# Intro

## #Slide - Enabling Remote Worker Productivity with Unified Communications

Today’s webinar will be about enabling remote worker productivity with unified communications. This is a broad topic so let’s get started right away and I’ll dive into the details to see how that’s possible.

## #Slide - About the Presenter

## #Slide - <QUOTE TITLE>

One quote that I found that really stuck resonated with me as I was preparing for this webinar was a quote by George Bernard Shaw. He said, “The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.” I chose this because it so closely resembles what knowledge workers in the 21st century struggle with every day. We think that we’re communicating at times when, in reality, the other party doesn’t get anything at all from it or gets the wrong message.

Since we, as an industry, have so heavily invested in Unified Communications, this naturally pertains to all of the aspects that make up UC. Have you ever left a voicemail to a coworker to find that they interpreted it the wrong way? Perhaps an IM would have been better. Regardless, having the technical infrastructure working properly and knowing how to use the tools you have at your disposal are both key at actually confirming that communication has actually taken place.

## #Slide - What Remote Workers Need in a UC System

There are 4 key topics that I think remote workers need to be productive using a Unified Communications System. Let’s dive into each of these.

### Mobile

The first topic is mobile. I heard the other day that we’re finally to the point to where mobile traffic on the Internet has exceeded desktop traffic. Everyone has a cell phone nowadays and more people than ever are getting smartphones. We’re hooked to the Internet 24/7. Whether you think that’s a bad thing or a good thing, it’s here.

This naturally leads to business where customers expect you to go to them or maybe you just need to get out of the office sometimes away from the hustle and bustle of the office. If you’re working remote, you must be able to stay productive just as if you were sitting at your desk in your office.

With all the various cloud services now, it’s easier than ever to get work done outside of the office because the data isn’t tied to your datacenter anymore. It’s now in that proverbial cloud where you can access it anytime or anywhere.

### Real-Time Communications

Next is real-time communications. Enterprises nowadays don’t sit still. They’re constantly moving and always innovating to keep up with customer demand and their competitors. Remember having to write an actual paper letter, go scrambling for a stamp, mailing it and waiting by the mailbox for days or weeks for a response? I’m 35 and I barely remember that. I’m not sure if young millennials these days would know what a paper letter even is!

Developed society is used to always-on communication. Businesses need to adapt to this. This is easier to do with workers in the office but is naturally harder to do with remote workers due to the distributed nature of the devices they might use. Regardless, your UC system must be able to provide these communication services at the pace of work and if that means buying faster servers or upgrading your Internet connection, that’s what should happen.

### Anywhere, Any time on Any Device

The Bring Your Own Device movement. Whether you love it or hate it, it’s here. Remote workers aren’t behind a desk on a desktop. They’re out and about. Your business need to recognize this and accommodate for it. If Susie in HR wants to use Lync on her personal iPad, let her. There are plenty of applications out there that allow you to continue to protect company data.

### Adaptation to Remote Connectivity

Finally, don’t dismiss your Internet connection as simply outgoing web traffic. Even though you might not see those people in the office they are presenting themselves as VPN connections back to the home office. Remote worker productivity depends on a fast and reliable connection back to whatever services your UC system is providing. Monitor and maintain a reliable connection to the outside world.

## #Slide - Meet Roger

To demonstrate some typical problems businesses go through with their UC system, I’ve chosen to create a fictional character called Roger. Roger is an employee at your organization.

### Road Warrior

He’s a sales guy always looking to catch that next client. He’s approaching retirement age now so he’s a little cranky sometimes and can’t stand it when his technology doesn’t work.

### Works on Lots of Devices

He’s independent and he’ll do whatever it takes to make the sale even if that means breaking the rules that IT enforces. Roger’s not afraid use any of his personal devices if he can woo the client.

### Constantly Moving

Roger is impatient. He’s a fast-paced guy and needs quick access to all the client information he needs. He needs all that information at his fingertips. Even though he’s a little older, he’s knows more tech than those young sales whipper snappers just coming out of college.

## #Slide - Roger's Day

Roger’s day is going to consist of an especially bad day for him and the company. He believes he’s lined up a huge client in Tokyo and is doing everything he can to bring them on as a client. Roger’s been working on this client for a long time now and the time has come to fly to Tokyo for a face to face meeting to finally seal the deal.

However, what you’ll see is that due to a series of unplanned events, things didn’t end up nearly as Roger or the company would have hoped.

Let’s take a peak into the day Roger recently went through to demonstrate just how wrong your organization’s UC system can get for people like him.

## #Slide - 2AM - The Last Night Sales Call

2AM: It’s way too late (or early) however you want to say it but Roger is determined. Due to the time difference, he needs to have one last phone call with the client to go over some final details. The client is interested but has insisted for some rough price numbers for awhile now. Due to some internal problems Roger hasn’t been able to get them to them yet.

