



THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE:
**SELECTING A CLOUD
COMMUNICATIONS PROVIDER**

RingCentral[®]

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Moving or expanding communications services to the cloud can seem daunting for any company. But if you know what to look for from a provider, the task of choosing a unified communications as a service (UCaaS) solution can be made with greater confidence. This comprehensive guide to selecting a cloud communications provider includes everything you need to consider when undertaking your search.



Choose your path



Unified communications and collaboration solution

Do you view cloud migration as a way to supplement a legacy on-premise system?



Cloud-first communications solution

Do you view the cloud as an opportunity to modernise your overall communications strategy to make your organisation more agile?

Seven critical considerations

No matter which path you select, make sure you have a detailed conversation with your current or potential cloud communications provider around the following seven core criteria:

1. Unified communications and collaboration solution
2. Integration
3. Cloud infrastructure
4. Connectivity options
5. Global presence
6. Pricing
7. Professional services and support



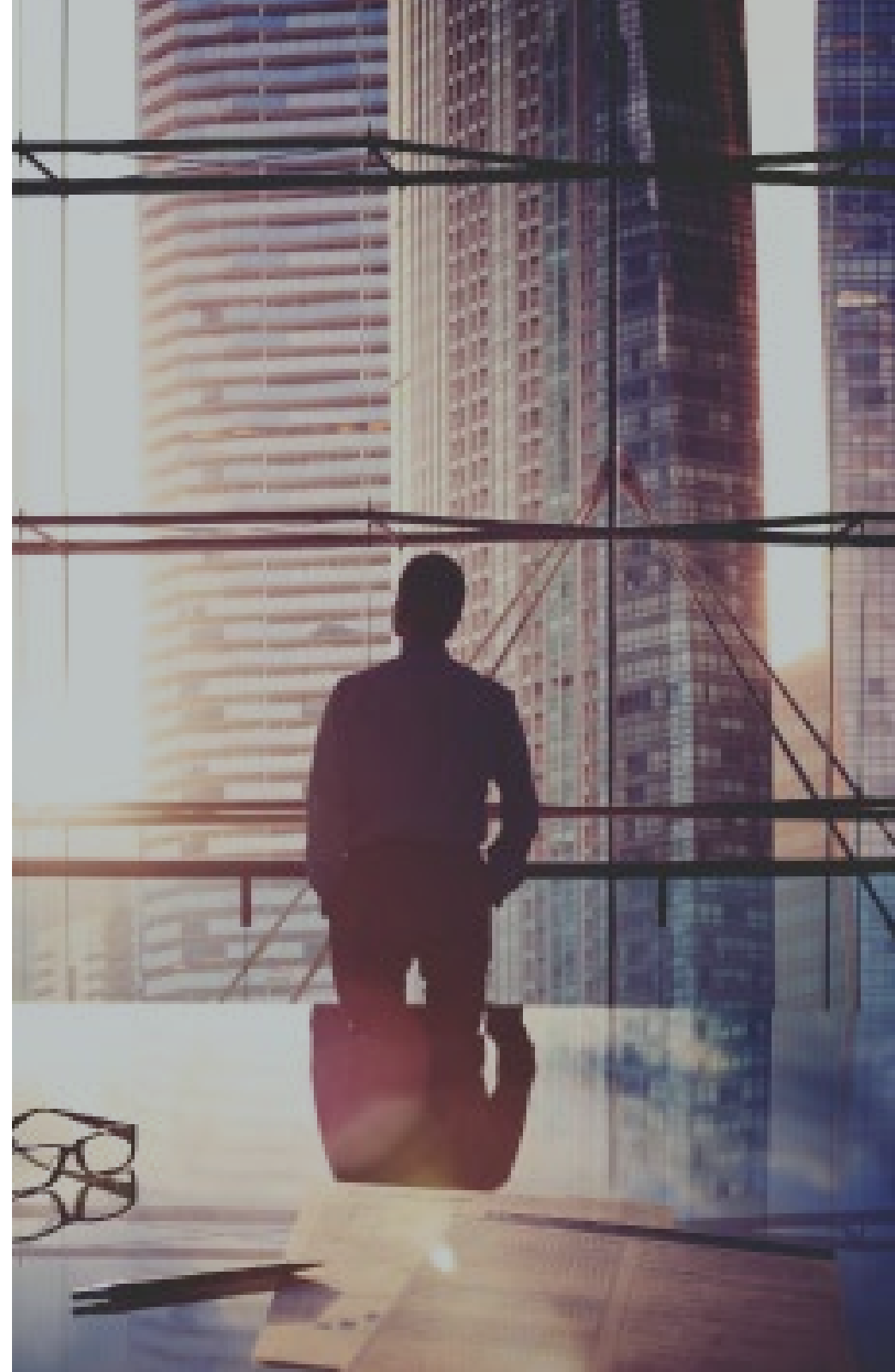
1. Unified communications and collaboration solution

