



## What to expect when deploying packaged Unified Communications (UC) applications

So you have purchased vendor X's "fully packaged" UC product, to be deployed in your IT infrastructure, and you are wondering what happens next. VoiceRite has deployed these types of applications for companies ranging from EDS and IBM to Watson Sysco and Duke University. Along the way, we have learned a few things about deploying pre-built, packaged UC applications, and we hope the following three step process will help.

### Key Points:

- Investing in Joint Applications Design (Steps 1) and pilot testing (step 2) will insure an easy time with end user deployment (step 3).
- Remember it's the vendor's application, but it is being deployed on your IT infrastructure.
- Packaged speech-enabled applications typically need secure access to at least one of your databases and/or applications.
- Many of these applications require browser based access to the server running the application.
- If administrators or users plan on accessing the applications via the Internet, a method of secure access (VPN or firewall tunnel) will be required.
- The most effective (cost and otherwise) vendor support is remote, so plan to provide VPN or some type of remote access.

**Step 1: Joint Applications Design (JAD).** This term is a little misleading in the context of deploying pre-packaged applications, where the core functionality is already designed and developed. The Design part of the JAD in this case refers to integration with any databases or applications that feed data to the UC application, and the importing of the initial set of data to drive the UC application. Another piece that needs some thought upfront is the settings that customize the UC application to your particular usage model. We find most customers do not spend enough time upfront thinking where the server to be located, what network will it have to be connected to access all of the users, databases and applications it needs to communicate with (securely) and what is the backup and fail over plan. Using Password Reset as an example, the JAD would be used to document which connectors would be used to connect to any applications that users could reset the passwords on. The process to obtain the initial list of users and their email address would be flushed out. Server(s) rack space and network connectivity must be worked out so Password Reset can communicate securely with users, PBX's and any Active Directory or other applications that it resets the password for. Last but not least is walking through all of the various customization settings for things like: do users have to call from their desk phones and how many challenge questions should be asked to be authenticated.

**Step 2: Installation and pilot testing.** With step 1 worked out in advance, we find that step 2 goes smoothly. We typically run into a few issues with setting up SSL and obtaining access to applications with which we integrate. Because these integrations are usually based on open standards, Web services, and API's, if an IT department has adhered to best practices, things drop into place nicely. In the cases where the IT department is behind on these practices, this is usually the motivation to catch up. As with any new application, the IT department needs some time to familiarize themselves with the actual operation of the UC application and the pilot is an excellent time to do this. We find that changes are usually made to the JAD document because of the IT department's experience during the pilot testing. Your help desk personnel should be brought in during the point to train them and make them aware of the impending cutover.

**Step 3: End user deployment** occurs after all pilot issues have been resolved, and any initial data dump has been accomplished. It's a good idea to cutover users in blocks of about 10%, then another 40% and then the final 50%, so that any last minute issues during the deployment of one block, does not impact the subsequent blocks of users. Success with step 3 is all about having done a good job with steps 1 and 2.

### For More Information

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