

# Revealing 10 Hidden Secrets of Unified Communications Technology

The latest hardware and software has ushered in an age of unified communications (UC), offering collaboration benefits undreamed of only a few short years ago. Technology from companies like Microsoft and Polycom has advanced rapidly to enable levels of functionality unknown to many users. Here we reveal 10 hidden secrets that you may not be aware exist.



## Overview

As little kids we all spent hours playing hide and seek. Nothing quite matched the excitement of gleefully calling out one of our little playmates as we spied them crouching under the stairs or pressed behind a tree.

Growing out of childhood, the thrill of the chase and reveal faded as we moved on to more adult pursuits. Well today's your lucky day. Cover your eyes and start counting as we return to yesteryear and play a little hide and seek with your unified communications technology.

Con calls, videoconferencing, and other familiar tools of communication collaboration have been around for years. They're now part of daily life as remote-based workers become scattered all over the world. What you may not know, however, is that technology from companies like Microsoft and Polycom has advanced rapidly to enable levels of functionality unknown to many users. The latest hardware and software has ushered in an age of unified communications (UC) offering collaboration benefits undreamed of only a few short years ago.

So today we're going to poke around the corners and crevices of your UC system and reveal 10 hidden secrets that you may not be aware exist.

### 1. Simplified video collaboration (VC)

When you need to schedule a videoconference, you don't want to conduct an inventory of which systems every attendee is using. You just want a meeting and your attendees want to use the tools they already have. Seems like a simple request, right? Up to now, however, it's been difficult to pull off.

That's no longer the case thanks to the Polycom® RealConnect™ for Microsoft Lync solution. With RealConnect and Lync – or Skype for Business as it is now known following Microsoft's recent acquisition – everything is done through a single platform. There's no need to learn new ways to schedule calls, no new software or



plugins, or anything that has to be deployed to anyone's desktops. Users can schedule a call more quickly and bring together the various disparate technologies easily.

The other benefit is that the users will experience the call seamlessly in their own familiar way, whether that's in a Skype for Business gallery format or a Polycom® RealPresence® Platform view. The best part is the magic is all taking place behind the scenes without any required intervention from the users.

### 2. Simplified VC workflow

Navigating the conventional manual workflow for setting up and conducting a videoconference is painful. You have to decide whether to schedule the call via Skype for Business or if you should use a third party plugin. Users have to remember there is no click-to-join URL for this type of meeting and instead must call in using the conference ID. Callers will have different multi-point video depending on their video system.

With the Polycom RealConnect, the call can be quickly and efficiently scheduled and launched from Skype for Business leveraging Microsoft Outlook. Attendees can call in using the conference ID or they can use the click the link to join from Skype for Business or from the calendar on Polycom endpoints. Users experience shared content in their own familiar format.

Tools should make the videoconference experience easier, not be another set of flaming hoops you have to jump through to collaborate and accomplish tasks. RealConnect for Skype for Business provides the streamlined workflow that makes that happen.

### 3. Smooth transition from PBX

Change can be disruptive and uncomfortable – for both people and organizations. It can also create delays and drive up costs. But sometimes change is inevitable. It's why we no longer use horses for transportation.

Businesses are facing this dilemma when it comes to their PBX systems. Although useful for many years, there is a clear move away from PBX because of high maintenance costs, waning support, inability to scale, and lack of modern communications features. Infonetics Research reported that in 2013, the PBX market declined by 3% while UC applications surged by more than 21%.<sup>1</sup>

The secret is that this inevitable change doesn't have to be painful. The joint Polycom/Skype for Business solution offers organizations a smooth conversion path that offers familiar devices and quick ramp up time for users. Organizations have found the combined **Polycom/Skype for Business UC platform** delivers an ROI as high as 98%.<sup>2</sup> The move from PBX is inevitable. Might as well make it as seamless as possible.

