

VoIPstudio White Paper

Why integrating communications and business processes can boost your business

Executive Summary

Businesses are burdened by inefficient processes due to many reasons. These may appear to be insignificant at first glance, but their consequences can be felt everywhere. Organisations have to pay more to achieve the same result or waste valuable time due to process inefficiency. It can also affect employee morale, turnover, and productivity.

Companies should target communications and application processes to make quick productivity gains. If an enterprise reduces process inefficiency by even a small amount, it can pay huge dividends over time. Integrating communications and business processes enables data sharing and improves collaboration.

Businesses can make decisions faster and react better to the changing economic environment. They can automate repetitive tasks and redirect employees to more meaningful work. The key is to integrate the enterprise communications platform with other systems and tools such as CRM or office software.

Such integrations have become known as Communications Enhanced Business Processes, or CEBP for short. Companies should select a partner that can provide multiple CEBP integration options that offer lasting value.

Introduction

A business organisation is a system with many moving parts. Even a small business may have several departments and people assigned to various processes. As companies grow, they also become complex and more people are needed for day to day workflows. Data becomes distributed between different systems throughout the business. The number of different processes increases which introduces inefficiencies.

The problem of inefficiency

Business processes start or become inefficient for several reasons including, but not limited to, a lack of data sharing, poor integration between systems, redundancy, and bottlenecks.

Data is not shared

Within a business, different departments interact with customers throughout the sales process. But they all work with their internal systems and data. For instance, sales teams use sales data. The customer support teams have different records for the same customer. When a problem arises, there is no easy way to identify the latest or most accurate data. There is no single source of truth for the entire business.

Poor integration

It is quite common for businesses to have several specialised systems for specific tasks. The inefficiency occurs when they are not integrated especially with communications tools.

In an IDC survey, over 80% of business leaders said that problems arise because they have different systems that don't communicate with each other. It means employees have to enter the same data multiple times or copy it manually from one system to another.

Redundancy

Companies of all sizes suffer from process duplication. The same set of steps are repeated several times by different employees. These situations generally happen when there is little or no collaboration between teams or departments.

Bottlenecks

If a task is assigned to 5 people, it will be done in 5 different ways. Some people will complete the task efficiently, while others will not. Unfortunately, businesses adopt the process done by the first person to do the task even if it is not efficient. A single inefficient process can cause other related tasks to slow down or stop completely, causing a bottleneck.

The consequences of inefficient processes

Inefficiency has far-reaching consequences for a business. Inefficient processes cost businesses money in multiple ways such as having to discard defective items or maintain excess inventory levels. More importantly, businesses lose time which is perhaps even more valuable. Eliminating 15 minutes of wasted time from a process that is done several times a day can add up to a lot of savings. Inefficient processes also mean more stress on employees. Unhappy employees are less productive, and this can lead to higher turnover. It damages morale which can lead to more errors in the workplace. A significant problem area for businesses is communications and other application-based processes. If a business wants to reduce inefficiencies, targeting these areas can give quick results in terms of improved productivity. Businesses can improve processes through better integration between various systems, thus enabling data sharing.

What is integration?

Process integration enables data sharing between several systems or people. It permits events in one service or tool to trigger actions in another service. A business can integrate communications and business processes to eliminate inefficiencies in the system.

Business process

A business process is a collection of logically connected tasks that end in delivering a product or service to a client. It has also been defined as a set of tasks that accomplish an organisational goal.

The process can cross departmental boundaries and involve several teams.

Communications process

A communications process refers to the exchange of information between two or more people. Successful communications means that all parties are able to exchange information. If the information flow is blocked or the message is not understood, then communication fails.

One method of making a communications process more efficient is to integrate several media into a cohesive whole. Suppose a business uses email, phones, virtual meetings, and instant messaging.

Instead of forcing employees to switch between multiple apps, the business can integrate everything into a single dashboard. This is often referred to as Unified Communications.

Another option is to integrate a communications process and business process to reduce wasted time, delivering CEBPs. Consider a business that connects its CRM tool, such as Salesforce, to the phone system. Employees can call clients from within the Salesforce application with one click. They can also screen incoming calls to easily manage client interactions.

The benefits of integration

There are several benefits of integrating the enterprise communications platform with business processes to enable CEBPs.

Automate processes

A business can automate processes that previously required several steps and user intervention. Consider a simple claims process where an employee has to email the client and their manager once they approve the documents. The business integrates the system so that the emails are sent automatically once the worker approves the claim. It reduces delays in communication and prevents mistakes such as the employee forgetting to email the customer.

