

Frost Radar™: Unified Communications as a Service in Europe, 2024

A Benchmarking System to Spark Companies to Action - Innovation That Fuels New Deal Flow and Growth Pipelines

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Strategic Imperative and Growth Environment



Strategic Imperative

- Cloud private branch exchange (PBX) and unified communications-as-a-service (UCaaS) solutions have been firmly established as viable alternatives to customer premises-based communications systems, yet often providing greater flexibility and functionality to organizations of all sizes, verticals, and geographies. As cloud communications increasingly penetrate mainstream buyers, requirements among remaining customers are becoming more diverse, which creates both challenges and opportunities for service providers.
- A service provider's background, portfolio, and skill set determine whether it straddles the full spectrum of customer needs or targets the unique requirements of specific customer segments. However, certain common trends are determining long-term success in the UCaaS market, regardless of participants' customer focus and market strategy:
 - Full-stack UCaaS, comprising calling, meetings, messaging and mobility services, has become the norm for most organizations evaluating cloud communications solutions. Frost & Sullivan 2024 decision-maker survey data show that 40% of European organizations prefer to buy and another 36% would consider purchasing a full UCaaS stack from the same provider. Providers commonly offer their own meeting (less commonly group chat) solutions to address this requirement. Many have conceded meeting and group chat sales opportunities to leaders in those segments, including Cisco, Google, Microsoft, Slack, and Zoom. Where providers have conceded or cannot offer compelling meeting and messaging capabilities natively from their portfolios, they must provide robust integrations with third-party solutions.

Strategic Imperative (continued)

- Integrated platforms delivering UCaaS, contact center-as-a-service (CCaaS), and communications platform-as-a-service (CPaaS) are the foundation of next-generation business communications solutions. To address customer needs holistically and tailor functionality for different user personas, providers must leverage integrated, microservices-based platforms with flexible APIs. Certain providers are leveraging "contact center light" solutions with functionalities designed to make sales personnel, operators/receptionists, and other personas more efficient and productive.
- The disintegration of the value chain (applications plus connectivity) is creating new challenges and opportunities for service providers. Provider strategies must capitalize on their core competencies to deliver both complete UCaaS and underlying services (for instance, connectivity, direct inward dial [DID] numbers, calling plans, and managed services) for third-party UCaaS and to differentiate in the competitive market.
- In most regions of Europe, fixed-mobile convergence (FMC) is an imperative with the rise of highly distributed organizations created by remote and hybrid work and shifting user demographics. For the purposes of convenience and regulatory concerns, UCaaS solutions must provide some form of FMC, whether app-based or native/core-based, to enable access to business communications functionality anywhere, anytime with full compliance from mobile devices.
- Vertical solutions are becoming more widely available with UCaaS solutions tailored to specific workflows, budgets, regulatory requirements, work styles, and integration needs. Financial services, healthcare, hospitality, retail, high tech, and public sector rank among the industries most targeted for UCaaS sales. Providers must establish vertical practices with personnel and technology ecosystems for industries to effectively address customer requirements through software, managed and professional services, and devices.

Strategic Imperative (continued)

- Security, data privacy, and data governance have become even more pressing UCaaS selection criteria because of the evolving regulatory landscape in Europe. Just 10% of IT decision makers in Europe state that dealing with security concerns is "no challenge" and 11% report that privacy and compliance concerns are "no challenge"; the vast majority are challenged in these regards. Political and social unrest have increased the importance of data residency for compliance and business continuity purposes, which is further complicated by the proliferation of communications modalities (e.g., voice, video, and messaging) that must be secured, recorded, and archived. UCaaS providers must constantly update their security and compliance postures as customer requirements and regulations evolve.
- Fast-maturing AI technologies are enabling organizations to optimize business operations, enhance workflows, and foster better customer and employee experiences. AI is driving much of the innovation in communications and collaboration solutions today as applying AI to voice applications promises to drive more value into an otherwise mature core application. As AI proliferates, providers will need to demonstrate their respective speed of execution to deliver true in measurable benefits that outweigh perceived or potential AI security concerns.
- Attention to frontline worker enablement and bridging departmental silos is creating opportunities for provider differentiation and revenue streams. Providers have traditionally focused primarily on desk-based knowledge workers. Leaders are now tailoring solutions for users and lines of business across a host of deskless workers in the field and non-carpeted environments.
- Composability through a broad set of APIs and no-code/low-code platforms that allow businesses to create their own apps, as well as integrate cloud communications with important workflows is beginning to resonate with customer decision makers seeking easier customization and agility.

