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How to sell unified communications – top tips for UC resellers

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Over the last decade, unified communications (UC) has grown from an exciting possibility to a must-have for organisations of all sizes.

The underlying technologies have matured, a rich diversity of UC and collaborative applications has developed, and presence sensing has tied them together with great additional value.

With the growth in UC adoption, organisations are experiencing greater benefits than ever. If you're a reseller trying to make a decision about which UC solution to invest in, here are some important considerations for making the right choice for your customers.

- **Put the customer first** - Most companies pay lip service to customer satisfaction, but few put in place the business processes and rigorous metrics necessary to deliver on the promise of their words. How intensive is your vendor's customer satisfaction programme – if any?
- **Offer rich features and capabilities** – The true test of a UC system is whether it accommodates all different types of workers – including those working from home, remote offices, or on the road – and affords them all equal power to manage their communications from anywhere.
- **Make it easy to deploy, use and scale** – Is the system unnecessarily complex? Simpler systems require fewer resources for deployment, maintenance, and training. And systems that are appliance-based as well as plug-and-play are far easier to scale and support.
- **Ensure a low total cost of ownership** – smart buyers look at the total cost of ownership of a system, which includes upfront as well as ancillary costs (such as training) and subsequent costs (such as maintenance). By understanding all costs, you can help your customers make the right choice.
- **Work with a vendor in a strong market position** – A UC system can last 10 years or longer, so consider a vendor's long-term road map for features and open standards-based upgradeability that will meet the ever-evolving needs of your customers.
- **Deliver a highly available system** – Enterprise-class systems must be 99.999 percent available and offer N+1 redundancy. Systems that require total duplication for redundancy are a waste of resources.
- **Integrate into any business environment** – Support of open standards is important. A UC system must be flexible enough to keep up with evolving technologies and changing business processes. The ability to offer both off-the-shelf and custom-built applications delivers the business agility your customers need.
- **Offer innovation** – Unified communications helps organisations streamline collaboration and increase efficiency through integrated business processes, presence information and other innovations. By offering innovative solutions you can help your customers differentiate themselves in a global marketplace.

* Tellumat is the South African distributor of ShoreTel systems.