



Unified Communications

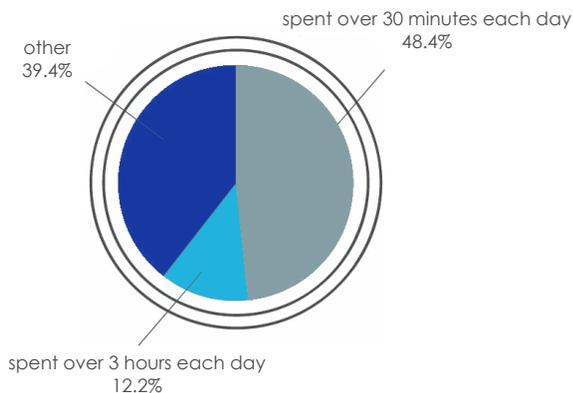
The End of Productivity Sinkholes

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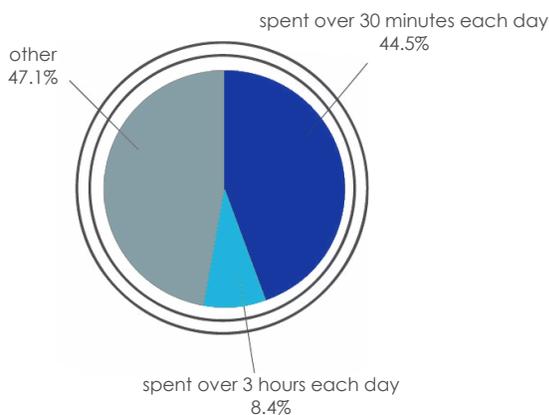
How much time do you waste at work trying to find the right people or information in order to get your job done? If you're like most people, the answer is: way too much. In early 2015, Fonality set out to find out how much time workers lose due to the inability to connect with people, access information, and set up meetings, and the results may (or may not!) surprise you.

Fonality (in conjunction with Google Consumer Survey) conducted two surveys that were completed by over 500 individuals who work for organizations with 1-500 employees. The goal was to identify some of the productivity challenges workers face, to compare the results with those from a similar survey conducted in 2011, and ultimately identify how cloud-based unified communications (UC) solutions can help overcome some of these challenges.

Time spent trying to contact customers, partners or colleagues:



Time spent trying to find key business information:



Consistent with the 2011 findings, Fonality found that there are too many productivity sinkholes that waste valuable time and prevent workers from being as productive as possible. The survey found that respondents waste an average of more than two hours (2 hours 12.5 minutes) on tasks that negatively impact productivity, which unified communications can help overcome.

Most of us spend too much time each day trying to reach people who aren't available, ultimately playing phone tag, or sending emails that go unanswered. The 2015 study found that 36.8 minutes per day are wasted trying to contact customers, partners or colleagues, with 48.4% of the respondents spending over 30 minutes each day, and 12.2% spending three or more hours each day. When asked about how much time is spent trying to find key business information 44.5% of the participants responded that they spend over 30 minutes each day, with 8.4% spending over three hours, for an average of 35.4 minutes per day.

Workers now have an almost overwhelming number of ways to contact each other for voice communications, options include the desk phone with voice mail, a conference phone, and of course the ubiquitous mobile phone. When it comes to messaging, most employees have an email account, a Web-based IM application—either corporate or public, and SMS or mobile texting. Time spent duplicating communications with multiple channels can be another productivity drain. With an average of 27.7 minutes each day wasted on this chore, 38% of the survey participants responded they spend over 30 minutes a day duplicating communications, and 6.5% of these spend three hours or more duplicating communications each day.

Meetings and conference calls, including audio, web, and video conferences, are an effective way of getting people together to collaborate and make decisions. However, the time spent setting up and joining conference sessions is another productivity sinkhole—looking up the conference number and passcode, launching the conference application, waiting for people to join, etc. can take far too much time.

According to the survey, an average of 12.9 minutes per user per day are spent attempting to schedule meetings with other people within the organization, while 47.8% of the respondents spend 10 or more minutes, with 12.5% spending over one hour.