Growth Environment

- Providers should anticipate a gradual customer migration to cloud communications, which may yield lower cloud PBX and UCaaS growth rates in the near term but an opportunity to sustain a growth trajectory for a longer period. A global 2024 Frost & Sullivan survey of IT/telecom decision makers revealed that 97% of European organizations will have adopted cloud or mobile PBX solutions to some degree by the end of 2026. Only 10% stated they were fully cloud-based in early 2024. The vast majority, 92%, expect to be managing hybrid environments with elements of both cloud- and premises-based solutions in 2026.
- Frost & Sullivan survey data indicate that 51% of European organizations expect communications and collaboration technology budgets to increase in 2024 and 43% expect no change. However, service providers and channel partners report lengthier sales cycles and increased restraint in technology spending. Volatile political and macroeconomic conditions and supply chain disruptions, primarily due to international conflicts, restrained technology investments throughout most of 2023 and 2024 to date. Inflation also may play a role, indicating that technology adoption may not accelerate in proportion to budget increases.
- Evolved work models are among the leading drivers for cloud communications adoption. Organizations embracing flexible work styles and supporting high proportions of remote and hybrid workers are leveraging UCaaS and cloud collaboration solutions to support variability in when and where work is performed.
- Looming ISDN decommissioning is an increasingly significant motivator for customers that have delayed migration to IP-based or cloud communications services. Providers are developing compelling offers for verticals, specialty lines, and smaller customers that have previously not identified the right solution or provider for migration.

Growth Environment (continued)

- Migrations from premises-based enterprise telephony solutions to cloud PBX and UCaaS continue as organizations equip their users with modern collaboration tools such as Cisco Webex, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom Workplace. Whereas enterprise telephony upgrades were historically separate from collaboration deployments and the result of deliberate PBX replacement strategies, communications solution modernization now often starts with meeting and messaging solutions, followed by adopting cloud PBX that is part of the same cloud services suite. The cost savings and user experience benefits of adopting integrated solutions from the same vendor are driving this trend.
- Diverse offerings in terms of features, price, design, and architecture—including mobile UCaaS, basic PBX functionality and highly customizable solutions—are driving broad penetration across the entire customer spectrum. Diverse business models including fully digital customer journeys, white-glove customer engagements, and a variety of reseller/partner models (agency, white-label wholesale, strategic partnerships, and BYOC) are also expanding providers' market reach.
- Growth opportunities are compelling providers to deliver additional capabilities for a higher share of customer budgets and improved relationship stickiness. Offering a broader portfolio of solutions wrapped with business voice services such as connectivity, fixed and mobile networking, security, and IT is enabling stronger revenue streams and provider differentiation in competitive markets. Broader communications application portfolios, including CCaaS, team chat, video conferencing, CPaaS, and mobility further help providers to address a wider range of requirements and increase average revenue per user (ARPU).
- Improved performance in terms of security, reliability, and quality of service (QoS) owing to the use of SD-WAN services, edge services, redundant data centers, and maturing technologies is enhancing UCaaS appeal among more demanding buyers.

