

THE STATE OF UC ADOPTION



November
2016

Key Insights into IT and End-User Behaviors and Attitudes Towards Unified Communications

This report presents and discusses the results of a survey conducted by Unify Square during the Microsoft Ignite conference in late September of 2016. The research targeted both IT administrators of UC (Unified Communications) systems as well as end-users of UC systems to compare and contrast viewpoints and action-oriented approaches to working with various UC platforms.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There's a growing trend of "IT perception versus end-user reality" emerging in enterprises with unified communication (UC) systems. IT lacks accurate insights (although they don't really know it) into the end-user experience, most notably as it relates to user access to training materials as well as daily usage trends and satisfaction. But despite this disconnect, UC does make for a more productive workforce according to both IT and end-users. In fact, users are leveraging UC systems far more than IT realizes and want to continue doing so. However, due to less than regular system monitoring and end-user check-ins, IT doesn't fully understand how users are using UC in their day-to-day lives and struggles to address technical issues quickly. All of which, leads to slower organization-wide adoption and speed to UC ROI.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

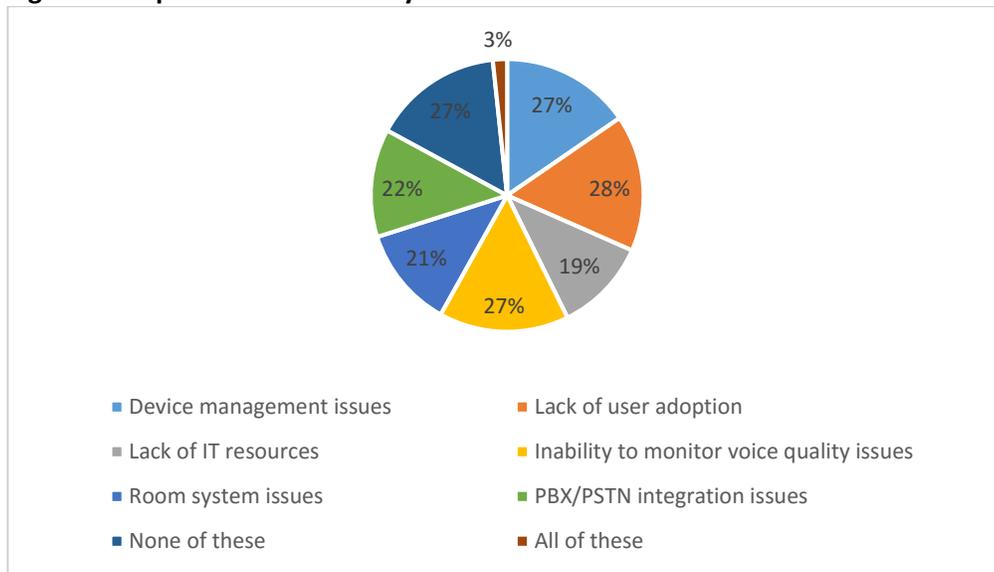
- **End-Users really live and breathe UC:** The overall user productivity (due to UC systems) and the amount of UC system usage by users are both a lot higher than IT believes.
- **End-Users also really like UC:** Satisfaction is surprisingly high for UC systems, despite IT's perception. This high end-user satisfaction is made all the more surprising due to the fact that IT is not diligent about measuring satisfaction, tuning UC systems, or even in involving the user in the headset/phone selection process.
- **UC Training Options and/or Opportunities are lacking:** In general IT believes that a lot more training options are available to end-users than users perceive and/or are aware of.
- **Problem and Solution Disconnects:** There is a large gap in the IT vs end-user beliefs of both a) how long it takes to resolve a user issue with the UC system; and b) at what point end-users seek out IT intervention versus solving the problem themselves or ignoring the problem entirely.
- **UC issues are only elevated to IT when they become serious:** IT reportedly spends less than a quarter of their time troubleshooting end-user UC issues, but over half of the end-users encounter UC system issues at least one or two times per week.
- **Minor UC tools investments equal low end-user knowledge:** IT is not investing in resources to monitor, manage or survey UC systems and end-users. Given low to zero investments it's difficult to keep track of overall UC system health or end-user issues.

