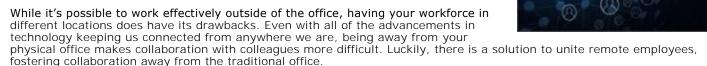# Creating a More Collaborative Workplace through Unified Communications

Working away from the office is not a new concept. The travelling salesperson has long been a part of business, often spending long periods of time on the road and away from their desk. However, the world and the way we work in it has changed, with technology making it possible for us to work from almost anywhere. And work from anywhere we do: a recent study by Gallup found that 43 percent of Americans spend at least some of their time working remotely.

While it's possible to work effectively outside of the office, having your workforce in different locations does have its drawbacks. Even with all of the advancements in technology keeping us connected from anywhere we are, being away from your physical office makes collaboration with colleagues more difficult. Luckily, there is a solution to unite remote employees, fostering collaboration away from the traditional office.

Unified Communications: Connecting employees in the 21st century workplace

Unified communications is a solution that integrates various synchronous and asynchronous business communication tools and applications that can be used in concert or successively within one single, comprehensive application. A unified communications solution typically includes IP telephony functionality along with tools such as email, instant messaging, text messaging, interactive digital whiteboarding, online audio and video conferencing, as well as other collaboration features. This combination of previously independent resources facilitates communication in both real-time and at the user's convenience from whichever device they choose to utilize, whether that is a desktop PC in the office or a smartphone from a remote location.

By integrating all of your communication platforms into a single system with unified communications, you'll realize a breakthrough in agility. Users can communicate and securely share files over a range of channels via a variety of devices —including desktop computers, laptops, smartphones, and tablets—all using the same interface. Imagine having quick and easy access to your voicemails, emails, faxes, instant messages, and other communications through a single, centralized messaging inbox. No more struggling to share documents, switching from application to application, or missing a call or message. Such convenience leads to better communication, which in turn leads to improved collaboration.

Unified communications connects all of your previously independent tools, as well as your employees, regardless of their location. Improving the way your dispersed employees communicate will naturally improve their collaboration.

The Importance of Effective Time Management in Business

Effective time management makes it possible for you to work smarter so you can get more done in a workday without adding hours to it. By organizing your day and **maximizing your efficiency, you'll be able to accomplish your tasks in less time,** meet your deadlines, reduce stress, and pursue a more desirable work-life balance. But what exactly is time management?

In a nutshell, time management is carefully planning and organizing the tasks you have to accomplish and determining how much time is needed for each specific activity in order to get more work done in less time. Effective time management involves goal setting, prioritizing, scheduling, milestones, and delegating to optimize your efficiency. All of these techniques are used toward an end goal of creating more productive hours, which leads to better performance. Imagine if you were able to maximize your time in the office and gain an extra hour of output each day.

More time, better decision making, less stress. All of these benefits can be gained from effectively managing your time at work and will have a positive impact on both **your professional and personal lives. Isn't it about time you started managing yours** more effectively?

Can Your SMB Afford to Pay a Ransom?

Ransomware is a scourge from which no organization is immune. Odds are, your company is more likely than not to **be targeted by cybercriminals, according to "The State of Endpoint Security Today,"** an independent study of 2,700 mid-sized companies in 10 countries sponsored by Sophos. According to this study, 54 percent of organizations polled were victims of ransomware in 2017.

What are the costs of falling victim to ransomware? The monetary value of a ransomware attack goes beyond the amount paid in ransom paid by victimized companies. The overall cost includes factors such as downtime, work hours, and lost opportunities. All of this adds up to a median cost of nearly $133,000 per ransomware attack for businesses, according to the Sophos study.

Are you protected against ransomware? While there are ways to mitigate the likelihood of falling victim to **ransomware, it's impossible to completely eliminate the risk. Therefore, it's essential for SMBs to employ the only surefire** method of regaining access to your data: backup restoration. Is your company regularly backing up its data and records, in addition to ensuring the backed up files are quarantined and not connected to your network once updates are done to protect them from being encrypted as well? If not, your files are at risk of being compromised by ransomware.

Cost-effective Strategies to Grow Your Business

One of the simplest ways to spread the word and expose potential customers to your product or service is by giving **some of it away. It's a way of coercing someone to sample** what you are offering without any risk. Once they try it and **see there is value in it for them, they're more likely to pay** for it in the future.

The Yellow Pages used to provide small businesses with a way to be listed in directories where they could be found by consumers in need of what they were selling. Local directories still exist; they just do so online. Yelp, Google Places, Yahoo Local, and Bing Places are just a handful of the options businesses have to list themselves locally these days. They enable your company to be found with an online search, and the free cost makes utilizing them a no-brainer.

While it may be perhaps the oldest form of marketing for businesses, word-of-mouth still works wonders. Ask your existing clients or customers to spread the word about your business.

Surefire Ways to Snuff out Employee Morale

As an employer or manager, it's important to be aware of your actions and avoid behaviors that can have a negative impact on the morale of your subordinates, such as:

Pitting employees against each other – While pitting your employees against one another as part of an internal competition may seem like a healthy way to motivate your staff, this tactic can quickly turn counterproductive for all but the winner. Competitions such as this often result in resentment and divisiveness among coworkers.