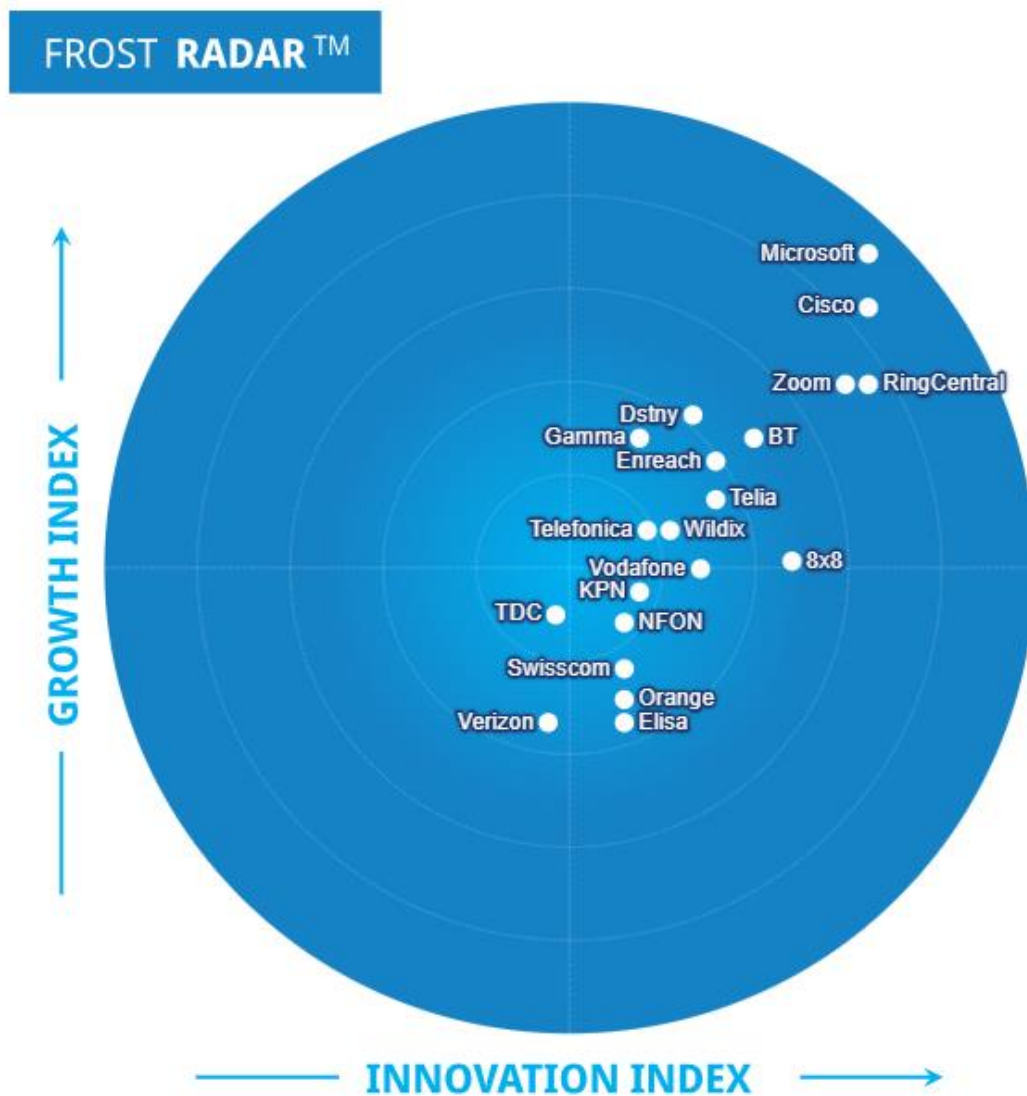
Growth Environment (continued)

- Enhanced value propositions including industry-specific solutions and vertical/frontline workflow improvements are boosting UCaaS adoption in organizations pursuing broad digital transformation.
- AI-driven solution enhancements will have a significant impact on UCaaS market growth. Free-of-charge, AI-powered features will increase cloud communications appeal across the customer spectrum and may accelerate UCaaS adoption. Premium AI features will enable innovative providers to increase seat prices of upper-tier solution bundles, as well as cross-sell and upsell to customers.
- Competition based on price remains, but higher labor and energy costs and an inflationary climate have resulted in small to moderate price increases from certain competitors to keep user seat prices relatively stable.
- UCaaS adoption will remain strong, although annual growth rates will continue to decline as the market matures further. Customer churn among UCaaS providers will be relatively high; however, churn away from UCaaS to other types of solutions (such as premises-based enterprise telephony systems, consumer services, or cloud meeting/messaging solutions) will remain low.

