

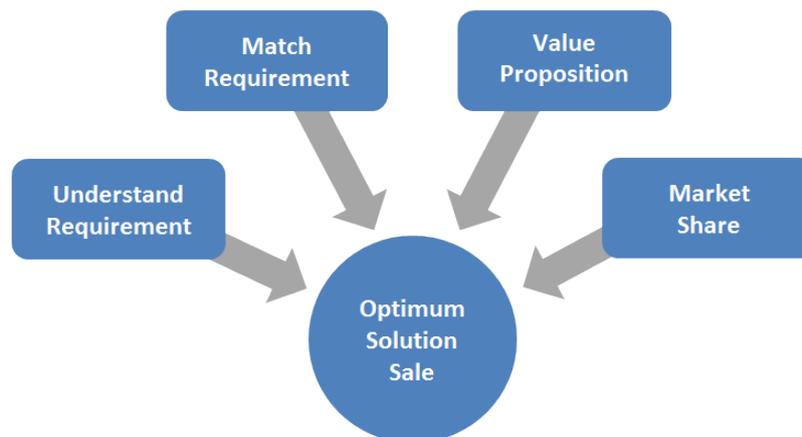
What is Really Influencing Business Communications Strategies?

If you are in the business of selling communications products and services what are the most challenging issues and what does it take to address these?

- Understanding what customers and end users want?
- Matching what customers and end users say they want?
- Sourcing and supplying the best total value proposition?
- Securing market share and fending off your competitors?

So how do you manage all these challenges whilst keeping up with the fast pace of changing technologies in the communications industry?

Finding the right partners and trustworthy sources of information are absolutely key to keeping ahead of your opponents and competitors, whilst securing and expanding more profitable sales. But how do you know where to go and who to trust?



Understanding the Requirements

Before you can provide a valuable solution to fulfil user requirements you need to know what your existing and new prospective customers are trying to deal with. Remember it's all about the "business impact" not the product, features and even initially the "solution", this is what you are working towards, but you cannot provide the solution until you understand the problem. Establish the customer's challenges and goals, these are the targets you will need to hit. Establish the IT & technical fluency of your customer or client, you should get some indication of this from their explanation and description of their requirements, you can then respond appropriately. If they do not define their requirements or are unclear then you must work towards clarifying these. Never assume you know what a customer wants or needs until you have confirmation, there is quite often a sting in the tail where there are hidden additional requirements.

Matching the Requirements

OK so you have the customer's requirements, now you need to match these with a solution, built or assembled from products features and services. Sounds easy and it can be as long as you have all or access to all of the component parts required to provide the solution. This is where **the right partner** is essential, depending on the customer's particular requirements this may be as simple as supplying some cost effective call accounting software that meets some specific requirements.

So in this case being able to make sure the requirements will be met and ensuring you can source software to fulfil this, is what's required. However the requirements may be or become more involved, need careful definition, some sort of solutions demonstration and a detailed proposal. Any technology partner you work with must be able to handle and provide a full range of services from, requirement definition, assistance with proposals, implementation and ongoing support.



What are Businesses Looking For?

So what is really influencing business communications strategies? Based on both survey results and actual user requests and feedback, the following are what companies, government organisations and other businesses have identified as the most enduring and relevant communications and technology challenges:

- Linking business strategy and communication
- Coping with the digital evolution
- Building and maintaining trust
- Matching the need to address more audiences, customers and channels with limited resources
- Dealing with the speed and volume of information flow
- Strengthening the role of the communication function in supporting top-management decision making
- Dealing with the demand for more transparency and active audiences and customers
- Explaining the value of communication to top executives
- Dealing with sustainable development and social responsibility
- Implementing advanced measurement and evaluation routines
- Establishing monitoring and listening strategies

How are business decision makers and communications professionals trying to use communications systems and software solutions to try to address these issues and challenges?

Most businesses can identify their most critical communications challenges but struggle to effectively source, implement and rollout solutions that fully address and keep pace with their business needs. Different organisations and business types face different but often related communications technology challenges.



Challenges in Small Businesses – SMBs

Smaller businesses struggle with available budgets and resources compared with larger organisations, particularly provision of information technology support, often having no real IT professional skills in house. Nearly half of small businesses outsource most or all of their technology management and support. This can be particularly challenging for system suppliers when trying to qualify, supply and commission the right telephone system and software to meet customer requirements that will work and continue to work in challenging SMB IT environments. According to the 2015 Spiceworks IT spending survey, the average US IT budget is \$303,879 so this clearly shows the scale of IT challenges face by smaller businesses, with only a minute fraction of this budget. According to Ipsos MORI their research shows that SMBs spend 45% of their IT budget on landline based telephone systems and 48% on outsourced tech support.

Challenges in Larger Businesses

Larger businesses may have more available budget, but they have other challenges such as, how to select a solution that covers their wider range of requirements across their organisation and associated divisions. Any systems, software applications and business solutions must meet the scrutiny of and have the agreement of multiple departments and stakeholders as well as senior management sign off. The IT environments and resources are better but are much more complex, rigid and tightly controlled. Often network security and industry compliance with mandatory regulations play a major role particularly for government, local authorities financial and insurance organizations. The medical industry and their associated support and service organisations have exceptionally stringent security requirements.



The Right Technology Partner

Now more than ever before, your ability to match and supply your customer communications requirements with suitable solutions ensures you can, compete, win and sustain more value added sales. In order to do this you need to seek out a partner with the appropriate knowledge, experience and range of solutions to be applied across the widest range of businesses.

At CommSoft RMS, as a software solutions provider it is our job to ensure we are always well informed, up to date and able to offer the solutions tailored to fit a very wide and diverse range of business types and sizes. With over twenty years supplying software solutions to the communications industry we are constantly evolving and enhancing our products and services to provide new and innovative features that increase the value of each sale based on, real user feedback, requests and current technology evolution and trends.



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