ENGAGEMENT SOLUTIONS:
The Key to Delivering Better Experiences For Everyone
I. Introduction

“How crazy was my week?” Scott, an ad agency executive, repeated the question his colleague Mark asked him in the commuter train bar car. He answered, “I have four pages of notes regarding a new project I talked about with someone yesterday and I can’t remember who I was talking to.”

“What year are you in, 1985?” Dave responded.

“What do you mean?” Scott shot back. “You have a better approach?”

Indeed, we’re a long ways from parachute pants, 4-pound cell phones, and the 9-to-5 workday. Culture and business have evolved separately and merged together. The percentage of American workers tied to the office today is falling as precipitously as the percentage of American workers wearing ties to the office. The very nature of work is changing and technology is behind it all.

Succeeding in business means getting more out of every day. And getting more hinges entirely on more effective communications. The key there is leveraging the best engagement technology available — one that allows you to engage with team members, clients, vendors, prospects — guaranteeing that everyone with whom you do business is enjoying the experience equally.

It’s a different world, one that’s constantly evolving. And in business, that means evolving with it. Or being left behind.

II. Trends In Team Engagement

Each day brings a new advancement in technology. Whether it’s something as academic as a software upgrade or as advanced as an Augmented Reality (AR) experience, technology is building on itself to bring us more and more ways to interact with others and experience the world. For example, IKEA uses AR to show how its furniture fits into a customer’s living room and all it takes is a smartphone with an AR app to make it happen.\(^2\)

One example of the way technology has changed business is how online shopping — a category that didn’t exist just a couple decades ago — has upended retailers. Or has it? Starbucks, Ulta Beauty Salon, and The Home Depot have all thrived by advancing with the times and successfully integrating their digital platforms with their physical locations.

*The Starbucks online rewards program boasts 13 million members, an 18% increase year-over-year,* as members loaded $2.1B onto their Starbucks cards and more than nine million customers chose to pay for their coffee digitally last year. Ulta’s main source of business requires an in-person appearance to enjoy, but they’ve promoted their e-commerce site to the point where it was responsible for 4% of the company’s 17% comparable-store sales spike.

And while The Home Depot’s digital sales make up 6% of the company’s business, just under half of those sales involve a customer coming into the store. The digital experience is actually driving people to the brick-and-mortar structure.\(^3\) In order for these retail giants to thrive, they needed to embrace technology, learn how it could help them, and take advantage of it.

That’s a lesson for every business.

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\(^2\) [https://theappolutions.com/blog/development/ar-benefits-for-business/](https://theappolutions.com/blog/development/ar-benefits-for-business/)
The evolving workplace and the evolving worker

What the workplace is becoming is not necessarily one half of the long-discussed “work-life balance.” Today, in every business, we have a “work-life blend,” and technology represents both the driving force behind it and the result of it. Fewer of us punch a clock anymore, but many of us check email and respond to business challenges after dinner, before breakfast, any time of the day or night.

If technological innovation is the engine behind this growth, then Millennials are the fuel. People approaching their 30th birthdays can’t remember a time without email and many other forms of electronic communication. Connectivity has always been a part of their lives.

Considering that Millennials are rising in the ranks, it’s important to understand how team engagement evolves as that happens.

What today’s business leaders have to understand and plan for is that tomorrow’s business leaders are replacing face-to-face meetings, telephone conversations, and “business hours” with Unified Communications platforms that include social media, chat, email, and instant messaging. And they expect it all to be working 24/7.

Today’s team members are engaged in an entirely different manner than any members of today’s senior management team were at that age. There are no “off” hours.

 Millennials became the largest generation in the American workforce, a trend that will only continue — and successful companies will take advantage of this group’s embrace of technology.

In 2015

https://blog.shrm.org/blog/2016-predictions-for-employee-engagement-recognition
Success rides on engagement

But that doesn’t mean everyone is engaged. According to a Gallup survey, only about $\frac{1}{3}$ of employees are fully engaged at work. It’s not an encouraging statistic to think that nearly 70 percent of your employees are not giving their jobs everything they have to give.

Looked upon another way, this deficit in team engagement could be seen as an opportunity. There’s an awful lot of upside to be captured via better team engagement, from less turnover to fewer quality defects. Just imagine the positive effect on key business outcomes that can result from making sure your team is fully engaged in what you’re doing.

Teams of employees are not loyal to a logo. They’re loyal to an idea that drives a business, to people whose idea makes that business what it is, and to the belief that they have a hand in bringing that idea to life.

Make sure you have the tools to keep your team fully engaged and you’ll see the results.

