

AVOXI®



A New Era in Communications: 6 Trends to Watch in 2022

The enterprise guide to keeping your communication tools competitive in the new year and beyond.

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2022: The Year of Accelerated Communications

When you hear unified communications (UC), what comes to mind? Cost savings, improved collaboration and customer service metrics, [reduced contact center costs](#) - maybe even greater reliability, scalability, and flexibility?

Simply put, unified communications exceed expectations - not only for your customers but for your teams, too. We live in a world where waiting merely isn't acceptable, in any facet of the meaning.

Your customers don't want to wait on hold or search the web to find a means of connecting with you. Just like your employees don't want to wait to complete a task because of siloed data storage and managing multiple interfaces.

And we all know a bad experience for both employees and customers is just bad business.

Not to mention, [63% of businesses](#) are now on a hybrid work model. This has made features like voice, video conferencing, and chat become an integral part of modern business operations.

2020 and 2021 served as a catalyst for businesses to invest in improved phone systems and communications tools. And 2022 will be all about growing those softwares to keep up with the demand and needs of customers and employees.

In this ebook, we're covering the top six trends for communications tools in 2022:

- ✓ The Market for Cloud Solutions is Growing
- ✓ 5G Goes Mainstream
- ✓ Increased Need for Security & Data Protection
- ✓ The Growth of UCaaS & Rise of Mobile UC
- ✓ Using API to Achieve CSAT
- ✓ The Future of AI in Contact Centers

Bookmark it, save it to your computer, or print it out. You'll want to be ready to move with these trends to maintain a competitive edge heading into 2022 and beyond.

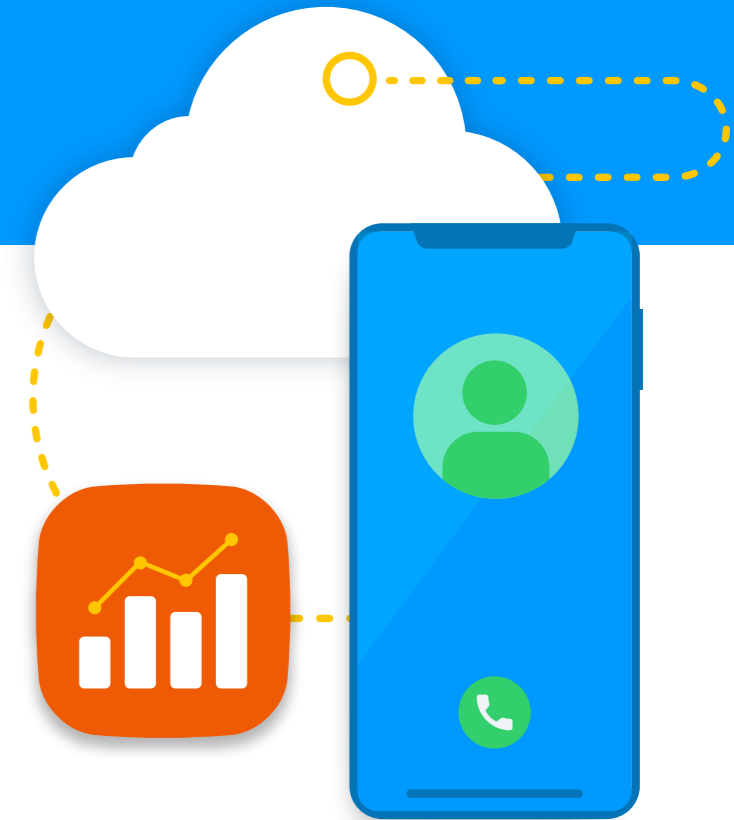
TREND #1

The Market for Cloud Solutions is Growing

In recent years we've watched the cloud go from being an efficient storage solution to a bespoke platform with tools that can effectively run an entire business. In fact, the cloud service industry has [grown over 380% over the last decade](#).

The COVID-19 outbreak truly served as [a catalyst for organizations](#) that weren't yet fully utilizing the capabilities of the cloud. Businesses were forced to find a way to operate from different locations while their existing phone system remained at the office. How did they quickly pull that off? The answer lies in the cloud.