Close the communications loop

Integrated systems can keep track of communications processes including details like who was contacted, by what means, and any responses or decisions made. Suppose a project team decides to meet again after a month. A single click sends a meeting invite to all participants, managers, and executive management. The same trigger can also reserve a meeting room and set up reminder alerts.

Reduce Latency in Decision Making

Integrated systems can trigger actions in one system based on events that occur in another. Suppose a customer order is delayed due to supplier problems. The order tracking system can automatically alert supervisors to the issue so they can take immediate action. In the absence of integration, managers have to wait for reports before they make a decision. Real-time tracking and communications can help decision-makers reduce latency in business processes.

Businesses often see the benefits of integration in areas like order tracking, sales force management, production planning, and customer notification.

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It means users can get started immediately, without delays. They also do not have to pay for every new integration that is released over time. All integration options are available in every subscription plan.

The VoIPstudio service integrates with the most commonly used CRM systems, such as Salesforce and ZohoCRM. It also works with Oracle Cloud and offers Chrome browser extensions."

How can a communications platform help?

A communications platform is an important piece of any integration effort. Businesses of any size can find value in integrating communications systems and business processes.

Computer Telephony Integration (CTI)

A good example of integration is connecting a business website to the phone system. An organisation can enable click-to-call functionality on their website. It allows customers to contact the business directly from the website. CTI can involve advanced CRM tools, simple Content Management Systems (CMS) or e-commerce applications.

Browser Extensions

Businesses can also integrate their communications platform with popular web browsers. This allows customers to call the business using the computer's hardware. It means customers are not charged for the call and the company has eliminated some of the friction involved in business communication.

CRM Integration

Communications platforms are most commonly integrated with CRM systems. This allows sales and customer support agents to contact clients from within the CRM application instead of switching to another software. Call information is also recorded directly within the customer record instead of the agent having to add notes manually.

Dispatch Software

Businesses can integrate the phone system with dispatch software for drivers and delivery systems. This integration can make it easier for support staff to contact employees in the field and make changes to schedules immediately.

Contact Centre Software

Contact centre software integrates well with most communications platforms. Customers are not content with only being able to call support.

They want multiple options such as email, video chat or even social media. With the integration, callers can choose to initiate a call back instead of waiting on hold for the next available agent.

Productivity Software

Organisations use a number of applications to produce information such as documents, images, videos, charts, and graphs. They can integrate communications with several such office productivity software. The options to do so are practically limitless.

For instance, project teams can communicate with each other in real-time when collaborating on documents. An office can connect the phones to security cameras and open doors to authorised visitors.

Businesses can also integrate paging or other alert systems with phones to optimise disaster response and recovery.

“Companies need a partner that understands the need for integration and can deliver real, lasting value through rich CEBPs. VoIPstudio is a communications platform that offers widespread and growing integration options for most critical industry software – the systems that are commonly used in different organisations. Contact VoIPstudio to explore the range of CEBP options available to business users of every size and in any industry.”



VoIPstudio Integration Options

Integration is valuable for businesses as it promotes efficient processes. But it is not always easy or straight forward to integrate the communications platform with other systems. The integration offered by channel partners might need additional time and money to make it work with business systems. Additionally, not all integrations are included in every pricing plan offered by providers. Businesses might have to pay additional charges for new integrations.

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Businesses can easily integrate click to call buttons on website and CMS platforms. Customer feedback impacts the priority of the development efforts, which means clients get the tools they need quicker.

Just as process inefficiency has consequences beyond the immediate waste of time and money, integration unlocks many benefits over the long term.

Businesses have to consider the cost of integration such as the subscription price, but the benefits can be significant. It is never too late to start integrating disparate business systems, as benefit can quickly be obtained.

Efficient processes can lead to gains in employee morale, customer satisfaction, and improve overall productivity. Employees are more likely to go the extra mile for customers when they do not have to deal with error-prone processes or repeat the same information over and over again and if it can be shared efficiently across platforms. It reduces employee stress and fatigue as well.

With less turnover, companies do not have to waste time in hiring and training new employees either.



Conclusion

Integration between communications and business processes to enable CEBPs will become even more important in the future. As more businesses adopt cloud solutions for various processes, this integration will be vital to success. Organisations are dealing with large volumes of data, multiple systems, and hundreds of processes. The ability to connect all these systems will soon become a competitive advantage.

Businesses need to have a frank discussion with their vendor to determine whether and to what extent the current communications platform offers integration opportunities. Quite often vendors need client feedback on what integrations are the most valuable to them.

If the provider does not prioritise integration, it may be time to look at someone who can better serve the business requirements.

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