

Justifying a move to unified communications

Many companies are already experiencing substantial benefit after combining their communications and IT infrastructures. However, what are the issues faced during the process? Are there downsides? If so, how do you mitigate against them? Exactly what are the benefits to your business and what does this mean to your bottom line?

Investing in unified communications, including IP Telephony, results in substantial costs for many organisations. When a technical and financial survey of the existing infrastructure is carried out, a good business case can be quickly developed to help mitigate these costs.

Datel Consulting has been involved in many of these audits, helping to identify both the tangible and intangible benefits of a unified communication deployment. Most importantly, *before* any major commitment or spend.

Our team of experts have many years of experience in the communications and IT environments and have seen the rough and the smooth when it comes to integrating comms and IT!

The sort of questions you need to ask during the decision making process include:

- What tangible benefits does an IPT implementation provide for my business?
- What are the long term support plans for my existing communication systems?
- What level of support will my current suppliers provide for my legacy systems?
- Is my LAN configuration capable of supporting unified communications?

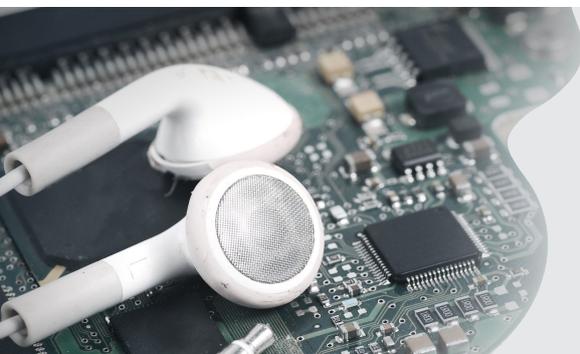
- How do I provide network services over the WAN?
- Are my communications centrally managed?
- Is there sufficient power and ancillary systems in the comms room for PoE?
- What are the obstructing factors in a move to IPT?
- Can IPT and unified comms reduce my IT costs?
- Do I fully understand my existing bills for communications services?

Potential benefits

- Streamlines the internal network infrastructure
- Significantly reduces maintenance costs
- Improves efficiency through integrated Instant Messaging and click to dial
- Reduces equipment footprint in the comms room
- Reduces the use of internal cabling infrastructure
- Reduces costs for office moves
- Easier integration of smaller sites and remote workers
- Improves resilience and business continuity capabilities
- Reduces call costs and PSTN infrastructure through the use of SIP trunking

Potential risks

- Does my team have sufficient skill sets to manage the implementation and operation?
- Do the LAN and WAN connections support realtime protocols and the necessary expediting of their packets?



Key factors to consider when planning a move to unified communications include both the long term support and availability of equipment for legacy based voice systems