This is why - to no surprise - increased adoption of cloud solutions among enterprises will be a continued communications trend in 2022. While previous years were about implementing the cloud on their time, 2022 will catapult its use from a mere service into a modern, bespoke solution. Here are four ways organizations will capitalize on moving to the cloud in 2022 and beyond:



Improved Collaboration & Productivity

The cloud is what makes unified communications (UC) possible. By providing your agents access to their complete tech stack under one umbrella, you open the doors for improved collaboration among:

- **Virtual Phone Systems**
- **Video and Audio Conferencing**
- **Team Chat**
- **Team Presence**
- **File Sharing**
- **CRM Software**
- **Helpdesk Platforms**

With cloud phone systems, agents share the same features and capabilities as a powerful business phone system regardless of their location. When they leave their remote offices, mobile UC and [softphone applications](#) keep them connected to the corporate phone system.

The result? Cost reduction, improved efficiency, support for remote employees, and most importantly, improved customer service. But don't take our word for it. [UC Today](#) reported that 75% of UCaaS users experience heightened levels of productivity.

Growth Management

One of the most appealing aspects of the cloud is its ability to scale with you on your terms.

Scalability

If you need to scale the number of lines in your network, you can easily do so with a cloud PBX system. Your VoIP communications provider can add phone lines to expand your services or locations with just a few clicks within the supporting software.

Team Management

[76% of support functions are now fully remote](#). Small businesses and large corporations alike implement cloud-based solutions so they can easily manage their phone numbers, agents, and call flows from anywhere in the world.



Greater Reliability

A reliable connection isn't just nice to have, it's essential to conduct business. In fact, reliability is the [overwhelming factor](#) for switching to VoIP. Four key benefits include:

1. Business Continuity

When it comes to business continuity, cloud solutions are a must. When the unexpected happens, organizations need strategic plans in place and technologies that can keep businesses running. Cloud-based networks help ensure business continuity for numerous reasons.



Flexibility

By replacing hardware for an Internet connection, IT teams can quickly set up systems like softphones to efficiently and securely conduct business from anywhere in the world.



Real-Time Analytics

Tracking agent performance with cloud-based advanced analytics and call recording can ensure messaging is always consistent and on-brand. Expanded reporting also gives you insights into call quality KPIs like bandwidth, jitter, and service level metrics to ensure uptime is sound.



VoIP Monitoring

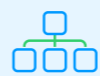
With call insights and instant VoIP monitoring, you can measure packet loss, jitter, latency, and the MOS score of every call for both onsite and remote teams.

2. Improved Customer Service

It's no secret that customers don't want to be stuck on hold, bounced around to different departments, or have their call dropped. And research shows that [58% of consumers](#) will not choose to use a service again after a bad experience.

In a remote environment, a flexible phone system that can adapt to the changing conditions of the workplace is key for ensuring excellent call quality and customer experience.

Cloud-based systems support your CX strategy through:



Efficient Call Routing

With advanced call routing, intelligent IVRs, and call forwarding, rest assured that customers are routed to the right department, every time.



Allow for Callback

Queue callback technology can be implemented to alleviate long wait times and improve customer satisfaction.



Optimize Tech Stack Integrations

Fully-integrated communications help automate tasks, helping agents work out of one platform - not several - to deliver a personalized experience to customers.

3. Security

From a security perspective, cloud-based solutions give organizations greater control over their networks. With robust security protocols and monitoring as part of their offerings to prevent attacks and misuse of service, you're privy to a wealth of security measures surrounding your network, phone system, SIP applications, and more.

Industry-specific compliance requirements, such as PCI and HIPPA, can be satisfied by implementing a solution that provides controls for handling secure password requirements, session timeout, mandatory call logging, and external or encrypted storage options.



4. Tap into New Markets

International brands can expand their reach, access new customers and talent with cloud solutions. A physical presence isn't necessary to tap into new markets, so long as you have a VoIP provider at your side. Businesses can purchase phone numbers and deploy faster than ever.

As such, organizations are benefiting from:



Improved Call Quality

When working with a VoIP provider to make calls, you gain access to quality call services backed up by multiple server locations and extensive backup systems. VoIP offers increased call quality and stability over analog systems.



Increased Call Returns

Local caller ID services, like [TrueLocal™](#), are [4X more likely to increase answer rates](#) and engagement from customers in target markets. Customers are less likely to pick up a call from an unfamiliar area code. With a local number, they're more likely to answer or call back.



