

IDC MarketScape: Worldwide Unified Communications and Collaboration Platforms 2024 Vendor Assessment

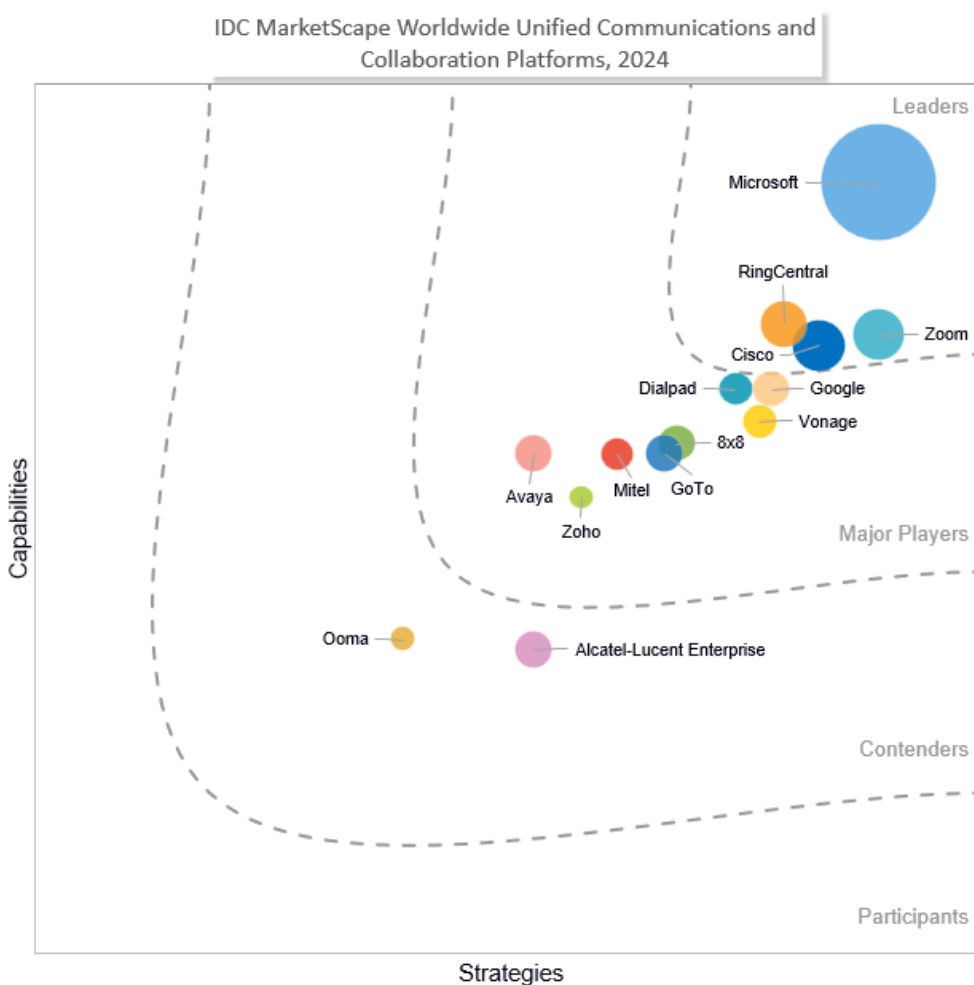
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IDC MARKETSCAPE FIGURE

FIGURE 1

IDC MarketScape Worldwide Unified Communications and Collaboration Platforms Vendor Assessment



Source: IDC, 2024

Please see the Appendix for detailed methodology, market definition, and scoring criteria.

IDC OPINION

The demand for unified communications and collaboration (UC&C) solutions grew rapidly during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the UC&C market growing 24% YoY in 2020 and another 20% YoY in 2021. After the initial surge, wherein businesses of all sizes equipped themselves with a variety of hybrid working solutions, businesses settled into a new buying pace, and some even rationalized their spending and/or workforce, moderating the UC&C market growth. In 2023, the worldwide UC&C market grew 7.9% YoY to reach \$64.3 billion. It is expected to grow to ~\$85 billion by 2028, at a 5.7% CAGR.

Around the globe, 9 out of 10 enterprises (93%) currently use unified communications (UC) and collaboration applications (audioconferencing/videoconferencing/web conferencing, team messaging, screen sharing, etc.), and 90% also use videoconferencing systems (meeting room platforms and devices) (source: IDC's *Cloud Communications and Datacenter Services Survey*, 2023). A significant percentage of small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) also currently use cloud-based UC&C solutions (source: IDC's *SMB Communications Services Survey*, 2023). IDC expects this usage to only broaden and deepen across enterprises and SMBs – driven by value-added services that infuse unified communications with AI capabilities (i.e., automated meeting summaries, action items, transcriptions, translations, and audio-video intelligence for more equitable meeting experiences).

Now, we are witnessing a massive shift toward customization and personalization of communication platforms that deliver equitable experiences for employees across functions as well as customers. This shift is being facilitated by the increase in the depth and types of integrations between UC&C solutions and customer engagement solutions (i.e., contact-center-as-a-service [CCaaS] and communications-platform-as-a-service [CPaaS] platforms). Therefore, it is now extremely critical for IT buyers to choose vendors that can deliver comprehensively integrated communication solutions and help shape their future with improved employee productivity, customer satisfaction, and great experiences.

Moreover, organizations are now increasingly focusing on consolidating their communication platforms. Half (51%) of the organizations surveyed in November 2023 stated that it is extremely important for them to consolidate the number of UC&C providers they currently subscribe to, while another 24% said it was somewhat important for them. This trend, which is driven by the need for businesses to simplify their technology and its administration, is pushing vendors to unify their UC&C, contact center (CC), and CPaaS platforms. It also enables vendors to deliver customized use cases and seamless experiences across workforce types and customers. In addition, as the UC&C space has matured with high levels of adoption, the customer communications space has now started to play a major role in driving growth for these vendors.

However, the convergence of communication platforms is leading to increased complexities in deployment and managing the transition, which is propelling the need for managed services. More than a quarter of the organizations (27%) stated provision of managed services among the top 3 factors impacting the selection of their current UC&C provider (source: IDC's *Cloud Communications and Datacenter Services Survey*, 2023). The lack of provision of managed services is also among the top 2 reasons for 19% of the organizations to switch from an existing primary provider to a new one.

Buyers will continue to deliberate their cloud transition strategies as legacy systems gradually go out of order and cloud systems increasingly become secure and safe for adoption in sensitive industry verticals. With 21% and 36% of the organizations still using (or planning to use) on-premises and hybrid UC&C solutions, respectively, the transition to cloud is not expected to happen as quickly as the cloud-native providers would want it. Further, with rising complexities, buyers are likely to favor comprehensive, integrated solutions providers that deliver multiproduct offerings that can scale and evolve with growing expectations from advancing technologies.

The UC&C vendors featured in this IDC MarketScape for UC&C platforms cater to a wide range of communication needs. They vary in their deployment focus (on premises versus cloud versus hybrid), communication and collaboration features, and telephony and AI capabilities. Each vendor has something unique to offer, whether in terms of new features, an ecosystem of adjacent services, integrations and interoperability, or other capabilities and strategies that define its present and future performance. This IDC document discusses the key strengths and challenges for each UC&C vendor studied, in addition to its core past and future focus areas – with the aim of helping buyers make informed decisions regarding their UC&C investments.

IDC MARKETSCOPE VENDOR INCLUSION CRITERIA

IDC studied 14 UC&C platform vendors for this edition of the IDC MarketScape for worldwide unified communications and collaboration platforms.

These vendors were selected based on the following criteria:

- The vendor's UC&C solution must comprise telephony (cloud and/or on prem), messaging (email/chat/presence/voicemail/fax), and conferencing (audio/video/web) capabilities in one unified platform. Additional products and features such as videoconferencing hardware, whiteboarding, screen sharing, and AI capabilities are optional.
- Annual company revenue must be greater than \$250 million in the latest fiscal year results available, or the vendor must show signs of being a potential disruptor in the market.
- The vendor must occupy a measurable market share (potential disruptors exempted) as per IDC's Quarterly Unified Communications and Collaboration Tracker.
- The company must have a publicly visible go-to-market focus on selling UC&C solutions in one or more geographical regions including the United States and other countries in Americas; Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (EMEA); and Asia/Pacific (including Japan).

ADVICE FOR TECHNOLOGY BUYERS

IDC advises organizations that are considering investing in UC&C platforms for their employee and customer communications to leverage Figure 1 – along with the associated vendor profiles, buyer guidance, and related research – to develop a suitable list of potential suppliers.

