Scaling the administrative functions is one of the most pressing challenges associated with managing on-site applications. As communications, collaboration, and administrative functions grow in complexity, companies need to adopt a more seamless, unified process.
- **Standardized software with high flexibility:** The flexibility and convenience offered by UCaaS is hard to duplicate with legacy on-premise equipment. For example, the ability to scale services up and down based on seasonal demands or special events is available in the cloud. With an on-premise solution, you need to decide ahead of time what your needs are and add equipment as the company grows. However, there's no way to scale down, so you're always planning for the highest-use periods. Star2Star offers several pricing models that provide unprecedented flexibility, including per-seat and per-line pricing. We also offer upfront, leasing, or monthly financing for

customers so they can choose the model that makes the most sense for their business.

- **Hybrid models leverage your existing infrastructure:** Star2Star offers a SIP Trunking solution—StarSIP AlwaysUp—for those customers that want the reliability of Star2Star but can't yet replace their legacy PBX. However, StarSIP AlwaysUp is far more than just SIP Trunking. It provides users with access to a wide range of Star2Star's advanced UC services, including disaster recovery protections, video conferencing, and instant messaging.
- **Business continuity is built in:** Whether an earthquake hits your area or a water pipe in the building breaks and floods the floor, your business needs to keep running. With UC services in the cloud, equipment is housed in a data center and backed up elsewhere, so your communications systems are always available.
- **Reduced risk of obsolescence:** With a UCaaS solution, your service provider often is responsible for maintenance and upgrades, granting you access to the latest technology updates available.
- **Reduced costs:** Deploying UC as a cloud-based service allows businesses to reduce capital expenditures related to purchasing on-premise equipment. The ability to reallocate capital to key internal projects without jeopardizing the company's communications requirements is very financially attractive.

With a UCaaS model, businesses can move their administrative responsibilities to a service provider that can centralize all the tasks. The data can be accessed and information communicated without time and location constraints, which improves the reliability of the system and saves time.

## Finding the Right Solution to Leverage the Cloud



Once the decision is made to pursue a UCaaS solution, it's important to partner with a service provider that not only matches your overall business requirements, but is flexible enough to scale with you and meet your business' growing needs. Some hosted solutions can only handle call quality at

small, single locations, and some on-premise solutions are only financially viable for large enterprises. Many providers aren't flexible enough to offer blended solutions that combine the best of on-premise and cloud technologies. In addition, just as SMBs have different requirements than large enterprises, a company in the fashion industry needs different features and capabilities than a financial services firm. Therefore, providers must be able to adapt and mold to the needs of their clients.

It's important to find the right match for your company by examining all solution options from a variety of different angles. For example, how will a solution meet the specific needs of a certain department as well as the requirements of the organization as a whole? Service providers should be able to answer the following questions for customers:

1. How easy is it to manage my UC applications in the cloud? Management of applications is one of the biggest time drains for IT when it comes to UC solutions. Framework views that show performance, usage, and other metrics can help ensure you align technology investments with business objectives. Adding users, changing access, and other functions should be intuitive.
2. How responsive is your customer support? Customer support should be available 24/7 to help you through every aspect of the service, including on-site delivery, deployment, and support of service-level agreements (SLAs).
3. How flexible are your solutions? If you require customization, will the service provider be able to accommodate in a cost-effective manner?
4. What is your strategy for disaster recovery and business continuity? Networks should be highly reliable and redundant.
5. Can I integrate with other applications? Applications like Salesforce.com are prevalent; solutions must "play nicely" with other applications and support easy and cost-effective integration of third-party APIs.

Star2Star Communications is unique because it uses a Blended Architecture to deliver the benefits of both the cloud and on-premise solutions while resolving the respective problems of both. Blended Architecture combines an on-premise StarBox Cloud Communication Manager with a suite of cloud-based UC services—hosted at highly-reliable, redundant data centers—to create a complete, feature-rich communications system.

The StarBox Cloud Connection Manager connects over the Internet to Star2Star's Constellation network, which utilizes an array of call routing nodes and data centers distributed across the country to provide crisp, clear audio on every call. Its data centers contain servers for cloud-based voice

mail, audio conferencing, automated attendants, and other StarSystem features. Everything is continually monitored to minimize downtime and maximize call quality, making sure your UC services are always there when you need them.

## Making a Business Case

Businesses today are looking to reduce both expense and complexity in their communications tools, but many have limited budgets for dedicated IT staff and need to focus their resources on their primary business. UCaaS allows companies to offload significant upfront capital expenditures, and reduce or eliminate the time and effort spent on installation, maintenance, troubleshooting, and updating equipment. It also centralizes management functions and helps assure business continuity in the face of a disaster or outage. All of these characteristics confirm that UCaaS eliminates not just equipment costs, but OPEX costs as well.



When selecting a UCaaS provider, companies need to perform their due diligence, which includes mapping out the features and capabilities needed. There are many models available, including hybrid and Blended Architecture solutions that let companies utilize on-premise equipment to protect their existing technology investments. Which option is best varies based on the speed and reach of the company's vision, as well as its desire to fully enable business applications. Understanding the flexibility of the provider's pricing, leasing, and financing options is also critical.

By upgrading to the world's most reliable cloud-based unified business communications system, Star2Star helps you see a quick return on investment. It's easy to see how the savings add up:

- Most businesses see a dramatic drop in their monthly phone costs; in many cases the bill is cut in half. For customers who pay extra for services such as central office voicemail or for those who make lots of long-distance calls, the savings can be tremendous.
- A Star2Star telephone system costs a fraction of what you would pay for a traditional PBX business

communications solution. Since the Star2Star system can support hundreds of phones at a single location, phones can be added one at a time as you grow. Do a cost comparison and see the difference!

- Star2Star has tremendous multi-location features. Your system can be configured so that it operates as a single, unified phone system, no matter how many locations your business has. Remote offices and employees can now have local extensions, making it even easier and cost-effective for them to

communicate with the home office and each other. Flexibility like this can result in tremendous cost savings.

For most companies, a new Star2Star phone system, including lease payments and phone service, can be deployed for a monthly cost at or below what the company currently pays for traditional phone service alone. Teaming with a trusted provider—like Star2Star—that has the experience and flexible solutions and billing models is critical to the success of your communication services—and your business.

## About Star2Star

About Star2Star: Founded in 2006 in Sarasota, Florida, Star2Star Communications delivers the World's Most Complete and Scalable Cloud Communications Solution. Star2Star unifies customers' voice, video, fax, instant messaging and presence management into a single, easy-to-use system. Star2Star's award-winning, patent-pending Constellation™ technology overcomes the reliability and quality limitations of other communications technologies.

In the past three years, Star2Star was named to the Forbes Most Promising Companies list, the Deloitte Technology Fast 500 twice, and the Inc. 500|5000 three times. Star2Star also recently received Inc. Magazine's Hire Power Award honoring the top private business job creators in the country.

Star2Star Communications solutions are sold through a diversified network of partners that include distributors, master agents, managed service providers and certified installing resellers. Available across North America, Star2Star systems are installed in hundreds of thousands of businesses, including large national chains with multi-location communications footprints.



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