Centralized Carrier Network

Fully compliant with all in-region legislation and long-tenured relationships with local carriers means the best possible call rates, managed from within one platform.

Ease of Resource Management

Unlike traditional PBX systems, there's no additional hardware needed for cloud communications. Your cloud provider handles everything from platform updates to maintenance and support. This eliminates hefty upfront and ongoing maintenance costs.

With cloud-based communications, you can support an unlimited number of users, easily scaling your platform as needed. When it comes to resource management, the leading benefits of switching to the cloud include:

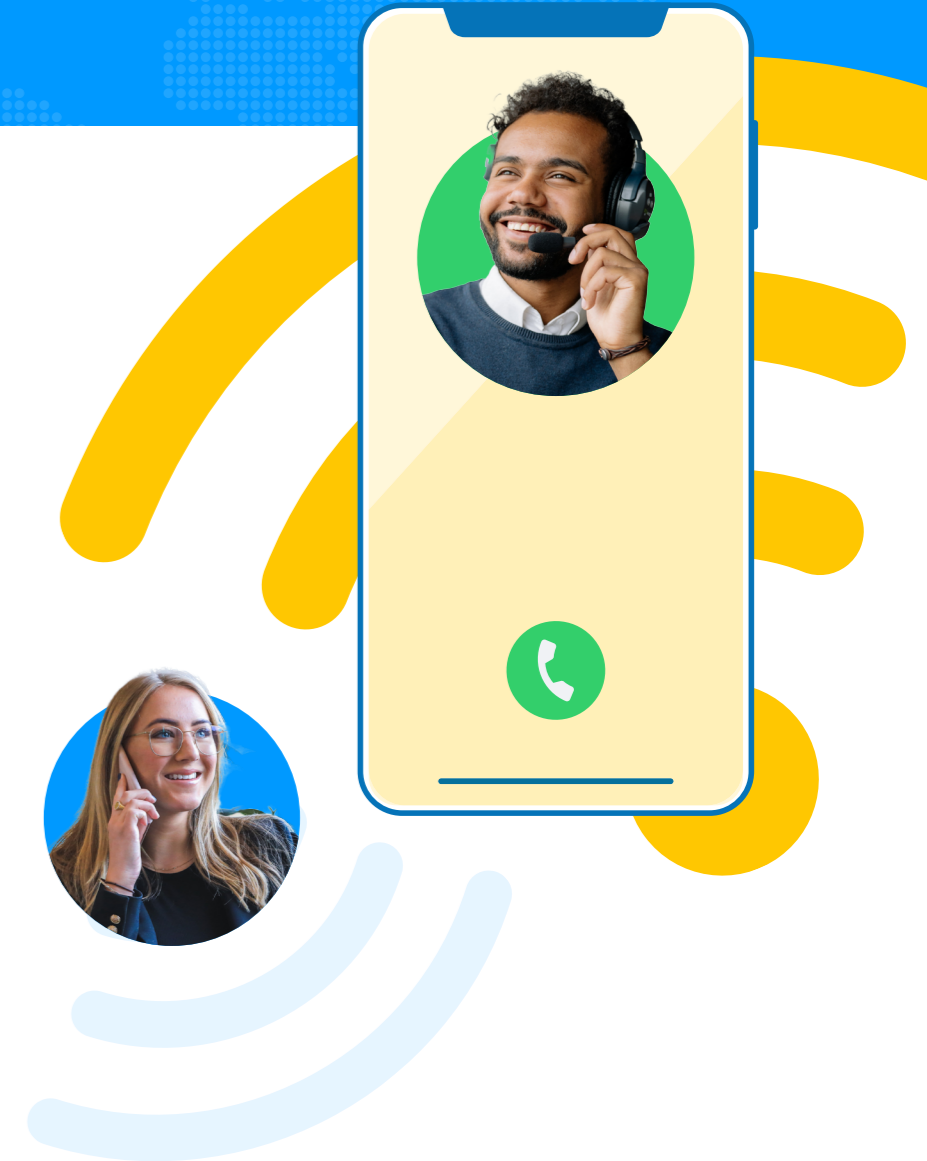
- **Saving time and money**
- **Onboarding new employees faster**
- **Coaching agents through live monitoring software**
- **Managing call volume spikes with ease**
- **Eliminating outdated in-house equipment**

TREND #2

5G Goes Mainstream

Fifth Generation (5G) is on the horizon, and its imminent debut into mainstream wireless is taking everyone by storm. And we mean, everyone. VoIP providers included.

