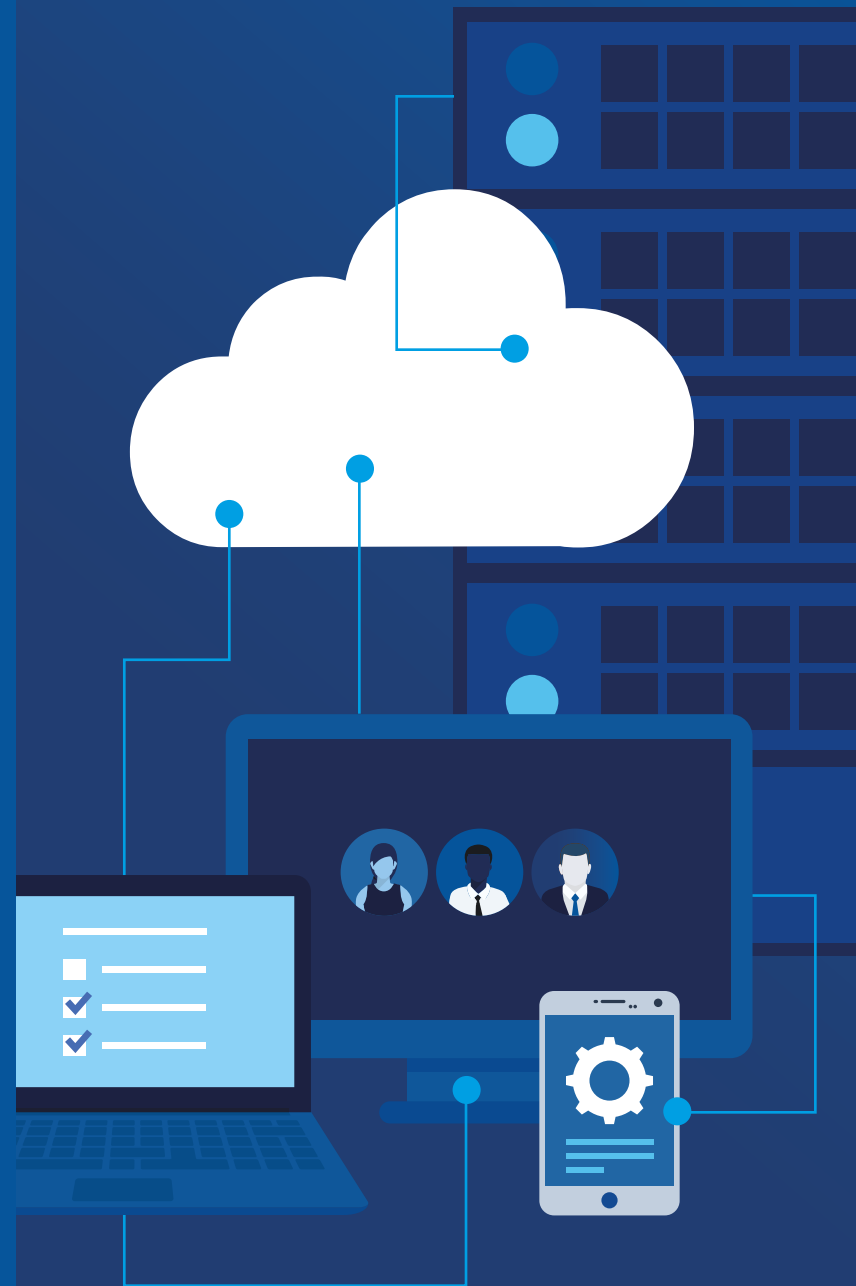


A Bell guide to optimizing your unified communications roadmap

# Getting the best from unified communications

Bell





WHAT'S IN THIS GUIDE

Integrating standalone communications streams into a single solution speeds up collaboration, boosts productivity and reduces costs. For many organizations, the question is no longer should we implement unified communications (UC) – it's how can we do it, in the smartest way possible.

This guide looks at UC as part of your digital ecosystem, providing insights and advice from Bell experts on how to develop an effective UC roadmap for your business.

Introduction.....3

UC today – and tomorrow.....4

Building a roadmap that's right for your business.....6

Starting point: Know your UC needs.....7

Choose the UC model that's best for you.....8

Approach UC as an ongoing journey.....16

Why Bell for UC.....17

# Introduction

The nature of work is evolving. The hybrid workforce is the new business reality: distributed, mobile, working anywhere and anytime. As businesses focus on growth, they need to connect their employees to data, customers, partners and colleagues wherever they are and on any device. Unified communications (UC) is a key driver of that transformation, bringing together multiple enterprise communications streams into a single solution.