The UC&C space has undergone major transformations in the past year, particularly owing to developments in the field of AI. Every major vendor rushed to announce and release AI features in 2023, albeit so far primarily focused on generating meeting summaries, action items, call transcriptions, language translations, noise suppression, and avatars and backgrounds. While these capabilities may help improve user productivity to an extent, the future of work is likely to be driven by how integrated these UC&C platforms and their AI capabilities are with the rest of work-related applications. These applications include, but are not limited to, the most widely used tools for creating documents, presentations, spreadsheets, emails, and customer relationship management (CRM). The ability to utilize information lying in a UC&C platform, such as chats and call transcriptions, and combining it with data from strategy, marketing, finance, operational, and other business tools to create relevant content will define the true productivity gains in the times to come.

In addition, it would be advisable for buyers to look to consolidate their UC&C platform providers to achieve a single, integrated view of communications from not just the perspective of seamless flow of information across work applications but also an administrative standpoint for easier management and control. Hybrid working is here to stay, and enabling equitable experiences will be key to more productive communications between employees internally and externally with customers and other parties. This calls for unification of unified communications and contact center platforms while leveraging API-based custom integrations to drive productivity across specific use cases for your business.

Cloud is indeed the way forward and migrations will continue. Nonetheless, it is advisable to move gradually at a pace that suits your business. This means a hybrid cloud approach could be beneficial for many businesses that prefer to extract the maximum return on investment (ROI) from existing systems while leveraging advanced capabilities of the cloud platforms.

Here are a few recommendations for businesses looking to make UC&C purchase decisions:

- It is imperative to understand the current communication needs of your business and evaluate how they are likely to evolve in future according to business growth and expansion plans. The UC&C platform provider you choose must be able to meet both the current and future needs in terms of scalability and capabilities needed to drive productivity improvements.
- The vendor you choose must have a strong record of innovation, with new capabilities being introduced in a periodical manner, and have a well-defined strategy in place for future developments tagged to a reasonably defined timeline.
- With technology advancing rapidly, vendors need to have a solid network of partners such as value-added resellers (VARs), independent software vendors (ISVs), and systems integrators (SIs) that deliver services and additional capabilities to customers on their behalf. These include managed services, customizations, implementation, and management support.
- Integrations with other business applications is another key criterion to consider. Vendors that enable a host of external integrations such as those with CRM and other workspace productivity tools facilitate a higher level of interoperability and seamlessness of information flow between business applications. These integrations are typically offered via pre-developed tools on an app marketplace and through APIs for custom development.

Voice calling or telephony capabilities are critical to a business' communication needs, especially when it has frontline workers or deals with specific use cases that require reliable voice communications (e.g., in healthcare or manufacturing industries). The more flexible these telephony services are, the better it is for a business as it enables expansion to new locations and use of preferred carriers in case the bring-your-own-carrier (BYOC) option is available.

VENDOR SUMMARY PROFILES

This section briefly explains IDC's key observations resulting in a vendor's position in the IDC MarketScape. While every vendor is evaluated against each of the criteria outlined in the Appendix, the description here provides a summary of each vendor's strengths and challenges.

8x8

8x8 is positioned in the Major Players category in this 2024 IDC MarketScape for worldwide UC&C platforms.

8x8 is a publicly listed United States-based company that provides an integrated cloud-based platform for communications leveraging voice, video, chat, contact center, and API solutions. It is one of the few companies in the UC&C space that have taken a completely integrated approach to UC, CC, and CPaaS. 8x8 actively markets its platform as an all-in-one solution for business communications under the 8x8 Experience Communications as a Service brand.

8x8 Work (a part of 8x8's integrated solution) is the company's primary UC&C offering that delivers enterprise calling, instant messaging, and video meetings. It integrates with a wide range of third-party enterprise applications including, but not limited to, those for CRM, employee engagement, analytics and reporting, and IT operations.

In 2023, 8x8 announced the launch of its Technology Partner Ecosystem, which brought together over 30 organizations that integrate their solutions into the 8x8 platform and help enhance customer experience (CX). These partners include ISVs, VARs, and SIs. The ecosystem is aimed at enhancing CX through eight primary categories of integrations: customer journey and experience, AI self-service, employee experience, service partners, workforce engagement and management, IT operations, CRM, and analytics and reporting.

Over the past five years, 8x8 has more than tripled its R&D spending. The company has made acquisitions (Wavecell and Fuze), expanded geographically, and launched several new capabilities including Microsoft Teams integrations for voice calling and the contact center. It has also invested in AI-focused initiatives, some of which include an integration with OpenAI for generative AI (GenAI) capabilities and the Conversation IQ offering, which is an AI-driven conversational analytics and proactive coaching capability.

8x8 aims to invest in the development of AI capabilities including smart assistants that deliver personalized recommendations and suggest actions for users, in addition to improving transcription, translation, and annotation capabilities. Moreover, the company plans to continue working on other key aspects of its platform, including customer engagement, administrative capabilities, and Microsoft Teams integrations.

Strengths

- 8x8's strength lies in the company's integrated UC-CC platform approach that can help deliver a standardized communications experience for both employees and customers of a business. Moreover, 8x8's telephony services reach 59 countries and are integrated into Microsoft Teams for a native calling experience.
- 8x8 has a large ecosystem of partners that include master and subagents, distributors, VARs, wholesalers, service providers, telecom carriers, and technology firms. These partners work on multiple operating models and enable 8x8 to deliver a wide range of services and capabilities including technology upgrades, implementation and support services, and tailored partner-led services or 8x8-led managed/professional services.
- 8x8 invests in R&D to innovate by focusing on building technology and identifying customer needs. It also engages in early access programs to test solutions and improvise them before general availability.

Challenges

- UC&C providers offering cloud-only deployment options may, at times, be limited in their ability to serve some specific customers with existing on-premises UC&C resources and/or those operating in some data- and privacy-sensitive industry verticals that require on-prem or hybrid

deployments. However, even though 8x8 does not sell on-prem solutions, it is able to integrate with on-premises systems to support hybrid deployments.

- 8x8's AI capabilities are currently focused on meeting summaries, transcriptions, next steps, translations, backgrounds, noise suppression, and sentiment analysis. It could enhance 8x8's AI portfolio by developing capabilities that help users generate content such as emails and documents.

Consider 8x8 When

- Your organization is a medium-sized to large business with users ranging from 500 to 5,000 that needs an integrated UC-CC platform ecosystem of 8x8 to deliver a common experience across employee and customer interactions.
- Your employees can benefit from multiple integrations to work effectively across CRM, customer engagement, analytics, IT, and other customer service or operational applications.
- Your users can extract productivity improvements from 8x8's foundational AI capabilities such as meeting transcripts, summaries, language translations, and assisted responses.

Alcatel-Lucent Enterprise

Alcatel-Lucent Enterprise is positioned in the Contenders category in this 2024 IDC MarketScape for worldwide UC&C platforms.

Alcatel-Lucent Enterprise (ALE) is a France-based global communications and networking company that provides services and equipment to deliver connectivity solutions via cloud, on-premises, and hybrid deployment models. Its communication solutions include UC platforms, contact center platforms, and IP phones/devices as well as softphones. The primary UC&C platforms ALE sells are Rainbow (self-developed) and RingEX (fka RingCentral MVP, in a resale partnership with RingCentral).

Rainbow by ALE can be deployed in public cloud (Rainbow Hub), private cloud (Rainbow Edge), and hybrid cloud settings, integrating Rainbow Edge with ALE's own on-premises UC solutions (OXO Connect and OXE Purple) or third-party private branch exchange (PBX) solutions. Rainbow offers voice telephony, audioconferencing and videoconferencing, and other collaboration features including chat, screen sharing, and file sharing. Further, Rainbow CPaaS is ALE's verticals-focused solution through which Rainbow's communication and collaboration capabilities are integrated into third-party applications and business processes for a customized offering suited to industries such as education, healthcare, hospitality, government, and transportation.

In August 2020, ALE and RingCentral entered into a strategic partnership, wherein they announced the launch of a co-branded public cloud unified communications solution called Rainbow Office powered by RingCentral. It was launched in March 2021 in 8 European countries, leveraging RingEX for message, video, and phone capabilities. This partnership was aimed at tapping into Europe's cloud migration opportunities and enabled ALE to offer more flexibility to its customers while granting RingCentral access to ALE's strong European presence. However, in mid-2023, ALE stopped selling Rainbow Office and, instead, started selling RingEX under a referral model.

Over the past couple of years, ALE has focused its efforts on enhancing Rainbow's capabilities geographically (Rainbow Hub now available in 12 European countries) as well as in terms of features. The company improved its telephony capabilities, focusing on optimizing management of inbound call flows with call queueing and analytics capabilities. ALE also introduced the Teams Connector offering to enable its telephony customers to operate within the Microsoft Teams environment. In addition, it

has been investing in improving the accessibility of its solution, targeting AA level of conformance on the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

ALE plans to continue focusing on hybrid deployments to leverage its installed base of on-premises telephony while gradually facilitating the transition to cloud. It plans to enhance Rainbow's telephony capabilities with a bring-your-own-trunk (BYOT) model that allows businesses to work with any telecom carrier of their choice. Furthermore, ALE plans to enhance Rainbow CPaaS solutions with more API-based integrations that enable users in specific verticals to continue using their preferred modes of communication along with ALE's platforms. Last, the company plans to introduce AI capabilities focused on generating meeting transcripts and insights.

