Empowered by Innovation

NEC

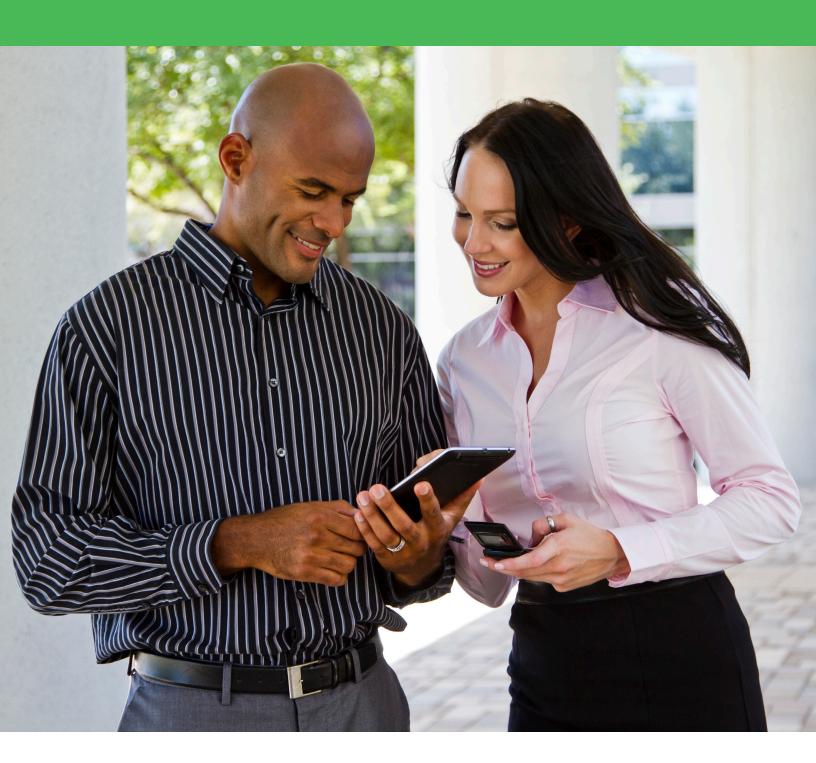# Empowering the Millennial Work Style with Unified Communications

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Introducing the Millennials

We have been hearing about an emerging workforce born after 1980 and the first generation to come of age in the new millennium. These young adults are also known as Millennials, the Net Generation, Generation Y, Generation Next, the Hyper Connected Generation or Echo Boomers. No matter which name you use to designate this group of young adults they are becoming a significant factor to consider in business. At over 79 million strong in the United States they outnumber the large Baby Boomer generation by three million people.[1] Within the next two years Millennials will comprise over half of the labor market globally.

The way Millennials have grown to interact with friends and colleagues is creating a new set of demands on the tools that businesses provide. They have a strong desire for always-connected, mobile access and when it comes to computers they live in a wireless, Internet connected world. The use of email is outdated to them; instead message posts on social networking sites are their modus operandi. Access to their applications from a PC or mobile is expected from anywhere and the idea of installing "Fat" applications that are locked down and only work on certain machines is limiting to their nomadic nature. For those of the Hyper Connected Generation the concept of making a call from a pay phone or even ever stepping inside a phone booth is very foreign to them. Life without a mobile device to provide anywhere, anytime connectivity is not imaginable. These mobile devices are not primarily used for making phone calls either. For Millennials, text messages are the preferred method of communication over making phone calls. Some may even question why there is an office phone on their work desk and most have already "cut the cord" (or the landline) at home or perhaps never even owned one. In fact, currently over half of Millennial households do not have a landline phone.[2] Finally, with the proliferation of Wi-Fi, working from anywhere is a prerequisite when trying to attract this young talent. For Millennials, work is something they do, not somewhere they must go to. The benefit to businesses who understand this can be unprecedented, as this generation is highly educated, born to multi-task, and seemingly capable of producing around the clock.

