NTT

# Five strategies to increase user adoption and boost your ROI

User adoption is key

Getting your user adoption strategy right is crucial to the success of your cloud communications program. In fact, user adoption can often be the 'make or break' stage when it comes to cloud communications.

However, it's not enough just to implement cloud communications in your own time. To get the most out of your cloud communications program and gain a competitive advantage over your competitors, it's imperative that your end users adopt the technology quickly.

The sooner you can get your employees to use cloud communications, the sooner your organization can begin to make significant cost savings and efficiencies, and position itself ahead of your competitors.

Without effective change management strategies, you may never achieve a ROI on your project and will still be paying vast amounts of money on third party technology years down the line.

41%
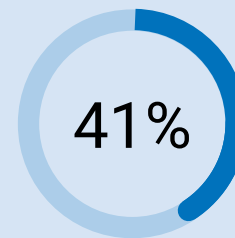
For 41% of businesses, employee resistance is the biggest barrier to technology.

The Cloud Communications Division of NTT - 2016

Cloud communications is dramatically growing in popularity, meaning your company is unlikely to be alone in transitioning to a fully digital workplace within your industry. **37% of participants of IDC's U.S. Enterprise Communications Survey, 2017** said they "currently use unified communications and collaboration (UCC), and another 36% plan to implement UCC within the next two years". This highlights the importance of implementing the technology as quickly as possible so you do not fall behind your competitors.

There are a number of strategies you can employ to ensure your end-users adopt cloud communications quickly.

These include:

1. Introduce the project to employees early on

2. Communicate the benefits for employees and the organization as a whole

3. Share goals with employees and offer rewards and incentives

4. Turn adoption into a competition

5. Break it down into manageable stages

'With organisational change management, **81% of companies stay on or below budget, and 71% are on or ahead of schedule.**'

PROSCI, 2016
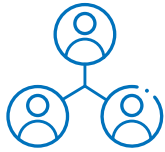
Introduce the project to employees early on

Introducing the project to employees early on helps to build a positive 'buzz' around cloud communications and creates a sense of expectation.

Awareness is the first important stage of the **PROSCI ADKAR model,** and involves creating awareness about the organization's need for change.

At this early stage of the programme it's important to grab employees' attention. Let them know what is being planned so they can begin to understand how they will be involved with cloud communications.

Discussing the project with your employees early on gives them the opportunity to ask questions. This helps to engage them and provides you with useful insights into what their main concerns are.

As a next step, you can then ensure that these concerns are addressed through communications and training methods for a smooth transition period. Introducing the idea of change gradually is much more effective than bringing in a new system all at once.

Employees have more time to get used to the idea of the new technology. By the time cloud communications is actually implemented they will be ready to embrace it.

We collate a pilot group of users and provide them with comprehensive training before general rollout. This is a great way to identify any potential issues and learn what aspects of the technology end-users find most challenging to inform training moving forward.

This group then acts as 'change champions', helping to engage other end-users and providing support during the implementation stage.

> **'80-100% of benefits and anticipated improvements are tied to the end user**, to people changing their behaviours and to their willingness to **incorporate technologies into their daily working lives.'**
>
> **PROSCI, 2016**

Communicate the benefits of the technology for employees and the organization as a whole

When encouraging employees to adopt cloud communications it's essential that you clearly communicate how it will benefit employees as well as the organization as a whole.

Ensure that there is a positive message for everyone.

Focusing on what the technology will bring to the organization helps employees to understand the business decision for change and their role in achieving important goals for the business.

This in turn helps to persuade them to adopt this new way of working.

Communicating the reasons for implementing cloud communications significantly helps to change employees' attitudes, which also has a positive impact on the training stage.

Training is significantly more effective if users understand what's in it for them and are supportive of the technology instead of feeling that they are simply being inconvenienced.

Our organizational change managers work closely with employees to spread awareness and communicate the benefits of cloud communications.

They help to develop internal campaigns to promote cloud communications to the entire workforce and ensure that employees fully understand why its implementation is advantageous to the organisation.

'Spend a lot less time on technology. Spend a lot more time on people. Earnestly engage and involve them. If they feel like they are part of the solution or part of the answer, they seem to produce. They're happier and it all falls into place.'