Strengths

- ALE supports all deployment models – on premises, public cloud, private cloud, and hybrid cloud. This enables the company to serve a wide range of organizations, from small businesses to large enterprises, as well as information-sensitive industry verticals. It also provides its customers with the flexibility and control to decide how and when to migrate to cloud.
- Owing to the broader scope of UC&C services and the flexibility of deployment options, the company can tailor its solutions and meet more clients' specifications compared with standard cloud-based solutions providers that may at times go with the rip-and-replace strategy.
- While ALE's telephony capabilities are currently limited to major European nations, they provide users with the flexibility to bring their own SIP trunks and the ability to adapt to varied network and security requirements, in addition to integrating with Microsoft Teams.

Challenges

- The UC&C space is evolving fast with rapid innovation in terms of unification of communication tools and AI in particular, and ALE could benefit from faster time to market for such advanced capabilities.
- ALE's presence in the UC&C space is primarily focused on the European region, which partially limits the company's ability to serve multinational businesses requiring a standardized solution worldwide.

Consider Alcatel-Lucent Enterprise When

- Your business has a strong presence in the European region, and it requires flexible telephony capabilities to operate and/or has specific network requirements.
- Your business operates in specific security-focused verticals and/or has existing on-prem investments you'd like to extract more returns from by opting for a hybrid deployment.

Avaya

Avaya is positioned in the Major Players category in this 2024 IDC MarketScape for worldwide UC&C platforms.

Avaya is a United States-based privately held full-service business communication services provider. Its communication and collaboration platforms include Avaya Cloud Office in partnership with RingCentral (a cloud phone system and collaboration tool for calling, meetings, and messaging) and Avaya Spaces (a collaboration platform for chat, audio/video calls, file sharing, and team channels). Moreover, it has a contact center platform called Avaya Experience Platform and other on-premises and hybrid deployment solutions for UC&C and contact center. Avaya also offers hardware including

IP desk phones, conference phones, wireless handsets, cameras, and an integrated audio-visual collaboration unit for meeting rooms. Last, the company also offers managed and professional services including assessing, designing, and building communication solutions.

In 2023, Avaya completed its financial restructuring and reformed its product and go-to-market strategies to focus on cloud-based solutions. This reform included the expansion of the scope of its RingCentral partnership by allowing it to resell the solution on its own paper and own the customer relationship. During the past two years, the company has introduced several new capabilities including integration via direct routing into Microsoft Teams, BYOD for frontline workers, and some AI-based capabilities such as noise removal in calls and meetings, summaries, transcripts, and highlights in meetings. In March 2024, Avaya announced a partnership with Zoom wherein existing Avaya customers will be able to integrate with and leverage Zoom Workplace as their cloud communications and collaboration solution. This is aimed at enhancing interoperability between platforms and devices for Avaya customers, granting them access to the Zoom AI Companion, and delivering additional tools like Zoom Team Chat, Zoom Scheduler, and Zoom Whiteboard to them.

The company plans to focus on a few different aspects of capability development. These include AI and automation through advancements in virtual assistants, predictive analytics, and automated workflows to streamline operations and improve productivity. It may also consider integration of communication platforms with augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and Internet of Things (IoT) devices to enable new modes of communication and collaboration. It can also be expected to deepen integration between its UC and CC platforms (for a consistent experience across internal and external communications), enhance its security and compliance features, and expand its cloud offerings via new partnerships.

Strengths

- Avaya has a broad range of products and services and the scale to serve the needs of most types of organizations – including those that are still in the process of migrating to cloud and hold significant on-premises deployments.
- The company has an established process for supporting its customers through in-house teams (including managed services) as well as a broad network of channel partners that provide support with initial setup, configuration, integration with existing infrastructure, user training, and other activities.
- Its partnership ecosystem is broad and widespread, and through its partnership with RingCentral, Avaya can also bring to market solutions that deliver rapidly advancing cloud capabilities.

Challenges

- Avaya has recently undergone financial restructuring, and its future road map strategy continues to evolve in the UC&C space. It could continue to lay out a clear, publicly marketed path for enhancements to its UC&C offerings.
- Avaya is somewhat reliant on its partners like RingCentral and Zoom for innovation in cloud capabilities, particularly with respect to AI. It can continue to improve its capabilities through increased investments in self-development coupled with further strengthening of technology partnerships.

Consider Avaya When

- Your business needs complex hybrid deployment of UC&C solutions to maximize existing infrastructure and leverage the agility of cloud.
- Your implementation and support services needs are also complex, requiring custom professional assessments and integrations.

Cisco

Cisco is positioned in the Leaders category in this 2024 IDC MarketScape for worldwide UC&C platforms.

Cisco is a publicly listed United States-based organization that provides a wide range of communication, collaboration, security, networking, and computing services and equipment. Its UC&C offerings include on-premises, cloud, and hybrid deployment options for platforms enabling calling or telephony, audio and video meetings, events and webinars, messaging, and collaboration (whiteboarding, polling, asynchronous video messaging, etc.). In addition, it provides a range of devices including IP phones, integrated audio-video meeting room devices, and other peripherals.

Cisco is a unique player on the grid, with a significant presence across all aspects of UC&C. It has a cloud communications platform in Webex; it can serve enterprises on legacy on-premises solutions as well as those entirely operating on cloud owing to its hybrid deployment options; it has a strong foundation in networking and security; it has a range of meeting room devices for hybrid working; and the company now also supports a multitude of external integrations. Strategically as well, Cisco has now evolved into a more open, collaborative, and future-looking UC&C provider.

Over the past couple of years, and particularly in 2023, Cisco took multiple strategic leaps to address the year-on-year decline it has been witnessing in its UC&C market share and revenue since 2019. In 2023, it formulated a strategy to drive growth via three key priorities: reimagine work (enhance and push the Webex Suite), reimagine workspaces (enhance meeting room devices), and reimagine customer engagement (enhance contact center and CPaaS capabilities). This way, it is going to market with a unified approach to employee and customer communications, along with increased focus on API-based integrations for better interoperability with other business tools organizations use.

Moreover, Cisco emphasized collaborative partnerships to increase its presence in the market. It launched a dedicated partnership with AT&T that will allow AT&T business users to use their mobile number as their Webex Go identity for more seamless mobile cloud calling. It also launched Webex for Auto and partnered with automotive companies including Ford, Volkswagen, Audi, and Mercedes to enable users to take Webex meetings and calls from their vehicles. Most importantly, it has decided to coexist with Microsoft and is working on increasingly integrating Webex Calling in Microsoft Teams and getting Cisco devices certified for Microsoft Teams Rooms, among other such initiatives.

Cisco has developed a comprehensive AI strategy that focuses on three key priorities: audio intelligence (e.g., background noise removal and speaker focus), video intelligence (e.g., cinematic meetings and virtual boundaries), and language intelligence (translations and transcriptions). It launched the Cisco AI Assistant for Webex, which can take commands and respond with information including summaries of meetings and chats and other work-related assistance such as reminding timelines. The AI Assistant will work across the Webex Suite, Contact Center, Devices, Control Hub (administration and device management platform), and Webex Connect (CPaaS platform). Cisco aims to continue investing in multimodal AI-powered collaboration experiences and develop more carrier partnerships for mobile communications via Webex Go, among other initiatives.

Strengths

- Cisco has a comprehensive UC&C ecosystem with end-to-end internal capabilities to cater to all software, hardware, and deployment requirements. It can serve companies of varying sizes and across geographies.
- It has a revised strategic focus that defines a clear path for its future, which is founded in interoperability, innovation, and AI-powered communications. This enables customers to form a long-term view of Cisco's capability to support evolving communication needs of enterprises.
- Cisco has an established network of local, regional, national, and global partners across geographies and supports multiple business models including VARs, network and managed service providers, distribution partners, agency partners, and ISVs.

Challenges

- Cisco operates in an extremely competitive environment, balancing its legacy roots with cloud services and going against both cloud-native and traditional UC&C players. However, it is on its way to recovery with its revised strategy focusing on the Webex Suite, its interoperability with other tools, and an integrated play across UC, CC, and CPaaS platforms.
- Cisco's portfolio of products and services is quite broad and may be deemed complex to navigate for buyers; some consolidation and rationalization on that end may be helpful.

Consider Cisco When

- Your business needs a single integrated provider of all UC&C products and services to ensure easier administration and management.
- Your communication needs are global in nature and require complex networking, security, and control management.
- Your business has an existing on-premises installed base and is looking to gradually migrate to cloud and leverage advanced capabilities.
- Your organization needs an evolving, technology-driven, and interoperable hardware, software, and services platform that integrates well with third-party applications.

