



## UC Management and the Digital Workplace

*Administration management is critical for supporting hybrid work,  
cloud migration, and multi-vendor environments*



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hybrid work, cloud migration, and multi-vendor  
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## Executive Summary

Today's communications and collaboration environment continues to evolve and grow in complexity as organizations support hybrid workers by adopting new tools, shifting to the cloud, and employing a variety of approaches for PSTN connectivity. To achieve success in this new reality, IT leaders must take a proactive approach toward ensuring consistent provisioning and management, and they must empower end-users to self-manage their environments as much as possible. They must also integrate **application and device** management into their overall IT service management strategies to optimize support activities.

Therefore, IT leaders should:

- Evaluate administration management platforms for their ability to reduce provisioning time, improve service and support, and maximize IT resource utilization
- Look for platforms that support a multi-vendor environment as well as seamless migration, enabling benefit in both the short and long term
- Consider additional benefits that come from IT service management integration, flexible deployment models, and distributed management.

## Hybrid as the New Normal

Over the last two years, IT has had to adjust to a new environment that is based on hybrid work, where often more employees are working from remote locations than are in the office. Many people have taken advantage of the ability to work from anywhere to relocate away from core company locations, presenting new challenges for provisioning and managing performance. Data collected by Metrigy for our *Workplace Collaboration MetriCast 2022* global study of more than 900 end-user organizations shows a roughly even split among employees working full-time in a traditional office, full-time from home, splitting time between home and office, and working in the field.

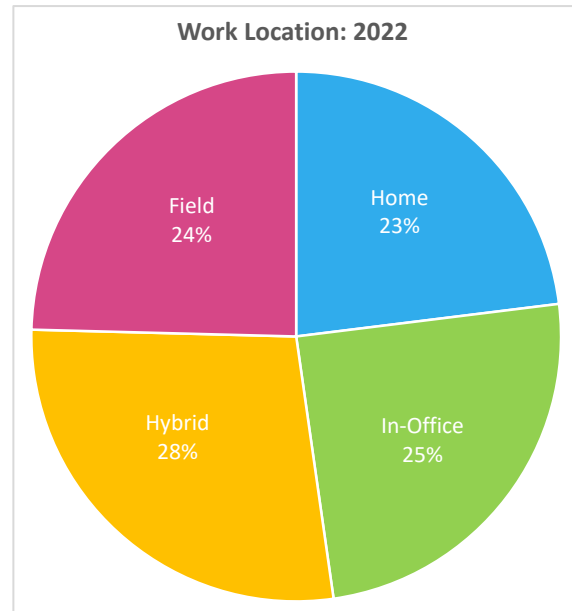


Figure 1: Work Location: 2022

Despite continued debate about work-from-home effectiveness in the media and among business leaders, it's not likely that we will ever see a return to the pre-pandemic days of the majority of employees working within traditional offices. In fact, our *Customer Engagement Transformation 2022-23* global study of 724 end-user organizations found that just 17.2% plan to even bring contact center agents full-time into company facilities.

To support this new work environment, IT leaders have made, and continue to make, significant investments in new tools, primarily delivered via the cloud, new devices to improve employee experience, and flexible approaches for connecting new services to the PSTN. This has created significant challenges for those responsible for provisioning and managing UC applications, including phone systems and video meeting services. No longer can they rely on antiquated approaches such as spreadsheets to manage phone numbers, employee locations, and device locations, and to track moves/adds/changes/deletions. Instead, they must adopt tools that automate provisioning and ongoing management to reduce IT workload and improve accuracy, for all employee locations.

## Applications Multiply

The trend toward hybrid work hasn't just created location management challenges. Today, video conferencing is a core collaboration service, perhaps more important than the phone for internal communications. And, Metrigy research shows that nearly half of companies now have more than one meeting app, with lines of business often using their own apps, or new apps that have entered through merger and acquisition. At the same time organizations are increasing their reliance on cloud-based contact center services.

In this increasingly complex environment, IT often struggles to define and implement consistent policies for provisioning of user accounts, license management, and enforcement of security and governance controls across multiple UC, CC, and video applications. The result is end-user frustration and barriers to successful adoption of collaboration and customer engagement capabilities that can drive measurable business benefits.

## Modern Communications and Collaboration Evolution

Hybrid and remote work have accelerated an already underway shift to cloud communications. Of the more than 900 participants in our *Workplace Collaboration MetriCast*, more than 45% are now using Unified Communications-as-a-Service (UCaaS) for their calling needs. Only about 29% remain on-premises, while 16% rely on custom-built hosted solutions. UCaaS adoption is growing at larger companies as well, with more than 52% of those with more than 2,500 employees now using it. These larger companies often are still supporting on-premises solutions for legacy users, or for use cases such as analog device support, backup, emergency calling, or custom process integrations that they cannot yet migrate to UCaaS. In some cases, on-premises platforms support business units or divisions acquired through merger or acquisition. The need to support UCaaS and on-premises solutions creates additional provisioning and management challenges.