Engagement’s effect on key business outcomes

When compared with business units in the bottom quartile of engagement, those in the top quartile realize improvement in the following areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Absenteeism</td>
<td>+41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnover (High-Turnover Organizations)</td>
<td>-59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnover (Low-Turnover Organizations)</td>
<td>-28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrinkage</td>
<td>-70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety Incidents</td>
<td>-58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient Safety Incidents</td>
<td>-40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality (Defects)</td>
<td>-40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Metrics</td>
<td>-30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productivity</td>
<td>-20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profitability</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Less absenteeism and turnover, fewer safety incidents and quality defects, better productivity, sales, and profitability. Businesses with employees in the top quartile of engagement are truly leaders in their fields.
The proliferation of ways companies market to customers is nothing short of exponential, when you consider less than 30 years ago, it was limited pretty much to direct (mail, phone), TV, radio, and print. Today, there are hundreds of ways companies engage with their customers, on devices as varied as you can imagine. Websites, email, dozens of social platforms, SMS, geo-netting, smart billboards, push-notifications, in-app messaging, banner advertising, and even wearables are evolving to allow brands to deepen their customer relationships.

And no one person is tethered to only one method of interaction. Over the course of a relationship with a brand, a customer might engage with them via digital loyalty programs, email, phone, text, chat, and social. And all that could happen in the span of minutes. Technology has allowed every business to present itself to consumers in so many formats that consistent omnichannel marketing is a must.

Omnichannel is “the realization of social business” and a successful omnichannel effort is possible when a company works with the most advanced engagement platform it can. Only then can a marketer offer customers an experience that consistently reinforces the brand from the store to the website to the contact center to the app to the messaging on the company’s Facebook page, Twitter account and beyond.

At least 43% of customers have used their **MOBILE PHONE** while shopping in a brick-and-mortar store.

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8 https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/omni-channel-user-experience-examples#sm.0016aqeyq19s9cxvuc02hugiqefc3
9 http://omnichannel.me/what-is-omnichannel/
All these touchpoints are really just communications, and those channels change based on wherever a customer is and whatever that customer is doing. Successful organizations understand that and use it to their advantage.

The goal of any company is to ensure that an interaction a customer starts on one channel is carried seamlessly across any other channel they choose; that the website and the app feel as cohesive as a store or hotel visit. If customers have the same great experience from one channel to the next, you have successfully delivered via the consumer channel.

In our ultra-connected world it’s easy for a customer to jump to another vendor to browse, compare prices, or even buy with the press of a button.

But when you provide a seamless experience customers can count on and enjoy — no matter how they’re visiting your business — you’ll have customers who are willing to pay up to 25% more for whatever it is you sell.¹⁰

By presenting your company consistently via every touchpoint you have with your customers, your business will realize more sales, more profits, more growth, and more success, no matter how you define it.

86% of customers will pay as much as 25% more for a better customer experience.

https://connecteam.com/contingent-worker-innovation/shopping-experience-personalization/
IV. Team engagement meets customer engagement in the cloud

So how do you provide that seamless, consistent customer channel? How do you give the employees of your small or mid-size business the tools to make sure that the customer channel is attainable?

You need a communication platform that offers true system redundancy, one that’s always ready for you to access even if something breaks down. You need an engagement system that’s customizable and scalable, so you can ramp up traffic or update information right away across every one of your company’s touchpoints. You need a solution that promotes both team engagement and customer engagement seamlessly across any barriers you can imagine. And chief among those now, is the ability to get the most out of your legacy investments while positioning yourself for the future. Enter the cloud.

Why cloud?

The advantages of having your company’s entire communication system in the cloud are virtually limitless. First off, there’s flexibility — if your business is growing or if it fluctuates in size due to seasonal demand, using the cloud allows you to adjust to demands instantly. Other resources include automatic software updates, increased security, and disaster recovery,\(^{11}\) so that your business communication system is always safe. No hurricane in South Florida will wipe out your marketing campaign, no earthquake in California will erase your customer lists. The cloud is always on, even if the computer at your desk isn’t.

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\(^{13}\) Emergent Resources, Small Business in the Cloud

\(^{14}\) Compass Intelligence
Is it cost-effective? Absolutely. That’s because the cloud allows you to streamline your IT department costs and refrain from purchasing hardware and making constant updates for that hardware.

Three years ago, 37% of small businesses used cloud computing services. Three years from now, 78% of those concerns will be on the cloud\textsuperscript{13} as the cloud computing and services market keeps growing: last year it jumped $12B over the year prior.\textsuperscript{14}

Using any device, your employees can access their projects, read internal memos, edit documents, collaborate with co-workers and get everything done that they can when they’re in the office. They can also send messages to spouses, make plans with friends, and even shop for that great pair of shoes they saw that guy wearing on the plane. Basically, the cloud makes anywhere you or your employees are into Worldwide Headquarters.