Enter Unified Communications & Collaboration (UC&C)

Unified Communications has many different definitions, but according to the 2012 Unified Communications and Collaboration Study from IDG Enterprise, Unified Communications and Collaboration (UC&C) is defined as a broad umbrella of technologies that are all accessible through common user interfaces on desktop and mobile devices using voice or tactile controls. Within this umbrella is:

- Advanced telephony calling and management,
- Unified messaging,
- Web/audio/ video conferencing,
- Instant Messaging,
- Pervasive presence,
- Mobility,
- VoIP,
- Collaboration,
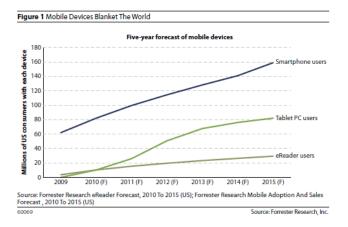- CEBP (Communications-Enabled Business Processes),
- Contact Center

NEC's UNIVERGE 3C™ Unified Communications and Collaboration solution includes these types of advanced applications that have been gaining steady traction across businesses as CIOs look for new, innovative technology to increase workforce productivity and stay competitive in the global marketplace, yet still be achieved within their tight budgets. UNIVERGE 3C combines UC&C, and a business tailored software services platform for enterprises, medium sized businesses, and Cloud operators. It utilizes a service-oriented architecture (SOA) and open standards (e.g. SIP, XMPP) to provide superior adaptability, which enables customers to easily consider how communications can best contribute to the needs of their business.

Established companies are migrating their legacy PBXs to Unified Communications and Collaboration software-based solutions to take advantage of this leading edge technology. UC&C is more economical to operate than traditional PBXs and helps to increase workforce productivity. More importantly, if UC&C products are designed correctly, they can provide the cutting edge work experience that Millennials expect. When Millennials are thinking about prospective employers, they are not only concerned about the company culture, but they also take into consideration the technology they will use in their work environment every day. According to a recent study from Accenture over a quarter of these Gen Y workers are disappointed with the technology their employer provides them, and almost 40% are looking for state-of-the art technology in the office.[3]

The Mobile and BYOD Lifestyle

The nomadic work style is a growing trend with today's workforce. According to Forrester® Research, 82 million US consumers will have tablets and 159 million will have smartphones by 2015. Globally, the numbers will grow to 200 million tablets and 500 million smartphones. Forrester expects one-third of those smart devices to be used for work.[4] Therefore, it is key that UC&C solutions embrace mobility.

Figure 1 Mobile Devices Blanket The World

Five-year forecast of mobile devices

Source: Forrester Research eReader Forecast, 2010 To 2015 (US); Forrester Research Mobile Adoption And Sales Forecast , 2010 To 2015 (US)

60069   Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

Millennials in particular embrace mobility with nearly a quarter owning tablets, over half currently using smart phones, and almost three quarters possessing a laptop. Millennials expect to be able to work anywhere at any time and on any device. They are the "always connected" generation, which sleeps with their mobile devices at their bedside and checks them even before having breakfast. State-of-the-art UC&C technology supports their anytime, anywhere work style by enabling users to control which device rings and when, based on profiles or schedules they establish. Therefore, information is easily exchanged even when using their mobile devices, resulting in improved customer service and overall efficiency. Less time will be spent listening to voicemails or playing phone tag.

The industry has observed consumerization before, but with Millennials, owning powerful smart phones and preferring these devices for both business and personal use, along with other devices such as tablets and laptops, a trend in communications computing known as BYOD or Bring Your Own Device is accelerating. This trend is being pushed from the top down by executives as well as from the bottom up by Millennials. With the current BYOD craze, the lines between work and personal devices are becoming blurred in the enterprise. Many corporations are already implementing BYOD policies and leveraging devices owned by the employee. There are several reasons for this. First, BYOD appeals to and helps attract a Millennial workforce.

This young generation is very familiar with technology, and they want to use leading edge technology not only in their personal lives, but at work as well. Second, BYOD can help to increase employee productivity because these individuals are most familiar and comfortable using devices of their choice. In fact, if BYOD is implemented properly it can result in a 10% - 15% increase in end user productivity.[5] Finally, the soft benefit of employee morale is bolstered by BYOD. Employees feel more empowered, and 77% feel that technology in general makes their working life better.[6]

Unified Communications is a critical component when considering a BYOD policy. It can actually enhance a user's device and thus their collaboration capabilities within the company while protecting a company's confidential information. NEC's UNIVERGE 3C unified communications and collaboration solution can enhance these different devices by offering mobile clients that provide a user