While this technology is still relatively new, the opportunity for better reach and connectivity, even in the most rural communities, will make a positive impact on UCaaS and by extension, mobile UC. With remote staff all over the world - and [more than two-thirds](#) of the world's population using a mobile phone - 5G will be key to keeping everyone connected and conducting business without impacting productivity (and without a fixed connection).



Here's how 5G is making a big impact on global connectivity:

Market Expansion

One of the most exciting things coming from 5G is greater Internet reach to underdeveloped countries and rural areas. 5G is a means of ubiquity and offers a level of digital equity for more rural areas and underdeveloped communities and countries - giving your business greater reach and higher quality of service.

Supporting Nomadic Work

Businesses have embraced the hybrid work model, and they understand the importance of giving employees access to business solutions from anywhere. With 5G, it goes beyond working from home. Employees can conduct business while traveling, visiting family and friends with limited Internet access, and more. This opens the door for not just remote work, but nomadic work too.

Higher Device Capacity

[67% of employees](#) are using their own devices at work. Employees are switching between their cell phones, softphones, personal computers, work computers - you name it. The problem is, networks weren't built to manage that many devices and that much data transmission simultaneously. This will change with 5G as it can support [one million connected devices per 0.38 square miles](#) - while 4G can only support 2,000.

Reduced Latency

Speed is critical when it comes to transferring data. Lag has always been a thing - even when watching TV. We know that we are just one step behind the live event. But with 5G, this will become a thing of the past. The lower the latency, the more improved the functionality. And in some cases, the safety of IoT devices.

Even with the current mobile broadband networks in the market, there's been a lot of development over the years to ensure optimal connectivity. As the usage in bring-your-own-device (BYOD) and bring-your-own-carrier (BYOC) grows, having a reliable VoIP communications partner at your side can ensure your teams continue to collaborate efficiently and carry out calls without skipping a beat.

The Mobile Advantage of VoIP

Call Forwarding

Divert incoming calls to mobile phone.

Direct Routing

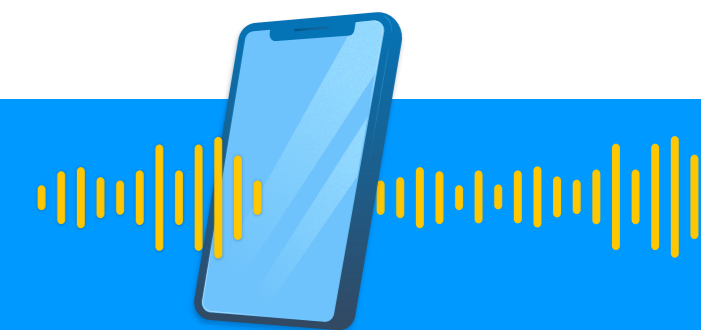
Carry out two-way calls from MS Teams with an expanded local presence.

SIP Trunking

Exceptional voice quality, secure call routing, and affordable SIP termination anywhere.

Voicemail Transcription

Voicemails are automatically sent to your email and transcribed.