Dialpad

Dialpad is positioned in the Major Players category in this 2024 IDC MarketScape for worldwide UC&C platforms.

Dialpad is a United States-based private company that provides a cloud-based communication platform for employee-to-employee collaboration (calling, messaging, and meeting), sales workforce (coaching, guidance, and scorecards), and customer service (contact center). The company has positioned itself as a cloud-native, AI-powered customer intelligence platform with real-time AI infused across all these products.

Its UC&C solutions include Ai Voice, Ai Messaging, and Ai Meetings. Ai Voice is its cloud business phone solution featuring AI-based real-time call transcriptions, summaries, and action items. It offers a range of traditional IP PBX features such as call routing, call transfer, directory, toll-free numbers, and interactive voice response (IVR) capabilities. Ai Messaging is Dialpad's team messaging, business texting, and channels solution that includes file sharing, SMS, MMS, group messaging, and voicemail (with transcription) features. Last, Ai Meetings is the company's videoconferencing platform that, in addition to AI-based transcriptions, summaries, notes, and action items, offers other collaboration capabilities such as screen sharing and whiteboarding through Miro integration. All these UC&C offerings are integrated into a single platform that is accessible on both mobile and desktop devices.

Over the past couple of years, Dialpad has introduced several capabilities to its UC&C platforms. These include the expansion of Ai Voice to 70 countries; screen and video recordings, real-time transcriptions, and Miro whiteboard integration in Ai Meetings; channels and threaded conversations in Ai Messaging; and integration with meeting room devices. It also expanded its integrations to 50+ applications, which include platforms from Google Workspace, Salesforce, ServiceNow, HubSpot, Slack, Zapier, and Microsoft 365. Further, Dialpad integrated Ai Voice into Microsoft Teams via Direct Routing.

Dialpad plans to continue enhancing its AI capabilities across its portfolio of collaboration, sales, and contact center platforms. These include improving existing capabilities of transcriptions and summaries, in addition to new capabilities focused on agent empowerment (e.g., insights and workflows), sales workforce (e.g., revenue and churn prediction), and recruitment (e.g., intelligent interviews). Moreover, the company plans to continue expanding Ai Voice across more geographies, strengthen integrations, and enhance administrative control capabilities.

Strengths

- Dialpad has positioned itself as an AI-focused communications company, and its AI strategy reflects a clear focus on capabilities that align with its product and customer portfolio. The company also owns its AI technology stack, which allows it the flexibility to customize and adapt faster to evolving customer needs.
- Dialpad has close associations with Google and T-Mobile, with both companies having equity in the company. Its platform is built on Google Cloud, while T-Mobile for Business resells Dialpad's UC&C solutions. In addition, Dialpad enables a range of integrations including Microsoft Teams for calling and several other third-party business applications.
- It also has a well-defined implementation and support services strategy that involves a balance of direct and partner-led support including in-house systems integration services and phased professional services from the planning and design stage to the build, go-live, and optimization stages.

Challenges

- UC&C providers offering cloud-only deployment options may, at times, be limited in their ability to serve some specific customers with existing on-premises UC&C resources and/or those operating in some data- and privacy-sensitive industry verticals that require on-prem or hybrid deployments. However, Dialpad has partnered with AudioCodes to enable a hybrid model for customers that are transitioning to Dialpad.
- Since all Dialpad solutions emerge from a common cloud communications platform, the addition of a productized CPaaS offering can help them enhance their suitability and value delivery for some specific client use cases across some key industry verticals.

Consider Dialpad When

- Your business wants to equip its workforce (knowledge workers or front line), sales teams, or contact center agents with AI capabilities relevant to each of their specific job requirements to try and enhance their productivity and/or improve customer experience. You can deploy AI in specific pockets such as sales conversations and test its effectiveness before broadening its reach.
- Your business has specific needs for integrations and/or implementation and support services that can streamline operations and free up maintenance resources.

Google

Google is positioned in the Major Players category in this 2024 IDC MarketScape for worldwide UC&C platforms.

Google did not actively participate in this study. Its evaluation is based on publicly available information and other information released by the vendor during analyst-specific events or meetings in the past year.

Google is a multifaceted technology firm that also produces UC&C solutions as a part of its workspace productivity suite called Google Workspace, which includes Gmail for business, Calendar, Drive, Meet, Chat, Docs, Sheets, Slides, Forms, and other office productivity tools. It also offers AI capabilities as an add-on to Google Workspace under the brand name Gemini, which acts as an assistant for research, sales conversations, drafting emails, generating images and designs for presentations, and creating custom AI-generated backgrounds.

Google's UC&C solutions include Meet (meetings and videoconferencing platform), Chat (team messaging application), Voice (telephony services offered as an add-on), and Google Meet Hardware (Meet-compatible third-party meeting room devices). While Meet and Chat are included in all Google Workspace plans, Voice and Meet Hardware are available as add-ons.

The past year has been all about AI at Google, like most other organizations in the UC&C space. In the first half of 2023, the company announced Duet AI for Google Workspace (now rebranded as Gemini for Google Workspace), a suite of AI features across workspace applications. These features were made available to users in September 2023 and included audio-visual enhancements for lighting, sound, and backgrounds; automated notes and translated captions; real-time teleprompting to help participants improve talking points; and the ability for AI to attend meetings on behalf of users. The "attend for me" feature allows users to predefine questions they want to ask and points they want to make in a meeting they can't attend.

In February 2024, Google announced that it had surpassed 1 million Gemini for Google Workspace users. Google is selling this AI add-on in two editions – Gemini Business (\$20 per user per month) and Gemini Enterprise (\$30 per month per user). These include all the AI features described previously, with the distinction that translated captions are available only in the Enterprise plan.

Google plans to continue to focus on advancing its AI capabilities across its Google Workspace suite, including advancements for Meet and Chat. It is likely to take an ecosystem approach to development of its UC&C platforms, as they integrate deeply with other offerings that are relatively more valued in the market compared solely with its UC&C products. This means the focus is expected to be on enhancing Google Workspace as a whole and adding capabilities that enhance the overall hybrid working experience with better seamlessness of flow of information and AI tools between its applications.

Strengths

- The company displays clarity in its planned road map for the Google Workspace suite through consistent announcements and introduction of new capabilities. This assures customers of long-term innovation and helps enhance the longevity of its solutions.
- Being a part of the Google Workspace, the company's UC&C solutions benefit from the company's massive ecosystem of users who have grown up using the company's products. This could play a major role in the future growth of Google's UC&C solutions as those users continue to enter the workforce and expect to continue to use the tools and interfaces they are familiar with.

- Google's partnership ecosystem consists of multiple categories of partners (e.g., resellers, service partners, and ISVs/technology partners) that have well-defined roles based on their level of expertise and specializations. This helps Google's users gain access to additional support and customization services.
- The Google Workspace marketplace of applications enables integrations with various third-party platforms, including Zoom, GoTo, Microsoft Teams, RingCentral, and Dialpad for better interoperability (e.g., scheduling meetings on these platforms from Google Calendar). It also enables multiple other integrations such as Loom for Google Chat, which allows sharing of asynchronous videos.

Challenges

- UC&C solutions do not form a core part of Google's business. The company's focus and vision are tied to the broader Google Workspace suite of applications, and hence, the evolution of the company's capabilities may differ in use cases and pace of development compared with core UC&C providers.
- Google has a decent presence across the small and midmarket segments; however, in the enterprise segment, it has yet to make a significant mark.

Consider Google When

- Your organization is a small or medium-sized business with a workforce that has grown up using Google's ecosystem of efficient and intuitive communication applications such as Gmail, Docs, Sheets, and Slides. This ensures continuity of familiarity and consistency in user experience.
- Your business would prefer to use a solution provider that has its own technology stack including its own large language models (LLMs) that may ensure rapid development and innovation for evolving communication needs.

GoTo

GoTo is positioned in the Major Players category in this 2024 IDC MarketScape for worldwide UC&C platforms.

GoTo is a privately held cloud communications and IT support management provider. It offers cloud-based telephony, collaboration (meetings, webinars, and training), contact center, and IT support platforms. The company's primary UC&C offering, GoTo Connect, comprises plans ranging from a standard cloud business phone system (with local/toll-free numbers, SMS credits, call routing, chat, videoconferencing, and basic integrations with Outlook and Google Workspace) to more comprehensive customer engagement-focused plans with more integrations (e.g., Salesforce and Miro), analytics and AI capabilities, and extras on the standard plan features. The offering is focused on calling, meeting, training, webinar, and customer engagement use cases.

Over the past couple of years, the company has undergone leadership changes and has taken a new strategic direction. It rebranded itself from LogMeIn to GoTo in 2022. It continues to strengthen its voice, video, and messaging solutions but is emphasizing more on driving business growth through its CCaaS offering. It is investing in building AI capabilities and enhancing customer engagement features.