Like most of today's modern workforces, your employee base has probably become more distributed across multiple locations, working on the go or from home. The ability for your team to communicate whenever, wherever, and however they want is essential for performing their jobs well and optimising agility and productivity. Currently, workers often adopt a mishmash of tools from disparate vendors to help them communicate in easy, mobile-friendly ways. But in fact, this can silo or confuse communications rather than enabling it.

As your company grows, it's wise to consolidate all of your cloud communications solutions with a single provider to ensure a more complete and seamless user experience that meets the needs of your team or workforce.

So how will your company benefit?

- **Improved user experience:** Achieve a more consistent and cohesive user experience for team members inside and outside of your organisation.
- **Improved scalability:** Fast deployment of additional cloud communications functionality and onboarding of users and agents in your corporate office or remote offices in North America or overseas.



- **Seamless communications:** Deliver all solutions on one platform to satisfy different types of user preferences. Voice, HD video and meetings, team chat and collaboration, messaging, contact centre can all be provided by one vendor, with one easy user interface.
- **Simplified billing and management:** Remove the complexity of paying multiple vendors for easier, more predictable budget management.
- **Cost savings:** By using one vendor to deliver integrated cloud-based communications solutions, realise significant savings in capital expenditures such as PBX hardware, save IT and workforce time, and replace expensive travel with video conferencing.

In a nutshell, consolidating your cloud communications with one single provider reduces complexity and operational costs while increasing agility, scalability, and flexibility.

A hand with the index finger pointing upwards is the central focus. The number '57%' is written in a large, blue, sans-serif font, with the hand's finger appearing to point at the '7'. To the right of the hand, a thick, blue, curved arrow points upwards and to the right. The background is a light blue gradient with faint white cloud outlines.

57%

57% of IT professionals surveyed who work in companies with 1,000+ employees said they believe the benefits of moving their communications to the cloud are either clearly identified or underestimated.