The client asks again and Roger is now finally able to provide them. However, when he attempts to log onto the company’s CRM system, it’s down. After a few tries, no dice so he apologizes to the client and says he’ll have them later. The client is ticked but isn’t in the mood to hear Roger grovel so they leave it at that.

Little did he know IT had a maintenance window and had taken the CRM system offline.

**7:00 Minutes**

## #Slide - 6AM - The Failed Voicemail

6AM: Roger’s colleague Bob calls him and leaves a voicemail. At least he thinks he does. Bob was calling because he’s got some bad news from that client Roger’s supposed to meet with soon. Bob leaves the voicemail and tells Roger to get back with him ASAP. It turns out that the voicemail never get committed to the database because the server that’s Roger’s voicemail on was actually out of disk space.

## #Slide - 8:15AM - The Failed Hand-Off

8:15AM: Roger’s still at home getting ready to head to the airport. He’s checking some last minute emails when he gets a call on the soft phone on his laptop. He answers, it’s his assistant just confirming some last minute details but he needs some files from the other side of his house. Rather than cutting her off, he tries to switch the call over to his cell phone like he’s supposed to be able to but it fails. Frustrated again, he has to call her back. This day’s not going well already.

## #Slide - 8:20AM - A Screen Share Gone Bad

8:20AM: Roger wants to go over some final tweaks to his PowerPoint presentation to the client today with another coworker. He decides to share is screen using Skype for Business to see how his colleague thinks of the way he represented this typical problem. Roger starts explaining things to have him immediately interrupted by his coworker exclaiming he still sees the slide before. Ah! The screen share is so laggy and to boot, his coworker’s audio is breaking up so he can barely hear him!

## #Slide - 8:30AM - No VMs Today, Weird

8:30AM: Time to get to the airport. Rogers heads out and checks his voicemails on his phone. That’s odd, no voicemails. He usually has at least 1 by this time from someone wanting something. “Oh, well”, he thinks. It’s better off. He’s not going to be available today anyway because he’s gonna land that big client!

## #Slide - 9AM - Roger's Still on Vacation?

9AM: Still concerned by Roger’s lack of response, Bob checks Roger’s presence on Skype and it shows that he’s on vacation. Ah! That’s why he’s not responding. Bob thinks, “I’ll just leave him alone then”. I’ll tell him the bad news when he gets back.

..but not all is meet the eye. Apparently, the presence information wasn’t being updated due to a faulty patch applied during that maintenance window. IT hasn’t caught it yet. Roger had actually made himself available yesterday.

## #Slide - 10AM - Forced to BYOD

10AM: Roger’s in the plane waiting to take off. He decides to take out his laptop real quick before the flight attendant confiscates it and send an IM to his assistant. He forgot to copy his slide deck to his laptop! Bad, bad. However, he can’t get connected. Let down yet again by this so called fancy system the company has paid lots of money for.

Undeterred, Roger takes out his personal cell phone, tethers and makes the connection. Ah, that’s better. IT hates for him to do that but Roger doesn’t care. The sale is more important.

## #Slide - 4:45PM - Old Age Setting In

4:45PM: Roger’s in Tokyo now getting something to eat before the meeting. He’s pinged on his cell phone by a voicemail but his glasses are in the car. The new app his company is enforcing to read these voicemails has the font so tiny no one could read it anyway! Roger will just wait until he’s in the client’s waiting room to fire up his laptop and check it out.

## #Slide - 5:05PM - Uh Oh

5:05PM - He’s a little early to the meeting so he waits in the waiting room to see what that voicemail was all about earlier. He patiently waits for the audio stream to start to hear Bob’s voice utter those three terrifying words; client…wants…out.

It turns out that the client Roger is currently waiting to see got so frustrated with his lack of response on the price that they decided to go elsewhere. Roger, now sweating profusely, makes a decision. He’s going to continue the meeting, grovel like there’s no tomorrow and see if he can make it up to them.

## #Slide - 5:15PM - Let the Begging Begin

5:15PM – Roger begs and pleads and practically tries to give his company’s product away but the Japanese weren’t having it. They are done. Jet-lagged, downtrodden and really angry at IT, Roger meanders out of the room with his head held low. He has been defeated.

## #Slide - Next day - Roger Wises Up

After a good night’s sleep in the hotel room Roger decides he’s done. After 20 years at this company, he’s tired of all these little tech glitches. “Providing some kind of reliable way for me to simply get my work done shouldn’t be so hard!”, he thinks. Roger’s right. There can be a better way so he quits.

Luckily, he’s still been in touch with an old client in the states that was thrilled to hire him on. Roger’s new company’s IT dept is top notch. They realize the importance of a solid UC system which Roger loves! He can actually do his job now and make a boatload of cash from commissions! He can now retire with some dignity.