The company works on a fast, iterative cycle of feature enhancements and releases. Some of the key updates for GoTo Connect during 2022 and 2023 include expansion in Italy, Austria, Sweden, and Belgium and the introduction of new features including call recording, call flow analytics, social and web chat channels, dial plan editor (drag-and-drop admin console for call management), and multiple softphone enhancements such as a new interface and the whisper-listen-barge functionality.

Over the next two to three years, GoTo plans to broadly focus on AI-driven functionalities, automations, embedded customer communications, and integrations. It aims to achieve these goals by expanding its set of APIs and SDKs to improve flexibility and interoperability, simplifying and automating call control, increasing CRM integrations, integrating further into Microsoft Teams, enabling BYOC, and launching AI capabilities for better admin and support operations. The company also plans to integrate its UC&C and IT management solutions, GoTo Connect and GoTo Resolve, respectively, in the long term.

Strengths

- GoTo has formulated a clear strategy for its future path, aiming to create a comprehensive ecosystem of partners and external integrations and going to market with a unified approach to UC, CC, CPaaS, and IT management – which is a pretty unique approach.
- The company lays special emphasis on easier control and management of its platforms, focusing on developing admin capabilities that are increasingly being infused with AI.

Challenges

- GoTo is currently focused on the small and midmarket (up to 1,000 employees) customer base, which is a competitive space with multiple players and tighter pricing.
- GoTo cloud calling solution could benefit from increased flexibility through BYOC support. However, with plans to introduce BYOC by 2024-2025, it will be able to offer its customers with that flexibility in the future.

Consider GoTo When

- Your organization is a small or medium-sized business that needs customer-focused cloud calling and collaboration capabilities including easier control and administrative management.
- Your business needs an extensive set of third-party integrations, advanced AI capabilities, and remote IT management in the coming few years.

Microsoft

Microsoft is positioned in the Leaders category in this 2024 IDC MarketScape for worldwide UC&C platforms.

Microsoft is a publicly listed United States-based company that provides a multitude of software products and services and digital devices. Its UC&C platform is Microsoft Teams, which is cloud based and deeply integrated with the other workspace productivity tools under its Microsoft 365 suite of applications. The company also has an AI offering called Copilot, which delivers a range of generative AI capabilities that are integrated with Microsoft Teams and other Microsoft 365 applications.

Microsoft Teams covers a wide range of UC&C products and services including telephony (Teams Phone), messaging, meetings and videoconferencing, webinars, events, and meeting room systems and associated certified devices from partners (Teams Rooms).

The past year was all about AI. In March 2023, the company introduced Microsoft 365 Copilot and made it generally available in November 2023 for enterprise customers. Copilot can help summarize key discussion points in meetings and calls, identify points where participants agree or disagree, and suggest action items in real time. Owing to its integration with Microsoft 365 applications, Copilot can also utilize data across meetings and the rest of the Microsoft ecosystem (via Microsoft Graph) to help create documents and presentations and analyze data in spreadsheets.

In addition, Microsoft Teams witnessed several other enhancements including the launch of a lighter version of the application that consumes half the memory and is twice as fast as the previous version. Other feature additions include multilingual support for captions, AI-powered sound improvements such as noise and echo reduction and spatial audio, and some new capabilities in webinars such as green room, the ability to manage what attendees see, templates, polls, Q&A, and reactions. In administrative capabilities, Teams users gained enhanced control and management features such as delegation of the management of outgoing call greetings for call queues and auto attendants and policy-based access to customer information when a call is picked. Microsoft also launched Teams Phone Mobile, which allows cell phone numbers of users to be used as their Teams Phone number and enables the integration of calls made from a native mobile dialer into Teams.

Microsoft Teams has surpassed 320 million users, and Microsoft plans to continue with its vision to make Teams a smart workplace to connect with colleagues, enable flow of information across workspace productivity applications, and use AI to improve user productivity. It will continue to prioritize investments in AI experiences and connected workplace solutions, empowering frontline workers.

Strengths

- Microsoft offers a wide range of products and services and can fulfill the needs of most types and sizes of organizations. It has a deep presence in the enterprise segment of buyers.
- It was among the first few UC&C vendors to announce advanced AI capabilities in UC&C and continues to innovate and launch new features via Copilot.
- Microsoft has an established worldwide presence for its Microsoft 365 suite of applications and has leveraged that presence for the proliferation of Microsoft Teams. This ecosystem continues to play a major role in driving its consistent growth in market share.
- Microsoft Teams enables an extensive set of integrations with other applications and UC&C platforms, particularly by enabling the flexibility for its users to bring in their choice of telephony services from other UC&C vendors integrated into Microsoft Teams.

Challenges

- Microsoft is in early stages of its journey toward creating an integrated UC and lightweight contact center platform; this approach could be valuable to small and medium-sized firms that currently form the primary target market for other smaller cloud-based UC&C vendors.
- The company broadly offers a fixed set of plans with some add-ons, which may not suit well directly for customers across some specific verticals with niche customization needs.

Consider Microsoft When

- Your organization is a large enterprise with needs for a host of communication, collaboration, and AI features that seamlessly integrate with your Microsoft 365 applications including Outlook, Word, PowerPoint, and Excel.
- Your business would prefer to maintain a single integrated provider of all communication and collaboration platforms and devices across geographies, with the additional flexibility to integrate telephony from other providers into Microsoft Teams, if needed.

Mitel

Mitel is positioned in the Major Players category in this 2024 IDC MarketScape for worldwide UC&C platforms.

Mitel is a privately held Canada-based business communications company that provides UC&C and contact center platforms in addition to IP phones and accessories. It offers on-premises, cloud, and hybrid deployment models and focuses on vertical solutions aimed at industries including healthcare, financial services, hospitality, and the government sectors. For cloud-based unified-communications-as-a-service solutions, Mitel has a partnership with RingCentral, through which it offers RingEX (RingCentral's message, video, and phone solution) to customers migrating to or adopting cloud communication solutions.

In October 2023, Mitel completed the acquisition of Unify from the French digital transformation company Atos, adding a portfolio of complementary UC&C products and services to its offerings. Unify adds a suite of voice, collaboration, and contact center platforms along with devices and endpoints. Unify also strengthens Mitel's position in the European markets and in the enterprise segment through its managed services capabilities. This expands Mitel's scope of services and target markets in the UC&C space, even as Mitel continues to serve small and medium-sized businesses in specific verticals operating via on-premises, private cloud, and hybrid cloud deployments.

Over the past couple of years, Mitel continued to incrementally enhance the capabilities of its UC&C offerings including MiVoice Business (aimed at small and medium-sized businesses) and MiVoice MX-ONE (enterprise focused) with new subscription offers, application interface refresh, SMS collaboration support, and the launch of new IP phone models. Similarly, Unify enhanced the capabilities of its OpenScape series of UC platforms with initiatives including direct routing certification for Microsoft Teams and integration of chat, whiteboarding, and survey/polling capabilities.

The company will focus on continuing to provide the choice and flexibility it does to its customers through multiple deployment options and tailored offerings depending on the type and size of business customer. It is on its way to develop a cohesive strategy and a go-to-market plan for the combined business. Some of its key focus areas include enhancing experiences for users through AI and automation, expanding integrations to improve interoperability, and exploring Internet of Things applications for collaboration in verticals such as healthcare, financial services, hospitality, and retail. Mitel also plans to align its UC and CC platforms to deliver common experiences across platforms and users (e.g., supervisors, agents, and frontline and knowledge workers).

Strengths

- Mitel's ability to serve small, medium-sized, and large enterprises through multiple deployment options across geographies and industry verticals enables the company to reach a much broader market. This increases the choices and flexibility for its customers.
- With Unify, Mitel has strengthened and expanded its presence across additional verticals including manufacturing, transport, logistics, and energy and utilities. Moreover, Unify brings a portfolio of enterprise customers and managed services capabilities to the company.
- The company has a diverse partner ecosystem comprising over 5,500 entities that help deliver a comprehensive range of services to a broad range of customers. While Mitel was primarily focused on the indirect go-to-market route through its partners, the acquisition of Unify now enables it to create a balance between direct and indirect approaches.

Challenges

- Mitel is still in the early stages of going to market with a redefined portfolio and strategy for the combined company; therefore, it is yet to be seen how that plays out in terms of new capabilities and future road map.

- The company would also need to formulate a clear, concise strategy on AI and introduce capabilities rapidly to compete effectively against competition.

Consider Mitel When

- Your business has or needs on-premises or hybrid deployment options for UC&C products and services across geographies, particularly across the healthcare, financial services, hospitality, education, retail, and government sectors.
- Your business has specific managed services, implementation/support needs, and integration requirements that standard, predefined solutions may not cover as effectively as a tailored offering can.

Ooma

Ooma is positioned in the Contenders category in this 2024 IDC MarketScape for worldwide UC&C platforms.

