



**NETGEAR®**  
BUSINESS

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# Unified Communications is critical to today's businesses

The essential factors for success



# Your business probably already depends on Unified Communications

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Unified Communications (UC) is a term that most businesses would not use or even be aware of, but they are almost certainly using UC, to one extent or another and with good reason. Unified Communications is transforming how companies operate now, and in the future, so it makes sense to understand what UC is and how it can help them thrive and survive.

UC is a term to describe integrating a wide range of business communications into one seamless environment. Communications covered by UC can include phones (desktop, soft, mobile), email, message services, web chat, video conferencing, shared screens or data, interactive whiteboards ...the list goes on. In essence, UC covers any way people use to communicate, internally and externally.

UC also includes integration with IT services and AV (which is very important, considering how consumption of video in business has escalated in recent times). Ideally, UC becomes a universal layer within a business, putting users at the heart of communications rather than revolving around devices, networks or locations.

With one identity, users are reachable in a multitude of methods (ideally with some control over how that is managed, such as setting their reachability as unavailable during personal time). Plus, incoming inquiries from customers can also be from an omnichannel selection of communication methods, for example web chat or phone.

The benefits of UC are enormous. Business information is no longer siloed, everything is connected, and employees have the same, consistent work experience regardless of where they are located. That matters because as organizations start returning to their offices or other work environments, some people will still be remotely based. So, companies need to create hybridized work environments to support everyone, as if they were in the same place. When implemented well, UC supports that level of flexibility.

NETGEAR helps businesses adopt UC by providing the essential layer: connectivity to bring together all those components of UC across all locations, systems, and devices. We work closely with multiple industry vendors, reducing complexity and cost, to make UC attainable for even the smallest business.

**The digital workplace has changed forever:  
now is the time to make the most of UC.**

REDUCE  
COMPLEXITY

# Why Unified Communications is growing

According to McKinsey, the COVID-19 crisis has accelerated the digitization of customer interactions by seven years, and their internal operations between three and four years (on average worldwide). Their survey also found that the largest shifts were the most likely to stay, including increased remote working and collaboration, greater migration to the cloud, and supporting more online purchasing and services.

Unified Communications (UC) has played a fundamental role in enabling that shift. Although it has been around in the technology industry for at least two decades, it took the global COVID-19 pandemic to accelerate UC for many businesses, to help them survive.

In parallel, the technologies that makes UC possible have evolved considerably over the years, meaning that its adoption is easier than ever before, supported by some key trends, including:



## **Software-defined products and services**

Purely hardware-based business products are being replaced by ones defined and controlled by software. Also, many services are now solely delivered via the cloud, making them accessible from just about anywhere.



## **Video collaboration**

Increasingly the collaboration tool of choice in business, video has been transformed over the years, with AV over IP and cloud-based video communications the new normal.



## **Everything digital**

The digitization of all these products and services makes it easier to connect them and transport services across different networks.



## **Hybrid working**

As businesses start to return to physical workplaces, many employees will still be remotely based, as will customers. So, companies need to create hybridized work environments to support everyone, as if they were all in the same place.



UC is at the forefront of how businesses are run, today and in the future, bringing IT, AV and communications together.



# UC best practice – what UC needs to work well (= great networking)

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## **Critical to successful Unified Communications**

Like anything to do with technology, the theory is just the start: the right implementation is everything. Plus, businesses have to consider supporting different employee preferences and locations, whether in a traditional place of work, or people's homes, or when traveling.

## **Clever collaboration**

For instance, existing meeting rooms need to be turned into intelligent video conference rooms, providing the same experience for both staff and customers in the same space, or those choosing to connect remotely. As well as AV traffic, collaboration tools are increasingly used for online document sharing, whiteboarding, and other activities. All this means making sure that IT, communications, AV, and network technology being used is fit for purpose, providing the necessary flexibility and capacity.

## **The user experience is everything**

A great user experience is now expected, partly driven by being accustomed to intuitive consumer devices such as smartphones. Also, the pandemic saw the replacement of inadequate home-working equipment with higher-grade tools, to help replicate working in the same building as colleagues. Back in the office, everyone will want that same quality: bad audio, cameras, and lighting are no longer tolerated. Also, many businesses do not have dedicated IT staff on-site, so equipment and services must be easy to maintain.

## **Connectivity is the foundation**

Successful UC is underpinned by a foundation of solid network technology across all environments: the primary workplace, employees' homes, other locations, and mobile working. It must be flexible to respond to change or growth with agility. It needs to be highly distributed and, of course, fast enough to support escalating volumes of network traffic (especially video).