Frost Radar™: Unified Communications as a Service in Europe, 2024



Frost Radar™: UCaaS in Europe, 2024



Frost Radar™ Competitive Environment

- This analysis includes technology providers leveraging internally developed proprietary platforms, proprietary platforms that providers have acquired to deliver services, and resellers delivering their own branded UCaaS offers based on third-party platforms that they directly host and operate. Services based on pure-cloud/multitenant and multi-instance platforms consumed by multiple end-user organizations are taken into account when evaluating providers' market position and innovation and growth capabilities. This Frost Radar™ does not include customer premises-based multi-instance solutions or hosted single-tenant solutions, or cloud voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services that are primarily targeted at consumers and residential users.
- In bring-your-own-carrier (BYOC) deployment scenarios, this evaluation credits UCaaS seats to the UCaaS application provider and not the PSTN connectivity provider. In scenarios where the BYOC provider enables a full-featured cloud PBX seat to provide PSTN connectivity for a third-party UCaaS user, both the UCaaS and PSTN connectivity provider receive credit for the seat. In the case of resale partnerships, both parties receive credit for the installed UCaaS seats. This approach allows Frost & Sullivan to assess and represent each provider's growth capabilities more accurately.
- The European UCaaS market is fragmented, dynamic, and competitive. Of more than 120 competitors vying for market share in Europe, Frost & Sullivan independently plotted 19 of the top companies offering UCaaS based on multitenant or multi-instance infrastructure in this Frost Radar™ analysis.

Frost Radar™ Competitive Environment (continued)

- At the end of calendar year 2023, Vodafone remained the European market share leader with a customer base of more than 6 million UCaaS seats. However, its growth rates have slowed because of the large size of its installed base and difficulties of scaling (across countries and customer segments) many of the platforms it leverages to provide UCaaS services. Divesting its UCaaS and other businesses in Spain and Italy will significantly reduce Vodafone's installed base by as many as 4 million seats in 2024 and beyond, until the provider begins to bolster its customer base in the United Kingdom and other countries.
- Microsoft is experiencing rapid growth, with antitrust actions compelling it to unbundle Teams for M365 unlikely to notably slow the momentum. Microsoft is poised to overtake Vodafone's leadership in terms of installed UCaaS seats in 2024. Integration, if not partnership, with Microsoft Teams and integrations with the Microsoft 365 portfolio have become an imperative for most providers. The ability to integrate calling solutions and offer calling plans to Teams customers is offered by most of the providers included on Frost Radar™. Direct Routing, Operator Connect, and Teams Phone Mobile solutions offer compelling avenues for providers to add value to and generate revenue from the increasingly popular Microsoft Teams and 365 solution set.
- Cisco is significantly impacting its large base of hosted IP telephony and UCaaS provider partners by migrating BroadSoft BroadWorks, Hosted Collaboration Solution (HCS) and Unified Communications Manager (UCM) solutions to more modern, fully integrated, and feature-rich Webex Suite (Calling, Meetings, Messaging, Webinar) offers that bring customers up to functional par with alternative UCaaS solutions.

Frost Radar™ Competitive Environment (continued)