DETAILED SURVEY FINDINGS

UC ADOPTION

There is strong agreement between both IT and end-users regarding the importance of user adoption programs and the contribution of such programs to overall UC system success. For IT, 28% cite end-user adoption as one of their biggest challenges they face with corporate UC platforms, and 64% state adoption programs have either high or very high importance in ensuring UC ROI. For end-users, they echo IT's analysis claiming user adoption is the biggest challenge (over 25%) that IT faces on the road toward full UC system success. Users go on to say that there are many factors that play into "adoption" – the top factor is training (26%), which is addressed in more detail later in the report, but technical issues and missing functionality also play large roles. Nearly two thirds of the users also reveal that it took at least three months (and in many cases longer) to fully adopt the new UC system.

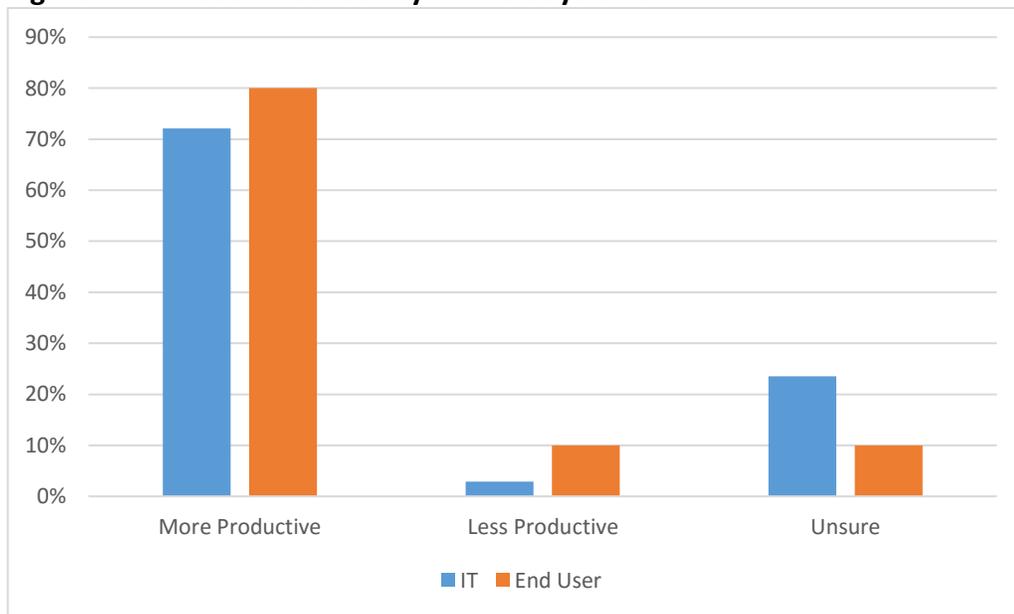
Figure 1: Top IT Issues with UC Systems



PRODUCTIVITY

The conventional wisdom, and even more importantly, the UC system ROI ‘bet’ is that installing a UC system will make end-users more productive. To that point, 72% of IT surveyed believe their users are now more productive against only 2.9% who are less productive. In contrast, and further proving IT is not just making up productivity numbers to justify their investments, 80% of users credit their UC system for improved productivity, but still, 10% are split on whether it has contributed any productivity gains or served as a detriment. This discrepancy shows early signs of a lack of understanding on the part of IT regarding how end-users are using UC and common challenges they face in fully integrating the system into their day-to-day.

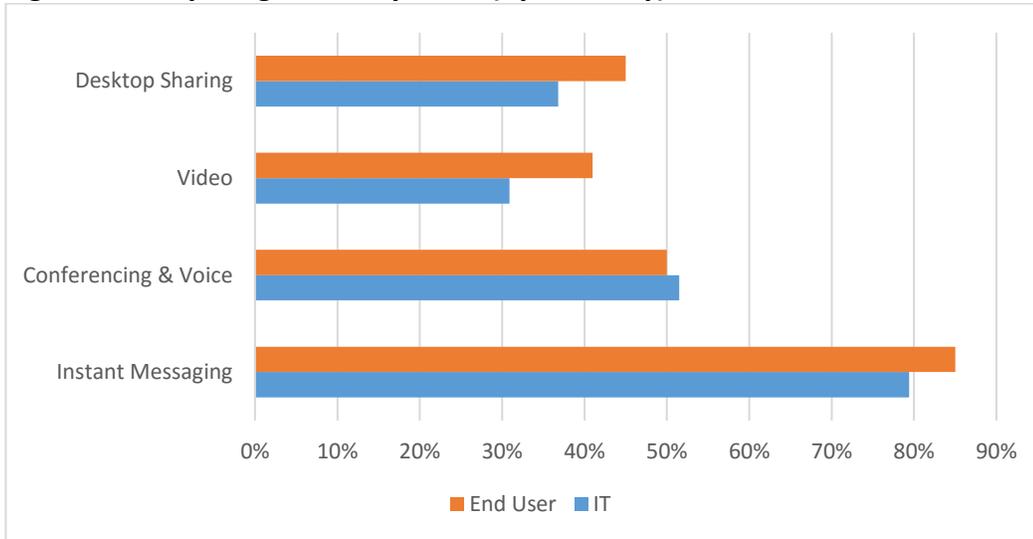
Figure 2: End-User Productivity with UC Systems



