

GUIDE

REDUCE BUSINESS DISRUPTIONS

With Unified Communications solutions from Spectrum Enterprise



Spectrum
ENTERPRISE™

More than any event in recent history, the COVID-19 crisis has shown how important it is for companies to plan for disruptive times. Most business disruptions aren't nationwide, but even local or regional ones like snowstorms, hurricanes and floods can cause disruption. A prepared business continuity plan can ensure your organization stays operational during fire, flood or something as simple as a power outage.

Voice and data communications are especially vital in coordinating a fast, effective response during a business emergency.

All too often though, these plans overlook one of the most fundamental aspects of any business: communications. This is one of the most critical operating components for any business because it underpins everything else. We're talking here about the components that keep calls connected and messages flowing. Without them, the rest of the business doesn't work.

Voice and data communications are especially vital in coordinating a fast, effective response during a business emergency. They're crucial factors in enabling employees to work from home when the office is inaccessible. Without it, employees can't collaborate with each other or their suppliers, or serve customers.

This guide outlines how the Spectrum Enterprise Unified Communications (UC) solutions play a critical role in maintaining communications during emergencies that disrupt business. It explains how these services can save organizations time and money by keeping communications operational during an emergency.

Staff and customer communication is a critical component of business continuity

Voice calling is a must-have feature in any company wanting to stay connected during a crisis, and modern unified communication systems offer various features that help companies to get ahead of disruptive events. Spectrum Enterprise UC services are offered as managed, cloud-based solutions that include support from design and installation through training and management. Common features include:

Presence informs employees of each other's availability during changing conditions in time-sensitive situations.

Messaging provides fast, asynchronous communications for busy employees when a real-time call isn't necessary.

Video conferencing supports nuanced discussions that need more visual cues. This is especially important for employees who are accustomed to face-to-face meetings in the same office.

Screen sharing helps communicate detailed information from slides and other documents in real time for clarity and efficiency.



Virtual workspaces keep you moving forward with others as teams or one-on-one. Chat, meet, share files and link your productivity apps all within your virtual workspace to keep your work and conversations organized.

Spectrum Enterprise was honored with the TMC's 2022 Internet Telephony Excellence Award for having developed exceptional IP Communications solutions.



Notifications

Keeping employees aware of fast-changing events is a vital part of any emergency communications strategy. Spectrum Enterprise UC solutions support emergency preparedness strategies. Employees can pair their mobile devices with their desk phone, making it more likely that they'll get urgent calls no matter where they are located. Our UC systems can also instantly transfer voicemail to email, ensuring that employees can see messages even when not available to take a call.

A resilient communication solution

All of these notification options rely on an underlying infrastructure that stays up and running during a disaster, which is why a cloud-based UC service from Spectrum Enterprise includes reliable geo-redundancy to eliminate single points of failure.

Spectrum Enterprise UC operates across multiple data centers, providing cross-country resilience that minimizes risk. These data centers are all certified to SOC2 compliance, which is an auditing process developed by the America Institute of CPAs (AICPA).

Spectrum Enterprise owns and operates its own national fiber network, giving it more control of service quality.

The third-party audit assesses several aspects of a data center's operations:

Security: The protection of systems against unauthorized access.

Availability: How accessible the system is according to service level agreements.

Processing integrity: Whether the system fulfills its purpose effectively.

Confidentiality: The confidentiality of information in transit and at rest.

Privacy: The responsible collection, use, retention, disclosure and disposal of personal information.

High-availability service level agreements

A cloud-based communications solution must have reliable connectivity so that companies are able to make and receive high-quality voice calls. Rather than relying on other backbone communication providers, Spectrum Enterprise owns and operates its own national fiber network, giving it more control of service quality.

The end-to-end service control provided by Spectrum Enterprise includes a high 99.99% service level agreement. Should a customer experience a problem, they have just one number to call to resolve issues rather than tracing the cause between several communication providers. Spectrum Enterprise will restore critical services within four hours.

As a cloud-based system, Spectrum Enterprise UC solutions also give customers the speed they need to implement services quickly and inexpensively in an emergency without sourcing more on-premises equipment.

Resilient connectivity to the cloud

Companies still face a potential issue if their own connectivity to the fiber network goes down. This is where the Spectrum Enterprise UC Wireless Backup service can help. In the event of a network disruption, the UC Wireless Backup service provides redundant connectivity to our UC platforms.

A unified communications router connects externally to both wireline and cellular (LTE) networks. Should the wireline connection fail, the router switches seamlessly to the other.

Hardened communications security

Emergencies can breed chaos and confusion, making them the perfect opportunity for attackers to target businesses. Protection is crucial for any communications system. A good cloud communications provider takes on security as a core competency.

UC solutions from Spectrum Enterprise will continue taking incoming calls during a disaster.

Spectrum Enterprise strengthens your security posture with data encryption, automated updates, advanced firewall, malware protection, SOC 2 compatibility and intrusion protection — all delivered over our private fiber network.

Because Spectrum Enterprise provides both the network and the UC service, it offers an integrated communications ecosystem that is reliable and secure.

Flexible call rerouting

Employee roles and locations often change during a disruption and a communications system must be able to keep up by rerouting calls to their new destinations.

UC solutions from Spectrum Enterprise will continue taking incoming calls during a disaster, providing easy rerouting using web-based portals that allow administrators to quickly set up a call routing plan using a group administration portal. Employees can define rules for forwarding calls to voicemails or to other company locations, in addition to home phones and mobile devices.

