



8x8

Unified Communications Buyers' Guide

How to choose the right UCaaS platform
for your business

About this guide

If you're reading this, we're willing to bet you've already decided to move your communications platform to the cloud.

No, not just move it—transform it. And in doing so, deliver differentiated experiences with an integrated solution for employee and customer communications. By moving to the cloud, you'll supercharge your organization's customer experience (CX) with faster service and hardwire business continuity into every aspect of your communications while boosting employee productivity and satisfaction.

Future-ready organizations understand that the most significant business asset is their customer base, and superior customer experience and satisfaction are what will drive measurable value in the long run. Companies that get CX right consistently outperform their peers on several critical dimensions including customer loyalty and revenue.

Pivotal components of their long-term strategy are (1) embracing the right combination of internal communication tools, (2) powering external channels (voice, video, web chat, SMS, and virtual assistants) and AI-enabled applications, plus (3) utilizing customer insights and analytics to deliver the data needed to perfect technology and business decisions.

The right business communications platform can do all this and more. And for such a critical system transition, there are bound to be apprehensions about the process and concerns around not only finding the right-fit vendor, but also ensuring a successful rollout and continued long-term success.

This expert guide takes you through the key themes and concepts organizations should consider when selecting Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) technology and offers insights into the [8x8 eXperience Communications Platform™ \(XCaaS\)](#), recognized as a Leader in the [Gartner Magic Quadrant for Unified Communications as a Service](#) for eleven consecutive years.

Step 1

What should you expect from a good UCaaS platform?

What to look for? The short answer: It depends.

It depends on what your customers and your business demand.

Today's businesses face rapidly-changing demands, whether due to customer trends, competitor activity, customer and employee expectations, individual and generational preferences, and other unforeseen factors. So the more versatile and robust your unified communications (UC) solution, the easier it will be to respond to any business challenges that come your way.



A top-notch UCaaS platform and vendor provides:

Reliability for the best end-to-end experience

- 99.999% financially-backed single uptime SLA for UC and contact center (CC)
- AI/ML-based GlobalReach™ tech for optimized routing to ensure superior voice quality and MOS score, even in low bandwidth conditions
- 24/7 follow-the-sun support for UC and CC for faster time to resolution

Integrated solution for superior customer experience

- Feature extensibility across UC and CC to ensure consistent experience from the front desk to the back office
- A single governance, security, compliance, and data privacy policy for all business communications
- One set of integrations across UC and CC with a wide set of technology partners including deep integration with Microsoft Teams

A true partnership to accelerate tech adoption and de-risk your deployment

- Single point of accountability, contact, and support
- Strong, innovation-powered, and proven cloud-native platform
- Hardened, time-tested migration strategy with simultaneous UC and CC deployment

Cost-efficient packaging for immediate ROI and low TCO

- Persona-based interfaces and packages with mix-and-match options
- Right-sized turnkey products to meet business needs without sacrificing features or added complexity
- Predictable, foreseeable costs with no additional software/hardware upgrade or maintenance costs

Modern communications to power your business success

Experience Communications as a Service (XCaaS) brings customer and employee experience together with contact center, voice, video, chat, and APIs on one cloud-native platform. The 8x8 eXperience Communications Platform™ is the first and only true XCaaS platform in the market and optimizes omnichannel customer experience with data-driven insights while enabling robust employee engagement in a work-from-anywhere world.

8x8 XCaaS erases the boundary between Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) and Contact Center as a Service (CCaaS) to help organizations deliver modern communications experiences that drive revenue, cut costs, and optimize operations for the new world of work.

With one integrated platform for customer and employee communications, businesses can respond to customer inquiries faster while maintaining the context and content of each engagement as it progresses through the customer journey.

8x8 is “capex-lite” and quick to deploy, with no additional hardware needed. Our dedicated team can get you up and running in a way that suits your needs and timescales with little to no disruption to your business.