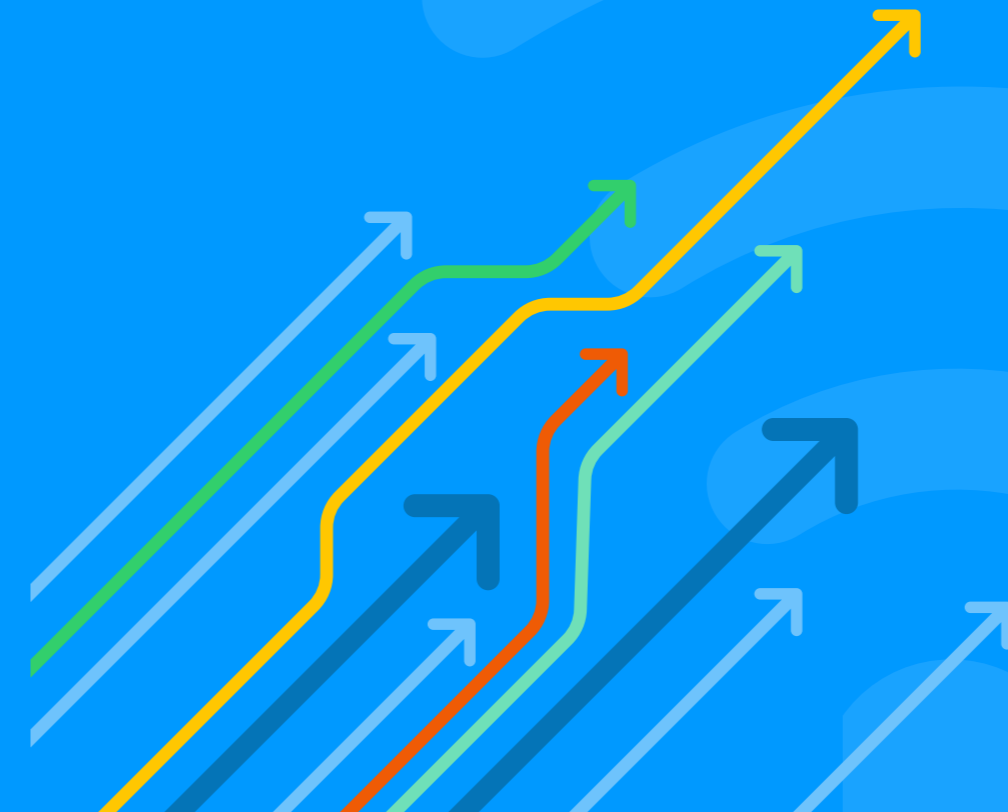
Preparing for 5G Implementation

5G is expected to supercharge businesses in 2022 and beyond. And like any new technology, your organization needs to have a plan. Here is a checklist to prepare for introducing 5G within your organization:

- ✓ **Set Your Budget**
5G will be more expensive than 4G. To remain competitive, you'll need to have your devices ready to go. Plan your resource allocation accordingly, including those of your BYOD and BYOC policies.
- ✓ **Invest in Advanced Analytics**
5G will further advance other trends such as AI, automation, and IoT. And with these advancements comes increased data. Make sure your company has advanced analytics tools to help you better collect, store, and use data when 5G is implemented.
- ✓ **Deploy Training**
[70% of digital transformations](#) that fail are most often due to employee resistance. There is no point in investing in new technology if your team isn't going to use it. 5G education will help your employees understand how the network's benefits can support business goals, improve customer experience, and their job performance.

- ✓ **Have a Strategy**
Like all technology, 5G will continue to evolve. Have a strategy that prepares for how the organization plans to use 5G now as well as in the future.

In 2022 and beyond, organizations will begin to capitalize on the benefits of 5G. From faster speeds, lower latency, and improved device capacity, 5G is just the tip of the iceberg for automation and intelligent technologies that will change your employees' work experience and customer experience for the better.



TREND #3

Increased Need for Security & Data Protection

As technologies, the Internet, and mobility become more tightly bonded, IT teams and communications require new security processes and strategic insight to stay ahead of potential threats to their operations. And with compliance in the mix, contact center leaders are voicing their infrastructure security concerns.

In order to protect themselves and their customers from cyberattacks, prioritizing security and data protection is number one to avoid a potential PR nightmare. Cloud communications can help. While the topic is heavy, advanced security measures surrounding your business need to be addressed. Network threats and attacks aren't going away in 2022. In fact, by October 2021, there had already been a [17% increase in data breaches](#) than in all of 2020.



Staying on top of your organization's security practices and protocols can better protect your organization's data integrity. Security measures continuing in 2022 include:

STIR/SHAKEN

Regulatory compliance of VoIP providers of the FCC, helping to reduce vishing and robocalls delivered to recipients in North America with a local area code.

Encrypted Communications

Located in the transport layer security (TLS) protocol, cryptographic encryption provides end-to-end SIP voice and media message security to ensure authentication and data integrity.

Cybersecurity Training

Consistent training videos and simulated phishing attacks to educate users on ways of identifying potential threats to the technology ecosystem.

AVOXI is a mission-critical communications tool for global enterprises, and we pride ourselves on the level of security provided for our customers and their customers as well. Businesses don't have to tackle security alone - that's where the cloud holds tremendous value.

