

Mobile Collaborative Communications FOR BUSINESS

A Parks Associates Whitepaper Developed for



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Executive Overview

This whitepaper assesses the impact of connected device use on business communications and workflow strategies.

Internet connectivity is a standard communication force—one that is foundational to the day-to-day management of the activities of business professionals. More than ever, it is essential that businesses invest in **unified communication (UC) systems and software** to leverage the inherent efficiencies of connected device mobility and cloud-based services.

Topics Addressed in This Whitepaper

- A Shifting Paradigm in Business Communications
- Unifying Mobile Business Communications
- Maintaining a Competitive Edge

A Shifting Paradigm in Business Communications

Internet connectivity greatly influences the way consumers interact with family, friends, colleagues, and business associates. Today, consumers use a variety of connected devices—desktops, laptops, smartphones, and tablets—and expect the freedom of downloading their favorite mobile applications onto their preferred device.

In addition, the explosion of device types and service offerings, many of them over-the-top (OTT) cloud-based applications, has spawned both device and service fragmentation within businesses of all sizes, threatening collaborative communication workflows. Business professionals often end up juggling multiple portals and applications on their mobile devices, each having separate requirements for discovery, registration, authentication, upgrades, and so on.

CONSUMERS ARE

MOBILE

Smartphone ownership stands at 66%
Tablet ownership grew by 208% in 2012 over 2011 jumping from 31% to 48%

VISUAL

25% of adults regularly use a smartphone or tablet to view photos or video

FLEXIBLE

31% of adults use Cloud-based services like Drop Box, Google Docs, or iCloud, and—53%, over half, are extremely satisfied with the service

SOCIAL

75% of adults use Facebook regularly and 23% use Twitter
There are 238 million LinkedIn users worldwide, with 35% of those, or 84 million, in the U.S.¹

ALL OF U.S. BROADBAND HOUSEHOLDS

¹ LinkedIn

Unifying Mobile Business Communications

New consumer behaviors fueled by technology innovation are a persistent challenge for small and medium businesses (SMBs) as they strive to develop a unified communications ecosystem in order to remain competitive (see Figure 1 for SMB Profile).

TODAY

Business professionals are no longer tied to their desk—instead, they constitute a highly mobile workforce.



A dominant majority of SMB employees, 77%, work outside of the office on a regular basis.

As a result, the use of mobile phones for business purposes is the norm, and the adoption of tablets represents a staple tool for many businesses to use in the management of work-related tasks (Figure 2).

SMB PROFILE

Employees Per Business size:

SMALL 1-99 | **MEDIUM** 100-500

In 2008, the United States Census Bureau counted about 5.82 million SMBs, employing 42.1 million workers and generating a payroll in excess of \$1.3 trillion

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FIGURE 1

Percentage of U.S. SMBs Using Specific Device for Business Purposes

Desktop computers	90%
Laptop/Netbook computers	75%
Telephones	72%
Mobile phones*	68%
Smartphones	48%
Tablets	30%

* Basic and feature mobile phones

Source: Parks Associates, *Small/Medium Business: Tech Support Opportunities*, 4Q 2012

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FIGURE 2

FOR EXAMPLE

Tablet apps are used as paperless enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems; the applications include built-in inventory tracking, ordering, and customer billing capabilities (Figure 3).

The shift to an IP-based world has also spurred the adoption of cloud-based services.

SMBs, particularly those with limited ability to manage in-house information technology (IT) resources, perceive the move into the *cloud* as a means to reduce corporate technology expenses.

CASE IN POINT

In 2012, Parks Associates found that 22% of SMBs used a public cloud storage service.



Other research reveals that, in 2010, around 20% of SMB *cloudable*² spending budgets were allocated to public cloud services. By 2015, the rate of cloud-based UC investment, as a percentage of *cloudable* spending, will increase by nearly 60%.³

The emerging trend of bring your own device (BYOD) is proving another effective way to reduce costs among SMBs. It is no longer standard operating procedure to provide employees with an Internet-connected device.