USAGE

The vast majority of end-users believe UC contributes to an increase in productivity, which has made them bullish on usage. Overall, users are trying to use the technology more than IT perceives, as shown by the comparison chart below. For example, users say they use video 41% of the time, but IT only thinks they employ it 31% of the time. Similar misrepresentations exist for IM and desktop sharing. This shows that increased visibility into how end-users are using the UC functionally could result in even more dramatic usage and productivity successes, especially if IT were to help out more with adoption issues as is outlined in the remaining sections below.

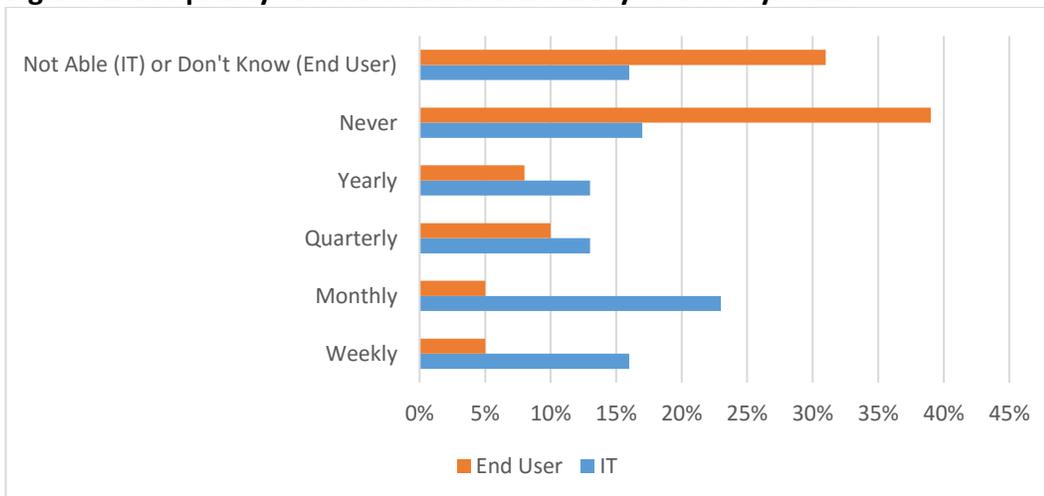
Figure 3: Daily Usage of UC Systems (by modality)



SATISFACTION

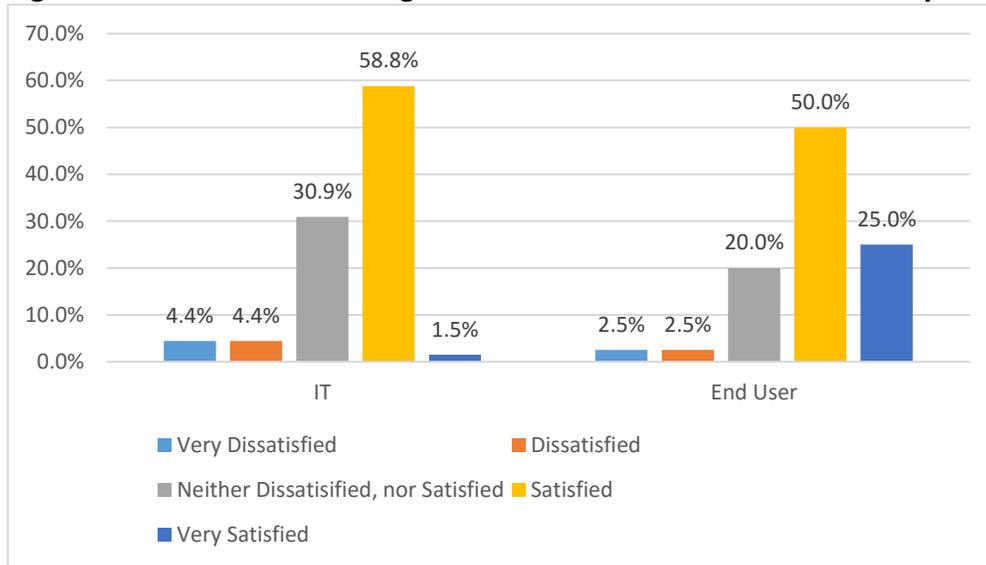
It goes without saying, that it's hard to know if your user population is happy if they aren't surveyed. When it comes to testing the temperature of the user satisfaction with the UC system, there are a substantial number of disconnects (as shown in the Figures 4 and 5 below). Perhaps the most surprising is that 70% of the end-users have never been surveyed (or don't remember being surveyed) about their UC system satisfaction.

