Do your employees and customers increasingly prefer text messaging over calling? Are your employees spending a lot more time working from home and on the road? Are your employees storing confidential work files in their personal cloud?

If so, you’re not alone. These are just a few trends keeping CIOs and IT managers up at night. Misery might love company, but it would rather have sound advice for tackling such challenges.

A recent white paper by J Arnold & Associates Research details how those challenges can snowball into a communications gap: With technology changing so quickly, enterprises struggle to provide employees with the communications applications they need to be productive.

To assess and close your organization’s communications gap, consider the four scenarios below:

1. Customers are Frustrated by Slow Response Times
While most business phone systems have features like virtual receptionists, call queues, and other ways to ensure it's simple and quick for customers to speak to the right person, you can also consider a cloud communications solution that lets employees talk and text from their business number, even when using their personal smartphone. This helps to enable the immediate reachability that customers crave. Employees can work and stay connected to customers anytime and anywhere they choose. Bonus? The employee's personal number stays personal, and the business number is displayed instead, thanks to the power of the cloud.

2. Your Employees, Customers, or Both Text More Than Call

Over six billion text messages are sent in the US every day, making the odds high that this trend is already playing out within your company. Consumers increasingly use text messaging to interact with businesses, often because they find it faster than sitting on hold, waiting for the next available agent.

For example, 34 percent of millennials—who spend more than $200 billion annually—would rather have their teeth cleaned than call customer service. They prefer non-voice channels such as text messaging, where 30 percent say they expect a response just as fast as if they'd reached out via social media. Businesses that can't receive and quickly respond to customer text messages risk losing sales, brand loyalty, and market share.

For outbound messaging, look for a solution that provides more reliability, speed and privacy than the basic short message service (SMS) that many mobile operators offer. For example, Nexmo, a Vonage company, offers APIs which provides direct links to each mobile operator, while other solutions typically route texts through multiple providers, which can lead to delayed or lost messages. Nexmo's Adaptive Routing feature also helps minimize delays by identifying the fastest network route for each message, ensuring a seamless connection with customers for deeper relationships and better business outcomes.

3. Your Employees Store Work Files in Third-party Cloud Storage Sites

Your IT department may not have approved storing assets in the these third party sites, and they can't control them.

Unauthorized use of third-party cloud storage sites is as common as it is problematic. Why? Employees are frustrated with the company-provided solution, often feeling it's not as user-friendly as the free cloud storage services they use for photos. But when employees go 'rogue', important details like compliance, usage and analytics are often ignored.

So when assessing enterprise-grade cloud storage services, pay close attention to their user interface (UI) and user experience (UX). The more intuitive the service is, the less time employees will have to spend learning it, which also frees IT staff to focus on tasks that drive revenue. And the ability for your cloud solution to integrate with other business tools, like Salesforce®, Google Apps for Business™, and other popular platforms, is another crucial element that enables your employees to access the data they need for their day-to-day, all in one place.

4. Your Management Has Made Remote Working a Strategic Priority

As a result, remote workers now must have the same collaboration capabilities as their office-based colleagues.

Cloud communications services are the way to go because they're flexible enough to support office and remote workers alike, with no location-related tradeoffs. Today's teleworkers need the ability to have a presence in the office, even if they're on the other side of the world. Cloud-based solutions allow you to work from anywhere, from any device, so if your top sales-person is out on a sales call, he or she can still attend an important last-minute meeting from their smartphone. High-quality video, voice, and mobile conferencing, as well as screensharing and virtual desktops, are all great ways to ensure excellent collaboration, even when face-to-face is not an option.
Consider the Cloud

These four scenarios are just a few examples of why savvy CIOs and IT managers are using the cloud to get a good night’s sleep. With the cloud, they have the flexibility to accommodate changing workstyles and customer preferences, all while maximizing efficiency and their company’s bottom line. Ready to join them?

Contact a Vonage representative to see how cloud communications can help your organization transform employee productivity.