- National incumbent carriers remain strong UCaaS providers in their home countries, and often in neighboring countries as well. Elisa, KPN, Swisscom, TDC, and Telia appear on the Frost Radar™ because they maintain dominant positions in their domestic markets and actively seek to boost customer value and identify new growth opportunities.
- British Telecom (BT), NFON, Orange, Telefonica, and Vodafone are well positioned across multiple European countries. Strong capabilities in distributed enterprises and multinational corporations (MNCs) and a solid foothold among domestic small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) enable these providers to differentiate from smaller or domestically bound competitors.
- Dstny (formerly Destiny), Enreach, Gamma, and Wildix have emerged as strong pan-European competitors through M&A, partnerships, organic growth, differentiated portfolios, deployment options, and go-to-market strategies.
- US-based UCaaS providers are significantly influencing European markets. Cisco, Microsoft, and Zoom are utilizing their scale and resources as levers for notable growth. UCaaS-centric providers 8x8 and RingCentral bring unique capabilities and are capturing market share and strong channel presence.
- Numerous partnerships with RingCentral to offer UCaaS based on multitenant infrastructure are creating opportunities for providers to clearly present their value propositions and differentiate their broader services wrap.
- Avaya and Mitel's withdrawals from producing multi-instance and multitenant infrastructure as the basis of providers' UCaaS offers have created opportunities for both vendors and their channel ecosystems to migrate substantial base of on-premises PBX customers to cloud communications services delivered from shared infrastructure.

Frost Radar™ Competitive Environment (continued)

- Frost & Sullivan evaluated service providers based on the capabilities they offer to end customers, whether developed, hosted, and managed by the providers or their technology partners. They receive credit for their innovation in solution packaging and positioning, network capabilities, tangential solutions (for instance, mobility, CCaaS, CPaaS, and IoT), managed and professional services, and other aspects of their portfolios and strategies that determine customer value in cloud communications deployments.
- Intensified M&A activity over the past few years has consolidated power and created new levels of competition. Activity slowed in 2023 and 2024 to date due to macroeconomic conditions and volatile company valuations. The future will bring further consolidation activity. Providers must seek opportunities to enhance their portfolios, scale, and tap into new market segments through M&A.
- The rise of Cisco, Microsoft, RingCentral, and Zoom is forcing other UCaaS providers to reevaluate their business models. BYOC and resale partnerships are among the strategies that providers employ to capture new growth opportunities. Coopetition is enabling many UCaaS providers to secure a niche and provide additional value in competitor environments. Direct Routing, Operator Connect, and native mobile calling solutions for Teams Phone are examples of growth strategies capitalizing on providers' strength in voice connectivity and managed services to capture a share of customer technology spend in Microsoft Teams Phone deployments.
- For two decades, telecom operators and next-generation service providers have leveraged their voice networks and third-party cloud PBX/UCaaS platforms to deliver end-to-end cloud communications solutions to businesses. With the widening gap between leaders and others in the UCaaS market, the value chain is increasingly disrupted and market participants both with and without proprietary UCaaS platforms are facing growing challenges to keep development pace.

Frost Radar™ Competitive Environment (continued)

- Many enabling technology vendors have made a strategic shift toward becoming service providers themselves, forcing service providers to resell vendor-managed cloud services rather than build their own solutions using third-party software. As a result of these trends, service providers are seeing shrinking margins on cloud PBX and UCaaS services, reduced brand equity and customer ownership, and limited differentiation opportunities.
- Service provider strategies in response to adverse market shifts vary. Some have chosen to solely focus on delivering connectivity and managed services in third-party UCaaS environments. Others remain committed to offering their own managed and branded UCaaS solutions. The majority are choosing a balanced portfolio approach that comprises provider- and vendor-hosted solutions, as well as connectivity services for the most popular third-party UCaaS platforms.
- Frost & Sullivan expects mixed-provider UCaaS environments to become more common. These will include scenarios in which multiple providers jointly power the UCaaS user experience. For evaluation, Frost & Sullivan considers all parties involved to reflect the evolution of the value chain.