Publically calling out employees – Employees make mistakes and fail to meet expectations from time to time. However, publicly admonishing them in these instances only serves to create an environment of anxiety and fear where your staff walks on eggshells. No employee wants to be made an example of and be embarrassed in front of their colleagues.

Holding good performers back – High-performing employees can pose a conundrum for employers: their performance merits a promotion but they are so good at what they do it will be difficult to replace them. If you want to keep employees, you must allow for upward mobility. Never hold someone back in spite of their performance.

Cost-per-Page: How to Quantify Your Printing Costs

One of the simplest ways to quantify your printing costs is by calculating your device's cost-per-page. This figure is the average cost of every page your organization prints and will give you a clearer picture of the true cost of your printing.

The most basic way of calculating your printer's cost-per-page is by using manufacturer's usage standards. Each manufacturer provides a page yield for their ink and toner cartridges—the approximate number of pages that can be printed using one of these cartridges. Using this figure, your cost-per-page would be calculated by dividing the cost of your cartridge(s) by the estimated page yield. For example, if your cartridge costs $50 and the estimated page yield is 1,000 pages, this would come out to five cents per page. Complete your cost-per-page calculation by dividing the cost of your paper by the number of sheets, and add that total to the cost of your device's ink or toner.

Calculating a more accurate cost-per-page requires a bit more work on your part. When adding new cartridges to your printer, write the date down in a log along with the cost of the cartridge(s) and the page count on the device. The next time you replace that cartridge, jot down the new page count to determine how many pages you printed with this cartridge and perform the calculation previously explained. Don't forget to include your cost-per-page for paper.

Prepare New Hires to Succeed by Onboarding Them Properly

Here are some steps you can take to onboard your new hires properly to help increase their odds of shining.

Have them shadow existing employees. Provide new hires with time to 'shadow' or watch over seasoned employees in a similar role within your organization to help familiarize them with how you expect their job to be done. This will also provide them with a great opportunity to ask questions relating to specific tasks and the tools they'll be using to complete them.

Don't overwhelm them. Ease new hires into their role. Allowing them to gain a solid understanding of everything they need to know at a reasonable pace will set them up for long-term success.

Set goals for them to reach. A clearly defined set of expectations and benchmarks lets new hires know exactly what is expected of them, enabling them to progress at the desired rate. Setting specific 30- and 90-day goals is a great way to integrate new employees into your operation at a reasonable pace.

By properly onboarding new employees, you'll give them the best possible chance to succeed in their new role while minimizing turnover as a company.

Remanufactured Toner Cartridges Provide Both Quality and Value

While remanufactured toner cartridges provide consumers with an affordable option to keep on printing, they have developed a bit of a questionable reputation over the years. However, is this reputation valid, or merely self-serving negative publicity put out by name brand printer cartridge providers to discourage consumers from buying anything but OEM products?

Remanufactured cartridges are made by taking spent or used OEM cartridges, recycling them, and professionally remanufacturing them. During this process, the cartridge is disassembled and thoroughly cleaned, any worn or damaged components are replaced, and quality testing is conducted. It is then reassembled, filled with toner to match the printer it is intended to be used in, and quality tested again.

Because remanufactured cartridges do not carry the brand name and require fewer new components to create, they cost significantly less than new, OEM products. But does this lower price tag come at the expense of quality, value, or reliability? In most cases, the answer is no, as long as you are purchasing these remanufactured toner cartridges from a reputable office technology provider and there has been sufficient testing done to support the output and reliability of their offerings.
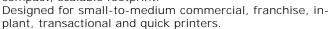
▶ Hot Products

Lexmark XC6152

Save time with the Lexmark XC6152's integrated software and solutions. Stay productive with print and scanning speeds fast enough to keep work moving. Look sharp with gorgeous color and finishing options.Copier capabilities in an affordable, space-saving device.

- Print Speed: Up to 52 ppm B&W and color
- Print Resolution: Up to 1200 x 1200 dpi
- Monthly Duty Cycle: Up to 200000 pages per month
- Network Ready
- Standard Duplexing

CANON imagePRESS C750

CANON imagePRESS C850/C750 digital color production presses offer end-users outstanding quality, productivity, and versatility in a compact, scalable footprint. Designed for small-to-medium commercial, franchise, in-plant, transactional and quick printers.

- Network Ready
- Print speed: up to 75 ipm
- Maximum paper size: 11" x 17"
- Maximum paper capacity: Up to 7,650 sheets
- Automatic Duplex

RICOH Pro C7110X

The RICOH Pro C7110X digital color production system is designed with industry-leading features and functions to help our customers create new business opportunities and meet demanding workloads. It delivers fast turn-around times, accommodate a wide range of media and offer professional finishing options.

The Pro C7110X offers best-in-class color printing technologies and robust monthly volumes, and is Ricoh's first 5-station digital color production print system with the ability to print Clear and White Toner. This advanced system changes the Ricoh playing field, expands the creative possibilities of digital printing and opens up new business opportunities for our customers with high-value applications.

- Print Speed: up to 90 PPM in Color and B&W
- Max Paper Weight: 360 gsm
- Max Paper Size: 13" x 27.5"
- Max Paper Capacity: 16,200 sheets
- ENERGY STAR Qualified