### 4. Connect on any device, anywhere

Look around as you walk down the street, sit in a train station, or sip on a latte from your favorite barista. What do you see? Heads down, buried in cell phones, tablets, or laptops. Welcome to the mobile world.

Users are no longer chained to their desktops. They get work done everywhere, at any time, on multiple devices and they need the technology to make that happen. Polycom video and voice solutions with Skype for Business unify communications across all work environments – home, office, conference room, coffee shops, and everyplace in between. Users enjoy an intuitive com-

munications experience regardless of device or location with ease of use and easy access.

Your team needs this kind of connected communications experience to keep them competitive in the marketplace.

### 5. Direct integration with Microsoft apps and infrastructure

There's nothing more frustrating than working on a PowerPoint or SharePoint presentation and having to exit to send it to a colleague. The entire process is cumbersome and creates delays.

The Polycom/Microsoft UC solution eliminates that obstacle. Polycom devices work directly with the Microsoft applications people use every day like Skype for Business, Office, and SharePoint, as well as Microsoft infrastructure like Active Directory, Exchange Server, and Edge Server. You can manage both the communications and application through a single interface to streamline deployment and speed up your ROI.

Your team can collaborate instantly and securely thanks to Skype for Business' presence information within email and business apps and allows users to find colleagues and initiate conversations without leaving the application. It also lets you work with virtual teams inside as well as outside firewalls with colleagues wherever they may be working. Polycom solutions extend the benefits of Skype for Business and enable highly scalable and secure voice and video collaboration experiences in multiple environments all within the familiar Skype for Business interface.

### 6. Rich Presence enabled communication

The on-demand world we live in has certainly made us... more demanding. We want what we want when we want it and that extends to our need to communicate with colleagues. We all know how frustrated we get when our email goes unanswered for five minutes or our IM just hangs there in cyberspace without a response.

<sup>1</sup> UC transition from PBX systems surges as vendors end PBX support, by Antone Gonsalves, TechTarget, January 2014.

<sup>2</sup> The Total Economic Impact of Polycom Voice Solutions for Microsoft Lync, a Forrester Study commissioned by Polycom and Microsoft, January 2014.

A key benefit of a modern UC environment solves those issues through the concept of presence – an indication of a user’s availability and readiness to communicate. Taken a step further, Rich Presence provides additional information about users showing if they’re busy on the phone, on a mobile device, or available on a video device.

With a Rich Presence solution, users set their own status or they can use automatic settings. For example if you haven’t touched your keyboard for a specified period of time, you’ll be switched to “away.” You can also set it so you can’t be disturbed or let people know what you’re busy with – such as being with a customer. The feature can also connect with everyone’s calendar for even more detail.

Rich presence promotes collaboration and improves efficiency by eliminating the time required chasing down people you need.

## **7. Video content library creation**

Voice to voice and face-to-face real-time communication is crucial to effective collaboration, but there are times when more is needed. Organizations across the globe need to create quality recordings and webcasts to support training, corporate communications, and knowledge management initiatives cost-effectively, without requiring employees to be experts in video production.

The Polycom RealPresence Media Suite is an enterprise recording, webcasting and portal solution that makes the creation and delivery of higher quality videos possible.

That makes it easy to use existing video conferencing endpoints in new ways to reach hundreds or even thousands of viewers with live webcasts or recorded video assets.

Your staff benefits from on-demand and live video streaming available from a single location for training, sharing user generated video content, internal communications, archiving, and compliance. Think of it as your own organizational Netflix.

## **8. Multi-Vendor environment enablement**

No man (or woman) is an island. Neither are many UC installations that can quickly become a conglomeration of various vendor devices and solutions. In a perfect world, every UC environment would be one happy, homogeneous family. Unfortunately UC life doesn’t normally work that way.

In today’s mixed UC environments, the only practical way to truly unify communications and keep your future options open is to employ the broadest possible use of open standards and native interoperability. In other words, do whatever you can to make all your “different stuff” work together.