Spectrum Enterprise UC solutions also allow administrators to define hunt groups that deliver incoming calls from customers or suppliers across specific groups of employees. The hunt group plan can follow specific policies such as calling group members in listed order, calling all users at once or calling the user whose number has been idle the longest. Companies can also use this feature to notify internal emergency response teams of developing situations.

Spectrum Enterprise solutions also include several other features that can help companies to maintain a smooth flow of calls during a crisis:

Auto-attendant: Use this to automatically field incoming calls when a receptionist may not be available, either delivering a standard message, accepting a voicemail or allowing callers to route calls by name or extension number.

Basic queue: Manage higher-call volumes smoothly during an emergency with call queue system that includes customizable greetings, comfort messages to reassure waiting users and music on hold.

Mobile apps: UC mobile apps allow calls to be answered wherever the user is located, making it easy to transition to different locations during an emergency.

Sim ring: Spectrum Enterprise UC solutions can be configured to ring multiple phones simultaneously, alerting several people to an incoming call.

Hosted call centers: Incoming calls can be sent to a queue of waiting calls in a virtual hosted call center. The pool then routes calls to employees in the call center's group as they become available. Employees, who can be either on the premises or remote through a soft client, can be members of multiple hosted call center groups, making it easier to dynamically assign calls in response to rapidly shifting call demand during an emergency or disruption.



Voicemail notification: Companies that are unable to deal with calls during an emergency or disruption can take voicemail messages in a general inbox and quickly forward them via email to predesignated employees, ensuring that a caller is never forgotten especially during a crisis.

Connectivity support for remote workers

Reaching users on their mobile devices or home phones is important in a crisis when they might be working from home. Spectrum Enterprise UC solutions provide seamless voice service and collaboration through one phone number on any device, allowing your employees to deliver outstanding service with high-application performance wherever work takes them. Users are able to connect with Spectrum Enterprise UC services using a WiFi network or mobile data plan. Voice calls run over the data network, enabling employees to take calls and retrieve voice messages with a single number from anywhere on any device. Spectrum Enterprise UC solutions feature calling (voice and video conferencing), messaging, meetings, virtual workspaces and more in a single application that delivers a unified experience for today's mobile, on-the-go workforce.

Emergency team support

People are an intrinsic part of the business continuity process. It takes a well-connected emergency team to minimize disruption during a rapidly evolving crisis. Emergency teams can serve two purposes. First, they coordinate the disaster response and help get the company back to normal operations. Second, they help maintain operations during the crisis, possibly on a restricted basis, by fielding calls from customers and suppliers in priority order.

Spectrum Enterprise UC solutions integrate with employee and online electronic directories to keep their contact details up to date. They can also use hunt groups to alert and communicate with internal emergency teams via the service's native interface. Another important feature notifies a designated person via text or email when someone dials 911 in the building, enabling emergency teams to quickly respond.

Quick and simple cloud-based emergency drills

Cloud-based administration portals make it easy to test broadcast alerts and confirm that staff receive them. They also let administrators quickly check hunt group features to make sure that calls reach the right people, and validate users' ability to switch work locations by testing call rerouting to employees' alternative devices.

Conclusion

Don't wait for disaster to strike before integrating unified communications into your business continuity plan. With communications forming such a crucial component of company operations, it makes sense to implement advanced technologies now that improve staff productivity while bolstering operational resilience. By introducing cloud-based unified communications, you can guarantee seamless continuity when emergencies threaten to disrupt your business.

Communications continuity checklist

The impact of an emergency on a business can be harsh and long-lasting if executives don't prepare for the unexpected. This checklist will help ensure that you take the appropriate measures when setting up your Spectrum Enterprise UC solution to minimize disruption to your business communications during stressful times.

Preparation for employees

- Identify employees who can work from home.
- Equip users with unified communications seats that have the features best suited to their role and to support remote work, as needed.
- Ensure users have downloaded and activated the UC mobile application on their mobile devices or smartphones.
- Configure core UC services for employees, including:
 - Call forwarding.
 - Associating home/mobile phones with work numbers.
- Provide resilient connectivity remotely by connecting to UC services through the employee's cellular data or home WiFi via the UC mobile app.
- Add employees to hunt groups to handle emergency calls.
- Ensure employees know and remember their passwords.
- Instruct employees to avoid phishing and other social engineering attacks.
- Train employees to use UC tools effectively.
- Provide IT the ability to clean out voicemail boxes to ensure emergency messages get through.
- Remind employees of company privacy policies as they work at home.

Preparation for company locations

- Upgrade internet at work to anticipate more traffic from employees, customers and suppliers.
- Audit communications security.
- Create emergency response teams, defining roles and processes.
- Practice emergency situations before they occur.
- Prepare emergency web pages for publishing on corporate intranets during emergency.
- Prepare public-facing web pages with critical information for emergency publication.
- Back up voicemails and other UC data regularly.

During a disaster

- Forward office numbers to numbers that are answerable by a receptionist or auto attendant.
- Update voicemail and auto attendant greetings.
- Invoke hunt groups to notify key personnel and route calls appropriately.
- Broadcast time-critical updates to employees.

Learn more about Spectrum Enterprise Unified Communications solutions at enterprise.spectrum.com/collaborate.

About Spectrum Enterprise

Spectrum Enterprise, a part of Charter Communications, Inc., is a national provider of scalable, fiber technology solutions serving many of America's largest businesses and communications service providers. The broad Spectrum Enterprise portfolio includes [networking and managed services solutions](#): [Internet access](#), [Ethernet access and networks](#), [Voice](#) and [TV solutions](#). The Spectrum Enterprise team of experts works closely with clients to achieve greater business success by providing solutions designed to meet their evolving needs. For more information, visit enterprise.spectrum.com.

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