Frost Radar™: Companies to Action



Dstny

INNOVATION

- Dstny’s vision is to “simplify the everyday lives of people by making complex technology simple.” The provider is positioned to address industry trends by organizing its portfolio around business communications, business analytics, customer engagement, and business integrations.
- A multifaceted approach enables a differentiated market presence compared with many providers. Dstny for Service Providers offers major service provider partners software as a service, R&D, branding, a broad portfolio, and sales and support assets and enables Dstny to act as a global company. Dstny country organizations provide direct-to-customer and indirect-into-channel (resellers and distributors) software as a service, recruitment and training, support, and customer success programs that enable Dstny to act as a local entity in its core countries.
- Dstny Business Communications solutions leverage proprietary platforms acquired with Escaux and Telepo, a proprietary UCaaS platform acquired with easybell in Germany, and technologies from major third-party vendors to address diverse customer and partner needs.
- Via the 2021 acquisitions of Telepo and Soluno, Dstny gained access to technology capabilities empowering partners of varying backgrounds to deliver compelling, mobile-first UCaaS solutions. More than a dozen other acquisitions since 2020 further enhance Dstny’s portfolio with chatbot (FAQBot) business analytics (Meredix), cloud automation (Stuart), and simplified third-party integrations (CRM Connect for numerous customer relationship management platforms and Qunifi for Microsoft Teams).

Dstny (continued)

INNOVATION

- Dstny has accelerated investments in its proprietary technologies with core and add-on capabilities to provide a broad spectrum of options to businesses and partners adopting UCaaS. Highlighted developments include the ongoing rollout of the Dstny Converge FMC solution enabling a single user number for UC and mobile services, and the Dstny client that will unify user and administrator interfaces across Dstny platforms and applications.

Dstny (continued)

GROWTH

- Through organic growth and strategic acquisitions, Dstny has risen to rank among the European UCaaS leaders in terms of installed users. Dstny hosts more than 2.4 million UCaaS seats in Europe. The provider maintains a strong channel of at least 140 telecom operators that sell and support Dstny technologies, including an additional 271,000 seats in Europe hosted by Dstny for Service Providers partners.
- With its software as a service model, Dstny as a service, the company is well positioned to benefit from growing telco trends to reallocate their resources from deploying UCaaS infrastructure on their networks, maintaining and advancing it to instead reallocate resources to support partner delivered UCaaS solutions. As more providers seek to outsource UCaaS technologies and deliver network, support and other services wrapped around those technologies, Dstny can expand its footprint through mutually beneficial partnerships.
- Dstny is rapidly shifting seats to its direct as-a-service offers and has experienced 52% seat growth in this model from Q4 2022 to Q4 2023. Continued offering expansion and enhancements in the Dstny for Service Providers portfolio and targeting of recruitment of potential SP partners with legacy infrastructure (e.g., BroadSoft and HCS) will aid in further growth.
- Dstny has strong presence in Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Denmark, and Sweden and a growing presence in Germany and the United Kingdom. Its strategy is to leverage its 30 points of presence in Europe, wholesale model, and an ambitious M&A strategy to expand in other countries and establish itself as a leading pan-European UCaaS provider.

Dstny (continued)

GROWTH

- Dstny's ability to deliver native mobile UCaaS represents a key differentiator and a growth catalyst as European businesses settle into distributed, remote, and hybrid workforces.
- A focus on CRM Connect, CCaaS, business process integrations, and Teams integration solutions offers strong upsell opportunities, differentiation, and greater customer value. The company is finding success with its integration initiatives, for which it reported 24% revenue growth from Q4 2022 through Q4 2023.
- The 2022 acquisition of German UCaaS provider easybell enhances Dstny's footprint in Germany, including access to more than 2,000 easybell partners, and a reported 30% user seat growth since Q4 2022. Dstny also acquired Danish UCaaS provider Flexfone in 2023, strengthening Dstny's position in Denmark through Flexfone's customer base of 50,000 user seats, partner ecosystem, and staff.