In a 4th Quarter 2012 Parks Associates study, SMBs reported that at least one employee uses a connected device—computer, smartphone, or tablet on a daily basis for work purposes.

Primary Business Functions Conducted on Device

Among SMBs using mobile devices

Smartphone	Tablet
	
Send/receive work e-mail	47% 62%
Manage business contacts	24% 34%
Order supplies	11% 25%
Track and process orders	10% 20%
Manage customer records	10% 28%
Create/edit video or audio	6% 13%
Manage inventory	6% 12%

Source: Parks Associates, *Small/Medium Business: Tech Support Opportunities*, 4Q 2012

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FIGURE 3

Percentage of U.S. SMBs that Use Specific Communication Service for Business Purposes

Among SMBs using mobile devices

E-mail	68%
Website	51%
Social networking accounts	31%
Online data backup	30%
Online cloud-based collaboration service	22%

Source: Parks Associates, *Small/Medium Business: Tech Support Opportunities*, 4Q 2012

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FIGURE 4








² The total addressable market for cloud service spending data obtained by AMI Partners was multiplied by cloud service spend projections from Cisco Internet Business Solutions Group (IBSG) research for IT hardware, software, and services that were deemed *cloudable* such as website hosting, security, storage, ERP, and application hosting.

³ Cisco, Cisco Internet Business Solutions Group (IBSG), *SMB Public Cloud Adoption*, 2012

The BYOD environment permits workforce mobility, but challenges organizations with managing a plethora of connected devices—tools that are not necessarily integrated with the firm’s back office systems. While the cloud can help businesses contain costs, the lack of systems integration is of concern to business management. The ability to access and share information securely, across disparate project teams and devices, is crucial to protecting customer data and maintaining a competitive advantage.

At the heart of developing a sound employee experience is using or building a well-designed, easy-to-use, and intuitive user interface (UI). The ability to synchronize a connected device to cloud-based communication services holds little power if the UI and the supporting software does not meet the needs and demands of business professionals. *Figure 5* highlights the core software features essential to provide a successful unified business communication interface.

CORE UC SOFTWARE FEATURES

- **VOICE AND VIDEO CALLING:** Visual company directory, which includes names and pictures, and tap to call
- **ENHANCED ADDRESS BOOK** (Network, Local, and Social): Company directory and personal contacts integration, including social and business connections on Facebook and LinkedIn
- **MESSAGING AND PRESENCE AWARENESS:** Identify availability of colleagues or business associates to determine appropriate communication time and channel (text versus call versus video chat)
- **UNIFIED MESSAGING** (includes Visual Voicemail): Retrieve voice, video, or fax messages from any connected device
- **REAL-TIME COLLABORATION:** Real-time screen and file share with one click, speeding up the information workflow process
- **MULTIPOINT VOICE AND VIDEO CONFERENCING:** Add colleague(s) to voice or video conference calls using drop and drag interface
- **INTEGRATION WITH ENTERPRISE APPLICATIONS:** Access to back office systems for work collaboration, such as salesforce.com, SAP, Oracle, etc., and other social media and business applications

Source: Parks Associates, *Small/Medium Business: Tech Support Opportunities*, 4Q 2012

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FIGURE 5

Whether a business is a sole proprietorship, a retail store with five or six part-time employees, or a law office with a dozen partners and a large support staff, it is increasingly likely that Internet-connected devices and cloud services are necessary for streamlined operations.

Figure 6 illustrates unified communication use cases by key business verticals.

