

Point of View



Skype for Business: Achieve more - Collaborate in new innovative ways

Summary: Skype for Business helps you compete as a digital business – if you do it right

Skype for Business is a powerful new tool to help create the digital workplaces necessary to maintain and increase competitiveness in the world of digital business.

It's a key part of the communications platform that enables your digital workplace and new ways of working anywhere, any time, on any device. A digital workplace empowers your people and helps deliver increased productivity, faster innovation and reduced costs.

This point of view explains what Skype for Business is, what it can mean for your business, and what you need to consider to maximize its value.

Introducing Skype for Business

Skype for Business is the next version of the Microsoft Lync communications and collaboration software familiar to millions of people around the world.

The software brings the familiar and highly popular consumer experience of Skype together with the enterprise security, compliance, and control that enterprises get from Lync.

Skype for Business transforms the way people communicate. It connects employees, customers, suppliers and partners virtually everywhere to achieve more by collaborating effectively.

Organizations can extend and manage their communications through federation with other collaboration platforms. You can even communicate seamlessly with the 300 million users of the consumer version of Skype.



Skype for Business



Since high user adoption is crucial to the success of any investment in digital workplace technology, the issue of change management for Skype for Business is crucial.

What Skype for Business means for your business

The impact of Skype for Business on your organization depends on the maturity of your unified communications and collaboration infrastructure (UCC).

For enterprises that are just starting their collaboration journey into UCC infrastructure, Skype for Business provides an opportunity to upgrade their UCC capabilities. This can help meet the growing expectations of employees, customers, and other audiences, and boost productivity and competitiveness.

For companies that have deployed Lync for instant messaging and presence but have maintained their traditional PBX, Skype for Business represents an opportunity to make the move to enterprise voice. At the same time, they will enhance their collaboration with video and desktop sharing—reducing cost and gaining functionality.

The transition to enterprise voice can take some time to fully implement. But companies can realize immediate benefits and cost savings by using the native conferencing capabilities in Skype for Business for audio, video and document sharing.

Many organizations will find that Skype for Business is an appealing alternative to a new PBX (once their legacy PBXs have been depreciated). Skype for Business delivers enterprise-grade voice communication capabilities allowing companies to reduce telephony costs across the board. In addition it eliminates the need for maintenance contracts associated with keeping a legacy PBX environment running.

Companies will also benefit from the improvements available over previous versions of Lync. For example, Skype for Business features peer-to-peer voice quality improvements on unmanaged networks. It has improved capabilities for collaboration that lets you connect with virtually anyone. Even people outside your organization can get the same capabilities and you can use your mobile devices to effectively collaborate with each other.



The embedding of instant messaging, voice, video and collaboration into applications is easier and more sophisticated, opening up new possibilities for businesses. Employees, customers and business partners can gain immediate access to communications and collaboration capabilities within the apps they're already using, wherever they are. This makes voice a more seamless part of the work experience—and, potentially, part of digitally disruptive solutions that generate competitive advantage.

The potential upside to adopting Skype for Business is significant—but what about the risk?

Skype for Business is low risk

“No risk, no reward,” goes the popular expression. Skype for Business may be an exception. It is a low-risk opportunity for most enterprises, while providing a clear enhancement over previous versions of Lync.

The platform and core technology for Skype for Business come from prior work and investments in Lync—an enterprise-focused solution used by many organizations. As such, there is high compatibility between existing Lync Server 2013 clients and servers and Skype for Business clients and servers.

In fact, enterprises can make in-place upgrades from Lync Server 2013 to the Skype for Business server—the first time Microsoft has allowed an in-place upgrade for Lync Server and its predecessors. Current Lync customers can choose this or other upgrade options to adopt Skype for Business based on their needs.

This also means that the rich ecosystem of third-party tools, hardware, and other components for Lync 2013 can be certified for Skype for Business fairly quickly, further reducing risk.

Considerations for your Skype for Business adoption

Once you have decided to adopt Skype for Business, you need to consider the best approach for you. There is no one-size-fits-all adoption plan. Instead, you should consider questions such as:

- Should you adopt the technology on-premises, in the cloud, with Office 365 or in a hybrid configuration?
- Which capabilities should you adopt, and on what timeline?
- Will your adoption also include an application development effort to embed voice in your line-of-business applications?
- What change management needs should you anticipate, and how should you address them?

Since high user adoption is crucial to the success of any investment in digital workplace technology, the issue of change management for Skype for Business is crucial—although it's one that many enterprises overlook.

The answers to these questions will depend in part on your governance, security, management and regulatory environment. Additional factors include the numbers and locations of facilities you need to support, the capabilities and maturity of your infrastructure, and the state of your investments in a traditional PBX and other technologies.

The need for expertise

Your enterprise may have considerable expertise in its line of business but, unless that business is technology adoption and, in particular, UCC adoption, you may not be well-positioned to answer these and other implementation questions.

Avanade is. We have deployed more than one million seats of Lync—including one of the world's largest installations of Lync for enterprise voice. And we have more certified professionals for Lync Core Solutions and Enterprise Voice Online Services than any other Microsoft Partner.

Avanade, co-founded by Microsoft and Accenture, has taken a leading role in Skype for Business planning and implementation.

- We were one of only nine Skype for Business Elite Launch Partners worldwide
- We participated in Microsoft's invitation-only Skype for Business Technology Adoption Program
- We are an active member of the Skype for Business Partner Advisory Council.



Our Change Enablement services help increase the success, certainty and user adoption rates of Skype for Business projects through a robust set of offerings including:

- Change Strategy
- Rollout and Adoption Success Kit
- Project Communications Planning
- Change Readiness and Measurement
- Stakeholder & Sponsor Engagement

If you're ready to learn more about how Skype for Business can help you, about how it can become part of the foundation of your digital workplace strategy, and about how Avanade can help, please visit [Unified Communications for Skype for Business](#) and [Digital Workplace](#).



About Avanade

Avanade is the leading provider of innovative digital and cloud-enabling services, business solutions and design-led experiences, delivered through the power of people and the Microsoft ecosystem. Majority owned by Accenture, Avanade was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation and has 29,000 professionals in 23 countries. Visit us at www.avanade.com

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