—The State of Cloud Communications,
No Jitter Industry Insights Report



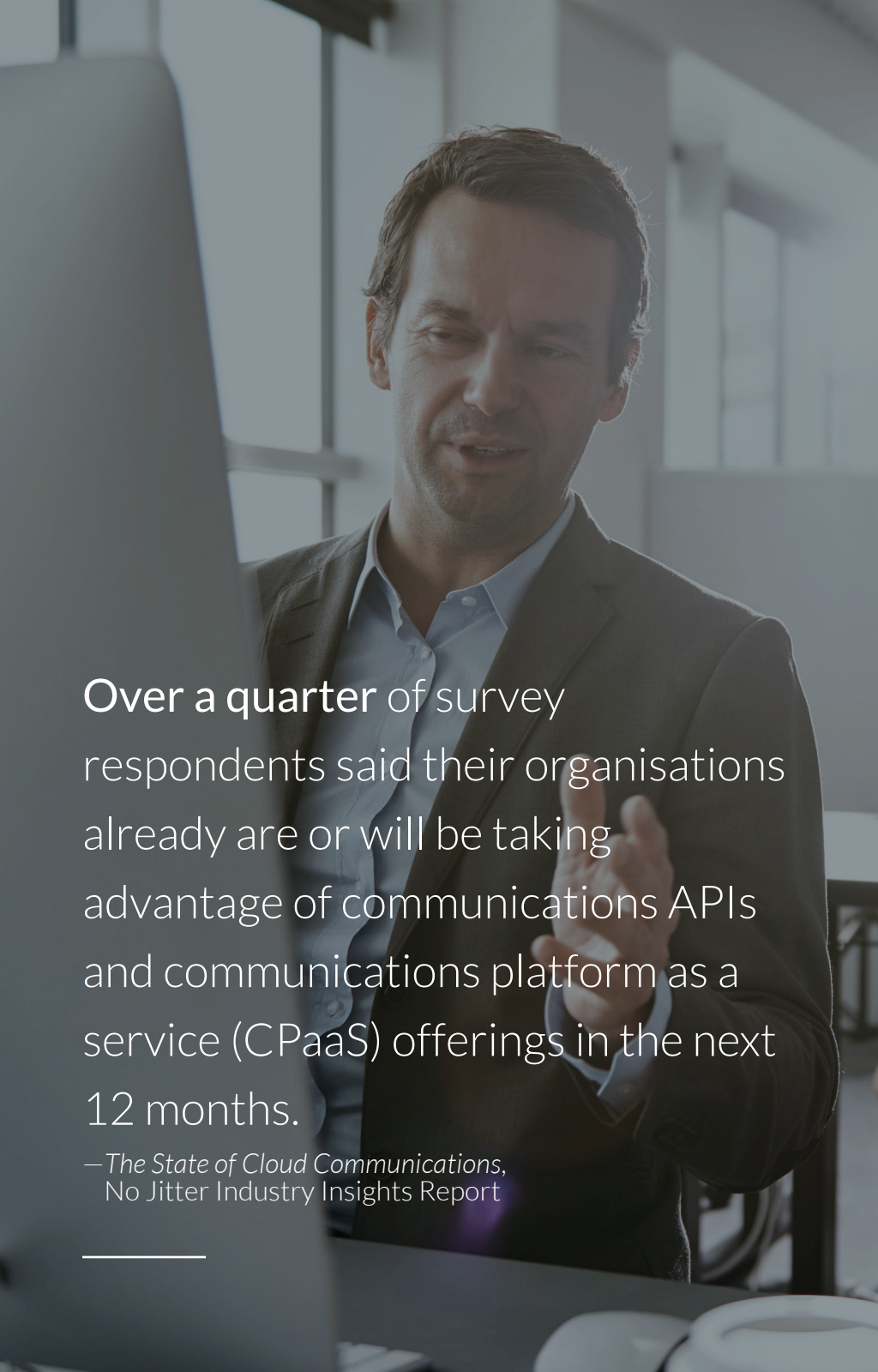
2. Integration

The need to be agile and highly responsive is key to staying competitive in business today. Therefore, it's important to ask your cloud communications provider about its ability to integrate using open APIs on a single platform.

Internal integration within the cloud communications solution:

- Is your provider offering disparate, stand-alone tools, or does it support interoperability among each solution? And if so, at what level? For example, can users easily escalate a cloud-based messaging chat, via the UC client's instant messaging capability, to a voice or video call with one click?
- Are cloud-based communications services manageable from the same dashboard?

After all, the goal of moving to the cloud is to reduce the complexity and rigidity of on-premise solutions.



Over a quarter of survey respondents said their organisations already are or will be taking advantage of communications APIs and communications platform as a service (CPaaS) offerings in the next 12 months.

—*The State of Cloud Communications, No Jitter Industry Insights Report*

External integration with cloud-hosted applications:

- Look for a cloud communications provider that has out-of-the-box integrations with popular cloud applications like CRM, office productivity, document management, service and support, and workforce productivity solutions. For example, if your employees use Office 365™ or Google G Suite, does your provider enable your team to seamlessly collaborate, meet, call, and easily click to dial contacts; schedule and launch video conferences right from their calendars; and archive content that's easy to find later?
- If agility is a goal, does your provider offer open developer platforms using industry-standard APIs? Developers can embed communications into business-critical applications, enabling click-to-chat, click-to-call from messaging, and many other capabilities that help you automate processes and streamline workflows.

