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How Unified Communications Adds the  
Personal Touch to Your Customer Experience.

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# Today's Biggest Business Challenges: How a Modern Approach to UC can Help

Customer expectations are on the rise. These days, many organisations live or die on the quality of their customer experience (CX). Universally, CX is moving up the agenda, with global spending on CX technologies predicted to hit \$641 billion in 2022 (IDC).

But the workplace is evolving too. Organisations are repurposing offices and embracing hybrid working in the wake of the pandemic. A CIM survey revealed that 84% of UK firms are now operating hybrid work practices.

**84%** of managers said their firms had adopted hybrid working.' CIM, 2022.

Other challenges are also in play. How do organisations link their legacy telephony systems with the latest digital collaboration platforms to build a truly unified communications solution? How do they prepare for the imminent phasing out of PSTN and ISDN networks and the switch to IP-based telephony? Collectively, these issues are whipping up a perfect storm of uncertainty and change, making it harder for organisations to focus on perfecting their CX to attract, service and retain customers.

This ebook explores how a modern approach to unified communications can help organisations to overcome these business-critical challenges, offer a richer, more personalised customer experience and succeed in the post-pandemic era.

'Global spending on CX technology is set to reach **\$641 billion in 2022.**' IDC.

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About Charterhouse

# UC: Making it Personal

Treat your customer as just a phone number in a database, and your relationship is doomed. The one-to-many model of communication is outdated. Customers expect a one-to-one, tailored experience.

Long before the pandemic accelerated the trend to buying online;



of consumers preferred to do business with an **organisation that offered personalised experiences.**



**found personalisation** appealing.

*Epsilon 2017*

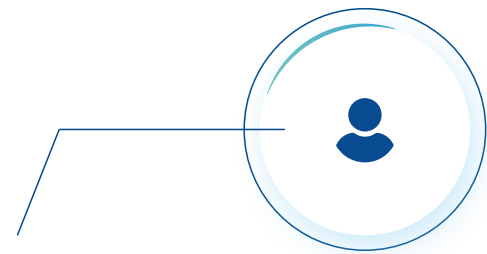
Nowadays, more than ever, customers don't just prefer to communicate when and how they want; they expect to. Suppliers are pressured to understand individual needs and respond with services and products shaped to fit. The pay-backs are significant and rewarded by stronger customer loyalty, higher spending, and greater lifetime value for those prepared to personalise.

*'Consumers are **40% more likely to spend beyond** what they'd originally planned when experiences are highly personalised.'* *Retail Week, 2021.*

836%



# Putting Customers Front and Centre



*Customer A lives in New York and likes to phone on weekdays during working hours on the move but email at weekends.*



*Customer B lives in Dublin and likes to pose queries in the evenings via the website, using either web chat or email.*

Personalisation is about wrapping your services around your customer's individual needs and behaviours instead of forcing them to adapt to you. Unifying communication across different geographies, multiple time zones, dispersed customer service staff and diverse contact methods can be problematic. By offering a choice of easy contact points and a consistently frictionless, positive experience, whenever and wherever, you entice customers to buy more and more often.

## • More Flex for Your Organisation

Your employees are invaluable internal customers and should be treated as such. Organisations that fail to adapt to the needs of a hybrid, mobile workforce will quickly be overtaken by those that do. Employers who neglect to provide a flexible, secure and location-agnostic collaboration environment can expect much more than operational inefficiency. They risk some of their most highly valued workers voting with their feet and seeking an improved employee experience elsewhere.

*'I need to transfer this call, but I can't see who's available.'*

Live presence and availability within unified communication tools help keep workers in touch with customers and colleagues more easily and reliably, wherever they are. They also differentiate your organisation as an employer of choice and help you to attract, develop and retain the best talent.

# Challenge 1: The Rise of CX. Customers Rule



Lockdowns and work-from-home policies have made consumers more reliant on doing everything digitally, from product research, booking appointments and making queries to banking, purchasing goods and tracking their deliveries.

In the age of multi-channel digital interaction, the buyer-seller power balance has shifted toward the digitally savvy customer. Substandard CX can destroy an otherwise healthy customer relationship in an instant. Social media can act as trial and jury, exposing underperforming organisations to the scrutiny of a critical worldwide audience of millions. Good CX is no longer merely a 'nice to have'; it has become a cornerstone of competitive advantage.

**'83%** of customers say they're more loyal to companies that provide consistency across departments.'

*Salesforce, 2022.*

## • More Channels. More Touchpoints

Every customer is different. As consumers, we all have different preferences for how, when and where we communicate. Responding to these choices at the right time in the right way is critical to achieving effective CX. Organisations should be as accessible as possible by offering their customers an array of touchpoints and channels, from voice, email and SMS to social platforms, apps and websites.

