

Measuring the Pain: What is Fragmented Communication Costing Your Enterprise?

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Marisa:

Hello and welcome to our IBM podcast: Measuring the Pain: What is Fragmented Communication Costing Your Enterprise? My name is Marisa Viveros and I am a director in IBM Global Technology Services and a global leader for converged communications. Joining me today from Siemens Enterprise Communications is Grace Tiscareño-Sato, senior global marketing manager for unified communications. It's great to have you here, Grace.

Grace:

Thanks, Marisa. My pleasure.

Marisa:

We're here today to talk about some research recently commissioned by Siemens to measure the pain customers are feeling as a result of today's fragmented communications and a lack of a unified communications strategy within their organizations. The research was conducted by Insignia Research of Toronto.

Grace, can you give me some background on why Siemens set-out to do this research in the first place?

Grace:

We have witnessed for years the unnecessary costs businesses are bearing each year by not implementing a UC strategy. We wanted to find a way to objectively measure the resulting impact to organizations. We focused on quantifying 3 things Marisa:

- the amount of money and hours being lost by organizations struggling with today's communications chaos.
- the frustration levels and *desire for change among the end users* who must live with communications obstacles to collaboration every day.
- Focus on the end user experience, especially the experience of customer-facing employees. 62% of our respondents identified themselves in customer service/sales roles. This means the findings in our research directly impact how customers are served and the type of experiences they have.

Marisa:

What were the key findings of the research?

Grace:

Despite the advances in communications technology, or perhaps because of them Marisa, business users are clearly enduring a frustrating, complex and fragmented communications environment.

First, the most common and costly pain point resulted from waiting for information from colleagues who were not available when needed. 94% of the 517 users surveyed said they were impacted by this. This reveals the high degree of collaboration required to execute most business processes in the 21st century – most of us are dependent on information from someone else to complete many tasks.

The average wait these users experienced was 5.3 hours per week, per person! Translate that latency into the experiences you are providing for your customers and suddenly you see the urgency of doing something to eliminate the status quo. This “waiting for information” pain point also earned the highest score for end user frustration and was rated as being the highest priority for change.

Secondly, survey respondents identified an average of 11 days of unnecessary business travel annually....11 days for internal so-called “team synchronization” meetings! That’s a waste of \$3,400 per person each year, directly caused by ineffective or non-existent collaboration with existing communications systems.

The findings also quantified incremental communications costs while on business trips, and reduced productivity levels due to remote workers being ill-equipped with effective, remotely-accessible tools.

We found that organizations of every size and in every industry are affected Marisa.

Marisa:

These findings echo the same pain points we hear from many of our IBM customers – Our consultants worked with several companies last year in the US and Europe, who say they are looking at new unified communications solutions because they are waiting for information, or because of barriers to collaboration and inefficient teaming . . . all affecting overall business performance.

Did you find anything surprising in the research results?

Grace:

Perhaps the most surprising aspect was seeing the tallied-up cost of doing nothing. The conservative estimate of the status quo, based on this landmark 517-respondent

survey (the largest end user survey of its kind by the way) was an annual cost per user of nearly \$13,000. This is more than *\$1000 per user per month* Marisa! And that's the conservative estimate that discounted the soft-dollar savings by over 75%. For a small company with 100 users, that equals 1.3 million dollars, which is significant. If you then apply the math to a larger company with 1000 users, the impact becomes almost \$13 million!

Marisa:

Wow, that is significant! It all makes perfect sense, but putting a dollar figure around it really underscores the impact. Let's talk about what companies can do to improve communications and collaboration in their businesses. What are the "next steps" business leaders should they be thinking about in order to reduce the costs associated with fragmented communications?

Grace:

The answer, in large part, is a unified communications strategy. UC solutions aim to break down the obstacles and complexity to communication in the enterprise, while optimizing the performance of communications-sensitive business processes. As you well know in your business, Marisa, when professionals have the ability to reach colleagues when they need them, using whatever media is at hand, and collaborate from wherever they happen to be working, process efficiencies are realized. The result is a competitive advantage in both customer satisfaction and revenue generation.

Here are 3 steps decision makers can take right away:

First, discover which of the 10 pain levels in the research are affecting your competitiveness

- Specifically, start with high-value users and key processes
- Identify critical processes where latency/obstacles **MUST** be removed
- Quantify baseline pain.....your own "cost of doing nothing". This will help you truly appreciate the problem you are facing.

Second, evaluate Unified Communications (UC) systems. Ask these questions as you do:

- Is it truly unifying my systems? Adding new collaboration efficiencies?
- Can it bring UC capabilities into your workflow apps in use today?
- Can you use any phone with the new UC solution?
- Beware the word 'unified' worn by some UC systems that are not

Lastly, just get started! Start a pilot with key user communities identified in step 1

- Choose on-premise installation or try UC as a hosted service

What this large, geographically diverse research survey has made clear is this, in a nutshell: the status quo landscape of fragmented communications is expensive and extremely frustrating to end users....It's time to re-evaluate the status quo with this research in hand and take the first steps towards creating and implementing a unified communications strategy.

Marisa:

Indeed! Grace, thanks for your time today and for sharing the results of this eye-popping research on the costs and other pains associated with fragmented communications in businesses of all sizes.

And thanks to you for listening to today's IBM podcast: Measuring the Pain: What is Fragmented Communication Costing Your Enterprise?

You can learn more about IBM's industry leading Unified Communications and Collaboration solutions at: [www.ibm.com/lotus/UC²](http://www.ibm.com/lotus/UC2) . You can download the entire Fragmented Communications research white paper and learn more about Siemens Enterprise Communications at: www.siemens.com/open.