Eliminating the barriers to communication and streamlining processes lead to improved speed, productivity, and customer satisfaction.



3. Cloud infrastructure

Perhaps the biggest and most essential question to ask yourself when selecting a cloud communications provider is: private or public?

- **Private:** If you have particularly stringent security or privacy requirements, for example, you might require a solution that allows you to build out cloud infrastructure within your data centres for your exclusive use.
- **Public:** If you are using services hosted in cloud infrastructure that your provider doesn't own, manage, or control.

This is where the decision gets more complicated. On the following pages, we'll walk you through the factors to consider when evaluating providers for their infrastructure.

4. Connectivity options

Most companies typically access cloud communications services via public internet connections, and those “over the top” connections are sufficient for many businesses. However, if you are in search of a higher level of connectivity and quality of service for mission-critical capabilities, direct connectivity to the cloud is essential. Ask your potential or existing provider whether it offers direct connectivity. If the answer is yes, find out where such interconnections are available and in what sort of configurations.



5. Global presence

Well-established cloud communications providers should have fully geo-redundant distributed networks that offer full functionality in any region. Ask your provider the following to ascertain whether full global integration is possible:

- Are its networks highly scalable and resilient where you need them to be, whether in Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America, or North America?
- Do they interconnect directly with service providers in those regions? This allows for the provision of carrier-grade reliability and quality of service.

By having peer relationships in these regions, cloud communications providers can provide seamless, localised, enterprise-class business communications for regional customers. Plus, using local data centres will allow your company to meet data residency and data sovereignty requirements.





6. Pricing

Moving your communications to the cloud can be a way to reduce TCO. However, the pricing models cloud communications providers propose are not always straightforward or easy to analyse based on your company's individual needs. Here are some things to look for:

- **Transparency and simplicity in licensing plans:** Are per-user pricing and any minimum monthly commitments clearly articulated?
- **Hidden costs:** Ask about pricing for toll-free and international calling and how many users and geographies are covered in the pricing. Also, enquire about how individual feature sets are billed on the account—all inclusive or a la carte?



7. Professional services and support

As welcome as it might be, moving mission-critical communications functionality into the cloud can be a daunting prospect. Be sure to evaluate providers on their ongoing customer care, including their ability to:

- Support an organisation's planning, design, and implementation needs globally.
- Offer ongoing project management, support, and consulting. As your business grows into a cloud deployment, modifications may be in order to improve efficiency and boost performance.
- Offer professional services around application development, particularly if your company is interested in communications platform as a service (CPaaS).

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a person's hands typing on a silver laptop keyboard. The person is wearing a plaid shirt. The background shows a desk with a yellow sticky note and another laptop. A semi-transparent grey box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing white text.

There's no doubt that moving to the cloud is the right step for modern, agile, mobile business communications. Being well prepared will help you find the cloud communications provider and solution that works best for your company and your teams' needs.

Interested in finding a cloud communications solution that works for your business?

About RingCentral

RingCentral, Inc. (NYSE: RNG) is a global provider of cloud unified communications and collaboration solutions. More flexible and cost-effective than legacy on-premise systems,

RingCentral empowers today's mobile and distributed workforces to be connected anywhere and on any device through voice, video, team messaging, collaboration, messaging, conferencing, online meetings, contact centre, and fax. RingCentral provides an open platform that integrates with today's leading cloud business apps while giving customers the flexibility to customise their own workflows. RingCentral is a leader in the 2017 Gartner Magic Quadrant for Unified Communications as a Service Worldwide and was named by Frost & Sullivan as 2017 hosted IP telephony/UCaaS Company of the Year. RingCentral is headquartered in Belmont, California.

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