Multiple channels pose the challenge of maintaining consistency and continuity across all points of contact and interaction. Disconnected systems can lead to a fragmented picture of the customer. Only by integrating with other business tools (*such as CRM and ERP systems*) and securely storing and managing contact data can organisations gain a clear, up to date and holistic customer view. This gives both office-based and remote workers equal and easy access to accurate customer information, ensuring prompt action and appropriate follow-up.

# You Can't Manage What You Can't Measure

**'52%** of Contact Centre leaders **rate customer satisfaction and retention as number-one CX metrics.**' *CCW, 2021*

Measuring the value of your contact centre is essential to understanding and enhancing the ongoing effectiveness of your CX. By deploying measurement tools, organisations can benchmark performance, identify blind spots, pinpoint areas of improvement and optimise their customer service across every channel.

Evaluation was much easier in the old days of centralised call centres when customers only communicated by phone. Today, with customer services personnel routinely distributed regionally, nationally or globally and with customers engaging via a diverse mix of channels, the task of measuring and reporting contact centre performance is hugely magnified.

How many calls are incoming? What are those calls regarding? How many enquiries are successfully resolved, and how quickly? Without answers to these and hundreds of other performance-related queries, organisations are unable to gauge demand, assess responsiveness or fine-tune their contact centre operations. But metrics have strategic value too. Measurements of customer satisfaction (*e.g. using surveys such as CSAT or NPS*), retention and lifetime value provide organisations with vital proof-points that their CX is truly delivering.

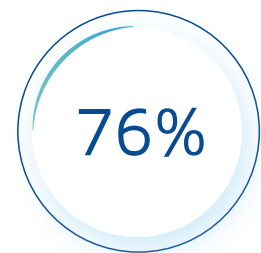
## • How Charterhouse UC Can Help

Charterhouse provides communication solutions to ensure your people and customers are securely connected across any device, channel or geography. Our exceptional end-to-end customer service delivers a 'white glove' experience to guide you every step of the way, from project scoping and needs assessment through to design, build, implementation and support.

# Challenge 2

## The New Normal: Resistance to the Office

Covid-19 caused a seismic shift in work patterns for millions of people across the world. By the start of 2022,



of employers  
**had shifted to a  
hybrid working  
model.**



Yet only 11%\* of their  
employees said they  
**intended to go back to  
the office full-time.**

This is hardly surprising since hybrid working, whilst challenging for some, enhances the lives of the majority. Benefits include more time for family, leisure and domestic activities, fewer commutes, improved mental health and higher work productivity. With many workers reluctant to give up these new-found perks, how can employers make their offices more appealing to tempt them back, for at least some of the time?

**'76% of workers have confirmed a shift to hybrid work in their companies but only 11% will go back to the office full-time.'**

*TravelPerk, 2022.*

**'Of working adults currently homeworking, 85% want to use a hybrid approach of both home and office working in future.'**

*Office for National Statistics, 2021.*

### ● Demand for Hybrid Office Spaces

The pandemic reshaped the brief for office spaces too. In 2022, whilst 12% of organisations were downsizing their offices due to a growing number of remote employees, 10% found their premises too small to accommodate extra staff recruited during this time..

Meanwhile, work-from-home restrictions bred a 'new-normal' of work routine, with workers accustomed to the convenience of online meeting spaces such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom and Google Meet. Today, hybrid workers expect to use these platforms in the office, at their desk, in communal spaces and meeting rooms, and combine virtual and in-person contact. The old office formats and technologies of the pre-Covid era are less suited to these dynamic, agile, on-the-move ways of doing business.

**'63% of workers claim their employers have not made any significant changes to their workplaces to adapt to this new way of working.'**

*TravelPerk, 2022.*



# The Meeting Rooms of Tomorrow



Many traditional office meeting rooms have outdated standards-based video conferencing or other legacy technologies that fail to deliver much of the functionality that hybrid workers demand. These days, employees want to connect with colleagues seamlessly 'in the room' or off-site, with mutual, instant access to data and applications. They demand a high-quality collaboration experience with inclusive access, reliable connectivity and robust network performance.

Customers have higher expectations of virtual meetings too. They want a painless, flexible, well-connected meeting experience, whether your staff are sitting in an office meeting room, operating from home, or working from another remote location.

Organisations must invest in updating their meeting areas, both to satisfy customer needs and to motivate staff to spend more time at the office. Fail to adapt and you risk disappointing your customers or discouraging your staff from making your office their workplace of choice.

## • How Charterhouse UC Can Help

Charterhouse provides everything you need to make your offices user-friendly and attractive for hybrid workers. This includes your initial needs assessment, delivery, installation, testing and ongoing technical support of your audio-visual equipment. From the initial brief to launch, our AV engineers and Microsoft Teams experts can equip your rooms to deliver the very best meeting experiences possible.