Enterprise telephony and UC capabilities (soft clients, conferencing, collaboration, mobility) upgrades will remain top investment priorities for businesses undergoing or planning digital transformation.<sup>1</sup>

Organizations across all sectors are looking to access a broader suite of communication and collaboration tools so they can better support remote and mobile workers, provide a more consistent user experience on any device, and be more agile and innovative in the face of heightened competition and technological change.

## The question is how?

To get the most out of UC, you need **a clear roadmap for deploying and managing** it. Whether you're looking to cut costs, boost productivity or deliver a better user experience, having a plan to guide your transformation journey will help ensure that the UC path you take is aligned with your unique business objectives and operational requirements.



# UC today – and tomorrow

At its core, UC refers to the integration of multiple enterprise communications streams into one unified system. It is typically made up of:

## Enterprise telephony

End-users can access rich voice and IP telephony features and capabilities – anytime, anywhere, on any device.

## Team collaboration

Formerly independent systems such as threaded group messaging, search, tasks, storage and file sharing are seamlessly integrated with conferencing, enabling an ‘always-on’ team environment.

## Multimedia conferencing

All-inclusive conferencing tools support the full range of endpoints, including desktop clients, legacy handsets, mobile devices and meeting rooms.

## Business process applications

Communications tools are integrated with those used for contact centre operations, workflow, customer relationship management, reporting, analytics, and more.



Underlying all of these components is an infrastructure of wireline and wireless connectivity, data centres, and front- and back-end business support systems (BSS) and operating support systems (OSS). This foundation helps enable UC's quality of service, high performance, availability and security.

# Advancements in UC have been accelerated by digital transformation.

Three areas in particular have had a big impact on the evolution of UC.



## The cloud

As cloud computing continues to mature, its benefits have extended to UC. Providers can now offer utility-style, pay-as-you-go cloud-based UC solutions supported by more agile service development for faster rollouts of new features and capabilities.

These benefits are powered largely by network function virtualization, which is pushing UC to a software-driven model rather than one with on-premises hardware at its core.