Dstny (continued)

FROST PERSPECTIVE

- Its partner-centric approach and local presence (e.g., local teams, data centers, and channels) in several key European markets position Dstny well to scale rapidly and gain market share.
- To drive efficiencies and scale, Dstny will need to further rationalize its portfolio to reduce product development and maintenance, and staff reskilling costs.
- The company will need to enhance its flagship solutions to provide more comprehensive feature sets, including video meetings and group chat/team spaces, and more effectively compete as a one-stop shop against more feature-rich offerings in non-Teams environments.
- Certain Dstny core countries—including the Netherlands, Denmark, and Sweden—are highly penetrated and experiencing low UCaaS market growth rates. Dstny may improve its UCaaS standing more rapidly by expanding into less penetrated markets, such as France and Germany, where it has a local presence.
- Differentiated strategies for various countries can help Dstny avoid conflict with its technology partners and resellers.
- Converge, a mobile-first approach, can position Dstny as the preferred wholesale partner for European telecom operators seeking to become more agile and leverage their 5G networks to gain a competitive edge in the UCaaS market.

Best Practices & Growth Opportunities



Best Practices

1

The addressable market is becoming more clearly segmented between organizations seeking collaboration-rich UCaaS and those with a preference for voice-centric cloud communications solutions. Specific workflows, user demographics or job roles, interaction cultures, or types of communications approaches (e.g., single-vendor versus multivendor/best-of-breed, and security posture) often determine an organization's choice of a UCaaS solution.

2

Improving CX, driving growth, and attracting the best talent top the list of end-user organizations' communications investment objectives. This is driving investments in cloud contact center and CX management solutions, and full-stack UCaaS solutions that include video meetings and team collaboration. Providers with integrated, collaboration-rich UCaaS and CCaaS offers are better positioned to address evolved customer expectations than those relying solely on a PBX-replacement sales motion.

3

FMC via software applications, WebRTC, or mobile-core-based solutions are appealing as organizations become more distributed. Novel mobile UCaaS solutions aim to address organizations' need for mobile access to secure, reliable, compliant business communications and collaboration. Providers must evaluate the feasibility of providing both app-based and native-dialer-based solutions for different types of users.

Growth Opportunities

1

Acquire or partner to bring cloud contact center capabilities to market quickly. Alternatively, develop CX capabilities internally to better control the technology roadmap and prices. Simple ACD functionality with reporting capabilities may suffice among cost-conscious SMEs. Multichannel contact center with advanced analytics, IVR, call recording, and AI-powered features is required in the mid-market and large enterprise. Leverage flexible APIs to embed communications services in customer-facing portals.