8x8’s cloud-driven flexibility, simple per-user pricing, license mix-and-match capabilities, and scalability mean your system grows with your business, allowing you to “invest once and use forever.” XCaaS solves for what you need today and provides a clear and easy path for whatever is next.

Bonus: 8x8 is backed by a platform-wide, financially-backed 99.999% uptime SLA that is unmatched in the industry and ensures peace of mind.

Step 2

Get the UCaaS capabilities your teams need to be productive

Work better together from anywhere

Along with the nature, sector, and size of your organization, the capabilities you require from a communications system also depend on the roles and responsibilities of individual teams.

As the responsibility for customer experience spreads throughout the organization, it is not surprising to find that one size does not fit all when it comes to communication tools. Back-office knowledge workers can typically have general UCaaS capabilities. They need to receive and place calls and chat messages and host video meetings to collaborate primarily with internal audiences and suppliers. But there is an exception in the back office—internal IT help desks. These teams also benefit from contact center capabilities, such as advanced call handling and routing, insight into activity levels for managing or scheduling purposes, or even the ability to provide real-time training and coaching.

Leaders seek to deliver the right communications capabilities for everyone in the company. Look for a UCaaS solution that's highly customizable, with a range of service packages that you can mix and match according to the needs of different roles cost-effectively for your organization. Simple per-user billing will allow you to switch employees from one package to another.

Whether or not your business currently relies on a contact center, an excellent cloud-based UCaaS platform will allow that capability to be switched on quickly, with a full spectrum of digital channels, including voice, chat, SMS, email, and social media. Organizations searching for communications technology that bridges employee and customer experience gaps find that an integrated platform provides the highest reliability, security, and the best overall value.

Modernizing communication experiences and powering business agility with 8x8 X Series Service plans to support company-wide communication needs.

X Series Service Plans

X2—All in one voice, video, and chat

The X2 plan is well-suited for most employees, offering one application for business voice, team messaging, and meetings.

Users can access the essential communication and collaboration capabilities through the 8x8 Work desktop or mobile app, web browser, or a desk phone, with unlimited calling to 14 countries.

Integrating 8x8 communications with your critical enterprise apps helps automate workflows and boost team productivity.

X4—Advanced calling handling and analytics

Includes advanced speech analytics and quality management to improve productivity and service quality.

Enable advanced call handling for receptionists with 8x8 Frontdesk and supervisory features like barge-monitor-whisper. Also, get audio calls and video meeting recordings and storage capabilities.

Bundled international calling to 48 countries makes this package great for global businesses.



Step 3

Accept no compromise on reliability, security, and compliance

Reliable business communications for your organization's success and growth

In the real world, service level agreements (SLAs) are more than the sum of their parts, and organizations need to consider the reliability and resilience of cloud services to realize the full benefits.

At 8x8, a focus on high availability across systems, people, and processes means there's no risk of a single point of failure across our 35+ geographic locations, providing reliability, quality of service, and local data residency.

We offer industry-leading reliability with a 99.999% financially-backed uptime service level agreement (SLA) that covers uptime and call quality.

A single SLA guarantee and single point of accountability for all your business communications needs are critical for organizations, unlike standalone solutions or bundled communication options, which cannot credibly promise a single SLA nor operate under one standard policy for governance, security, and data privacy.

8x8's financially-backed 99.999% uptime SLA across UCaaS and CCaaS is a major distinction in the industry. It is only made possible because 8x8 XCaaS is built on a proprietary, single-vendor, integrated technology platform, enabling organizations worldwide to focus on driving their business forward by exceeding their employee communications and customer engagement objectives.

Security, privacy and compliance for everyone

8x8 has prioritized security and compliance certifications to meet the demanding needs of our customers across all industries.

With the industry's widest geographic coverage and over 300 patents covering diverse aspects of our services, infrastructure, UX design, and functionality, 8x8 has been a leader in cloud communications for many years. We maintain various industry-leading third-party compliance certifications, and our security program is designed to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of our customers' data.