Ooma is a United States-based publicly listed company that provides cloud telephony and communication solutions, in addition to IP and desk phones. Ooma Office, its primary UC&C offering, is designed to be simple and has just three solution tiers. The basic, Ooma Office Essentials, is a purely telephony offering aimed at very small businesses; it includes features such as free toll numbers, virtual receptionist, ring groups, and unlimited calling in the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Puerto Rico via a mobile application. The next tier, Ooma Office Pro, adds to the basic tier features like a desktop application, call recording, and videoconferencing for up to 25 participants. The top tier, Ooma Office Pro Plus, further adds to the middle tier features such as team chat, hotdesking, call queueing, and CRM integration and extends videoconferencing for up to 100 participants.

Over the past couple of years, Ooma has added several new capabilities to its platforms. These include integrations with the Clio client management system for law offices and with the NexHealth patient management system for dentists and the addition of online bookings, one-to-many messaging, call screening, and call deflection in Ooma Office. The Ooma Office Pro Plus tier was introduced in May 2022. It also supports direct routing for telephony integration into Microsoft Teams, in addition to CRM integrations with Salesforce, Zoho, Microsoft Dynamics, and Freshdesk.

In October 2023, Ooma acquired 2600Hz, which created and maintains the Kazoo platform, an open-source communications solution. This acquisition provides Ooma additional capabilities in the areas of call center, CPaaS, and AI.

Ooma plans to build AI capabilities including call transcription, meeting summaries, noise suppression, sentiment analysis, and automated project management. It is also exploring investing in LLMs that would help its users query data via conversational searches on topics such as peak call times or through key phrases, such as those relevant to sales teams.

Strengths

- Ooma offers a simple to procure and deploy cloud telephony and conferencing platform with straightforward pricing, which is particularly well suited for small businesses.
- It has a DIY approach to implementation, wherein the users can install the platform themselves. However, wherever needed, it provides implementation support through its VAR partners and assigns internal customer success personnel for enterprise customers.

- Ooma's platform integrates with Microsoft Teams and key CRM platforms including Salesforce, Zoho, and Freshdesk for the businesses that need it.

Challenges

- Ooma is still in the early stages of evaluating and offering AI capabilities on its platform.
- Its telephony services could offer more flexibility to customers through the enablement of BYOC capabilities.
- Due to the simplistic nature of Ooma's platform, it offers the basic key integrations, but there is room to make the platform more interoperable through an expanded set of prebuilt integrations and APIs for custom development.

Consider Ooma When

- Your organization is a small business that primarily needs telephony services across North America, coupled with videoconferencing and team chat capabilities.
- Your users need a simple-to-use, no-frills telephony-focused platform.

RingCentral

RingCentral is positioned in the Leaders category in this 2024 IDC MarketScape for worldwide UC&C platforms.

RingCentral is a United States-based publicly listed company that provides cloud-based communication platforms for calling, messaging, videoconferencing, events, webinars, and contact centers. It also provides a conversational intelligence solution focused on sales teams and open APIs for customized programmable communications capabilities.

RingEX is the company's unified platform for calling, messaging, and meetings. It features a cloud business phone system that supports calling, SMS, fax, and other calling features such as call queue management, heads-up display, and whisper/monitor/barge-in. The Video and Messaging platforms deliver capabilities including audioconferencing and videoconferencing, whiteboarding, breakout rooms, team chat, file sharing, and task management. The calling, messaging, and meeting platform also features AI capabilities including live transcripts, call summaries, action items, sentiment analysis, video highlights, and automated chapters for in-meeting and post-meeting collaboration.

The company's platform integrates with a wide range of external business applications (over 330 prebuilt apps in RingCentral's App Gallery) including Salesforce, HubSpot, Google Workspace, and Microsoft 365. In addition, RingCentral provides over 500 APIs with some SDKs that enable users to build and customize their RingCentral communications applications. RingCentral also integrates well into Microsoft Teams for which it has an embedded app that delivers telephony, SMS, fax, and other features. Its business phone capabilities, including SMS and fax, are integrated into Microsoft Teams via an embedded application for Microsoft 365 E1 and E3 license holders and via Direct Routing for E5 license holders. In addition, other calling features such as call queue management and whisper/monitor/barge-in are also extendable into Microsoft Teams.

In August 2023, RingCentral acquired the events and sessions products of Hopin to expand its video capabilities to include virtual events offering. It was rebranded as RingCentral Events. It launched its BYOC solution in November 2021, making its cloud telephony services more flexible and cost effective for customers. In 2023, RingCentral also launched RingCX (its AI-enabled contact center) and RingSense for Sales (its revenue intelligence platform for sales workforce), among other enhancements.

The company has strategic partnerships with several companies including AT&T, TELUS, BT, Deutsche Telekom, Vodafone, Avaya, AWS, and Mitel-Unify (Mitel acquired Unify). These partnerships help RingCentral expand its reach into the markets these players have a strong presence in and extend its own partner ecosystem's capabilities. Its partnership program is called RingCentral Reach, under which it lets partners choose whether to co-sell with RingCentral or entirely own the sales process and the customer relationship.

Over the next two to three years, the company plans to develop strengths in generative AI to deliver intelligence based on the vast amounts of real-time communication data generated by users. Investments in AI will be aimed at enhancing employee productivity and business workflows, delivering immersive experiences. AI will permeate across all its platforms. In the long term, RingCentral will look to use AI for hyper-personalization of experience through relevant language translations, presentation focus, leveraging biometrics for emotion and intention sensing, and advanced analytics and reporting.

Strengths

- RingCentral has a wide range of UC&C services and partnerships with hardware providers to deliver a complete solution, along with adjacent communication platforms for contact centers, webinars, and events. These platforms are also underpinned by a suite of AI capabilities.
- Its strategic partnerships with telecom companies and other UC&C players (that primarily cater to on-prem and hybrid deployments) expand its access to various markets globally. Further, it integrates with multiple third-party applications via a prebuilt marketplace of applications as well as custom integrations through APIs and SDKs.
- The company displays clarity of vision for its future road map of product development and AI strategy in a way that aligns with common use cases across businesses.

Challenges

- UC&C providers offering cloud-only deployment options may, at times, be limited in their ability to serve some specific customers with existing on-premises UC&C resources and/or those operating in some data- and privacy-sensitive industry verticals that require on-prem or hybrid deployments. However, it has a partnership with Mitel to cater to that segment of customers.
- RingCentral has grown into a large business with over \$2.2 billion in sales (full year 2023) and will now have to tap into the adjacent segments of the UC&C market such as events, webinars, and contact center platforms to keep up the pace. This will require rapid innovation, particularly on the AI front, to compete effectively in the extremely competitive and hard-to-differentiate UC&C space.

Consider RingCentral When

- Your organization needs a broad set of multifunctional communication tools for sales, customer service, knowledge workers, executives, and other functional users that could benefit from targeted AI-powered communication solutions.
- Your business needs a globally consistent solution that can deliver flexible, BYOC-enabled telephony across all major regions and provide a network of partners to support implementation and additional services.

Vonage

Vonage is positioned in the Major Players category in this 2024 IDC MarketScape for worldwide UC&C platforms.

Vonage is a United States-based company that provides cloud-based solutions for unified communications, contact centers, and conversational commerce to businesses worldwide. It also has a major presence in the communication API space with its CPaaS platform. Vonage Business Communications (VBC) is the company's primary UC platform, providing voice, messaging, videoconferencing, and SMS capabilities. These further include capabilities such as virtual receptionist or call routing, integrated inbox (SMS, MMS, and Facebook Messenger) for customer communications, whiteboarding, and other collaboration tools.

The company also provides business VoIP phones from HP Inc. (Poly), Yealink, and Grandstream to connect to its mobile/desktop platforms. Further, VBC integrates with several CRM and other third-party business applications including Microsoft Teams, Slack, and Google Workspace. Vonage also offers an integrated platform for UC-CC interactions (Vonage Fusion) for consistent employee and customer experiences.

VBC is built on the Vonage Communications Platform (VCP), its own technology stack that unifies UCaaS, CCaaS and CPaaS functionalities in a single platform. It also enables advancements made in one communications offering to be adapted in others for easier flow of innovation.

In July 2022, Vonage was acquired by Ericsson to venture into the market for network APIs and to offer UCaaS, CCaaS, and CPaaS solutions. During the past couple of years, Vonage has enhanced its VBC platform with several upgrades such as virtual backgrounds in its Meetings platform, whiteboarding, text to speech for call queues, and integrations with Microsoft Teams (voice calling) and Slack.

Over the next two to three years, the company looks to continue to build a more unified employee and customer communications platform that delivers AI-powered conversational insights and analytics to both small and large businesses. It will leverage its relationship with Ericsson to go to market via telecom companies globally. In the coming year, it plans to launch several AI features in VBC, including transcriptions for calls and meetings, captions, and noise cancellation. Further, it plans to expand its integrations into Microsoft Teams through eFax and emergency support services (911).