# Challenge 3

## Phone Systems: A Barrier to UC?

The humble phone call isn't going anywhere soon. For over 100 years, people have used voice telephony as an efficient, convenient way to communicate. Today, even though we have social media, text, instant messaging, live chat, email and virtual face-to-face technologies at our fingertips, billions of phone calls are still made every day.



*'Only **3%** of call centre leaders believe live phone conversations will become obsolete in the contact centre of the future. **85%** believe all customers should have access to live voice agents.'*

*CW Market Study, 2021.*

Phone systems have become an indispensable part of business life at the office, offering a wide array of features such as DDI, voicemail, call transfer, call recording, and time-of-day routing. Historically, all this functionality has been the backbone keeping customers and employees connected and organisations running smoothly.

### Ongoing Demand for Fixed-Line Phones

We live in a mobile age and an increasingly wireless world. But even as smartphones, WiFi, and 5G have become 'everyday', fixed-line telephony still plays a pivotal role in many environments.

For instance, the energy industry uses landlines for service monitoring, network visibility and operating circuit breakers, hospitals have mobile 'no-go' areas where fixed lines are preferable, and emergency landlines are used everywhere from railways and telecare to manufacturing and office lifts.

85%

# Telephony: The Limitations of Microsoft Teams

When the pandemic forced office shutdowns and confined workers to home offices, many organisations could not access their premise-based telephony systems. Video meeting technologies like Microsoft Teams became a remote-friendly, quick-fix communication solution.

*'January 2022 'Teams now has more than 270 million monthly active users. **That's up from 250 million monthly active Teams users in July 2021.'** zdnet, 2022.*

*'Only **12% of contact centres believe they will ever revert to a traditional, mostly on-site contact centre model.'** CCW, 2021.*

Today most organisations are evolving to a hybrid model, and remote work is here to stay. But while online collaboration platforms are now widely embedded into daily business life, they are far from being an out-of-the-box unified communications solution.

For instance, Microsoft Teams is not designed to support all the capabilities offered by legacy telephone systems. It lacks many important functions such as desk phone interfaces, call analytics, CRM integration, call merge and other voice features.

Ironically, our reliance on office telephony systems to keep us in touch with our staff and customers has become a potential barrier to achieving a unified communications solution fit for the future.

## • How Charterhouse UC Can Help

With our 29-year heritage in telephony and collaboration solutions, Charterhouse designs, provisions, and supports technologies that ensure business success by driving connectivity and teamworking.

Our expertise spans the latest cloud and Microsoft Teams technologies as well as older telephony systems. When it comes to blending innovative tech with existing infrastructure, our extensive know-how and hands-on experience of legacy systems mean we're ideally placed to combine the old and the new.

# Challenge 4

## The Big Switch-Off: No More Copper

Fundamental changes to the UK's communication infrastructure are yet another obstacle for organisations seeking to deliver their customers an exceptional experience. In 2025, BT is set to switch off all of the PSTN networks across the UK. The 'Big Switch-Off' will affect more than 2.4 million\* UK organisations that still rely on these older technologies and will need to migrate from analogue and digital services to IP.

This transition to IP-based telephony is happening worldwide. The changeover in countries like Germany and Japan is ahead of the UK, whilst ISDN and PSTN services have already been completely phased out in the Netherlands and Estonia.

*'The UK has more than 2.4 million small businesses still using analogue phone lines.'*

*Independent, 2022.*

### • What is the Analogue Turn-Off?

The PSTN (*Public Switched Telephone Network*) is the century-old copper-wired landline phone network that was the exclusive means for carrying voice traffic across the world for decades. Later, ISDN (*Integrated Services Digital Network*) arrived to boost transmission across the same wired network. From 2025, these analogue networks will discontinue, and the UK's entire phone system will use VoIP (*Voice over Internet Protocol*) to service its calls and other digital traffic via full-fibre broadband connections. Digital networks give organisations a raft of benefits:

- **Cost savings:** phone calls can be less expensive using VoIP
- **Free features:** call recording, conferencing and call analytics
- **Flexibility:** supports mobility and remote working with call management from anywhere
- **Performance:** an intelligent approach to cloud delivery ensures HD call quality and excellent reliability

# How Will the Big Switch-Off Affect You?

## It's Time to Get Dialed-In

The impact of the Big Switch-Off is already being felt across the UK. Today, organisations can no longer order new lines based on the PSTN network in many areas. **By September 2023**, these limitations will apply to all exchanges across the UK. **Between September 2023 and December 2025**, analogue services will be withdrawn completely on a rolling basis.