We have created a top-down culture of security and compliance, including a commitment to secure architecture and development. As a result, national and multinational organizations in both the private and public sectors choose 8x8 to help them comply with strict standards, protect their reputations, and secure their customer data.

8x8 security features and compliance certifications include:

Security features

- Secure Coding practices including the Open Web Application Security Project (OWASP) and Common Weakness Enumeration (CWE) List
- Fraud Detection
- Secure Endpoint Provisioning
- Data-in-motion encryption with Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) over Transport Layer Security (TLS) and Secure Real-time Transport Protocol (SRTP)
- Regional Data Residency with a presence in USA, Canada, UK, Germany, Australia, and Hong Kong

Compliance certifications

- Cloud Security Alliance (CSA) STAR compliance
- FCC Customer Proprietary Network Information (CPNI) compliance
- Health Information Trust Alliance (HITRUST) compliance
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliance
- STIR/SHAKEN
- National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST 800-53 R4) and Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) compliance
- Standard Contractual Clauses (SCC) apply for data transfers between EU and non-EU countries
- ISO 27001:2013 and ISO 9001 certified
- Certified PCI-DSS 3.2.1 SAQ-D provider
- UK Government G-Cloud supplier
- UK Government Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation

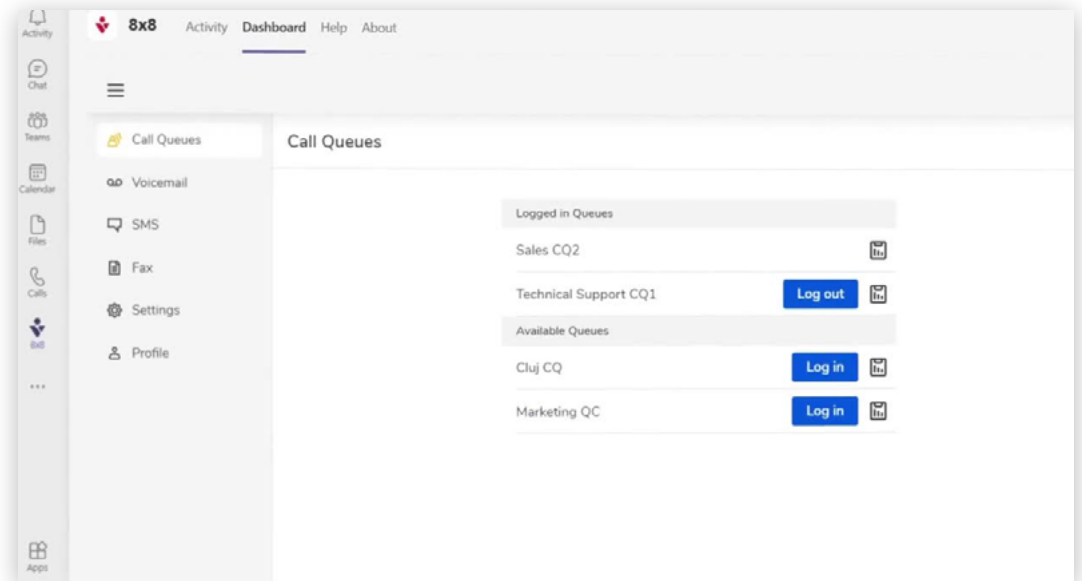
Step 4

Look for an open platform with native business app integration

Integrate communications into essential business apps

Deploying a new unified communications platform shouldn't mean changing what works for your business or giving up any apps and systems that already serve you well. Your new system should be compatible with vital third-party apps in a way that enhances their effectiveness within your business.