Strengths

- The strengths and differentiation of Vonage lie in its communication APIs, which make it a uniquely integrated solutions provider for UCaaS, CCaaS, and CPaaS offerings. Moreover, its integrated UC-CC platform, Vonage Fusion, brings to market a solution that can deliver equitable employee and customer experiences.
- Vonage also enables a wide range of integrations on its platform, making it interoperable with providers of other UC&C services, CRM platforms, and productivity tools.
- The company has an established partner ecosystem with long-standing relationships with Technology Service Brokers (TSBs), technology partners (e.g., Salesforce and AWS), ISVs, and SIs that help put together a comprehensive sales, implementation, and servicing network worldwide.

Challenges

- Vonage's UC&C platform-specific AI capabilities are currently broadly focused on meeting summaries, backgrounds, and voice quality. Vonage could enhance its AI portfolio by developing capabilities that help users transcribe calls and take notes in real time, suggest action items, or provide live coaching, brainstorm (e.g., digital whiteboards), and generate content such as emails and documents.

- Vonage's telephony capabilities and the company's market presence can be enhanced further through a well-marketed enablement of the BYOC approach, as it provides more flexibility for customers.

Consider Vonage When

- Your users would benefit from custom integrations via APIs to enable specific customer-focused use cases.
- Your business needs an integrated platform for both employee and customer communications.

Zoho

Zoho is positioned in the Major Players category in this 2024 IDC MarketScape for worldwide UC&C platforms.

Zoho is a privately held India-based company that provides a wide range of applications for use cases including sales, marketing, finance, human resource management, legal, security and IT management, customer service, and workspace productivity and collaboration. The company has over 55 products serving these use cases, and the majority of these are clubbed into a package called Zoho One.

Its UC&C platforms include Zoho Meeting (videoconferencing, rooms, and webinar), Zoho Cliq (chat, file sharing, etc.), and Zoho Voice (cloud business phone and SMS system natively built within Meeting and Cliq). Zoho Voice is sold as an add-on to Meeting and Cliq, which provides telephony capabilities (e.g., toll-free numbers, call barging, and call queueing) in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia. Zoho also offers a low-code developer platform that allows users to integrate with third-party applications or build their own tools or entire applications on top of Zoho's platforms.

Zoho's platforms are highly interoperable as they integrate across the multitude of Zoho apps as well as with external tools. For instance, Zoho Meeting and Zoho Cliq integrate well with Zoho's CRM, contact center, HRMS, and email applications. In addition, Zoho Meeting supports external integrations with Gmail, Microsoft Teams, and Outlook, while Zoho Cliq integrates with third-party applications like GoTo Meeting, Box, and Whereby. Zoho also has a partnership with Rev AI for AI-based real-time transcriptions of meetings and webinars and with Krisp for AI-based noise cancellation in their business phone system. Further, Zoho's own AI assistant, Zia, integrates across a majority of the company's applications. Some of the key AI capabilities it currently supports include call transcriptions, meeting/chat summaries, and language translations for messages.

The company has over 2,000 partners across 75 countries; these include systems integrators, technology consulting companies, and other indirect go-to-market channel partners. These partners contribute a third of its revenue and include certified Zoho Consulting Partners that can build capabilities on top of Zoho's applications to serve customers effectively.

The company plans to forge strategic hardware partnerships for Zoho Rooms and expand AI integrations into its UC&C platforms. It is focused on developing its own LLMs as well as working in partnership with AI firms like OpenAI and Anthropic to build or enhance AI capabilities. In addition, Zoho plans to enhance its platforms' administrative capabilities to make it easier for users to deploy the solutions.

Strengths

- Zoho has a broad range of workplace applications including telephony, collaboration, sales, marketing, CRM, finance, IT, analytics, and more business aspects, which can be bundled together in a way that meets the needs of most businesses. This is a rather unique proposition.
- The company enables smaller businesses with access to a broad suite of applications at a pricing that is within reach for many businesses (e.g., Zoho Meeting starts at \$1 per month per user and Zoho Cliq at \$1.8 per month per user).
- It offers an integrated platform that's flexible and adaptable to customer needs. Its marketplace of available integrations includes over 2,000 ready-to-use extensions with several of those being for Zoho Meeting and Zoho Cliq.

Challenges

- Zoho's administrative capabilities include a panel for admins to add/modify users and control permissions for them, automated analytics and reports for meetings and webinars, and downtime alerts. However, owing to a broad range of applications, these controls are dispersed across various consoles and could be improved with some unification across platforms.
- Zoho's telephony capabilities could be enhanced with the flexibility of BYOC options for customers.

Consider Zoho When

- Your organization requires a suite of employee productivity and customer engagement applications in addition to the UC&C platforms.
- Your business needs a low-cost solution that integrates with both internal and external business tools (e.g., Slack and Microsoft Teams).

Zoom

Zoom is positioned in the Leaders category in this 2024 IDC MarketScape for worldwide UC&C platforms.

Zoom is a publicly listed United States-based company that provides an integrated cloud-based communication platform featuring team chat, phone, meetings, contact center, whiteboarding, workspace collaboration, and AI solutions. Its primary UC&C offering is Zoom One, which is a unified platform comprising meetings, team chat and presence, telephony, events, whiteboard, and email/scheduling features. Its meeting room solutions include Zoom Rooms (conferencing software for devices used in meeting rooms, classrooms, etc.), Zoom Conference Room Connector (for interoperability with platforms and conferencing devices from third parties), and Zoom Workspace (meeting scheduling and workspace reservation tools and displays for scheduling and signage). Zoom also offers virtual events and contact center platforms. In addition to the previously mentioned cloud-based platforms, Zoom also enables hybrid cloud deployments via Zoom Node, which enables it to tap into the market featuring significant on-premises investments and equips users with cloud controls and advanced UC features.

The past couple of years at Zoom have been primarily about developing generative AI capabilities. The company announced its Zoom AI companion in March 2023 and released new features thereafter. Customers with a paid Zoom plan were granted access to AI features at no additional cost. These features include chat and meeting summaries, next steps, catching up on the missed parts of a

meeting, live language translations, whiteboard generation, and drafting of messages and emails. Zoom has developed its own large language models and has also partnered with other LLM providers including Anthropic and OpenAI, taking a federated approach to AI.

Zoom also enhanced some other UC&C capabilities in the last year; for instance, in May 2023, it released Continuous Meeting Chats, which allows meeting participants to collaborate before, during, and after the meetings and access assets shared in the meeting after. It also rolled out additional features such as Notes (with individual as well as shared editing purposes), Clips (video messages), and Workspace Reservation (which also uses AI to suggest people who work closely to find desks closer to each other).

Zoom aims to continue enhancing its AI capabilities (particularly in the first half of 2024) while keeping its federated approach to GenAI to keep costs lower. It plans to expand its AI Companion's interoperability to deliver its capabilities across Zoom applications as well as integrated third-party applications. It is also adding AI Companion features to Zoom Phone for enabling call summaries, voicemail prioritization, task extraction, and SMS thread summaries. The AI Companion is also expected to be able to perform tasks like sending emails and scheduling meetings. In addition, Zoom plans to make meetings more productive with features that help users before a meeting (e.g., creating agendas and gathering information), during a meeting (e.g., streamlining juggling between apps), and after a meeting (e.g., accessing information shared and enhanced summaries and next steps).

Moreover, Zoom plans to continue investing in enhancing in-person meetings with better experiences, collaboration, and space utilization. It aims to make productivity tools more interoperable across environments, enable the utilization of common spaces as collaborative spaces using AI, and enhance Workvivo (its employee engagement platform). Last, the company plans to enable frontline workers to collaborate better with enhanced mobile features including presence, file sharing, status update submissions, automated shift planning, and analytics.

Strengths

- Zoom has a wide range of products and services and adjacent UC&C offerings to deliver a complete communications stack including software and compatible hardware. Moreover, it can cater to most company sizes across geographies with its wide platform access and flexible, multitiered pricing structure.
- Zoom's strategy to provide access to paid users of the company with the AI Companion features at no additional cost enables its users to test out the capabilities and determine how they impact productivity and collaboration before actually committing to an additional cost for AI.
- The company has consistently developed new capabilities, showing both incremental and radical improvements. It also depicts a clear strategy for future development with well-defined objectives and timelines.

Challenges

- Zoom has now ventured into the broader office productivity space, but it would be challenging to compete with the other providers in this space.
- Zoom is interoperable with multiple other platforms including Microsoft Teams and several videoconferencing hardware providers; however, the user experience takes a slight hit when using multiple communication platforms, which is why many businesses are looking to consolidate their UC&C providers. This will pose another challenge for Zoom to drive future growth.

Consider Zoom When

- Your business needs a comprehensive meetings, telephony, and collaboration platform that can plug in additional capabilities like events and customer engagement as and when required.
- Your business wants to leverage rapidly advancing AI capabilities that are deeply integrated with productivity enhancement solutions. Moreover, at the moment, these can be tested at no additional cost over the eligible paid subscriptions.
- Your users would prefer a familiar communications and collaboration experience, as Zoom was one of the most widely used platforms during the initial stages of the pandemic.

