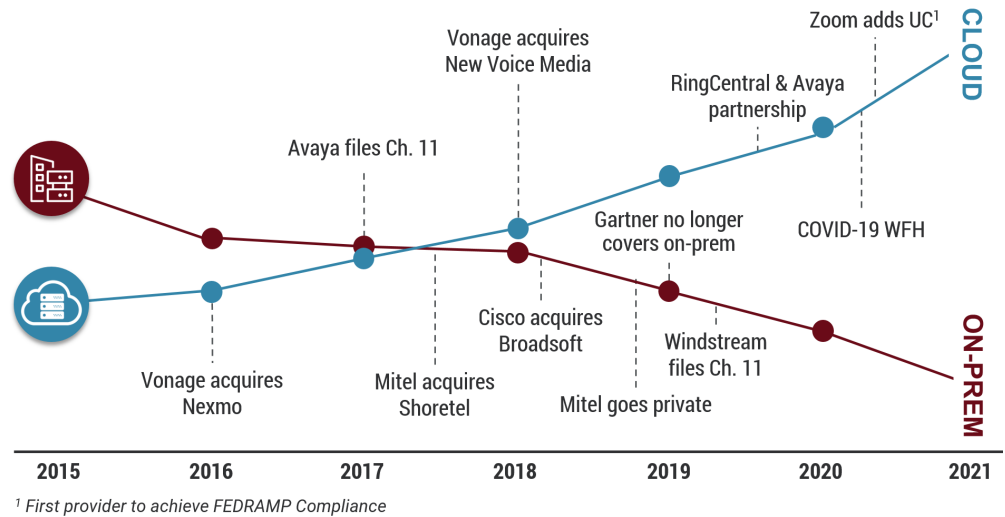# Unified Communications
Market Insights & Decision Guide

ARG
IT Clarity®

Unified Communications solutions adoption rates have accelerated since collaboration requirements skyrocketed in March. There is a near constant state of disruption in the UC market, but it is clear that the future will be in cloud-based solutions.

CLOUD

Zoom adds UC[1]

Vonage acquires New Voice Media

RingCentral & Avaya partnership

Avaya files Ch. 11

COVID-19 WFH

Gartner no longer covers on-prem

Cisco acquires Broadsoft

Windstream files Ch. 11

Vonage acquires Nexmo

Mitel acquires Shoretel

Mitel goes private

ON-PREM

2015   2016   2017   2018   2019   2020   2021

[1] First provider to achieve FEDRAMP Compliance

Where to go for Information?

CHALLENGERS   LEADERS

Microsoft
RingCentral

Google

Zoom   Cisco
LogMeIn   8x8

Mitel

Vonage   Fuze

Star2Star

Dialpad

Windstream

Alcatel-Lucent Enterprise

ABILITY TO EXECUTE

NICHE PLAYERS   VISIONARIES

COMPLETENESS OF VISION   As of October 2020   © Gartner, Inc

The Analyst Community

There are conflicting viewpoints creating noise in the market. Research firms such as Forrester, IDC, and Gartner are a data point but come with some bias. Consider the Gartner Magic Quadrant (GMQ).

Given our expertise and experience deploying solutions, we were surprised by some of the providers represented. The delta between the upper right and the lower left is extraordinary, and not all of these providers are in the same class.

Only the top right are truly relevant and Cisco's relevance is due to their BroadSoft acquisition.

Another challenge with the GMQ is that it discounts the innovation that providers have built on top of the BroadSoft PBX software:

- APIs to business applications
- Process and support
- Contact Centers
- Integration with Microsoft Teams

Exclusion Criteria

The latest criteria requires them to be a UCaaS platform vendor that has **developed its own proprietary UCaaS application stack.** The UCaaS provider must **design, build, upgrade, support, and operate the UCaaS platform** (typically in its data center or in a partner data center). They must have at least 200,000 users with calling capabilities and 3+ clients with over 1,000 calling users.

The UCaaS solution must be commercially offered with at least 15,000 calling users and contracted customers in two (or more) of the following regions: North America, EMEA, Asia/Pacific and Latin America (which includes Mexico).