Figure 4: Frequency of User Satisfaction Surveys for UC Systems



However, for the users who have been surveyed, there was still a surprising disconnect. IT believes that only slightly more than 1% of their users (see Figure 5 below) are VERY satisfied with the UC system, while 25% of end-users report that they are actually VERY satisfied! In spite of the early struggles with the system, end-users are patient and like what they see as an additional 70% of the users rated themselves as either Satisfied or “Neutral (neither satisfied, nor dissatisfied).”

Figure 5: IT vs End-User Rating of End-User Satisfaction with the UC system

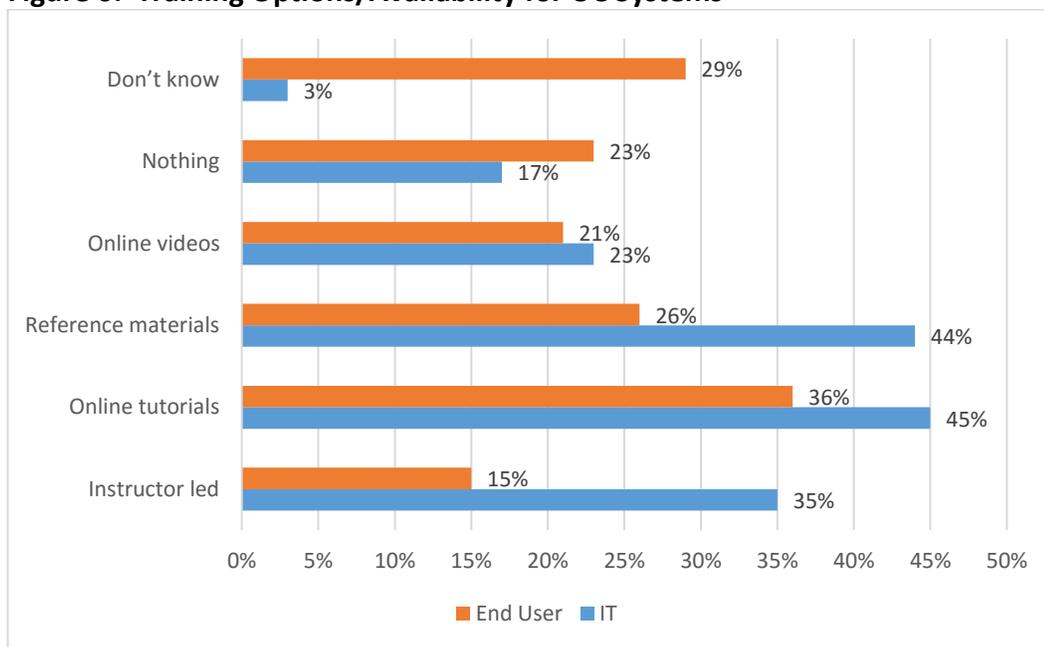


This relatively high level of satisfaction is made all the more surprising given that problem resolution times are poor (see the User Assistance section below) and users were not provided with any hardware or choice in telephony hardware – 50% of users were either not provided with any headset/phone or were not allowed to choose the type of device. In addition, an additional 23% don’t know/remember any sort of choice opportunity; leaving only 26% who received a device and were allowed to participate in the selection of the device.