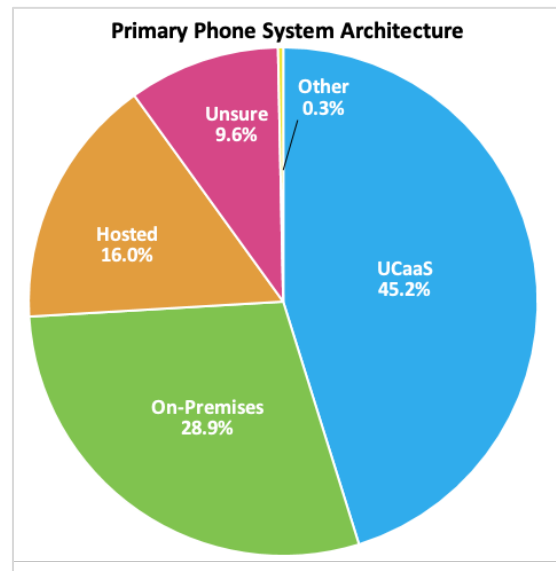


Figure 2: Primary Phone System Architecture

Contact center platforms also are rapidly shifting to the cloud, with 48.6% of companies exclusively using Contact Center as a Service (CCaaS) while another 16.0% plan to migrate to it in the next several years. Almost a quarter of companies use CCaaS in conjunction with an on-premises contact center platform.

## The Rise of BYOC

Migrating to UCaaS and CCaaS, especially for mid- to large-size companies, does not mean outsourcing all management or telecom infrastructure. Often these companies still maintain control over dial plans and use bring your own carrier (BYOC) capabilities such as Microsoft Direct Routing to connect their UCaaS provider's services to the PSTN. Reasons for BYOC adoption vary, but include the potential for lower telecom costs, an ability to maintain control over phone numbers and dial plans, the need for global reach, and a requirement to support existing telecom contracts. Among our research participants, approximately 80% of those using Microsoft Teams Phone System, for example, are using Direct Routing. BYOC adoption is growing

for other UCaaS providers as well. In addition, more than 75% of companies are using BYOC for the contact center, or plan to do so by the end of 2022.