Millennials Embrace the Mobile Work Style

Over a half use a smartphone

Stephanie

Nearly a quarter own a tablet

Almost three quarters possess a laptop

experience that is not only powerful and rich, but also functions consistently across different operating systems, including iOS, MAC, Microsoft Windows and Android, resulting in an intuitive, easy to use experience. A UC&C solution should be architected for infrastructure supporting all types of different devices or equipment – mobile or stationary. In fact, the UNIVERGE 3C solution employs the same software code across MAC and Windows making it easy for IT to manage across different end points. With UC&C, no matter which device is being used, an employee can still access key contact lists, join a conference bridge, or access other collaboration applications using a common set of login credentials, resulting in a more valuable device and a more productive employee.

Securing the Social Enterprise

Social and mobile are converging in the workplace. Social networks from Facebook® to LinkedIn® are being used by employees as a means for company advertising, finding prospective employees, monitoring the competition, etc. Since Millennials grew up with technology, they are very Internet-savvy and use many of these social networking sites, as well as, visit

many other sites on a daily basis. In fact, an overwhelming 83% of Millennials use some sort of social media site. Many of the Hyper Connected generation connect to these sites not only via their desktops, but they use other devices such as their tablets and smart phones too. These users do not want to be burdened with VPNs and other security measures, yet enterprises advocating a BYOD policy must make security a key element of the policy because the cost of a breach can be catastrophic. Companies deploying UC&C solutions should enable their users to leverage their same authenticated enterprise credentials and use the same encryption methods that are employed for other content that traverses the enterprise network normally. Therefore, the standard security methods such as HTTPS / SSL and certificates should apply for unified communications as well. NEC's UNIVERGE 3C solution incorporates more stringent security measures, such as JITC (Joint Interoperability Task Command) certification, which is mandated by government organizations. Security is becoming increasingly more critical for markets such as health care, legal, finance and retail as well.

Satisfying a Variety of Roles

Unified Communications and Collaboration infrastructure should serve many different roles in an organization, supporting engineers, to sales, customer service, operations and more. When deploying a UC&C solution, it is important to take into consideration the different types of users and their work styles. If the UC&C system is deployed with these different communities in mind, it will not only improve productivity, but it will also result in attracting the best and brightest of the Millennial workforce, reduce travel expenses and improve customer service. Below are just a few of the different ways that a UC&C solution can be used for all types of employees:

- Sales organizations can easily schedule or establish ad-hoc collaboration sessions to engage prospective or existing clients.
- Marketing departments can arrange webinars to promote to the broader market and to poll attendees on their specific interests.
- Customer support can invoke remote control or co-browsing sessions with clients to enhance the support experience and ultimately the resolution.

- Users across an organization can arrange recurring or scheduled virtual meetings, which can include video, screen sharing, file sharing and more for a fully integrated multimedia experience.

In Conclusion

Millennials are the next generation workforce. If you want to attract these new employees their different work styles and technology expectations cannot be ignored. Unified Communications solutions such as NEC's UNIVERGE 3C software can help enterprises to accommodate this new work style and provide powerful benefits to the productivity and competitiveness of their business. Next time, you consider your company's current communications network, do not just think about how it serves the needs of your current workforce, but consider how an Echo Boomer would view your current technology. *Would your business satisfy the 40% of Millennials who are looking for state-of-the-art technology to use at work?*

About NEC Corporation

NEC Corporation is a leader in the integration of IT and network technologies that benefit businesses and people around the world. By providing a combination of products and solutions that cross utilize the company's experience and global resources, NEC's advanced technologies meet the complex and ever-changing needs of its customers. NEC brings more than 100 years of expertise in technological innovation to empower people, businesses and society. For more information, visit NEC at *www.nec.com*.

1 Time Moneyland "Millennials vs. Baby Boomers: Who Would You Rather Hire?" Dan Schawbel March 29, 12

2 Research Access "Millennials are Growing Up" Gayle Vogel November 28, 2012

3 Jumping the Boundaries of Corporate IT – Accenture Global Research on Millennials' Use of Technology Accenture 2010

4 Mobilize Your Collaboration Strategy – Forrester Research Ted Schadler July 13, 2011

5 Developing a BYOD Policy webinar J. Gold Associates June 2012

6 Jumping the Boundaries of Corporate IT – Accenture Global Research on Millennials' Use of Technology Accenture 2010