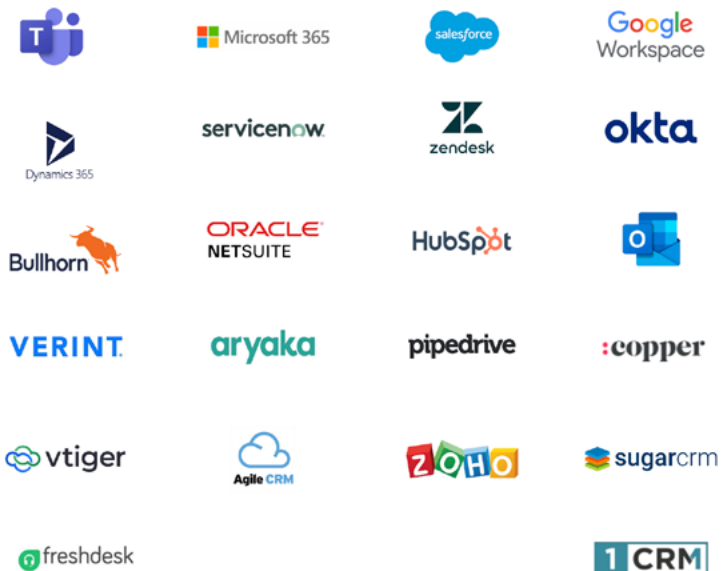
Our integration-friendly architecture makes it easy to leverage **pre-built integrations** or use APIs to support additional integration possibilities for users who work and spend most of their time in productivity and business apps. 8x8 integrates with over 40 of the most commonly used and industry-leading CRMs, ERP, WFM, helpdesk, and productivity applications.



Given the rise in popularity of collaboration apps like Microsoft Teams, XCaaS also extends into Microsoft 365 to enable external calling from any Microsoft Teams endpoint. 8x8 Voice for Microsoft Teams gives organizations all the benefits of a global enterprise communication solution and enhances the customer experience through additional functionality such as supervisor barge/monitor/whisper, business messaging through eFax and SMS/MMS, legacy hardware support, and more. This saves time and money without the hassle of managing multiple communications vendors or complicating the Team's user experience.

In addition, our contact center is solution certified for Microsoft Teams, which offers the best of both worlds. It enables contact center agents using 8x8 Contact Center for Microsoft Teams to simplify customer engagement workflows using Teams by connecting agents with experts when needed. Both solutions leverage the same streamlined deployment system that enables organizations to quickly improve employee productivity and the customer experience.

No more toggling between apps lets your teams stay in the flow and get more done with their favorite business apps.



Step 5

Make sure every mode of communication truly delivers

Not all UCaaS solutions are created equal

With the global economy and workplace undergoing radical restructuring, you need tools that spur productivity and creativity while setting you apart in customers' eyes.

The best UCaaS platforms offer dynamic, easy-to-use features that make customer and employee experiences as efficient and effortless as possible, allowing you to harness advanced technology and elevate your business performance.



One platform for every experience: voice, video, and chat

8x8 Work is a cloud-based app that brings together business telephony, video meetings, and team messaging on your desktop PC, smartphone, or web browser to offer a single, unified experience. Employees can communicate and collaborate with co-workers, customers, and suppliers securely and with complete confidence, building meaningful business relationships and inspiring customer trust.

Voice and telephony

Powerful enterprise-grade PBX and cloud calling capabilities:

- Auto-attendant
- Unlimited global calling (with full PSTN access in over 55 countries)
- Voicemail
- Business SMS/MMS
- Internet fax
- Flexible call flow rules
- Support for informal call queues, such as internal help desks for HR or IT, and
- Local, regional, and international numbers, including toll-free and emergency services

Video Meetings

To unleash your employees' creative energy and productivity, video and audio conferencing need to be intuitive and secure. 8x8 video meeting features include:

- Secure, browser-based video collaboration for maximum versatility and mobility
- The ability to host, manage, and attend video conferences from your mobile or desktop with up to 500 meeting participants
- Personal meetings URLs for each employee
- Intuitive user interface
- Integration with Microsoft Outlook and Google G-Suite for easy calendar scheduling and invitations
- Live streaming via YouTube capabilities
- Guest access without additional plug-ins
- Live transcription
- Advanced moderation controls
- Meeting polls
- Emoji reactions
- Breakout rooms
- Post-meeting summary and highlights