In addition, any equipment – whether a high-performance network of switches supporting multiple meeting rooms or a WiFi router in a home office – must be easy to install and reliable. Finally, for most businesses, an attainable price point without any compromise on quality is non-negotiable.

## **UC connectivity checklist**

No two business situations are the same, but there are some standard requirements to consider when looking for networking to support UC, including:

- Speed and flexibility
- Reliability and affordability
- Ease of deployment, use and maintenance
- Support for distributed environments

OPTIMAL UC  
STRATEGY

# NETGEAR is here to make UC easier

NETGEAR, a pioneer of network technology for 25 years, helps organizations of all kinds to connect communications, IT and AV and supports businesses as they explore, adopt, and expand Unified Communications. We bring together all the separate components, working and integrating with leading manufacturers in the market to ensure that everything operates seamlessly together. Our network technology becomes part of the unifying layer that makes UC possible.

Our aim is to help take away the complexity of all networking and that includes UC. Our products, purpose-built for today's small to medium sized businesses, prioritize ease-of-deployment, use and maintenance. While all the NETGEAR product portfolio packs in a powerful array of impressive features, they are also cost-efficient, giving SMBs the performance they need within an affordable budget.



# NETGEAR®

## BUSINESS



### M4250 Series Managed Switches

The transition of AV to an IP-based infrastructure, requires a switch that is easy to set up and “plays nicely” with existing IT equipment. NETGEAR’s M4250 AV Line of switches provides a new, simplified way of configuring a switch to ensure complete functionality with the wide range of AV over IP equipment used in UC. Fully tested and dual-certified profiles for all types of AV over IP signals allow the user to be up and running in a matter of minutes.

Engineered with a different look and feel, the M4250 switches look great in an AV rack or behind a monitor and can be run fanless to not intrude on the room audio. Plus, IT managers will appreciate the full web-based or command line configuration functionality to fit their specific needs.

**Learn More:**  
[www.netgear.com/avline](http://www.netgear.com/avline)



### Plus Switches

With all the additional devices on the business network for UC, network switches need to provide more control, security, and easy management. This is where the NETGEAR Plus switches are a great choice for any small business, with a wide range of ports and numerous features.

These switches are plug-and-play so they work immediately while offering control through a user-friendly interface for easy management, diagnostics, and maintenance. Additionally, Power over Ethernet (PoE) functionality on some models allows the powering of PoE-capable UC devices through the same Ethernet cable used for data. This saves time, money, and the complexity of having to run power to all the devices.

**Learn More:**  
[www.netgear.com/business/wired/switches/plus](http://www.netgear.com/business/wired/switches/plus)



### Smart Switches

As networks become more and more complex, businesses may want more security and control. NETGEAR Smart switches provide all the capabilities of the Plus switches with extra capabilities, including: separate networks through VLANs, traffic prioritization with QoS, and remote cloud management through NETGEAR Insight. The wide portfolio of NETGEAR Smart switches offers a variety of port counts, PoE power and high speed switching with Gigabit, Multi-gig, and 10-Gigabit connectivity: all at a price accessible to SMBs.

#### Learn More:

[www.netgear.com/business/wired/switches/smart](http://www.netgear.com/business/wired/switches/smart)



### WiFi Access Points

With millions of users in homes and businesses worldwide, NETGEAR has proven WiFi technology expertise, and continuously invests in developing WiFi solutions for today and tomorrow's devices. Ideal for small and medium sized businesses, NETGEAR WiFi access points offer WiFi 6 speed, performance and capacity, along with security and management.

The first range to mention is NETGEAR Essentials. Essentials offer the best price performance ratio for easy plug-and-play WiFi with the ability to set up separate and secure WiFi networks. Essentials are standalone WiFi access points ideal for a single office at a home or business, dorm, or waiting room.

For larger coverage areas, more security features, or network management capabilities, NETGEAR Insight Managed Access Points are ideal. NETGEAR Insight Remote Management paired with Insight Managed Access Points enable network management and monitoring across multiple remote and local sites. These access points also bring enterprise-grade security to SMBs, with support for WPA3 and provision of up to 8 separate and secure WiFi networks. Although these Insight Managed Access Points provide advanced WiFi features, installation is quick and easy with PoE capability, wireless mesh set-up, and of course the Insight app.

#### Learn More:

[www.netgear.com/business/wifi/access-points](http://www.netgear.com/business/wifi/access-points)

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INSIGHT

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