



# OPUS™

## Communication, Engagement and the Community Experience

THIRD SECTOR

# Engaging and Supporting Communities

In our increasingly mobile world, the role of communication in the third sector is crucial, especially since Covid-19. Charities who are digitally engaged gain a myriad of benefits ahead of their less-digital counterparts. Technology can move the third sector closer towards achieving their mission goals, improving engagement, increasing transparency and building strong relationships with supporters.



Unique in its reach, size and range of experience, the third sector is ideally placed to help public bodies better understand local and wider societal needs, campaign for change, deliver public services, promote social enterprise and strengthen communities.

One of the most fundamental responsibilities of the third sector is to ensure that the voices of individuals, organisations and communities – often from

marginalised sections of society – are heard. Whether building ongoing partnerships, delivering training to volunteers, enabling better opportunities for remote working or opening up channels to fundraise online, communication and collaboration in the third sector should be a top priority.

# The Third Sector's Challenge To Connect

Delivering better ways to communicate and support each other is not an easy task. Consisting of social enterprises, trade unions, specialist campaigning organisations, in addition to faith groups, community and voluntary organisations, the third sector looks very different now to how it used to.

The third sector has struggled to respond to the need for better communication tools as they are still largely working with a complex set of technological infrastructures. These systems have performed in disjointed ways and are now critically ineffective due to their lack of connectivity or collaboration. As the sector has evolved, and the world has become more digital, the need for robust communication technology and higher levels of collaborative working has become even more important.

The third sector must find ways to transform their communication infrastructure to enjoy a better, more coherent experience - one that meets expectations of its supporters and wider communities. But what can this mean in practice?

## Stimulating A Shift In Communication

Many businesses are enjoying the emerging innovations in communication technologies, which is becoming one of the most dynamic areas to achieving effective customer and community engagement and staff productivity. Synergizing communication tools can radically reshape how the third sector deliver their

services. So how can you achieve this synergy? Unified Communications (UC) technology should underpin every third sector organisation's digital strategy. Not only is UC technology a critical differentiator for staying ahead in a digital world, it immediately releases savings, delivers efficiencies across a wide range of areas and empowers all of the sector its staff, stakeholders and volunteers.



# A Family of Technologies

Unified Communications (UC) is an all-encompassing family of technologies that deliver new features for the third sector to change the way they communicate and collaborate. Unified Communications is a combination of innovations that seamlessly join up across multiple devices and media types.

With UC, all types of communication channels are available from messaging to video conferencing, call control and speech recognition, as well as the integration of voicemail, email and SMS.

Unified Communications tools can even transform the way staff work, enabling rapid business decisions, immediate responses and significantly reducing human latency. They can communicate efficiently no matter where they are or what kind of device they're using – desktop PC, mobile, tablet or VoIP phone. IT leaders can enjoy the ability to easily manage systems at reduced cost, moving away from system complexity and allowing them to adapt to an evolving business environment. Staff needs are met as they are able to seamlessly communicate in their preferred channels.

Unified Communications infrastructure will lead to improved collaboration with the community and external agencies, making the third sector smarter, dynamic and modern.



# Unifying Communication for the Third Sector

Imagine your third sector space achieving a myriad of successes with only one communication ecosystem. Here are some key areas that Unified Communication tools can support you with:

## Audio & Web Conference

A special suite of audio conferencing and web conferencing (screen sharing) applications that are designed to improve collaboration and information exchange between third sector staff, stakeholders and the wider community.

## Video Conferencing

Achieve better collaboration, use time more efficiently and improve staff interactions with HD quality video conferencing over standard IP networks.

## Collaboration Tools

Enjoy seamless communication regardless of location or device with tools like visual voice mail, conferencing, desktop and application sharing. Bring together all methods of communications that works anywhere, any time, on any device.

## Unified Messaging & Auto Attendant

Unified Messaging (UM) solutions simplify message retrieval and improves productivity, but allowing users to access and manage their voicemail, email and even fax messages from one synchronised message store, via the device that suits them best.

## Instant Messaging and Presence

Facilitate rapid information exchange and real time decision making, improving organisational responsiveness and enhancing the community experience. Offers staff a visual indication of your status and availability on a range of devices – PC, mobile or desk phone.

## Gaining Efficiencies in ICT

On-premise, hybrid or cloud-based, cloud telephony systems can deliver enhanced productivity, management reporting and citizen experience benefits to third sector organisations. It requires minimal-to-no on-site equipment, eliminating the need for equipment that requires valuable time from IT staff and space in your building.



# Reinventing the User Experience

Unified Communication technologies provide the third sector with the ability to share knowledge, best practice and information in seamless and easy ways. It can accelerate greater efficiencies and promote collaborative communication, resulting in a stronger, united voice and a more integrated approach to how services are delivered. The third sector has a great opportunity to embrace the transformative power of this unique family of communication tools to help adapt to the modern age, motivating staff supporters and volunteers to become more involved, supportive, interactive and engaged.



# OPUS™

Opus is a customer-driven and results-oriented technology company that provides end to end communications, IT and managed print services, to private and public sector organisations across the UK and beyond.

Founded in 1992, our aim is to be the most successful independent technology partner in the UK. Our purpose is to enable enterprises to succeed and thrive by providing purpose driven technology, backed by caring personalised service.



This paper was built in partnership with GovNewsDirect. GovNewsDirect specialise in facilitating innovative and engaging partnerships between the private and public sector.

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# Features of Unified Communications

## Unified Collaboration

Benefit from tools that deliver seamless conversations, independent of channels and platforms.

## Cloud Based Telephony

Enable users to easily communicate in any workspace using any media, device or operating system.

## Microsoft Teams

Integrate existing solutions with Microsoft Teams for voice, video and contact centre solutions.

## Omni-channel Contact Centre Solutions

Benefit from enhanced citizen engagement, by allowing them to contact you via the channels of their choosing and automate repeat questions with chatbots and self-serve solutions.

## Mobility

Benefit from collaboration, video, voice and communication with contact centres, enjoying compatibility with multiple devices, apps and operating systems.

