

What to Know Before You Commit

Key Questions to Ask
Before Choosing Your
UCaaS Provider



A MITEL GUIDE

 **Mitel**
Powering connections

You need your communications solution to keep passing the test.

That's why unified communications as a service (UCaaS) is an opportunity worth exploring. UCaaS delivers long-term value as well as immediate benefits. But when moving to a cloud solution, you're embarking on much more than a one-time investment; this is a long-term relationship between your business and its communications provider. For this reason, it's extra-important to know what you're getting into in the long term – with regards to both the technology you're adopting and the vendor who will be coming alongside you.

This guide explores 12 key areas you should consider when selecting a new UCaaS provider, including reliability, integration and compliance, as well as all the questions you should be asking before making a decision. It's the best way to evaluate UCaaS providers and ensure you make the right choice for you. We've also included some industry-specific questions for finance, healthcare, education, hospitality and public sector companies.

Change doesn't have to be arduous. With the right roadmap and a steadfast vendor in place, you can take big steps with ease. No one knows what's coming next, but the right vendor and technology not only empowers you today, but also provides you with successful foundations for tomorrow.



UCAAS 12 areas to consider

- | | |
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| 1 Infrastructure | 7 Ease of Use |
| 2 Reliability | 8 Adaptability |
| 3 Support | 9 Scalability |
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1

Infrastructure

What is your cloud infrastructure like?

A cloud provider with the expertise to host a carrier class network should have several best practices in place to ensure maximum security. Select a vendor that works with your unique setup to enable you where you already are, while providing a foundation for the future. Your chosen vendor should also employ industry standard encryption, firewall configurations and protection systems to prevent outside network intrusion and ensure security.

Be sure to also *ASK:*

- How will your technology **grow with my business?**
- How does your tech support change with my **evolving needs?**
- What types of **disaster recovery solutions** do you have in place?
- Are your data centers **georedundant?**

2

Reliability

How do you monitor uptime?

A cloud provider's very existence depends on its ability to provide consistent service and deliver true reliability. Look for a provider that offers solutions that take your unique business needs into account, focus on business continuity, and enable you to monitor things easily.

Be sure to also *ASK:*

- Do you provide 24/7/365 **monitoring and support?**
- **How will I be notified** in the event of downtime?
- Will I be able to review your **Service Level Agreement (SLA)?**
- **Will you provide guarantees** and incur financial penalties if you fail to meet these requirements?

3

Support

How does your customer support work?

With the cloud provider managing the overall telecom infrastructure, your team can focus on more pressing issues that are key to advancing your business. However, in the event of a problem, your UCaaS provider should have strong support mechanisms in place. It needs to be able to respond quickly to your needs and support your unique business culture, makeup, and evolution. Make sure you choose a vendor that makes business continuity part of everything it offers.

Be sure to also *ASK:*

- What are your **support hours**?
- Is your **support managed internally** and in a geographic location that is relevant to us?
- Are there any **associated costs**?
- Are you a **single source provider** and will you serve as the interface on our behalf to resolve issues when other parties are involved?

4

Compliance

Will I be compliant using your solution?

With the right UCaaS provider, compliance is covered without putting the burden of maintaining it on your staff. Cloud-based applications can often provide a more rapid rollout of new features that address regulatory standards, while ensuring conformity across multiple locations.

Be sure to also *ASK:*

- What **compliance requirements** do you meet (e.g., PCI, SOX)?
- Do you do **routine audits** to ensure compliance?
- Are your data centers **SSAE 16 compliant**?

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Features

How will your features address our needs?

A cloud provider can provide basic calling features, such as caller ID, voicemail and conferencing, as well as advanced features such as call routing, call recording and interactive voice response. New features should be added regularly and be made available immediately, with no uncertainty and without the need to upgrade the entire system.



Be sure to also **ASK:**

- Which of your features **address the goals** unique to our organization?
- How intuitive is the **experience for your users**?
- How often do you provide **new releases**?
- How will **new features** be added to our system?