This criteria discounts a number of providers with robust solutions for North America and those built on the BroadSoft platform with turnkey integrations that optimize enterprise software investments.
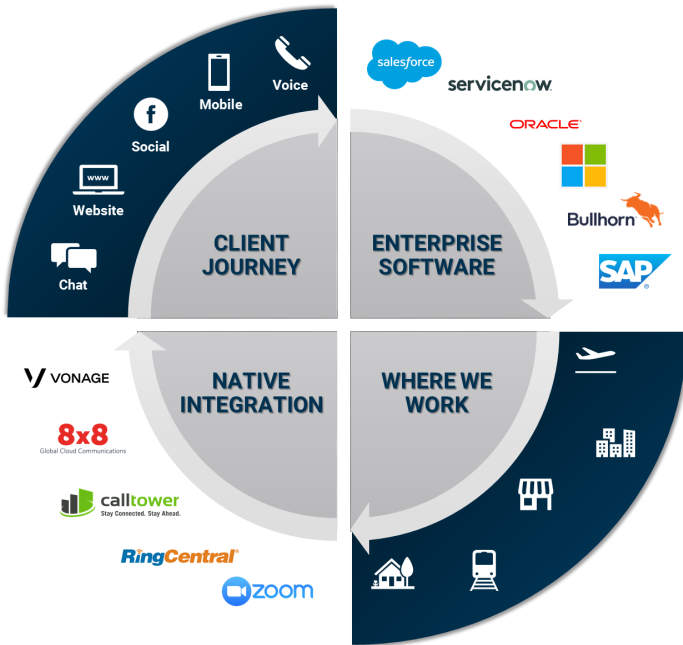
A Business-Driven Approach

Start with Software

On premises phone systems are no longer a valid solution. As clients move to cloud based solutions, their approach revolves around optimizing enterprise software investments. Choosing a partner with the right native integrations is pivotal to maximizing efficiencies and realizing business benefits.

Additional Approach Considerations

Delivering improvements to user experience, customer experience and collaboration is also driving technology decisions. UCaaS provides a great opportunity to create seamless customer journeys and facilitate better coworker communication. There are massive efficiencies to be gained by aligning the platform with line of business applications for ERP, CRM, helpdesk, and digital workflow management and bringing them together with native integrations.

According to an MIT study, over 80% of businesses say "AI is part of their strategic initiatives" [2]. UCaaS and Contact Center as a Service (CCaaS) bring machine learning, agent assistance, natural language processing, virtual agents and tools like sentiment reporting. These deliver the ability to build customer profiles, streamline customer experience, automate business processes, increase agent efficiency, and expand access to digital channels. All of this results in faster and more informed decision making and a better customer experience.

There is more disruption in the space than ever. In addition to being a hotbed market for mergers, acquisitions, and private equity deals, recent events have created more change. Zoom had been steadily gaining market share with their freemium product and ease of use. Similarly, Microsoft gave Teams away with their software licenses. These two companies' pre-pandemic positioning combined with timely marketing efforts drove their use cases to the masses in the wake of COVID-19.

Regardless of market share, this is not a two horse race. Depending on the business requirements, there is significant nuance to making the right choice. Even within Microsoft there are multiple ways to get there.