APPENDIX

Reading an IDC MarketScape Graph

For this analysis, IDC divided potential key measures for success into two primary categories: capabilities and strategies.

Positioning on the y-axis reflects the vendor's current capabilities and menu of services and how well aligned the vendor is to customer needs. The capabilities category focuses on the capabilities of the company and product presently. Under this category, IDC analysts will look at how well a vendor is building/delivering capabilities that enable it to execute its chosen strategy in the market.

Positioning on the x-axis, or strategies axis, indicates how well the vendor's future strategy aligns with what customers will require in three to five years. The strategies category focuses on high-level decisions and underlying assumptions about offerings, customer segments, and business and go-to-market plans for the next three to five years.

The size of the bubble for each vendor marks its relative size. The size is determined by a predefined range of revenue share of each vendor in the worldwide UC&C market for 2023, primarily based on the estimates from the Worldwide Quarterly Unified Communications and Collaboration Tracker.

IDC MarketScape Methodology

IDC MarketScape criteria selection, weightings, and vendor scores represent well-researched IDC judgment about the market and specific vendors. IDC analysts tailor the range of standard characteristics by which vendors are measured through structured discussions, surveys, and interviews with market leaders, participants, and end users. Market weightings are based on user interviews, buyer surveys, and the input of IDC experts in each market. IDC analysts base individual vendor scores, and ultimately vendor positions on the IDC MarketScape, on detailed surveys and interviews with the vendors, publicly available information, and end-user experiences – in an effort to provide an accurate and consistent assessment of each vendor's characteristics, behavior, and capability.

Market Definition

IDC defines unified communications and collaboration (UC&C) as a bundled, integrated UC&C stack that may include an advanced telephony solution integrated with messaging (i.e., email, voice, and fax), instant messaging (IM) or chat, presence, and conferencing platforms for web conferencing, audioconferencing, and/or videoconferencing. These platforms also typically include creation of teams/channels for access-based communications and knowledge sharing and tools such as digital

whiteboards, screen sharing, live polls/surveys, questions and answers (Q&As), and meeting scheduling capabilities. In addition to the software-based platforms facilitating these communications, the UC&C market includes the primary hardware that enables these communications, including desktop IP phones, videoconferencing endpoints comprising integrated camera and microphone systems, and multipoint control units (MCUs) bridging multiple users and devices into a single network.

These UC&C solutions can be delivered via on-premises infrastructure or on public cloud/private cloud on as-a-service basis.

In IDC's definition of UC&C, the following segments are excluded and covered elsewhere under other research programs:

- Contact center platforms
- Virtual events/webinar platforms
- Other hardware devices such as laptops, smartphones, tablets, desktop computers, TV screens, cables, and standalone personal microphones and webcams

Strategies and Capabilities Criteria

Tables 1 and 2 provide key strategy and capability measures, respectively, for success related to unified communications and collaboration platform vendors.

TABLE 1

Key Strategy Measures for Success: Worldwide Unified Communications and Collaboration Platforms

Strategies Criteria	Definition	Weight (%)
Functionality or offering strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clarity of vision for how the company will evolve relative to the ecosystem of UC&C solutions, including contact center and collaboration apps ▪ The clarity and effectiveness of the vendor's strategy to maintain differentiation in the highly competitive and crowded market 	25.0
R&D pace/productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The extent, frequency, and quality of thought leadership (whitepapers, blogs, webinars, events, etc.) that the vendor produces to demonstrate market leadership ▪ The timeliness and progressiveness with which the vendor releases new capabilities to market 	15.0
Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The extent to which the vendor clearly markets and demonstrates its strategy for hybrid, on-prem, and cloud deployments to suit the market needs ▪ The extent of flexibility in the vendor's voice calling solutions through enablement of BYOC and/or integrations with other providers 	15.0
Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The rate of growth achieved by the vendor in UC&C seats or other comparable parameters across target markets relative to competition ▪ The degree to which the vendor has defined and established its partnership program to maintain harmony between competing channel partners and to engage in strategic alliances for building a network that delivers necessary services to customers ▪ The effectiveness and clarity with which the vendor approaches the diversification of its revenue through the optimum utilization of direct and indirect channels 	20.0
AI strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clarity of vision of the vendor's AI strategy and the vendor's ability to control the developments through own or external LLMs 	15.0
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The effectiveness of the vendor's strategy on innovation, focusing on enhancement of capabilities not only incrementally but also radically 	10.0
Total		100.0

Source: IDC, 2024

TABLE 2

Key Capability Measures for Success: Worldwide Unified Communications and Collaboration Platforms

Capabilities Criteria	Definition	Weight (%)
Functionality or offering	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The breadth of services to deliver an end-to-end solution comprising telephony, videoconferencing, collaboration, and UCaaS▪ The extent to which the vendor is able to offer variation and customization in solution tiers to cater to the needs of different customers▪ The range of tools, programs, and partner network the vendor has to support clients with implementation of UC&C solutions and with ongoing support needs	25.0
AI capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The extent of the vendor's progress on introducing GenAI capabilities	20.0
Administrative capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The breadth of the vendor's administrative capabilities (admin portal for managing the UC&C solution) and emphasis on use of self-serve options or in-depth guides	5.0
Financial performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The vendor's revenue growth performance considering company size and industry growth in the last fiscal year	15.0
Customer service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The vendor's ability to deliver seamless communication and collaboration solutions, particularly voice calling, across multiple countries and regions to support global business needs	5.0
Platform approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The level of vendor's emphasis on developing and delivering a truly unified platform for UC&C, contact center, and CPaaS capabilities	15.0
Portfolio benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The breadth of integration the vendor's UC&C solutions support to enhance interoperability with other internal applications as well as third-party applications such as CRM, workforce engagement, and collaboration tools	15.0
Total		100.0

Source: IDC, 2024

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Related Research

- *Which Are the Key UC&C Platform Capabilities Driving Employee Productivity?* (IDC #US51980824, March 2024)
- *What Are the Top 3 Factors Driving Vendor Selection for UC&C Solution?* (IDC #US51959224, March 2024)

- *What Drives the Willingness to Pay for GenAI UC&C Capabilities?* (IDC #US51959324, March 2024)
- *Top 5 Trends in UCaaS for 2024: Predictions for UCaaS for Telecom and Cable Communication Service Provider Consideration* (IDC #US50915924, February 2024)
- *Top 5 Trends in UC&C for 2024: Predictions for the Worldwide UC&C market in 2024 and Beyond* (IDC #US51805424, January 2024)
- *The Future of Meeting Rooms – Delivering Equitable Experiences* (IDC #US51424523, December 2023)
- *IDC's Worldwide Unified Communications and Collaboration Taxonomy, 2024* (IDC #US51405923, December 2023)
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- *The Dilemma Facing Communications Service Providers: SaaS, CPaaS, and an Evolving Approach for Customer Engagement* (IDC #US51426823, December 2023)
- *Five Reasons to Consider the BYOC Approach to UC&C* (IDC #US51436423, December 2023)
- *Market Analysis Perspective: Worldwide Unified Communications and Collaboration, 2023* (IDC #US51230523, September 2023)
- *Market Analysis Perspective: Worldwide Unified Communications as a Service, 2023* (IDC #US51249823, September 2023)
- *State of the State – Generative AI in UC&C Can Be Massively Impactful If Done Right* (IDC #US51067123, August 2023)

Synopsis

This IDC study for 2024 evaluates 14 unified communications and collaboration (UC&C) platform vendors, highlighting the shift toward cloud deployments and the increasing focus on AI capabilities. It provides insights into the strengths and challenges of key players such as 8x8, Alcatel-Lucent Enterprise, Avaya, Cisco, Dialpad, Google (nonparticipant), GoTo, Microsoft, Mitel, Ooma, RingCentral, Vonage, Zoho, and Zoom, emphasizing their strategic positioning and future plans to enhance UC&C offerings with AI and other advanced technologies.

"In a rapidly evolving UC&C landscape, embracing AI and cloud integrations is not just an option but a necessity for future growth," says Jitesh Gera, research manager, IDC's Unified Communications and Collaboration research program. "Leaders involved in UC&C vendor selection process at their businesses are encouraged to use this IDC MarketScape analysis and vendor profiles to map their needs to relevant providers and build the right communications technology stack for their employees and customers."

"Hybrid deployments and AI capabilities are becoming the battlegrounds for UC&C vendors aiming to meet the diverse needs of modern businesses," says Denise Lund, research vice president, IDC's Worldwide Telecom and Unified Communications and Collaboration research. "Buyers of UC&C solutions are advised to study the key decision factors outlined in this IDC MarketScape to acquire solutions that can meet their current as well as future needs."

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