## #Slide - Roger's Day from IT's Viewpoint

Now that you’ve seen how bad a poor sales guy’s day can be from his standpoint, let’s take a look at what IT saw (or didn’t see) that day.

This is a typical, single log file that someone in IT may have to look at to diagnose these problems. First of all, who knows where a log file like this exists. Which server, which appliance, no one knows? Also, it’s going to take someone to actually look at it. It’s just a log file. It’s not going to jump out and email you on it’s own. There was some indication of a problem on IT’s end but no one noticed.

**14 minutes**

# Takeaways

## #Slide – BYOD

Now that we’ve went through a day in the life of Roger, let’s take a step back and figure out what went wrong and most importantly how to fix this from ever happening again.

The takeaway I got was Roger’s company lack of a Bring Your Own Device strategy or BYOD. IT didn’t know that Roger was using his personal cell phone to tether on the plane. They are just paying attention to his office desktop and maybe his laptop. They currently don’t have any good way to provide the services that Roger needs on other devices. They can barely keep up with the company issued ones!

They need services to allow communication on any of these devices.

## #Slide - Mobile Experience is Critical

Next, the mobile experience was terrible. First of all, Roger was having lots of connectivity problems. Who knows if it was his Internet connection, his company’s internet connection or a problem with the internal server.

Second, Roger’s an older guy and the app that the company uses for IMs, voicemails and other notifications isn’t mobile friendly. There’s no app. Roger has to bring up a web page every time. If IT would have just used the mobile webpage that Roger and his team are forced to then know how bad it is.

Other than connectivity monitoring, IT should actually use every facet of a communications platform. That means testing on iPads, iPhones, Windows Desktops, Macs..whatever. If they are supported, they all need to be tested.

## #Slide - Productivity Never Sleeps

Everyone is different. I’m a night person and prefer to work at night while others may prefer to work during the day. A company shouldn’t force productivity during a certain time of day. Maintenance windows are OK as long as they are monitored and properly planned for. For example, why couldn’t the company fail over the CRM system to another server for maintenance? Don’t take services down if you don’t have to.

## #Slide - Keep up or Get Left Behind

Things happen so fast now is your company keeping up? Communication, especially, requires near 24/7 reliability. You need to have an infrastructure that can keep up. That means monitoring it to ensure that as well as being able to troubleshoot any problems that might slow it down. You’ve seen what can happen when a company can’t keep up.

Develop a strategy now and plan for the future to keep all communication flowing.

## #Slide - Proactive Monitoring is Crucial

Proactive, rather than reactive monitoring is crucial. Your goal should be to figure out there’s a problem before your users do. How do you do this? It’s through defining baselines of what’s considered “normal” activity across your UC environment. It’s about defining metrics of what you believe needs to be monitored and finally it’s about having tools that work for you by alerting you to these kinds of problems.

Some example metrics might include free disk space on servers, Internet bandwidth available, audio/video streaming quality, number of dropped calls, etc. The metrics are going to be unique to your particular environment but those might give you an idea.

It’s all about ensuring however you define a good user experience is met now, tomorrow and beyond.

## #Slide - Monitoring is Not Problem Resolution

To take monitoring a step further, monitoring is not problem resolution. Monitoring and alerting can simply tell you what’s wrong. It won’t fix it. That’s up to you to either automate some kind of problem resolution in or, if that’s not possible, to have tools available to allow you to easily troubleshoot problems when your monitoring systems notify your team.

People don’t have time to mess with down systems. It’s hard enough to keep up with all the other projects going on. Establish a methodology to quick resolve these problems when they come up.

## #Slide - Poor Communication is Expensive!

According to an SMB communications study, poor internal communications cost businesses $26,041 per employee per year in lost efficiency. That’s a lot of money! If you’re down in the weeds every day and notice these communication problems Roger say you may not think it’s that big of a deal. The problems may not crop up every day but only on occasion. Realize that the sum of all the frustration and lost productivity adds up!

It’s important to keep tabs on your service level agreements and ensure your team is meeting them. Don’t get caught in the minutiae of your daily activities to simply keep closing trouble tickets all the time. It’s important to see the forest for the trees here.

Ultimately, communication breakdowns affects your company’s bottom line and that is what’s most important to recognize.

## #Slide - Meet Bill

To end my piece, I want you to finally meet Bill. Bill is Roger’s replacement. He’s excited to be here and is ready to get to work. How is Bill going to fare at your company? Is he going to get so frustrated he quits just because he can’t be productive in his job? Or is your company going to reeavaluate your UC solution, troubleshoot and patch all of the little problems and then monitor the environment to ensure it doesn’t happen again?

Let’s do it right this time.

Bill would really appreciate that and, ultimately, so will your customers.