Path to the Right Decision
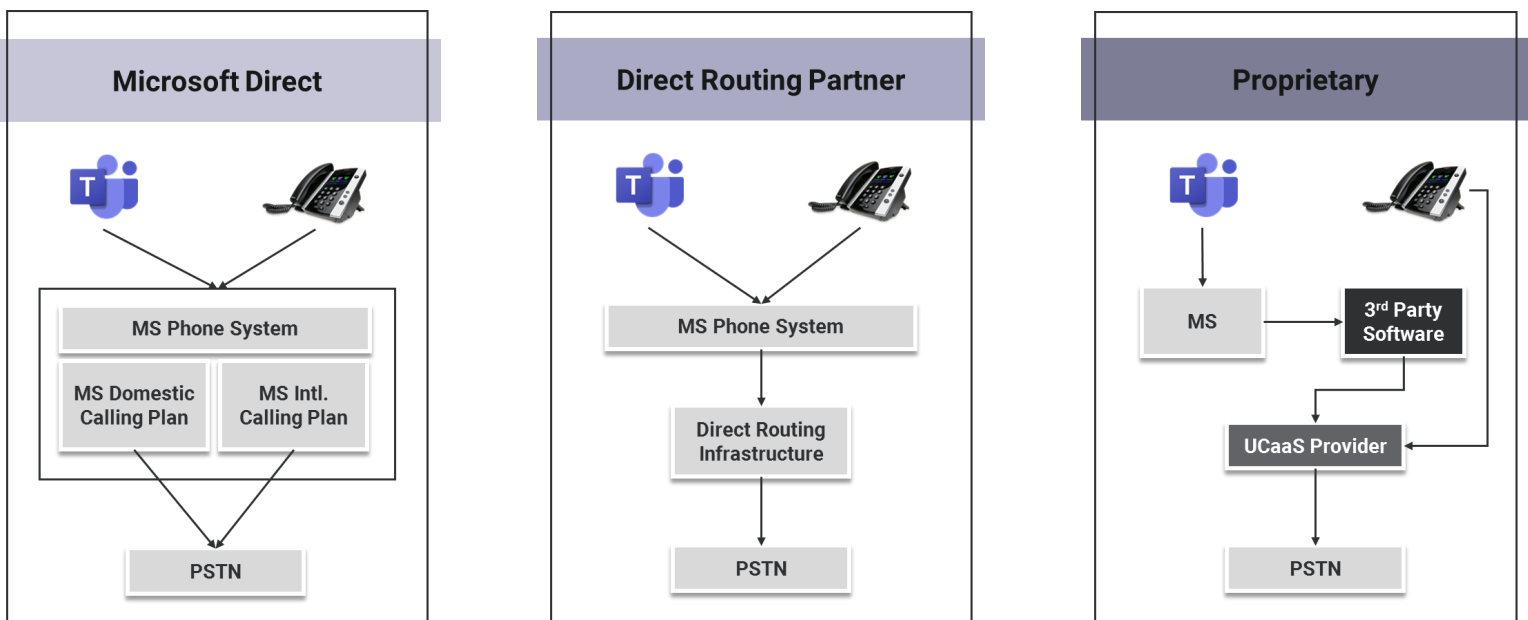
A deliberate approach is critical when deciding on a platform because navigating the pace of change and overwhelming choice in the market is a significant resource challenge for any IT organization. ARG identifies the right solution by following an established framework to map the desired business outcomes and software investments to the most robust integration and performance criteria displayed by service providers. We bring perspective gathered from thousands of implementations and post-installation service that we manage for our over 4,000 clients.

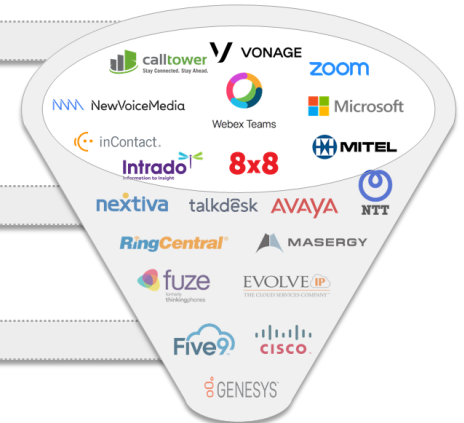## Down-Selection *(Sample Based on a Specific Client's Requirements)*