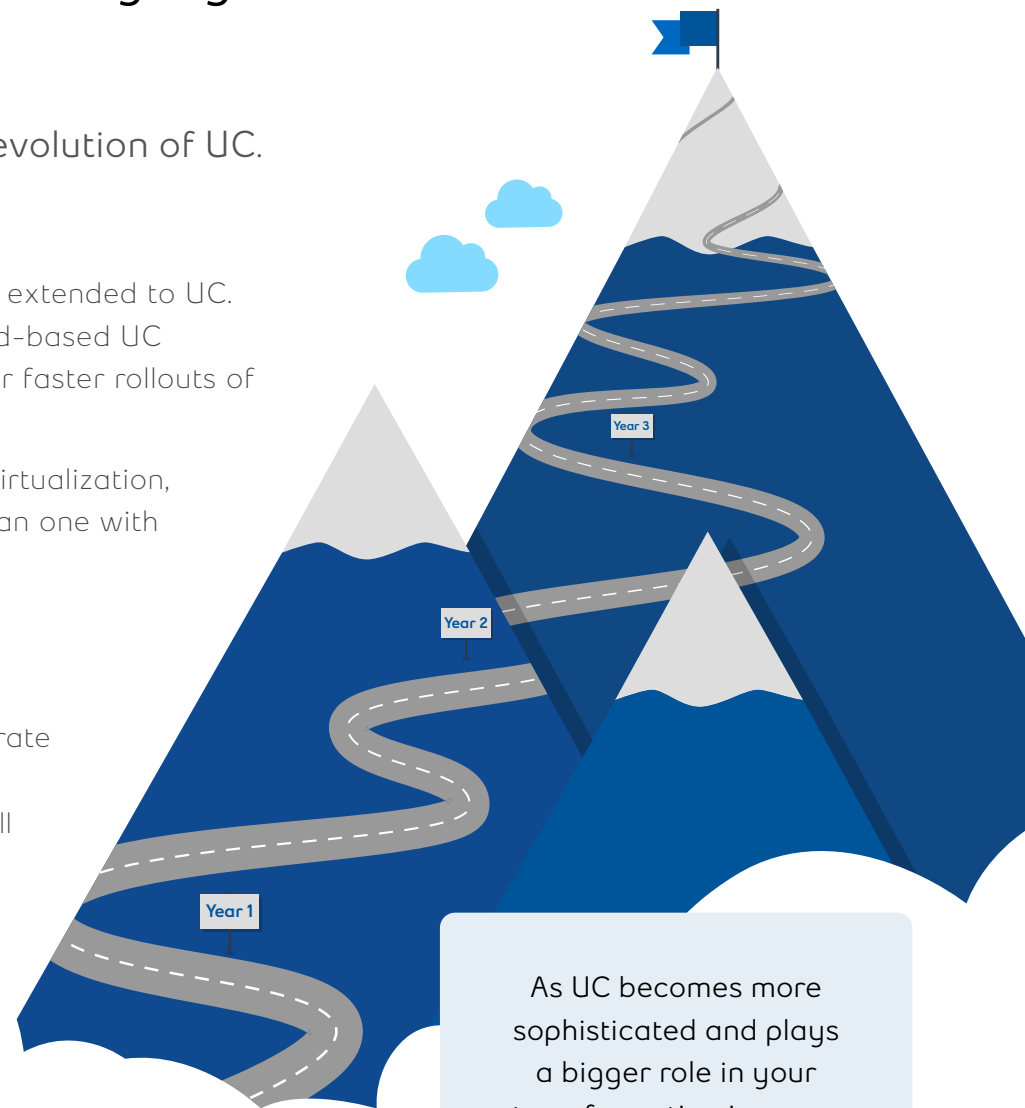
## The user experience

While the first generation of UC focused on bringing separate applications together, the next generation is focused on delivering an optimal user experience. Users can access all of their communication and collaboration tools from a single integrated application – with the same features, look and feel across all endpoints and devices.



## The unification of things

By integrating UC with supporting infrastructure, organizations will be able to optimize performance, improve compliance with corporate policies, and enhance access controls. And, when UC is paired with artificial intelligence, machine learning and data analytics applications, organizations will gain access to actionable insights on how their teams are working together.



As UC becomes more sophisticated and plays a bigger role in your transformation journey, having a clear roadmap is critical for reaching your destination.

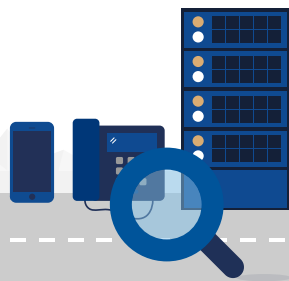
# Building a roadmap that's right for your business

To stay on course as you pursue your transformation journey, it helps to have a map to guide you. These three steps will help you create a roadmap that leads to achieving your UC goals.

Step 1

## Assess

Get familiar with how you currently communicate and collaborate – and pinpoint opportunities for improvement.



Step 2

## Select

Understand the options for UC deployment – the models and choices available – so you can identify what will work best for your requirements.



Step 3

## Improve

Keep your roadmap up to date and aligned with your needs as your business evolves.





## Starting point: Know your UC needs

Understanding your Current Mode of Operation (CMO) will give you a baseline for mapping your UC strategy.

Start with an inventory of your existing communications systems, applications and tools. Consider how each is used within your organization:

- What adds value and what is business critical?
- What is overutilized and underutilized?
- What would make your current communications approach more effective?
- Are there overlapping services or platforms that could be removed or standardized?
- Are there opportunities to enhance the user experience?

Next, perform a **SWOT** (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis of your communications infrastructure. Include **interviews** with key stakeholders inside and outside your IT team. This will help you better understand what works, what doesn't and why.

Finally, look at your current **operating models, processes** and **Key Performance Indicators** (KPIs) – and determine if your metrics of success have changed (or are likely to change) over time.



A professional services consultant from Bell can help provide specialized expertise and capacity if you don't have internal resources to perform these kinds of assessments.

# Choose the UC model that's best for you

With multiple deployment possibilities, it's important to determine which UC model will work best for you – and help deliver the results you seek.

Do you want to own and manage the entire UC infrastructure? Do you have the in-house resources to manage it all yourself or will you need to contract outside support? What will the total cost of ownership (TCO) be? Answering these questions ultimately comes back to understanding your business priorities and objectives over both the short and long terms.

There are four common deployment models for UC services, each suited for different needs:



## On-premises

You own, maintain and manage all UC systems and applications, which are located on your premises.



## Hosted

The entire UC solution is outsourced – owned and managed in the carrier's data centres and delivered as a cloud-based service.