Be sure to also **ASK:**

- Can personal devices be **integrated with your network**?
- Can you provide video, instant messaging and desktop sharing to facilitate **greater collaboration from anywhere**?
- Do you provide an **automatic Wi-Fi/cellular call handover**?
- Are you able to keep voice and signaling secure, **even in public hotspots**?



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BYOD support

Can you support our needs, no matter the location or device?

To make widely dispersed teams productive, your people need more than just a phone system that simply connects a call. They need to move seamlessly between phone calls, chats, video conferences and desktop sharing. Look for a UCaaS solution that supports collaboration across all devices, no matter the type, ensuring that your people can stay connected and productive from anywhere.

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Ease of use

Are your features user friendly?

Users will be more likely to adopt communications tools that are straightforward to use, particularly when they look and work like the consumer apps they've come to love. Make sure you select a UCaaS system that is simple to use and intuitive in nature.

Be sure to also **ASK:**

- Can I gain access from various browsers or mobile devices?
- Are functions easily completed with single commands rather than multiple steps?
- What training is available, both during implementation and on an ongoing basis?
- What's the average adoption rate of your features?
- How long is the interruption to daily routine when switching to the new solution?

Be sure to also **ASK:**

- Does your solution enable us to make a **gradual move to the cloud**?
- Can you **seamlessly link on-site and cloud deployments**?
- Does your phone system support **future and emerging technologies**?
- Do you have an **evolving portfolio of solutions**?

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Adaptability

Can your solution evolve with our business?

If you want to take a measured approach to cloud adoption, consider working with a UCaaS provider that offers both cloud and hybrid solutions. With a blended environment approach—a mixed deployment with some elements remaining on-site and others hosted in the cloud—you'll not only get expert guidance, but also the flexibility to customize a migration path that fits your business.

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Scalability

Can your solution grow as our business grows?

To succeed in today's competitive commercial landscape, your business needs to be agile. That requires technology that grows with you. Your cloud phone system needs to scale quickly, no matter if the need is prompted by expansion, mergers, regulations or other industry changes. Make sure that whoever you engage is already at work behind the scenes, developing the solution to your next business communications challenges.

Be sure to also **ASK:**

- Do you have a **solution that can scale** as our business demands change?
- Can you support the **capacity of new acquisitions or mergers**?
- **Can you add licenses easily**, or do we have to purchase them up front?
- **Is your technology able to integrate** easily with existing and future technologies?
- **Which advanced technologies** are you working to develop next?

Be sure to also **ASK:**

- Does your solution **enable custom configurations**?
- **Will it integrate** with our existing systems?
- **Do you have options for third-party integration** and custom-tailored applications?
- **What API programs** do you have in place?
- **Which known technologies** do you work with?
- **Which new strategic partnerships** have you recently made?

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Integration

Can you integrate with our existing systems?

Integrations between cloud-based solutions are often pre-built or easier to facilitate. A cloud phone system can offer integration options with other cloud-based systems you may be using, like a CRM (customer relationship management system) or MAP (marketing automation platform). Look for cloud providers that offer open APIs (application programming interfaces) which enable you or a third-party developer to create a customized solution to meet unique business needs.

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Administration

How easy is it to manage?

Cloud apps often provide greater opportunities for hands-on management, since accounts, users and functionality can be accessed securely from anywhere. Many businesses often experience a greater sense of control when they move to a cloud vendor that provides single-source service, minimizing the number of calls needed to answer questions and enquiries.

Be sure to also *ASK:*

- How much **technical understanding** does our staff need to run your solution?
- **How much time** will our staff need to dedicate to managing your solution?
- How easy is it to **administer and use?**
- How many of your existing customer are **hands-on with solution management?**

Be sure to also *ASK:*

- **How will you help us** to start up?
- How long will the **implementation process** take?
- Do you offer **phasing?**
- **Who will be guiding us** through the implementation phase?
- What does **implementation** entail?
- **Who do we call if something goes wrong?**
- How long is the average response time?

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Implementation

How do you handle implementation?