THE VALUE OF UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS

Among users of device platforms in U.S. broadband households

BUSINESS VERTICAL		USE CASES
 Professional Services: Real Estate, Sales, Financial, and Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accelerate the collaborative processes with employers, coworkers, and clients• Manage documents, workflows, collaborative workspaces, and directories anywhere, anytime• Reduce preparation time and efficiently manage business meetings• Offer presence and location awareness	
 Retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open lines of communication between workers at all store locations• Provide customers with Internet access for comparison shopping• Supply remote login to troubleshoot issues at the computer/cash register	
 Commercial and Residential Construction Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Order products immediately when out in the field• Track the location and availability of employees• Retrieve customer records from the field for conflict resolution• Update customer files in real time	
 Food Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enter orders remotely and access pricing options• Deliver real-time notifications to customers for marketing and promotional events• Share calendar of events	
 Manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respond to customer inquiries, quotation generation, and order fulfillment• Gain instant access to production, inventory, and shipping schedules• Plan production and manage time for each task	

Source: Parks Associates, *Small/Medium Business: Tech Support Opportunities*, 4Q 2012

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FIGURE 6

Maintaining a Competitive Edge

As consumer comfort with new technologies increases, they expect seamless, simple, and familiar user interfaces and experiences even for managing their professional lives. Businesses gain a competitive edge and differentiation for their products or services by ensuring these experiences are unified, mobile, visual, flexible, and social.

In today's highly fragmented cloud services market, businesses require a secure platform that integrates the leading connected devices.

These platform services must also connect to existing technology infrastructures as well as third-party services and applications.

Telco and broadband service providers are best positioned to offer unified communication solutions: nearly 3 in 4 SMBs prefer to purchase a cloud service from their current Internet access provider; 60% of those say they are willing to change service providers to obtain a better quality cloud-support system for their businesses.⁴

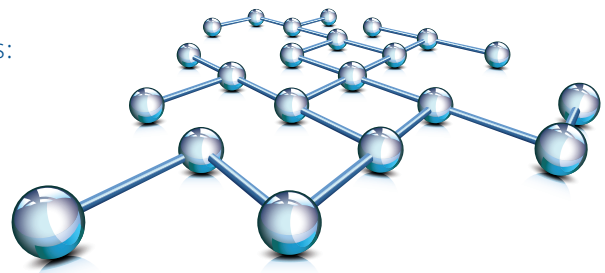
The adoption of IP-based mobile collaborative services is an innovative, and soon to be standard, way to acclimate to the evolving nature of business communications. By offering a centralized and secure cloud-based platform, service providers can provide their clients—*businesses of all types and sizes*—an integrated, unified, and personalized business communication framework.

Using that framework, their employees gain multiple capabilities:

- Full mobility and flexibility
- Enhanced communications with colleagues, customers, suppliers, and partners
- Improved internal and external response time
- Heightened efficiency and productivity

In turn, competitive advantages accrue to businesses:

- Scale and the management of multiple device platforms
- Real-time collaboration capability
- Faster time to market
- Effective tactics for fulfilling corporate strategy
- Protection of corporate investments
- Potential for increasing company revenue or profit



⁴ Cisco, What Do SMBs Want from Commercial-Services Providers? Insights from Cisco's U.S. Research on SMB Services Delivery, 2013

Unifying the Mobile User Experience with mPortal SPRINGBOARD® Comms

SPRINGBOARD® Comms

redefines how mobile users connect, interact and share—all from one easy-to-use application on their tablet or smartphone.