Defer your security conversations to your communications provider, and let them keep your business network's security and policy management controls in check.



Tips for Safeguarding Your Communications Data

Tip	Helps Stop
Connect to a VPN to make your Internet lines more secure	Packet Sniffing & Black Hole Attacks
Deploy phone request verification training	Vishing (VoIP phishing)
Employ encryption, firewalls, and regularly check for network infection	Malware & Viruses
Use a dedicated Internet line for VoIP	DDoS Attacks
Encrypt your SIP media	Phreaking Attack & Call Tampering
Set up two-factor authentication (2FA) on your accounts and restrict geo-permissions	Toll Fraud

TREND #4

The Growth of UCaaS & Rise of Mobile UC

If the COVID-19 pandemic taught us anything, it's that businesses need unified communications to keep operations running. And due to this realization, the UCaaS industry has exploded. By 2024, the industry is expected to reach [\\$24.8 billion](#).

And with BYOD driving the [need for a cohesive voice environment](#), the movement for mobile unified communications is accelerating. As businesses continue to work remotely, an immersive voice experience capable of security, productivity, and efficiency is essential.

Managing this cohesive environment requires a system with reliable functionality. We're covering everything you need to know about making your UC work for you.



Negotiating excellent SIP rate pricing is easier when you have competitive benchmarks to compare for international countries. Here's what you could save with AVOXI.

COUNTRY	AVOXI.		xfinity		twilio		Savings with AVOXI.
	Termination Rate	Switched (Mobile)	Termination Rate	Switched (Mobile)	Termination Rate	Switched (Mobile)	
Angola	9.4¢	16.7¢	\$1.48	\$1.48	80.9¢	27¢	More than 62%
Côte d'Ivoire	50.6¢	50.6¢					
Malaysia	2¢	2¢	17¢	17¢	4.6¢	7.6¢	More than 130%
Singapore	1.8¢	1.8¢	12¢	12¢	3.1¢	5.1¢	More than 72%
Thailand	4.8¢	6¢	23¢	23¢	9.6¢	9.6¢	More than 60%
United States	1¢	1¢			4¢		300%

SIP Trunking

SIP trunking, or SIP interconnect, is one of the most common and reliable ways to bridge your communication channels on the cloud. Think of it as a virtual connection between your UCaaS platform and legacy voice carriers. Commonly known as BYOC, business leaders can carry over their preferred voice carriers and leverage the services of a full-stack communications solution from the technologies of their choice.

Microsoft Teams Direct Routing

A major trend we've seen is the increasing popularity of workspace collaboration platforms - specifically, Microsoft Teams. With more than [250 million active users](#) in 2021, it's the clear leader in collaboration tools.

MS Teams offers two telephony options within its platform: Calling Plans and Direct Routing. With its SIP trunking capabilities, businesses can extend their reach and improve voice quality through a cloud communications provider while operating out of MS Teams. In 2022, it's expected that [90% of enterprises](#) will use direct routing for public switched telephony network (PSTN) connectivity.



Both voice integrations offer unique features. We're breaking down each option below, so you know what to expect.

Calling Plans	Direct Routing
Voice plan by Microsoft	Voice plan by carrier of choice
Suited for small to medium businesses	Suited for businesses of all size
International plan at a separate cost	Single, regional and global carrier management
Limited voice coverage: 26 countries expanding North America and Europe	Global voice coverage: 170+ countries expanding The Americas, Europe, Middle East, Africa, and Asia-Pacific
Phone numbers belong to Microsoft	You own your numbers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3000 minutes per user (domestic plan) • Dial-in audio conferencing for up to 250 people • Remote calling through any device with Teams application • Call transfer • Multi-level auto attendant • Call queues 	20+ VoIP features included with extended offerings such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customizable minute packages • Call recording • Local caller-ID • Detailed analytics dashboard
Billing: consumption & subscription	Billing: consumption & subscription
Call quality unreliable in some areas	Better global coverage leads to more reliable call quality
Limited scalability and support	Highly scalable and extensive 24/7 support

Calling Plans vs. Direct Routing

So, how do you know which one is right for your business?