## Managed

While the systems and applications are owned by you and reside on your premises, the day-to-day operations and management are handled by your carrier.



## Hybrid

Some UC applications are hosted and managed in-house while others are provided as a service by the carrier.



## Model 1: On-premises (customer-owned, customer-managed)

This approach puts you in full control. You own the systems, build and maintain your own supporting infrastructure, and manage daily UC operations – physically on site or out of your dedicated single-tenant ‘private cloud’ (provided by your organization).

This control comes with **many responsibilities**. Under this model, you’ll have to procure and operate your own data centres, BSS/OSS, IP connectivity, and network and security operations centres. You’ll need to perform your own hardware and software updates and upgrades, and handle routine support requests. To do all that, you’ll also need to **maintain a sizeable and highly skilled in-house IT team**.

On-premises UC is ideal if you have a single location and a large concentration of staff working on site rather than remotely. Just be aware that as cloud-based approaches become more popular, on-premises systems may become less supported by their vendors, with fewer and less frequent feature updates and upgrades.

Consider an on-premises model if you are looking for:

- A CAPEX model
- Full control and customization of your services
- The ability to pick and choose your own systems and apps
- A solution that lets you leverage your existing infrastructure and resources
- Higher levels of security to comply with data sovereignty regulations



## Model 2: Hosted (carrier-owned, carrier-managed)

This model involves outsourcing your entire UC solution. The carrier owns the applications, builds and manages the services in its data centres, and offers cloud-based UC as a service (UCaaS) for a monthly fee. The carrier also provides the IP connectivity required to access the UC services and interconnect with other networks.

Because most of the risks and responsibilities are taken over by the carrier, you can **free up your own IT resources** to focus on your core business objectives. The hosted model enables you to scale your services up or down as needed – without getting locked into paying for a fixed capacity.

A common hosted model is the multi-tenant cloud that serves many enterprise customers – each customer being one tenant. If that cloud is dedicated to one customer, it is known as a single-tenant or private cloud. Over-the-Top (OTT) cloud, is when user access is through the Internet. In the carrier-hosted model, the user access is over the carrier's private network that is Quality of Service (QoS) enabled for better performance.

Consider a carrier-hosted model if you are looking for:

- Predictable pay-as-you-go billing and a lower TCO
- A reduction in upfront infrastructure investments
- Minimal IT resourcing
- Reachability and security
- End-to-end quality of service (QoS) with service-level agreements (SLAs)
- Rapid access to UC innovations



# 74%

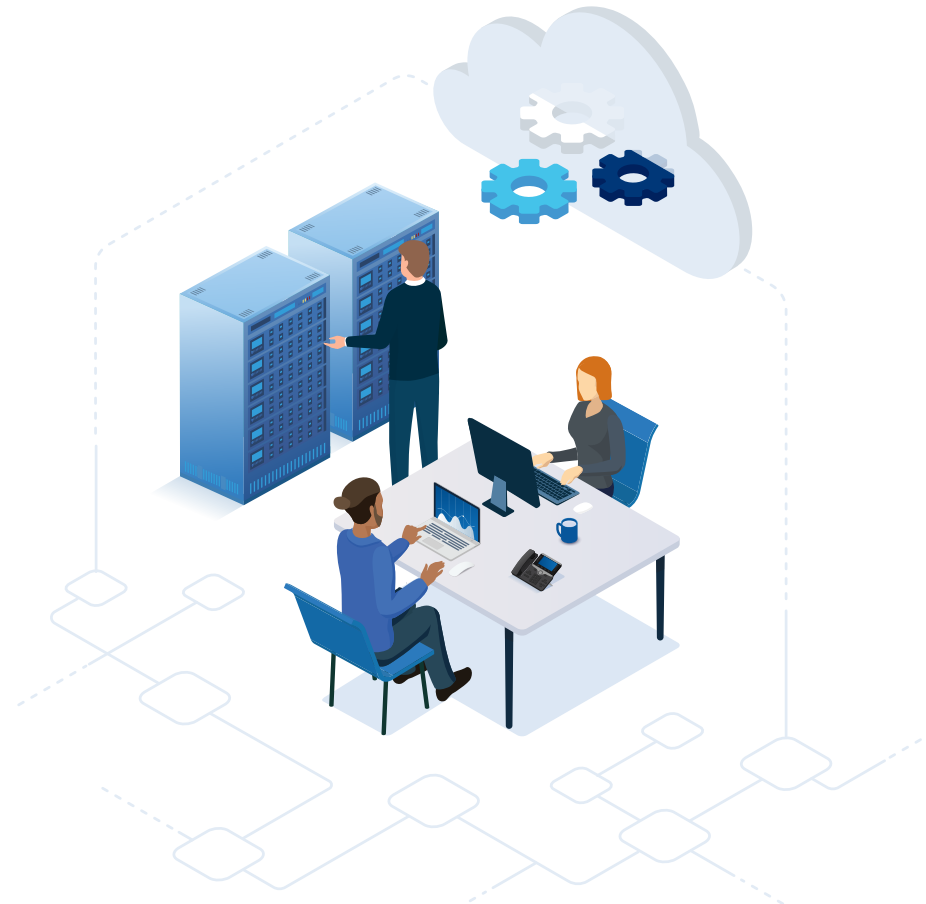
“By 2024, 74% of the new unified communications licenses purchased by organizations will be cloud-based, up from 48% in 2019.”<sup>2</sup>