Kurt Thaus, Senior Vice President and CIO, Telephone & Data Systems, Inc

(Deloitte, 2016)

## Share goals with employees and offer rewards and incentives

Sharing the business's goals with employees provides them with a focus and creates a clear goal to work towards.

It gives employees insight into the difference they are making by adopting cloud communications and helps them understand how their own participation contributes to a wider goal.

Setting clear targets with time frames provides additional guidance for employees so they know by when they should be fully using the technology.

Another way to speed up user adoption is to offer incentives and rewards to employees for using the technology.

These rewards could be anything from gift cards, financial rewards, an extra day of paid leave, or some tasty treats for the office on a Friday to say thank you for cooperating and embracing the technology.
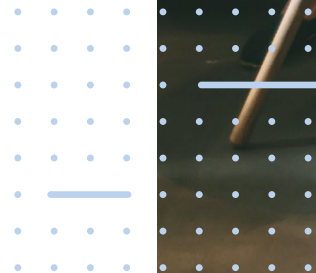
'It is now vital for businesses to **make employees feel wanted and valued as an individual** if they are going to be successful.'

Andrew Pearce, Managing Director, EMEA
The Cloud Communications Division of NTT

Turn adoption into a competition to introduce a fun element

Encouraging whole departments or teams to work together and create a social competition is a great way to boost user adoption rates across the whole organization.

Set measurable goals so different groups can pit themselves against each other in the race to full adoption. Challenge your employees to become the first department to fully adopt cloud communications.

Introducing small prizes or monetary incentives such as small bonuses for early adopters and cloud communications champions helps to boost participation.

This approach also makes adoption more of a team effort which some people may respond better to.

Your dedicated team of organizational change managers works alongside you to understand what user adoption strategies will be most effective for your organization.

They monitor user adoption throughout the project and after its implementation, and continuously adapt and optimise your strategy for ideal user adoption.

From experience we know that the human element of change is where organizations can realise the anticipated benefits and **ultimately gain their expected return on investment.**
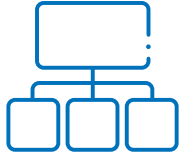
Break it down into manageable stages

It's essential to break training into manageable steps. Otherwise, employees quickly become overwhelmed and confused by the new technology, or feel pressured to have to understand it straight away.

Teaching employees the core functions first ensures that they can start using them quickly. This helps to speed up adoption.

We provide all employees with comprehensive and structured training, tailored to all levels of proficiency, on how to use the new technology. Training should start early and be ongoing to ensure that end users are fully comfortable and confident using the technology.

By the time cloud communications is rolled out employees should have a good understanding of how to use the core functions so they can work without disruption of their business as usual (BAU) processes. More advanced training can follow later as employees become more confident using cloud communications.

Breaking the training into easy steps also helps employees to help each other as most of them will be on the same level of adoption.

This can significantly reduce the amount of IT resource required to assist end users which helps to minimise disruption.

Your organizational change manager separates the project into key stages and scopes out a detailed training plan with time scales and targets for each phase to ensure the project runs smoothly.

Do not treat a digital workplace initiative as one big simple project. Instead, **develop a digital workplace programme with an implementation strategy that meets the specific needs of your organization**. IT leaders must not be fixated about rapidly advancing to the next level.

Tay et al (Maturity Model for Digital Workplace Programs), Gartner, 2016

Key takeaways

Adopt the following strategies to boost
your user adoption rates:

- Introduce cloud communications to employees
  early to help them get up to speed with the
  technology and reach your projected return on
  investment (ROI) as quickly as possible.

- Communicate how cloud communications
  benefits employees personally to minimise
  resistance towards the technology.

- Share your business goals with employees to help
  them understand the reason for implementing cloud
  communications and encourage them to embrace it.

- Offer rewards and incentives for employees
  and introduce a competitive element to
  user adoption to boost participation.

- Break the project down into structured and manageable
  stages to guide employees slowly towards adoption
  of the new tool in their day to day work.

Contact one of our experts today!

Speak to an expert

5 Greatest Opportunities of Future-Proofing your Business

Five greatest opportunities of future-proofing your business

By providing tailored strategies to eliminate barriers to communication and collaboration, organisational change management creates many opportunities for future-proofing your organisation.

Read more