Calling Plans work fine for businesses with light calling requirements. However, most international organizations need advanced voice features for their communication requirements and service level agreement. All in all, direct routing works as an extension of your MS Teams platform.

AVOXI + Pro Tip!

AVOXI offers a hosted SBC solution to directly and securely connect to your MS Teams environment. Talk to us to learn more.

When you use direct routing, you're going to need to integrate your virtual number into your certified Microsoft SBC. What is an SBC? It's a network device that supports VoIP infrastructure while providing interoperability between devices and application servers. An SBC helps maintain compliance and safeguards your communications.

TREND #5

Using API to Achieve CSAT & Maintain Competitive Advantage

Enterprises are embracing APIs, or application programming interfaces, to create a synergetic omnichannel experience for customers with a high level of accuracy. Communication APIs do just that by defining the capable interactions between your servers and applications.

With an API in your tech stack, you can set your system up to improve processes and workflows that drive more efficiency for happier customers. The integration is simple and can be done without high-level coding knowledge.

APIs have evolved, and with the shift to low-code/no-code integrations, employees from various departments can utilize this technology to optimize their work and improve service levels for their customers. Here's how:



Improving the Customer Experience

Improving the customer experience is the [driving force](#) behind contact center AI implementation. And the more forward-thinking businesses are using APIs to do just that through their unified communications with:

These integrations make real-time support accessible to all customers from anywhere, resulting in stronger ties with your customers. APIs also allow for contextual communications by making useful client information readily available to customer service reps, delivering an elevated level of support and service.

- **Live Chatbots**
- **SMS Bots**
- **Click-to-Call Features**
- **Social Media Integrations**
- **Video Conferencing**
- **IVRs**
- **Email Automation**

The Shift to Low-Code/No-Code

APIs have historically been very technical pieces of code, built by developers so organizations can connect their business tools across the web. 2022 will see a rise in low-code/no-code API solutions which make it possible for the average employee to implement their own API with drag-and-drop editors.

This shift is being driven by the need for faster innovation and more agility in today's market. As your business looks to get new products and features to market faster, you'll need employees to quickly build solutions and roll them out to your customers.

TREND #6

The Future of AI in Contact Centers

For decades call centers have leveraged advanced technologies. And the industry has come a long way from its first call routing systems and IVR. But even with these advancements, keeping up with growing customer demands has been a challenge. And bringing artificial intelligence (AI) into call center technology has presented a huge opportunity to fill this gap.

With AI, organizations are presented with an assortment of tools that can boost retention, customer loyalty, and revenue. Because of the endless possibilities, the rise of AI within call center technology will be a massive player in 2022.

AI Applications Taking Charge

Organizations of all sizes are now investing in AI tools that support enhanced customer service and are easy to manage. Here are a few AI tools to keep an eye on heading into 2022:



Answer Bots

Think of an answer bot like chat support on a website - but without an agent on the other side. Answer bots can help with questions and troubleshoot information, providing customers with a self-service option first before routing the inquiry to a live agent.

Natural Language

This tool enables machines to understand and direct calls based on human speech and text. In the call center, this is used in the form of an auto attendant. Auto attendants can help your customers:

Get directed to the right department or agent

Receive automated answers to their questions

Speech to Text

Much like the name implies, speech to text transcribes audio files into text. This allows organizations to break down spoken words into smaller samples - making it easier to analyze conversational data coming in via the contact center.

These consumer-facing tools are made possible by network AIs that work behind the scenes and keep your systems in tip-top shape. Tools such as intelligent data storage, network self-optimization, predictive maintenance, and optimal network quality ensure required maintenance is fulfilled for the customer, on the behalf of the provider handling their communications.

Advantages of AI + UC

AI tools are completely transforming unified communications. With predictive analytics, natural language processing, and many other tools, businesses can tap into the power of AI to improve team collaboration and customer interactions.

There are a variety of reasons an organization may want to explore AI within their UC including:

- ✓ **Improved Employee Performance**
AI tools help your employees reduce routine tasks. This increases their efficiency and empowers them to make more impactful business decisions.
- ✓ **Improved Time to Resolution**
Tools such as voice bots can offer self-service options for customers to provide quick solutions to their problems and questions.
- ✓ **Faster Customer Experience**
IVRs provide customer-empowered automation to route callers to the right agent the first time. Plus, virtual assistants can gather info and record conversations.