Chat and team messaging

Flexibility and versatility are vital in a messaging app, particularly if you have multiple locations spread across the world. 8x8 chat and team messaging features include:

- Instant chat and group messaging access for all employees
- Public and private collaboration rooms
- Secure file sharing, @mentions, and the ability to follow and unfollow rooms
- Shared document shelf for easy access

Unified administration

8x8 offers unified administration capabilities for license management, number porting, provisioning, and configuration changes. 8x8 unified administration features include:

- Role-based access controls to easily set permissions for administrators and users
- Multi-site support to automate quick site setup from any location
- User provisioning interface to create users, assign devices, and configure features for users
- Flexibility to set up independent and site-based cost centers
- Granular access to subsets of the system for better control, compliance, and security
- Simplified administration for all endpoints
- Access and audit configuration change history
- Mobile Admin, a composed experience built specifically for admins on-the-go, for easy access to everyday tasks and visibility into system health

Step 6

Don't let valuable data go to waste

Enable better decision-making and faster customer responsiveness

High-performance businesses lead the way in generating value from advanced analytics and data.

Your UCaaS platform must be capable of consolidating data from all your communication tools and presenting it in actionable performance metrics.

This is even more important if your platform includes contact center functionality, so you can uncover trends and understand customer sentiment for improved service excellence.

Get actionable business insights using advanced analytics

Collating information from multiple communication tools makes data-driven decisions time-consuming and resource-intensive.

8x8's XCaaS platform offers aggregated analytics across all your cloud communications. Usage trends and valuable insights help you understand how different UCaaS tools are used across the organization and effectively boost adoption to maximize productivity gains. With 8x8, you get accurate, customizable data from all your communication channels in one easy-to-use tool.

- Conversation insights from the front desk to the back office
- Quick and easy-to-deploy speech analytics with ready-to-use reporting
- Easily customizable evaluation forms and auto-notification based on scoring thresholds
- Ability to focus on different groups and departments
- Tracking for adherence to best practices and compliance with in-house or industry-specific processes
- Integration with automated workflows
- Ongoing data and feedback on the health of your communications network



Step 7

You deserve custom deployment that takes days, not weeks

Proactively plan for a successful UCaaS deployment

Every organization is different, and you should expect your UCaaS solution provider to help design your system, plan your roll-out, and embed enhancements.

A deep understanding of your current and future business vision should drive the UCaaS deployment, so it's important to take the time to plan the foundations of a successful roll-out meticulously.

Planning, figuring out your goals and drivers, and assessing your business needs are the first and most important steps of any new UCaaS deployment.

De-risk your migration and accelerate tech adoption

Over the years, we've developed and hardened the methodology to upgrade even the most complex installations to the 8x8 XCaaS platform. We understand not every one of your locations may be ready to move to your new 8x8 solution at the same time. We collaborate with our customers to develop a comprehensive phased go-live approach. Whether it's five offices or thousands of retail sites, we will develop the right strategy for you.

8x8 has various deployment packages designed for the unique nature of multi-site businesses. The deployment options also consider the availability and aptitude of existing resources, whether internal or from a designated third party. Occasionally, businesses take a blended approach, with some locations deployed by internal resources, by 8x8, or by third parties based on cost, expertise, and location.

- **Managed implementation**

Using a world-class methodology, 8x8 provides a standard implementation to deliver communications solutions in a distributed workforce environment.

- **Tailored implementation**

8x8 implementation services offer a tailored approach for businesses with more complex requirements.

- **A la carte services**

One (or even two) size does not fit all. For unique requirements, 8x8 offers a choice of implementation, on-site services, and customization services on an a la carte basis.

No matter which deployment method is suitable for your company, 8x8's proven deployment methodology ensures quick time-to-value and minimal disruption to your operations.