If your systems rely on these older technologies, you will soon need to rethink your solution for office communications. Staying analogue is not an option. If you haven't already switched, going digital will give you a network to support hybrid working, unify your communications and create a richer, personalised experience for your customers.

Yet despite the radical implications for UK organisations large and small, 24%\* of all CEOs and 33%\* of SME CEOs remain unaware of the impending switch-off. The deadline is fast approaching, and time is running out to scope, source, acquire and install new IP-based telephony before it's too late.

**'24% of UK CEOs and IT decision-makers (rising to 33% for SMEs) are not aware of the impending change.'** *Censuswide, 2022.*

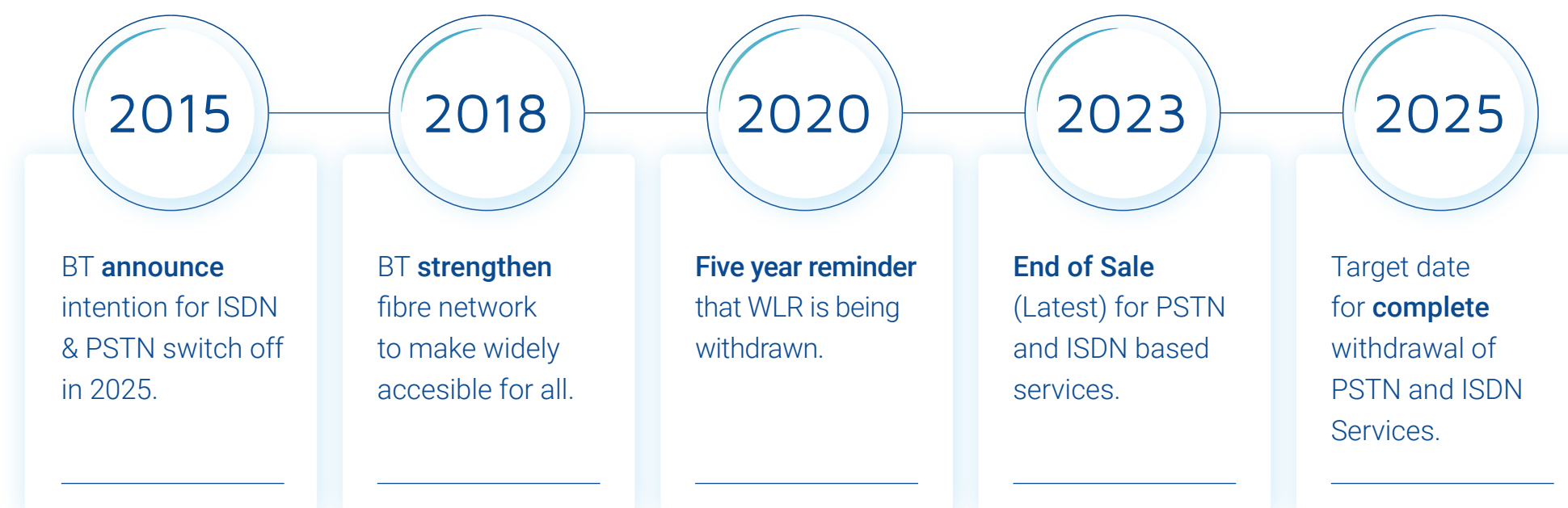
**'10% of SMEs are aware of the stop-sell but don't know what to do next.'** *Censuswide, 2022.*

## How Charterhouse UC Can Help

**Staying analogue is no longer an option. But where do you start?**

We have been leaders in the delivery of voice technology since 1993 and earned our stripes along the way. From analogue to digital, digital to IP and now this major change in the country's infrastructure, our team of experts has a wealth of experience in this area to help you scope, source, acquire and install the perfect solution for your business before it's too late.

Get in touch with us for an informal chat, and let's get switched on to The Big Switch Off together.



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## About Charterhouse

### Empowering Your Connected Organisation

With our 29-year heritage in telephony and collaboration solutions, Charterhouse designs, provisions, and supports technologies that ensure business success by driving connectivity and teamworking. We take pride in our exceptional, end-to-end customer service. Our 'white glove' experience guides customers every step of the way, from project scoping and needs assessment to design, build, implementation and support. Our strategic partnerships and accreditations with world-class vendors such as 8x8 and Microsoft ensure our customers benefit from a one-stop-shop for the most innovative technologies and industry-best expertise.

### Connecting You Across the UK and Worldwide

Our team of accredited engineers and consultants covers various technologies, enabling us to deliver innovative solutions. Our commitment to exceptional service is backed by our methodical approach to systems design and implementation centred around your business needs and priorities.

We have built a reputation for forming strong and long-lasting partnerships with our customers by delivering integrated solutions to companies throughout the UK and internationally.

**Securely connecting your organisation, is our business.**

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