Unwanted communications, such as calls you'd like to avoid, can be more than simply a nuisance—it can lead to a drop in worker productivity as time is spent on things other than the task at hand. While most of us have caller ID on our mobile phones and even our home phones, it's not as common in the typical workplace. When asked "How many minutes per day do you spend dealing with unwanted communications?" almost 60% of the respondents found that they waste over 10 minutes a day, with 5.4% of those respondents spending over 2 hours a day, for an average of 19.7 minutes per user per day.

It's clear that companies are losing valuable time and resources due to unproductivity when communication isn't efficient.

Unified Communications:

The Cure for Improving Productivity

What's the solution? Cloud-based unified communications. UC integrates several communications areas—video, voice, messaging, conferencing, and IM—onto a single platform that both mobile and desk-bound employees can access using a simple, streamlined interface. It provides convenient features like a unified inbox, a visual "buddy list," presence indicators to locate co-workers, and desktop call control to let users activate voice features with a click of their mouse. UC solutions facilitate real-time collaboration, with capabilities such as web-based meetings, screen sharing, and video conferencing, which can be accessed from a computer, smartphone or tablet.

Teams and workgroups are perhaps the biggest beneficiaries of UC solutions. UC-enabled workgroups can interact and collaborate more effectively, leading to faster development time, quicker time to market, and better and faster decision making—all impacting the company's bottom line. Workgroups can work more effectively together as distributed "virtual teams," efficiently communicating and sharing information.

Why UC?

Productivity and More...

Unified communication services, including presence, instant messaging, mobility, audio/web/video conferencing, click-to-call, and other capabilities, help individuals to be more efficient and effective at doing their jobs. By simply clicking on a person's name on a desktop screen, smartphone or tablet, individuals and teams can be connected via IM or a voice call, making communications significantly faster.

Rather than wasting 36.8 minutes per day trying to contact customers, partners or colleagues, and wasting 27.7 minutes a day duplicating communications with multiple channels, UC solutions let you know whether or not someone is available before you reach out to them, saving valuable time.

From your desktop or mobile UC user interface, you can view someone's presence status, making it easier to determine if they're available to communicate, and what's the best method (IM, phone, mobile phone, etc.), eliminating phone tag and wasted time.

Companies that have deployed UC found their use of voice messaging dramatically decreased, as people won't bother calling someone if they see that the person they're trying to reach is unavailable.

UC also makes it easy to escalate from one communication method to another. Let's say you're having a chat interaction with a colleague, and realize that you need to share files and want to have a web conference. With a UC solution, you can simply click a button and have an interactive web or video conference, and bring in other people when needed.

Scheduling and setting up meetings is no longer a time-consuming productivity sinkhole, as workers can initiate ad hoc or spontaneous audio, web, or video conferences with the appropriate people simply by clicking on a button or dragging and dropping an individual's name into a "conference room" in the user interface. Think of how much easier collaboration can be when you can quickly see the availability of your contacts on your desktop or mobile device screen, and click on their name to initiate a phone call or interactive conference session with HD video and screen sharing.

Productivity doesn't have to decrease when you're out of the office. Mobile UC capabilities make it possible to extend the desktop communication environment to the mobile device when needed, giving mobile workers access to features like click-to-call, conferencing, unified messaging, integration with the calendar and enterprise directory, as well as other communication capabilities—so mobile workers can be just as productive when out of the office as when in the office.

Mobility capabilities increase mobile workers' productivity by extending the office reach to any location via access to the enterprise network. By simply being able to forward incoming office calls to their mobile phone, users have more freedom and flexibility, increasing productivity.

Conclusion:

As the Fidelity study survey showed, respondents waste an average of more than two hours each day on productivity sinkholes that unified communications can help overcome. By making individuals and workgroups more productive, businesses experience enhanced and simplified communication and collaboration. Companies that have implemented UC solutions have found improved employee productivity; improved customer service with higher customer loyalty and retention; faster problem resolution; better communication with partners, suppliers, and customers; shorter product development cycles; and faster time to market.

Cloud-based UC services make it easy for companies of any size to get the capabilities they need simply and affordably, without the hassle of purchasing, deploying, and maintaining hardware and software.

If you want to help your workers become more productive, while communicating and collaborating more easily and efficiently, it's time to look at cloud-based unified communications.