- ✓ **Improved Collaboration**
AI ensures all Internet-capable devices are connected to simplify the exchange of data.
- ✓ **More Accurate Data-Based Business Decisions**
AI analytics can swiftly identify patterns within available data, such as transcribed calls or complaint emails, helping to improve interactions.
- ✓ **Save Employees Time**
AI applications such as voice assistants can help schedule meetings, make calls, send SMS messages, and even translate voice messages into text. And collaboration tools can help them find relevant documents based on past information - allowing employees to come to meetings better prepared and saving time along the way.

AI Challenges

Though AI in UC is still in its infancy stage of implementation, the road ahead is full of ways to innovate and further adopt its applications. But before every industry can adopt AI tools, some challenges need overcoming.



Security

As you add more layers to your tech stack, you add more security risks. Unified communications solutions combine video, text, and voice - and transporting these media snippets needs to be done securely. AI requires a lot of learned data to secure end-to-end passage.



Bespoke Use-Cases

AI tools are very explicit on use-cases. It takes thousands of hours of data to make a model, and it's typically specific to the individual client. Broadening AI tools to the masses continues to serve as a challenge, and organizations must work with vendors who are willing to dig into your needs and address your unique challenges.



The Human Element

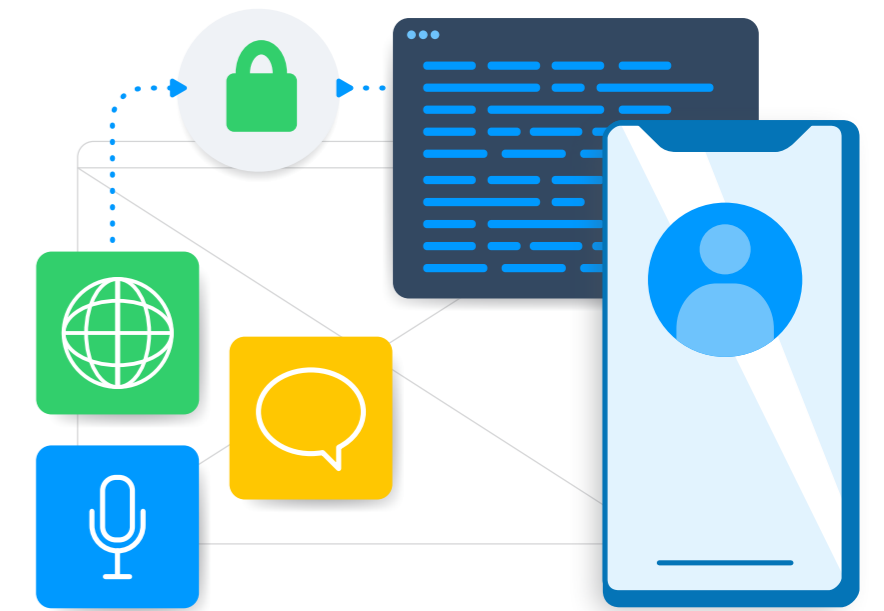
Your organization must understand that AI is not a means of replacing your people. Bots are not meant to replace humans, they are meant to empower them to work more efficiently. Bots are a great way to provide around-the-clock customer service, but ultimately the human element remains an important aspect of the CX.

CONCLUSION

Evolving Your Competitive Edge in 2022 & Beyond

2022 is the year to modernize your phone system and leverage the synergies between your communications and business tools to stay competitive in the marketplace. Cloud communications software gives that competitive edge, enabling businesses to outsource complicated on-premises, security protocols, and system maintenance, to focus on other areas of the business.

We're AVOXI, and delivering mission-critical global communications is what we do. Our award-winning cloud-enabled solution provides voice, messaging, and contact center solutions - all within one platform. With multiple points of presence around the globe, and an established network of local carriers that span more than 170+ countries, AVOXI delivers the most expansive and reliable communications solution on the market.



Ready to get ahead of these 2022 communications trends?

AVOXI can help. Try our leading global communications platform today and benefit from:

- Expansive number inventory across 170+ hard-to-reach countries
- Global voice, messaging and contact center - all in one platform
- Industry leading reliability across 50+ Local Tier 1 carriers
- Enterprise support 24/7/365

Let's Talk

AVOXI[®]