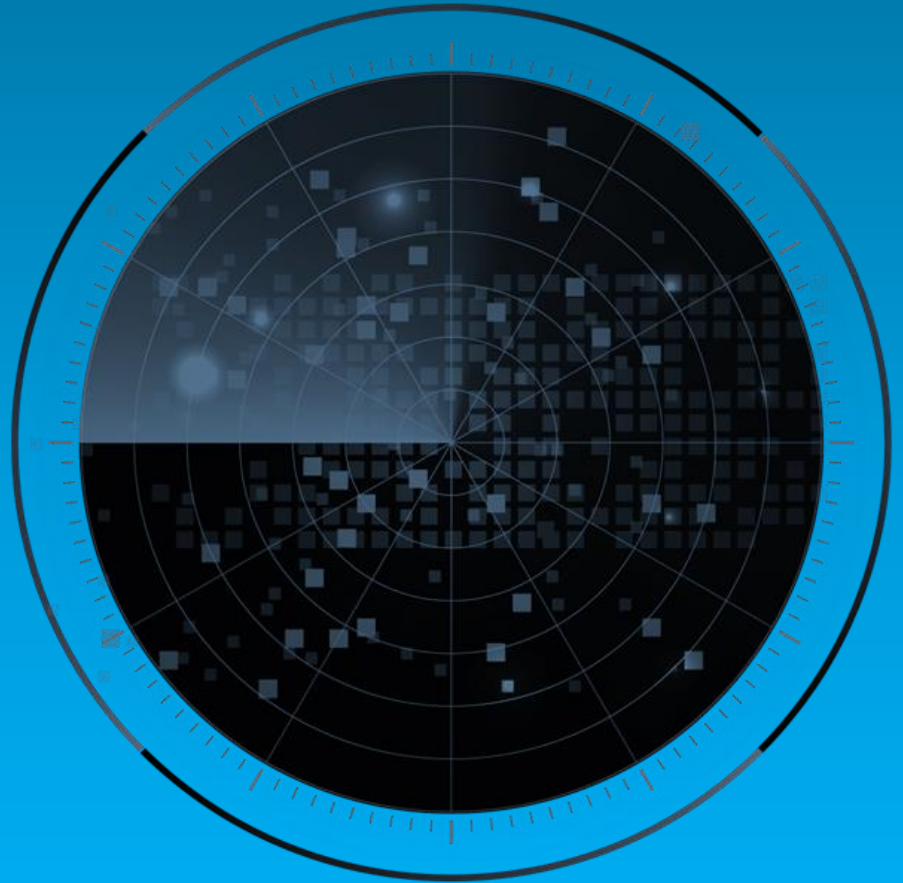
2

Offer a consistent user experience across networks and devices: PC/Mac (desktop and web clients), desk phone, and mobile device (native or app-based dialer). Enhance your mobile/WebRTC app or mobile UCaaS to provide more than a voice-service replacement option. Leverage existing mobile assets, acquire an MVNO status, or explore partnerships to deliver native mobile calling with the cloud PBX user number.

3

Gain deep understanding of business processes in different verticals, lines of business, and job functions to identify use cases for embedded and/or integrated communications features. Leverage integrated, extensible platforms to enable unique persona-based user experiences (e.g., front desk and field sales) that combine UC and contact center features. Offer APIs and SDKs that enable developers to embed your communications functionality into a website, business application, desktop client, or mobile app.

Frost Radar™ Analytics



Frost Radar™: Benchmarking Future Growth Potential

2 Major Indices, 10 Analytical Ingredients, 1 Platform

Growth Index

Growth Index (GI) is a measure of a company's growth performance and track record, along with its ability to develop and execute a fully aligned growth strategy and vision; a robust growth pipeline system; and effective market, competitor, and end-user focused sales and marketing strategies.

GI1

MARKET SHARE (PREVIOUS 3 YEARS)

This is a comparison of a company's market share relative to its competitors in a given market space for the previous 3 years.

GI2

REVENUE GROWTH (PREVIOUS 3 YEARS)

This is a look at a company's revenue growth rate for the previous 3 years in the market/industry/category that forms the context for the given Frost Radar™.

GI3

GROWTH PIPELINE

This is an evaluation of the strength and leverage of a company's growth pipeline system to continuously capture, analyze, and prioritize its universe of growth opportunities.

GI4

VISION AND STRATEGY

This is an assessment of how well a company's growth strategy is aligned with its vision. Are the investments that a company is making in new products and markets consistent with the stated vision?

GI5

SALES AND MARKETING

This is a measure of the effectiveness of a company's sales and marketing efforts in helping it drive demand and achieve its growth objectives.

Frost Radar™: Benchmarking Future Growth Potential

2 Major Indices, 10 Analytical Ingredients, 1 Platform (continued)

Innovation Index

Innovation Index (II) is a measure of a company's ability to develop products/ services/ solutions (with a clear understanding of disruptive Mega Trends) that are globally applicable, are able to evolve and expand to serve multiple markets and are aligned to customers' changing needs.



II1

INNOVATION SCALABILITY

This determines whether an organization's innovations are globally scalable and applicable in both developing and mature markets, and also in adjacent and non-adjacent industry verticals.

II2

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

This is a measure of the efficacy of a company's R&D strategy, as determined by the size of its R&D investment and how it feeds the innovation pipeline.

II3

PRODUCT PORTFOLIO

This is a measure of a company's product portfolio, focusing on the relative contribution of new products to its annual revenue.

II4

MEGA TRENDS LEVERAGE

This is an assessment of a company's proactive leverage of evolving, long-term opportunities and new business models, as the foundation of its innovation pipeline. An explanation of Mega Trends can be found [here](#).

II5

CUSTOMER ALIGNMENT

This evaluates the applicability of a company's products/services/solutions to current and potential customers, as well as how its innovation strategy is influenced by evolving customer needs.

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