Large multinational embraces unified communications, but fails to anticipate the complexity

Client Name:
Multinational food and beverage company

Region:
Americas

Country:
United States

Vertical:
Retail

GTM Theme:
Intelligent Workplace

Partner:
Microsoft

Services:
Adoption and change management

Recently, a large multinational company approached us for assistance cleaning up a challenging unified communications rollout to their global user base after beginning the complex project on their own. We stepped in to help, and in doing so, uncovered a cautionary tale of what not to do.

Problem 1: Strategic view

Fail: They didn't understand the full Microsoft picture because they lacked the Microsoft product knowledge and roadmaps a partner like us has.

Solution: With a partner who understands Microsoft's future plans and timelines, they could have made better choices for their business and better bridge gaps from the outset.

Problem 2: User personas

Fail: They had assumed every user was the same and hadn't understood the challenges, requirements and training needs for different user types. Assuming every user was the same led to low adoption rates and end-user frustration.

Solution: With a solid user persona analysis and intentional change management tactics, they could have driven user satisfaction and kept the forward momentum of their rollout.

Problem 3: Global complexities

Fail: They not only lacked local support for their global deployment, they didn't understand local challenges such as porting numbers or local requirements for Skype users. They were surprised to learn several of their international sites needed additional equipment and investments.

Solution: Had they had a global partner with experience in global rollouts or been aware of the local challenges before beginning, they would have planned and deployed accordingly.

[**Read more**]

Disclaimer: The work described in this case study was performed while the company was known as Arkadin.

Case study

The background

A publicly traded multinational food and beverage company had operations in more than 40 countries and is a pioneer in embracing forward-thinking technology.

Based in the American Midwest for the last 75 years, their management believe in the power of cloud communications and the agility of cloud services, and fully embraced the idea of moving their enterprise voice and communications to the cloud.

Led by their US-based internal IT team, they purchased Office 365 E5 licenses from Microsoft, pulled together a set of partners, including a hardware partner and a local training provider, and set about implementing their cloud telephony solution.

The situation

They completed the initial rollout to their US offices on their own, facing challenges along the way and a longer-than-anticipated rollout. While their internal team was knowledgeable about the technology, they didn't appreciate the level of complexity in managing user change or the importance of network readiness.

End-user adoption was low, which was hard to understand, given the superior technology. Why weren't their employees taking to the new system? The project encountered further challenges as they began their overseas rollout.

Their team did not have local resources in each geography with expertise in cloud telephony and regulations in each country. The team learned that things they expected to be very simple – like porting phone numbers – could be a political landmine. They also found that foreign locations with a single worker, such as a home worker, could take as much time to rollout as an office with several hundred workers, given local complexities.

They intended to lean on Microsoft for assistance in these cases, but found the software provider only offers local support in nine countries. In the middle of their implementation, the international rollout ground to a stop. The delayed implementation led to other challenges they weren't prepared for. Not only did they lose their momentum in the project, the aging hardware systems they intended to replace with a cloud solution began to fail.

This company had no back-up system in place, nor the funds or desire for costly hardware replacement. Time was running out. They knew they needed help to kick start the project and drive adoption, but given the multiple challenges, they weren't even sure exactly what it was they needed.

Stepping in to help

When they reached out to us, we asked them what challenges they'd experienced in their cloud transformation journey. As we began to understand the situation, it was easy to see they lacked understanding of the path ahead of them, which led to the challenges they were experiencing. In short, they 'didn't know what they didn't know'.

With 14 years of voice experience and status as a Microsoft Gold Partner, our Cloud Transformation Services has extensive knowledge of what it takes to plan, deploy and operate a cloud telephony solution. We know that every successful implementation begins with a thorough consultation to fully understand the path ahead. So, less than two weeks from our initial conversation, we gathered their team for a discovery Envision Workshop to understand the scope of situation and find their needs and priorities.

The Envision Workshop uncovered significant knowledge and planning gaps for them, and provided them with a comprehensive technical and financial analysis of the various options in front of them, as well as our recommendations for success. Since their Envision Workshop, they have engaged us to manage their international rollout, develop complete user profiles and usher their staff through training and adoption.