

to communicate. The new cloud-based offering can be used with Google Apps for Business and is ideal for businesses with one or multiple locations -- such as retailers, franchise owners and medical offices -- seeking new ways to boost workforce productivity and enhance customer service.

Now, small and medium-sized companies can empower their employees to more effectively communicate and collaborate. For example, workers can designate where and how they want to be reached by phone, whether in the office or on a mobile device, to more readily respond to customers, co-workers and changing business requirements.

Companies using Google Apps for Business can download a Virtual Communications Express application from the Google Apps Marketplace, which will allow users to make calls -- with one click -- from Gmail, GChat and Google Calendar. Individuals can also see if other Google Apps users are available to join a call instantly.

The Google Apps Marketplace makes it easy for the more than 5 million businesses using Google Apps to discover, purchase and deploy integrated business applications and related professional services. By integrating with user account and application data stored in Google Apps, these cloud applications provide a simpler user experience, increase business efficiency, and reduce administrative overhead.

“We’ve built a cloud-based solution that is cost-effective and easy for employees to adopt and use for working smarter in their day-to-day jobs,” said Janet Schijns, vice president of mid-market solutions and alternate channels for Verizon Enterprise Solutions. “Customers in our pilot for this solution appreciated its self-serve, which enabled their employees to be more productive. They also benefitted from the cost savings associated with unlimited local and long-distance calling, zero maintenance fees, and no need for costly back-office phone systems.”

One of the customers participating in the trial, Nick Graziosi, owner of Montage Clothing Inc. in Farmingdale, N.Y., said, “Virtual Communications Express has allowed us to deliver a more professional experience to our customers when they call, and has also made it easier to communicate within our office.”

A Verizon-certified phone and an Internet connection, from any broadband provider, are all that any company needs to experience Virtual Communications Express’ benefits of enhanced productivity through real-time collaboration with co-workers, customers and business partners. In addition, administrators can authorize and instantly manage the various features available to individuals through a dedicated online tool.

Matt Davis, director, SMB Telecom Services with IDC, said: “Verizon’s new UC offering represents a solid understanding of where business communications – especially for small and medium-sized companies – is heading, and Verizon is addressing this change head-on. In addition, the offering appears to include the kind of simplicity for setup and usage that our research shows the market demands in order to embrace hosted voice solutions. Verizon’s long-standing experience in engineering telephony services and going to market with them should play an important role in growing this market in the SMB segment.”

Virtual Communications Express combines Verizon’s award-winning Voice-over-IP solution with Broadsoft’s cloud infrastructure to eliminate the need for on-site PBX (private business exchange) equipment and costly licensing upgrades for new features. Customers will get advanced communication features such as simultaneous ringing of an office, mobile or home-office line; visual voice mail messages that can be read via email; and Office Anywhere, which forwards incoming calls from an office to a mobile line and displays outgoing calls made from a mobile or home phone identified with an office phone number. The service also enables traditional PBX features such as enhanced hunt group and call queuing.

Verizon Enterprise Solutions creates global connections that generate growth, drive business innovation and move society forward. With industry-specific solutions and a full range of global wholesale offerings provided over the company’s secure mobility, cloud, strategic networking and advanced communications platforms, Verizon Enterprise Solutions helps open new opportunities around the world for innovation, investment and business transformation. Visit www.verizonenterprise.com to learn more.

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