## Model 3: Managed (customer-owned, carrier-managed)

Under this model, you own the UC systems and the applications that reside in your own infrastructure. The management and operation of those systems, however, are outsourced to a carrier under a managed service arrangement. This approach gives you the security and control of an on-premises system with the quality and reliability provided by an experienced partner.

Consider a managed model if you are looking for:

- A solution that lets you leverage your existing infrastructure
- Reduced administrative and management burden
- Predictable ongoing costs



# Over \$1M

required in annual staffing costs alone,  
to operate your own 24/7 UC Network  
Operations Centre (NOC) with 10-12  
full-time employees.<sup>3</sup>

## Model 4: Hybrid

With the hybrid approach, some applications are hosted on your own infrastructure and managed in-house, while others are hosted and managed by the carrier.

Consider a hybrid model if you are looking for:

- Flexibility on which apps to deploy on-premises and which to outsource
- Core sites and select functions to be kept on-premises
- A solution that lets you leverage your existing infrastructure
- A transitional step towards a fully hosted cloud solution



# 53%

of organizations are spending more to enable employees to collaborate and work remotely.<sup>4</sup>

# What business priorities might influence your UC decisions?

When it comes to making the best possible decisions for your UC deployment and operating models, there's more to consider than just the technology involved. There are several business drivers that will play an important role in which model you should choose.



## Staffing

Your organization may be facing the challenge of adopting new styles of work, while continuing to support traditional workers and existing technology.

If your team is currently stretched thin across multiple locations and projects, and your current UC solutions can't meet diverse user needs, you may consider outsourcing your UC.



## Security

If you're in a highly regulated industry, stringent security requirements are critical for your business. Your data for example, would need to reside in country to meet the data sovereignty regulations. You could opt for an on-premises solution or work with a local cloud provider.



## Competition

If your aging infrastructure is negatively impacting your bottom line and lead-times and costs are prohibitive to refreshing the infrastructure, the carrier-hosted model could better serve your needs, allowing you to more quickly and cost effectively introduce new apps, features and capabilities to your team.



## Capital

If you're tight on capital and cash flow, you may find yourself with a shrinking IT budget but a growing OPEX, by choosing the on-premises model. You may want to consider a predictable pay-as-you-go carrier-hosted model. This would help you avoid large upfront capital investments, required by the on-premises model, and free up your resources to work towards more strategic business objectives.



## Mobility

Mobile workforces often want the same touch, feel and user experience across devices. They want collaboration tools at their fingertips, enabling them to be available and productive from anywhere and at all times.

If you're looking for improved service performance and end-user satisfaction, you may want to consider a carrier-hosted model – giving your workforce access to the latest and greatest UC innovations – anytime, anywhere.



## Infrastructure

If you've invested in on-premises infrastructure and your decision-makers prefer that your organization owns everything, you should consider the on-premises model.

That way, you can continue to leverage existing infrastructure, with plans to upgrade your back-end systems and equipment a couple years out in your transformation strategy. When you're doing your longer-term planning, you may want to seek ways to save money elsewhere and explore alternatives to hosting your UC on-premises.



## Integration

If your solutions are not natively integrated, they could cause inefficiencies and poor user experiences. Having different vendors for IP telephony, conferencing and team collaboration costs organizations time and money to integrate them.

You may want to consider a carrier-hosted model to provide your users with a more seamless and efficient experience. Since cloud solutions are always up to date and advancing, your workforce would benefit from continuous updates and innovations.