A Polycom RealPresence platform does this by acting as a central hub for your UC environment. It works with business and communication applications from hundreds of vendors and supports enterprise, cloud, and hybrid deployments. It supports BYOD and works on any vendor network making video collaboration universal.

Polycom’s Telepresence Interoperability Protocol (TIP) enables Skype for Business users to collaborate in Virtual Meeting Rooms, reduces bandwidth consumption, eliminates the need for expensive gateways, reduces complexity, and lowers your Total Cost of Ownership.

Simply put, a Polycom solution allows your technology to play well together.

## **9. Streamlined installation and integration**

All the bells and whistles sound perfect, but you have to get them integrated and up and running within your current environment to enjoy the benefits. Polycom simplifies the installation and integration process with its Unified Communications Professional Services group.

They provide expertise to address the intricacies of integrating Polycom video solutions into complex communications environments

to improve communication while reducing costs. They'll evaluate your company's business goals, usage levels, types of technologies, and geographic diversity. From there, they'll plan and design a solution to ensure maximum utilization of your current infrastructure. Project-managed deployment to help ensure timeliness and optimization of technology implementation and adoptions.

Polycom Global Services handle the full spectrum of UC installations, from large, complex integrations with your primary UC vendor to custom deployments with multiple vendors, to legacy system and business process integration with existing video and telepresence infrastructure.

In other words, they make sure it all works for you.

## 10. Significant cost savings

As wonderful and effective as the new UC solutions are, you're still going to have to justify the expense. The good news is that UC technology is not just another pretty face. It saves money – something sure to get a smile from any controller or CFO. A Polycom/Skype for Business solution provides a positive ROI in many areas.

Integrating voice and video directly into business applications dramatically increases staff productivity, eliminating the need to fumble between software tools and phone/video devices to collaborate with other team members. Streamlining the communication process increases usage and drives a faster ROI. ZK Research estimates that integrated voice features can save the average worker four hours a week.<sup>3</sup>

The productivity of IT staff is also improved since upgrading features to every user is a snap. Instead of having to physically get to every device, a centrally managed implementation allows you to roll out features to every user at the same time.

Modern UC technology extends worker productivity by enabling mobile and BYOD initiatives. Mobile devices can handle both

video and voice as easily as a laptop or desktop, making remote collaboration simple.

Finally, a Polycom/Skype for Business solution lowers the overall cost of communication through reduced long distance calls and trunk charges, ease of moves, adds, and changes, and lower overall system maintenance.

It adds up to a compelling response when your CFO asks you to show her the money.

## Summary

There you have it. Ten cool features right at your fingertips that can help you become more productive and efficient. And as UC technology continues to evolve, you can be sure more exciting things will become available to help you find and collaborate better with your colleagues, whether they're across the hall, or across the country.

And now that we've ferreted out these things out, it's up to you to take advantage of them. You can uncover your eyes now.

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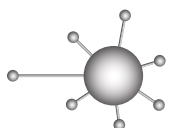
<sup>3</sup> *Lowering the Cost of Communications, and Six More Real Benefits of Lync Enterprise Voice*, by Zeus Kerravala, June 2013.

## About Solutionz Conferencing, Inc.

Founded in 2001, Solutionz Conferencing, Inc. is a total conferencing provider that offers the total solution for communicating. In order to offer an unparalleled communication network, Solutionz brings together the best-in-class audio and video conferencing manufacturers with our specialized service offerings (Audio Visual Integration, Managed Services, Bridging Services and Grant Program Services).

## About Polycom

Polycom helps organizations unleash the power of human collaboration. More than 400,000 companies and institutions worldwide defy distance with video, voice and content solutions from Polycom. Polycom and its global partner ecosystem provide flexible collaboration solutions for any environment that deliver the best user experience and unmatched investment protection.



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CONFERENCING, INC.

901 Bringham Ave. Los Angeles, CA 90049 | 1-888-815-6128 | [www.solutionzinc.com](http://www.solutionzinc.com)