With little to no hardware to install, you can implement a cloud-based phone system at a pace that's right for your organization. Departments, teams or locations can be migrated over to the new phone system in a phased approach that meets the needs of your business. This gives you the freedom to grow at your own pace, getting there on your schedule.

Why Mitel?

Your success is our responsibility, and delivering the right UCaaS experience for you is our primary function. We are the experts in our space, but there's much more to Mitel than that.

We have a proven history of reliability and expertise. Our long-standing customers continue to choose us because we provide technology that not only empowers them today, but also provides them with dependable foundations for tomorrow.

In short, we support you wherever your journey takes you. You control exactly how the technology fits you, rather than having to bend your business around a product.

Here's how we stack up against some of the competition.

Service outages

Service interruptions cause headaches. When technology fails, your business suffers. That's why we make sure our outages are kept to a minimum. When we're lined up against 8X8, Ring, Zoom and Microsoft Teams, **we're the least likely to let you down.**



All reported outages supplied by DOWNDetector, an independently owned and operated company, which leverages over 22 million monthly reports from individual users, real-time analysis and verification of outage reports.

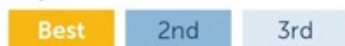
User satisfaction

We're the only vendor that works with your unique setup to let you develop at your own pace, regardless of where you are on the journey. And we provide an evolving portfolio for your future.

That's why our user satisfaction ratings are ahead of the competition across a wide range of categories.

	Mitel MiCloud Connect	8x8 X Series (formerly Virtual Office)	RingCentral Office
Ease of Doing Business With	81%	77%	74%
Production Direction	76%	70%	71%
Quality of Support	76%	76%	73%
Would Recommend the Product to a Friend or Colleague	79%	77%	77%
Meets Requirements	84%	82%	85%
Ease of Admin	80%	80%	76%
Desk-to-Desk Calls	92%	88%	85%
Phone Calls	88%	85%	86%
VOiP Number	90%	89%	88%

Key:



All user satisfaction ratings are unbiased and independent, provided by G2, the world's leading business software review platform. Data relates to the UCaaS Platforms category. Ratings were collected as of March 15, 2021.



Industry-specific questions

Although there's a lot of overlap between verticals, every industry has its own individual set of requirements. Make sure you engage with a UCaaS provider that understands your industry, by discussing situations that relate directly to your business framework.

To start the conversation, here are questions that relate to finance, healthcare, education, hospitality and the public sector.

- Does your offering meet strict security and data protection standards?
- Can you unify various disparate tools and programs?
- Do you have the flexibility to support future financial norms?
- Can your offering provide secure, tamper-proof voice transcription?



Finance

- Does your offering comply with the Dodd-Frank regulations?
- What cybersecurity options do you provide to ensure financial institutions are protected?
- What's your understanding of your regional financial regulatory requirements?
- Can your offering provide secure, tamper-proof voice transcription?



Healthcare

- How do you ensure ePHI is safe?
- Do you meet HIPAA compliance requirements?
- Can you support the capacity of newly acquired hospitals and physician practice groups?
- Can you integrate with electronic medical records (EMR)?



Education

- Can you support all forms of learning across all devices?
- Can course content and supporting resources be accessed securely at the

time and place that works best for students?

- Which team collaboration tools eliminate the most boundaries and improve the information flow between faculty and students?
- Are you a preferred Sourcewell vendor?



Hospitality

- How will your offering allow me to deliver a personalized service and appealing new experiences for guests?
- In what ways will guests be able to use their mobile devices as an extension of our telephony system?
- What small personalized gestures that make a big difference with guests will your system enable me to harness?



Public Sector

- How do you ensure data and information meet strict privacy and protection requirements?
- Are you a preferred Sourcewell vendor?
- What do you see as the main differences between a public sector and a private sector deployment?
- We have a wide range of disparate applications and communication services, and need to continuously deliver essential assistance. How can you reduce such diverse complexity?

Your next steps



You've got the questions,
now it's time to get all
the answers. Talk to our
cloud experts today.

Contact us today to get your communication and collaboration tools
by reaching out to your Mitel representative or call **844.YES.MITEL**

mitel.com

 **Mitel**
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