TRAINING

In general, IT believes there’s a lot more UC training opportunities and resources available to end-users than end-users perceive and/or know about. But as addressed earlier, over 25% of users underscore the importance of end-user training and believe it’s the largest barrier to UC system adoption over all other speed bumps in the environment. The silver lining is most organizations do have a myriad of training options, which the table below outlines, so the process of simply connecting users to this training is a fairly low bar for IT and could lead to large returns.

Figure 6: Training Options/Availability for UC Systems

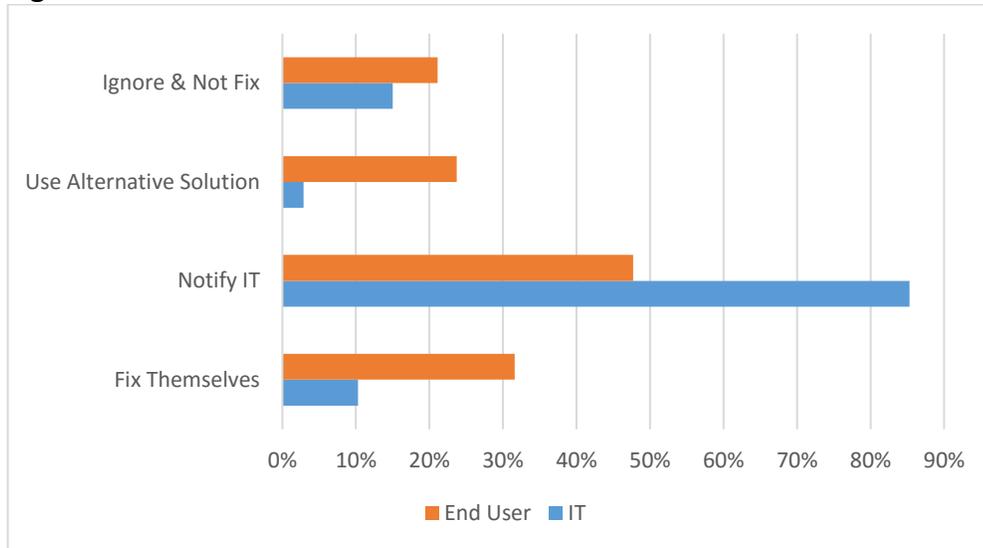


USER ASSISTANCE

In the cases where training is not enough and/or not yet administered, organizations rely on the ‘Help Desk’ as the panacea for user assistance. To this end, nearly half of the end-users will notify IT when they need assistance, however nearly a third will still try to fix the issue themselves. Further, nearly a quarter of the users will “give up” and turn to alternative communication applications or devices and a disturbingly high number (21%) will ignore the issue and not even try to fix it. Making the “fix” by IT even harder is the fact that over a quarter of users say that they use other communication apps in combination with their UC system more than half the time. This “dual use” makes it easier for users to give up on the UC system should things not function as expected.

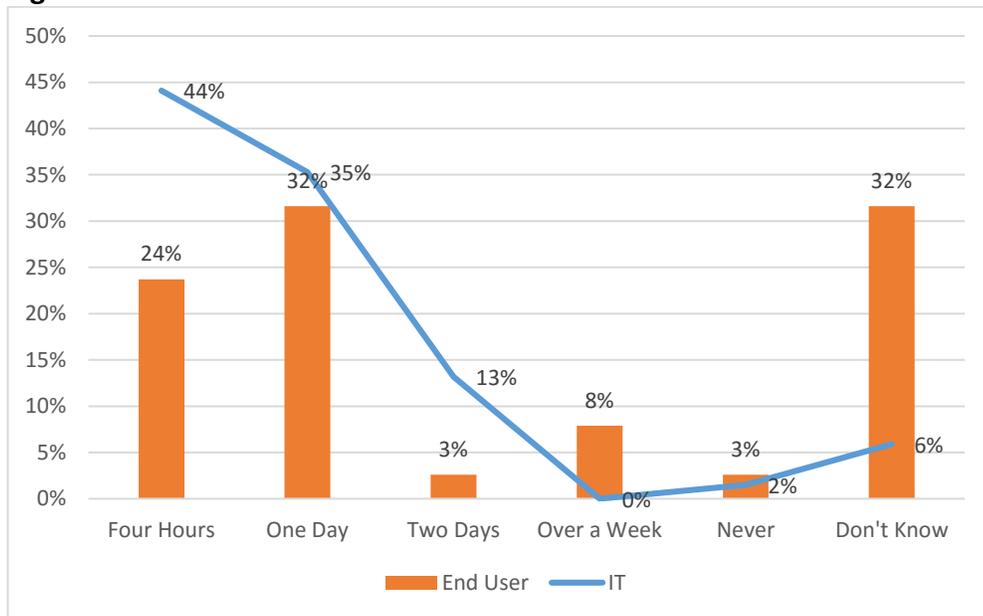
The user assistance issue becomes even more interesting, though, when we compare IT’s expectations of how end-users react when an issue arises. Here, IT believes that 85% of EU’s will notify IT for assistance. IT also thinks that only 10% of the end-users will try to fix it themselves. Finally, IT also has the opinion that only a very small set of users (3%) will turn to alternatives. This data signals a fairly substantive disconnect between IT belief and end-user “reality” which, if addressed, could help speed adoption and increase overall satisfaction.