Business leaders like that the cloud saves a company money in so many ways. Cloud computing also improves productivity and time-to-market, resulting in business growth. IT buyers appreciate the easy hybrid delivery options, the ability to integrate with/reuse equipment that employees are already using, and the capability to provide mobility security. Line-of-business buyers rave about the improved customer experience and the increase in customer satisfaction that comes with a system that they simply need to learn how to use… not how to build.

The cloud is changing the rules for how small businesses will grow in the future.

\textbf{What business owners seem to like best about migrating to the cloud is that it’s “future proof”}

\textsuperscript{13} Emergent Resources, Small Business in the Cloud
\textsuperscript{14} Compass Intelligence
Not only does the cloud present a predictable expense model, it also gives your business access to the latest technology all the time. It frees up your IT staff to focus on strategic initiatives and offers the flexibility to scale up or down depending on what you need for a specific time period. If your business is seasonal, this subscription-based technology will allow you to pay only for what you use during your high season without carrying excess capacity when things slow down.

Moving to the cloud

So, is migrating to the cloud difficult? As there are no hardware or software installations, can it really, truly be a tough transition?

It certainly can be — 63% of businesses that have migrated to the cloud have rated the final transition as one that required significant effort. Upon their migration, 44% of companies have moved infrastructure or applications from one public cloud to another.¹⁵ Moving to the cloud didn’t provide these companies with the immediate business advantage they sought, instead, it presented daunting hurdles.

If you want to get the most out of your engagement platform, and you want to take advantage of the cloud, Avaya IP Office™ is the optimal choice for both — especially if you presently work with the Premise IP Office™ solution.

Migration is simple, as it has a common code base, so there’s no re-training of staff. You can re-purpose your existing IP Office 500v2 as a gateway and re-use your IP, digital, cordless, and analog devices.

And to help avoid interruptions to your business, IP Office can provide failover from premise-to-premise, cloud-to-cloud, premise-to-cloud or cloud-to-premise. And all of this in a secure way with media and signaling encryption to all soft and hard endpoints.

Avaya IP Office instantly solves the problems of someone in the office connecting with a colleague who works remotely, or an employee traveling and working from a hotel or anyplace else where conducting business can be difficult, or on-the-go salespeople staying in touch. It enables receptionists to connect customers to remote sales reps and allows you to embed communications in the applications you already use, like SalesForce.com, Outlook, Office 365, Gmail, Skype for Business, and many others.

Avaya’s newest innovation integrates with your mobile, find me/follow me technology and can support single site deployment with as few as five users or it can handle up to 150 branch locations and 3,000 users.

Avaya IP Office™ brings your calls, messaging, conferencing, and customer management into a single system. It’s a unified communications solution that, among so many other features, sends email, voicemail, and texts to the same inbox.16

There’s call handling, messaging, conferencing, presence, IM and so much more. There’s built-in, always-on security and centralized management. Avaya IP Office connects you with your customers and employees the way that’s most comfortable for them: voice, SMS, chat, email, and even fax. It lets you offer what the people who interact with and promote your business want.

Basically, Avaya IP Office allows the call to connect no matter where
the person is and solves the problem that many people in business
will hang up rather than leave a message.

And migrating to Avaya IP Office in the cloud is as easy as using
it. There’s no hardware installation and you can employ your office
number instead of a personal number as your constant point of
contact. Conference calls happen with the click of a mouse or tap of
a finger, and you can turn your tablet, laptop, mobile or even your
home phone into an office extension.

Some of the many advantages include the exchange of commuting
time for productive working time and the fact that your business will
tick smoothly even when something like bad weather closes your
office. What’s best is that you control your customers’ experience,
your sales people can control when they can be reached, and your
company controls the phone numbers your customers call.

Avaya IP Office has everything you need to stay connected and
accessible, no matter where in the world you are. That makes it
perfect for a business like yours.
VI. About Avaya

Avaya is the worldwide leader in business communications, providing telephony systems to small- and medium-sized business with a 23.1% share, and is the leader in IP Telephony with a 21.6% share.

Since Q2 of 2013, Avaya has been the #1 company on the planet in telephony due to the popularity of IP Office and the number of phone lines Avaya has shipped. We’re the leader in Unified Messaging with a 46.8% share and contact center at 25.8% share.

In short, Avaya is the only communications software and service provider who can transform your business internally to build the stronger teams and better collaboration that you want in your business. Furthermore, Avaya can enable the messaging you display to your customers to be consistent and seamless across every device they choose.