Criteria 1: Evaluation of Unified Communications Space

Criteria 2: Down-Selected for Identified Business Criteria

Criteria 3: Providers to be Evaluated

Understanding the solution provider's ability to execute against your most critical criteria is the difference between making the right choice and having a project that misses the larger business value. Once a solution is selected, ARG's continual monitoring of market conditions and experience pricing solutions for thousands of clients ensures the best price, and best value, by leveraging the maximum benefit from available offers and promotions.
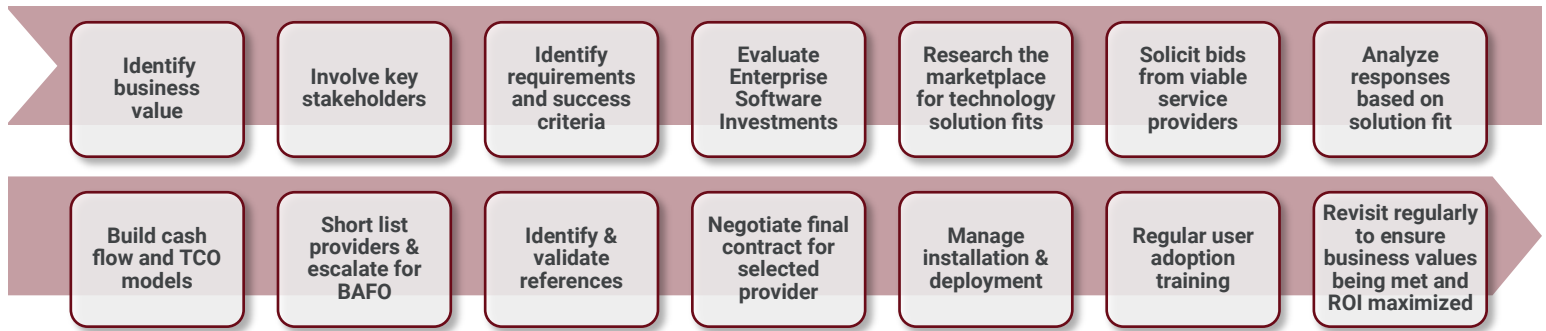

Crystal
Potomac Testing

"I can't recommend ARG enough. They recently helped us with a phone transition project - they took the leg work out of the decision making and provided cost-effective, cutting-edge solutions. They were responsive and effective any time an issue arose. Long story short, ARG helped make our day-to-day business operations more efficient, helping us provide better service to our customers."

ARG's Thoughtful Decision Process

Identify business value	Involve key stakeholders	Identify requirements and success criteria	Evaluate Enterprise Software Investments	Research the marketplace for technology solution fits	Solicit bids from viable service providers	Analyze responses based on solution fit
Build cash flow and TCO models	Short list providers & escalate for BAFO	Identify & validate references	Negotiate final contract for selected provider	Manage installation & deployment	Regular user adoption training	Revisit regularly to ensure business values being met and ROI maximized

Deborah
Forest Trends

"ARG has provided us with only the best and most knowledgeable support over the more than 10 years we have worked with them. The teams they deploy to shepherd any project, no matter the size, has ensured a seamless experience and a steady focus on the process, every time. Also, ARG has consistently delivered its top talent to help inform our service procurement decisions. We are grateful for this partnership!"

Meeting with the Board

To support the right solution for an organization, ARG helps clients prepare the presentation for their board. This presentation justifies the solution by thoroughly documenting the selection process. We prepare you to field questions from the board room, your leadership and your peers. You will be prepared to inform them with the detail they need to approve your recommendation:

- Why are we making a technology change? What are we looking to achieve and why?
- Were we inclusive? Who was involved in the decision?
- What process did we follow?
- What are our requirements & measurement for success? What business value will we achieve?
- What approaches did we consider? Roughly how much does each approach cost?
- Did we look at everyone? How did the suppliers stack up?
- Are we getting the best deal? Cash Flow? Net Savings?
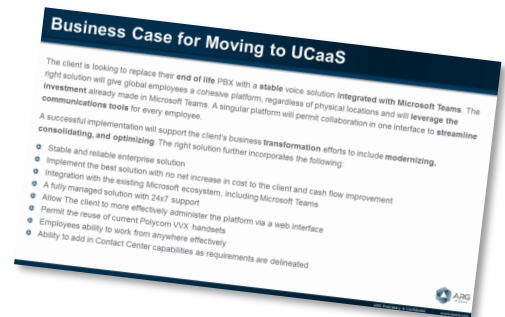
There is no charge to engage ARG to evaluate the market on your behalf. Contact us at info@myarg.com to schedule a consultation.

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