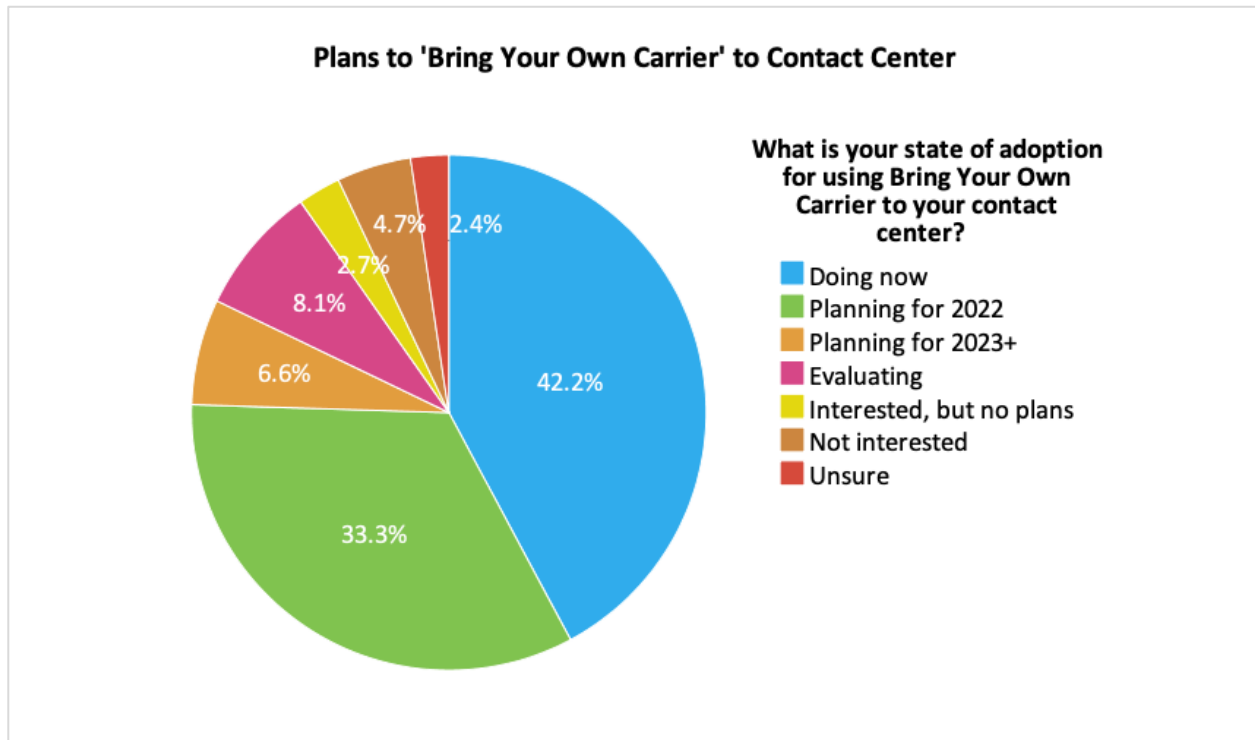


Figure 3: Plans to 'Bring Your Own Carrier' to Contact Center

## Administration Management Challenges

Maintaining PSTN connectivity separately from calling applications means that companies must continue to maintain responsibility for phone number provisioning, location management to support emergency call routing and dispatchable location requirements, and moves/adds/changes/deletions. They must also ensure proper provisioning and management of endpoint devices such as telephones and headsets.

Companies are also increasing the number of video endpoints, be those in conference rooms, at desktops, or for home use. Employees may have phones, but they are likely to have headsets and web cameras as well. Effective IT management requires ensuring that devices are properly provisioned, tracked, maintained, and recovered throughout the employee and device lifecycle.

As companies move to the cloud and expand the number of apps and endpoints, they are often constrained by limited IT resources. Given current economic conditions, they may have a mandate to maximize organizational efficiency or be facing cutbacks. To address these constraints IT and business leaders must enable end-users with the capability to self-manage as much as possible. This means enabling self-service support for moves/adds/changes, address validation, password reset, and more.

## Administration Management to the Rescue

Administration management tools address many of the challenges in supporting UC and CC applications, on-premises or cloud, regardless of employee location. They simplify and automate provisioning and ongoing management, delivering measurable improvements in provisioning time. A 2021 Metrigy global study of 395 end-user organizations found that those using administrative management tools reduced provisioning time by an average of 33.2% compared to those using manual processes or only relying on administration capabilities provided by their UC and CC vendors. Some vendors report even higher provisioning time reduction. Metrigy's *Workplace Collaboration MetriCast 2022* study found that nearly half (48.3%) of participating companies had already implemented or were implementing an administration management platform.

## Requirements for Success

Administration management platforms provide a number of capabilities to simplify provisioning and ongoing management of applications, users, and devices.

### *Multi-Vendor Support*

Administrative management platforms provide a middleware layer that sits on top of multi-vendor environments, enabling a single source of truth for configuration management and policy enforcement. This means that IT administrators can use a single administrative tool to provision and manage users across a variety of different calling and contact center platforms. Ideally, the administration management platform enables an easy migration by eliminating the need to manually port and recreate user identities on the new platform.

### *Automation and Delegation*

Administrative management tools may be integrated with HR and directory platforms to automatically provision users, based on pre-defined policies, at time of hire. They may also enable automation of off-boarding as employees leave the company. Automation not only saves time and effort, but also eliminates errors in manual provisioning. Automation processes may be defined by user type, role, or location.

Beyond automation, IT may choose to delegate administrative tasks to level-1 support personnel, or line-of-business personnel to manage any day-to-day administrative functions such as managing moves and changes. This minimizes the need for UC and CC specialists to manage routine administration tasks.

### *ITSM Integration*

IT service management integration allows the tools used for helpdesk management to have visibility into administration information. For example, a help desk person using ServiceNow to manage trouble tickets could see the configuration information for a user without having to



leave the ServiceNow interface. This integration offers the opportunity for faster troubleshooting of provisioning and management issues. Integration may also support automated reporting of user information and device provisioning.

### *Self-Service*

In the consumer world, many companies have invested in enabling self-service to reduce workload on contact center agents and to improve customer service. Enabling self-service for IT support, through the use of an administration management tool, offers the same benefits for employees. Users can manage features across multiple applications, reset passwords, and even delegate control to others within the organization.

### *Flexible Deployment*

As companies move UC and CC infrastructure to the cloud, they are likely to look for administration management solutions that both support cloud-based platforms and offer a cloud deployment model itself. Flexible deployment allows companies to migrate to the cloud at their own pace, with minimal user, IT, and provisioning interruption.

### *Conclusion*

The hybrid workplace continues to drive profound change in collaboration, communications, and customer service application deployments. Companies are responding to this change by delivering new applications and devices, migrating to the cloud, and adopting deployment strategies that achieve maximum flexibility. To succeed in this new paradigm, IT and business leaders benefit from adoption of administration management platforms that unify and simplify onboarding and ongoing management tasks.

Therefore, IT leaders should:

- Evaluate administration management platforms for their ability to reduce provisioning time, improve service and support, and maximize IT resource utilization
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ABOUT METRIGY: Metrigy is an innovative research firm focusing on the rapidly changing areas of Unified Communications & Collaboration (UCC), digital workplace, digital transformation, and Customer Experience (CX)/contact center—along with several related technologies. Metrigy delivers strategic guidance and informative content, backed by primary research metrics and analysis, for technology providers and enterprise organizations.