



PRESS RELEASE

Tellumat Telecoms

February 24, 2011

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ShoreTel value mirrors unified communications adoption trends

A 2010 survey of European adoption and usage of unified communications (UC) tools is great news for ShoreTel customers and partners, as it shows remarkable overlap with ShoreTel's promise of low-cost simplicity, reliability and rich functionality.

Bennie Langenhoven, managing executive of Tellumat Communication Solutions*, the communications solution provider in the Tellumat group, says as such the *2010 Aspect Report* ought to boost ShoreTel's uptake in South Africa in the near term, because SA adoption tends to closely follow European trends.

So many tools, so little integration

At the outset, the report reveals that a significant portion of respondents use a high number of communication tools. Some 15% use all nine covered in the report (e-mail, mobile device, traditional landline voice, conferencing, VOIP, instant messaging (IM), document sharing, presence and video). Another 16% use eight and many use four, five or six tools.

However, only 17% of respondents access these tools on a single integrated (UC) platform, with a further 38% stating their tools are only partially integrated. Some 45% use standalone solutions without any form of UC integration. The result of this is high implementation and ongoing management costs in terms of training and retention of skilled staff.

Despite great benefits

On the face of it, this is incongruous, as UC holds enormous benefits. The most-listed among them in the report are increased productivity (22% of respondents); mobility (13%); and time-saving (12%).

Respondents also believe it improves customer service. Some 32% say it improves cross-channel communication, 18% think it improves response time, and 17% believe it improves comms with field staff.

Resource-intensive?

The reason many respondents shy away from UC is to be found in the current economic climate. 16% said they expected it to be costly, and 12% said they anticipated a high implementation workload.

Langenhoven says this perceived strain on company resources is incorrect in ShoreTel's case. "From a total cost of ownership perspective, ShoreTel outshines both dial-tone solutions and all IP competitors," he says. (The vendor offers a guarantee to this effect.) Considering that on top of that, ShoreTel customers also get rich UC functionality, the vendor's value proposition skyrockets.

Brilliant simplicity

What makes ShoreTel so cost-effective? Langenhoven says the vendor offers simplicity of design, operation and support with "brilliantly simple" business communication solutions, starting its design with a clean slate, he says. Without a legacy, its solution fully leverages the power of IP communication and collaboration from the ground up without complexity – one core solution that can be extended to ancillary UC functions within minutes.



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- ShoreTel systems are administered via a single interface, ShoreTel Director, with which to provision users for all applications at once. Director offers intuitive browser access.
- ShoreTel Communicator offers a very easy to use end-user interface across user types, allowing users access to communication tools and media simply and in one place. (By comparison, one competitor has three different interfaces to master, and another two.)

In addition, ShoreTel offers a unique replicated architecture** that saves on upfront capital costs and implementation. Its simplicity of design cuts the costs of training, MACs or 'moves, adds and changes', systems management and upgrades. Its IP core saves on business integration and phone charges, and its appliance-based switch design and scalability cuts down on the high energy consumption of server systems.

Versus a legacy of complexity

Langenhoven says many incumbent communications vendors find it difficult to compete. "Many have transitioned from analogue telephony systems to IP-based UC platforms, retaining and integrating components along the way," he says. "This complicates the end-user and administration experience."

He explains that these vendors often circumvent the difficulty of integration by retaining multiple interfaces, which further complicates and loads the cost of administration.

Bright outlook

Despite the objections, the outlook for UC adoption is bright, the report notes. Some 41% of European organisations expect to deploy unified platforms within the next two years. Added to the 17% that have already deployed it, this brings the total to 58%, leaving those that have failed to implement UC in the minority.

It is a near-certain bet that the SA market will soon follow. Given ShoreTel's advantages, the vendor should get a definite look-in by SA enterprises looking to save and benefit from UC's many performance-enhancing features for enterprises.