Support that goes above and beyond to resolve issues fast

Now, more than ever, effective communications mean effective business. That is true for customer engagement, customer experience, and for your teams' productivity and efficiency.

With this in mind, you need a UCaaS provider committed to ensuring your system's ongoing performance. That means round-the-clock support to ensure all aspects of your platform and your business operate at their full potential.

8x8 specialists constantly monitor our network, making proactive adjustments to ensure consistent voice quality and service availability. Meanwhile, a global team provides "follow-the-sun" support for high-impact issues.

All of this is backed up by our service level agreements for voice quality, system uptime, and response time.

Your 8x8 always-on support team provides:

- 24/7/365 customer service from coordinated teams around the world, via phone, chat, or through your client portal
- Automatic upgrades to ensure you have the latest version of our technology
- A dedicated Customer Success Manager (for accounts that meet a certain criteria)
- Access to the 8x8 Knowledge Base for the latest product capabilities and best practices
- Training courses to help your teams get the best from 8x8 (including administrator/configuration training, advanced topics and troubleshooting, and Tier 1 support processes)

UCaaS Buyers' Checklist

Use this checklist to see how UCaaS vendors stack up

UCaaS tools help drive significant changes in the way people work. Beyond the basics of offering voice calls, video meetings and chat, your chosen UCaaS solution should include a range of essential features you need to empower every employee, delight every customer, and power business agility.

This checklist will help you benchmark the critical business communications features and functionality you need.

Essential Features	Description	8x8	Vendor 2	Vendor 3
Self-owned IP and proprietary platform	Have complete control over product roadmap and strategy and the ability to quickly incorporate the voice of the customer inputs and market trends into the roadmap as the sole controllers of their product destiny	✓		
Uptime SLA	Reliable global communications from a single vendor with one financially-backed 99.999% platform-wide SLA	✓		
Security and compliance	One unified data residency policy, security, privacy, and compliance framework for the entire UC and CC platform	✓		
Single point of accountability, contact, and support	A true single vendor solution versus billing and reselling agreements and bundles with blurred accountability and patchy support	✓		

Essential Features	Description	8x8	Vendor 2	Vendor 3
Industry-leading solution with proven deployment success	A hardened, time-tested migration strategy with simultaneous UC and CC deployment with right-fit implementation options to meet your business needs and customer references to prove the same	✓		
Flexible licensing model	Persona-based mix-and-match licensing options for lower total cost of ownership and cost-efficient packaging for faster return-on-investment	✓		
Composed, personalized experiences	Composed, personalized experiences for key organizational roles to boost user productivity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Knowledge workers ● Frontdesk staff and receptionists ● Contact center agents and supervisors ● Administrators on the go 	✓		
Unified administration	Provision, configure, manage, and monitor all your communications with one administration interface	✓		
Single integration framework	Easily connect popular business apps, and help your teams achieve new levels of productivity without complexity or cost	✓		
Microsoft Teams integration options	Deep out-of-the-box Microsoft Teams integration options for UC and CC users which supports user interface preferences	✓		
Platform-wide analytics and AI	Conversation insights from the front desk to the back office for UCaaS users	✓		
PSTN replacement in 55+ countries	Global coverage and redundancy with local cloud PSTN services — domestic and toll-free numbers, emergency calling	✓		

Deliver five-star customer and employee experiences from the front desk to the back office

Whatever your precise needs, 8x8 can help you tailor a flexible, powerful, cloud-based solution with an integrated contact center, voice, video, and chat. The 8x8 eXperience Communications Platform™ powers engaging, responsive communication experiences that delight customers and make your business more agile.

Unlike point solutions, 8x8 delivers personalized experiences that boost employee productivity, guarantees platform-wide uptime, and lowers costs. Talk to one of our experts now.

[Visit 8x8.com](https://www.8x8.com)

Contact 8x8 sales or your 8x8 partner for additional information, or visit 8x8.com.

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The 8x8 eXperience
Communications Platform™



Integrated contact center, voice, video, chat, and embeddable communications.