Figure 7: End-User Solution to UC Issues



Once the user is finally on the phone with Help Desk, the disconnect between IT perception and end-user reality continues. Among the disparities (view the full comparison in table 8 below) is the fact that IT believes that nearly half of all Help Desk calls are resolved within 4 hours or less, while only about a quarter of end-users experience quick resolution. Most troubling is that nearly a third of the users have no idea how long a resolution takes.

Figure 8: Resolution Time for UC Issues



On a positive note, 82% of IT note that the troubleshooting of one-off end-user issues (versus focusing on broader UC system issues) only takes up to 25% of IT's time. Additionally, over 40% of users say that they never encounter any issues, which need to be pushed up to IT for troubleshooting.

TOOLS INVESTMENT

In order to manage their complex UC systems and ensure service availability, nearly two-thirds of the enterprises default to the expensive 'brute force' method of assigning dedicated IT staff to manage the UC system. Beyond that only 10% leverage a third party partner, only 6% leverage a managed service, and only 4% have any sort of operations software to help with the overall management, monitoring, analytics and reporting of their UC system. Additionally, 13% of all surveyed have no other assistance (partner, managed service, software, etc.) to help with troubleshooting or analysis. These facts also dovetail with the IT admission that lack of monitoring for their UC system was the second biggest challenge (directly behind user adoption) that they faced in running their UC system.

CONCLUSIONS

- **UC will live on in the enterprise:** End-users and IT understand and appreciate the productivity benefits of UC and will continue to push for organization-wide adoption.
- **Slower adoption is due to lack of detailed UC system monitoring:** This lack of tool usage by IT is the primary culprit in slowing end-user adoption and satisfaction, despite end-users' desire to leverage UC.
- **Visibility is key:** Increased visibility (telemetry and user satisfaction ratings) into how end-users are using the UC functionally could result in even greater usage, higher user satisfaction and improved UC productivity successes.
- **ROI secret sauce:** UC ROI hinges on IT's commitment to end-user adoption and satisfaction.

ABOUT THE SURVEY AND REPORT

This report presents and discusses the results of a survey conducted by Unify Square during the Microsoft Ignite conference in late September of 2016. The focus of the research was on end-user adoption of Unified Communications systems, with an emphasis on the Microsoft Skype for Business platform. Although the conference was predominantly focused on Microsoft technologies and customers, over one-third of the respondents listed a non-Microsoft UC system as their primary UC system. In order to qualify for the survey, organizations had to have already deployed (or had in pilot) some sort of UC system. The survey was conducted with mid-sized and large organizations and the total number of respondents was over 150. Respondents self-identified themselves as either IT (managing the corporate UC system) or End-User (using the corporate UC system).

ABOUT UNIFY SQUARE

Unify Square's software, consulting, and cloud managed services power the world's largest Microsoft Skype for Business (SfB) deployments. Built on innovative technology, our solutions create actionable insights and help enterprises transform their unified communications infrastructure, delivering enterprise-grade service availability, data-driven end-user satisfaction, and double-digit ROI increases. Founded by SfB product visionaries, Unify Square is a member of the Skype for Business Partner Advisory Council and one of Microsoft's global elite partners. Our software and services have delivered value to more than five million Skype for Business seats, in over 275 global enterprises across more than 50 countries, and in most major industry verticals.

Headquartered in Bellevue, Washington, Unify Square also has offices in the United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, India, Australia and Singapore.