## Geography

You have a large, centralized campus, so overseeing on-premises systems and core functions is manageable and preferable. If you realize that this option is not cost-effective, you can consider a hybrid model, which could allow you to be flexible regarding which apps to deploy on-premises and which to outsource. You would be able to continue to own and manage core functions from your headquarters, while leveraging a carrier-hosted option to keep costs under control at your branches.



## Evaluating UC apps and services

In addition to deployment and operating models, you also need to determine which apps and services will be the right fit for your workforce.

Consider the following questions:

- What is your organization's ideal work style? Which UC apps and services enable that style of work, both today and tomorrow?
- How are your current apps and services evolving? Is their evolution in line with UC industry trends and best practices?
- What UC apps and services are available in the market today? How will they evolve in the future?

Make sure to factor in the needs of the people who will actually be using these apps and services.

### Your users

While office workers will likely want advanced business telephony features, production and development teams will require more robust collaboration tools. You'll also want to consider how your users' needs will change over time.

### Your partners

If you're looking to collaborate more closely with your external customers and partners, team collaboration capabilities that enable guest access becomes an important requirement.

# Approach UC as an ongoing journey

Deployment is just the beginning of UC adoption. Because your business will continue to evolve and change, your UC solution needs to do so, too. To keep your UC roadmap effective over the long run, be sure to:



## Establish your future mode of operations

Your future mode of operations (FMO) is the target future state for your organization. Your UC roadmap should serve as the multi-year implementation plan that guides you from your CMO to your FMO.

**You'll want to set specific goals and milestones as you move from your CMO to FMO. Consider:**

- What will be done year by year?
- How will the budget change?
- What is the recovery plan if something goes wrong?
- What type of training will be required?  
What will be the impact on your workforce?

When envisioning your FMO, factor in your ideal user experience and how UC will support your long-term business objectives.

## Audit and update your roadmap

Once your roadmap is established, you should regularly audit your implementation and update it to meet the changing needs of your business and users.

**Good questions to ask include:**

- Have any of the business drivers behind your roadmap changed?
- Has the implementation process created new pain points for employees, customers or partners?
- Is the roadmap delivering on its projected benefits?
- Have there been any major shifts in UC trends and technologies?
- Have the needs of your users changed since the roadmap was first developed?

The findings from these audits will inform revisions and updates to your roadmap. They may even trigger a re-evaluation of the UC model, apps and services you've put in place.



A carrier with a business strategy that aligns with your roadmap can strengthen your future capabilities. They can provide the support you need if you grow or relocate, and their skillset can be leveraged to complement your workforce. Ultimately, you want a partner with future-proof products and services, a vision that's driven by the user experience, and a deep understanding of how UC is evolving.



# Why Bell for UC

Planning and deploying UC is a lot easier with a trusted advisor by your side. If you want the best of unified communications for your business, you want Bell.



Our team has implemented and transformed the UC infrastructures of many of Canada's largest institutions. From assessing your CMO to evaluating your progress towards your FMO, our consultants have the know-how and experience to help you at every step of your transformation journey. Because we operate Canada's largest voice and data network, we also bring unique insights and capabilities that can help you build the optimal UC roadmap – then customize, roll out and maintain the right services and features to meet your business objectives.

**Bell offers several market-leading UC solutions and services:**

## Hosted Services

With Bell Total Connect, your entire unified communications system is hosted in our secure Canadian data centres and connected to your business via the Bell network – delivering crystal-clear voice quality along with a full range of messaging, collaboration and conference features.

## Managed Services

Our team can manage the on-premises UC systems and endpoints that you already own. We are responsible for 24/7 remote monitoring as well as the management of all assets, configurations, events and incidents, updates and changes. We also offer an online self-serve portal for accessing service catalogues and reports.

## Infrastructure Services

We leverage our buying power to qualify and procure systems, endpoints and software from industry-leading UC vendors on your behalf. While you own the solutions and are responsible for managing all deployment, operations, field support and lifecycle management, our team can be called in to provide service maintenance.

## Professional Services

With the largest number of certified consultants in Canada, our professional services team can help you develop your UC roadmap, select your operating model, evaluate applications, deploy solutions and integrate UC with your vertical business apps.



## Take UC to the next level with Bell

Every organization will have a different UC journey – and a different roadmap to follow. If you're ready to talk about where you want your UC journey to take you, connect with us.

Visit [bell.ca/unifiedcommunications](https://bell.ca/unifiedcommunications) to request a callback or learn more about our unified communications services and solutions.