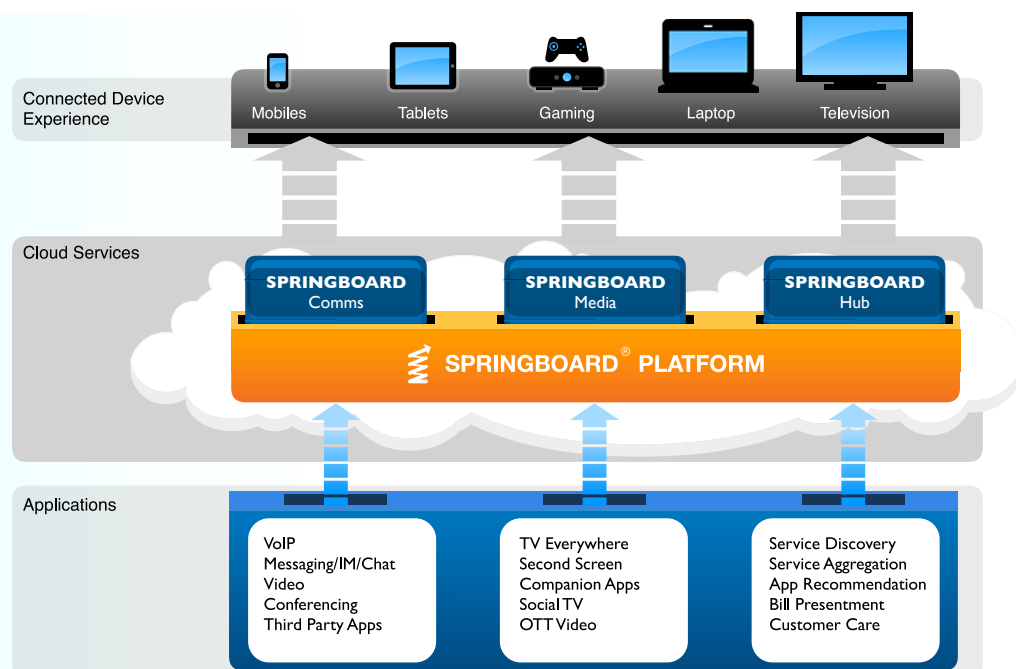


The SPRINGBOARD software platform enables telecom and cable providers to deliver a superior user experience to smartphones and tablets, with a brand-able end user app that aggregates and integrates their existing IP-based services. This may include voice, video, messaging and presence, text (SMS), conferencing and collaboration, as well as social and business applications.

Designed on a cloud-based, open and modular platform with published APIs, the standards-based SPRINGBOARD software platform provides both the client-based user interface and the cloud-based software that powers and controls the user experience, such as discovery, user and device management, and analytics.

Because SPRINGBOARD integrates with the service provider's existing product infrastructure and third party IP-based services, providers have the flexibility to create custom market offers for both businesses and consumers, as per the segment needs.

mPortal SPRINGBOARD® Comms



SPRINGBOARD Comms offers three base packages designed to meet different market needs:



SPRINGBOARD Comms Enterprise

The Enterprise edition was developed for larger business organizations who are looking for advanced communication and collaboration features, as well as integration with other IP-based business applications such as Salesforce or Microsoft Outlook, typically on corporate-sanctioned devices such as smartphones and tablets.



SPRINGBOARD Comms Business

The Business edition was developed for small to medium businesses who are looking for a simpler and easy-to-use rich communication solution, including integration with social applications such as Facebook and LinkedIn and that is typically used on employee's existing personal devices. This solution provides a simplified and intuitive user interface that requires little to no training, with an easy onboarding process and immediate access to integrated business and social applications as required.



SPRINGBOARD Comms Consumer

The Consumer edition was designed to provide a fun-to-use communication application that let's users call, chat, text and video call with their friends and family on their existing IP-based smartphones and tablets, providing a clean and easy-to-use interface that takes advantage of familiar functions such as tap, swipe, drag and drop.



About mPortal

mPortal, founded in 2000, offers mobile software and services to telecom, cable and media providers, empowering them to deliver superior mobile user experiences for their content and services across smartphones, tablets, smart TVs and other IP-connected devices.

Our customers to date include many of the world's leading companies such as AT&T, Brighthouse Networks, Cablevision, Comcast, Cricket Communications, Cox Communications, Disney Mobile, Mobile ESPN, Reliance Infocomm, TELUS, TV Guide, Time Warner Cable, and Verizon Wireless.

For more information, visit www.mportal.com.

Stay up-to-date with our The Connected Experience blog—www.mportal.com/blog—and follow us on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn. 703-852-9600 | info@mportal.com

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About Parks Associates

Parks Associates is an internationally recognized market research and consulting company specializing in emerging consumer technology products and services. Founded in 1986, Parks Associates creates research capital for companies ranging from Fortune 500 to small start-ups through market reports, primary studies, consumer research, custom research, workshops, executive conferences, and annual service subscriptions.

The company's expertise includes new media, digital entertainment and gaming, home networks, Internet and television services, digital health, mobile applications and services, consumer electronics, energy management, and home control systems and security.

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