Improve engagement with modern contact center technology

Contact center as a service solutions (CCaaS) offer dynamic digital experiences and technologies that scale to fit every college and university use case. The primary function of colleges and universities lies squarely in sharing knowledge and encouraging lifelong learning. However, that doesn't mean the technology needed to support an institution's business and customer service functions should take a back seat to learning.

As hybrid work and learning now represent the norm in day-to-day campus and instructional operations, most everyone who interacts with a college or university today also expects always on, omnichannel connections to all facets and functions of business. Fundraising, alumni services, athletics, music and theater productions, marketing and communications, recruiting, and retention are just a few examples.

"Institutions need to reach students in the ways they communicate, and students today demand instant access and self-service at their fingertips. That's one of the top reasons why a contact center, especially in the cloud, is an important solution," said Rod Armstrong, UC&C account director at Lumen.

Benefits of cloud-based contact-center technology

The list of potential benefits stemming from the use of cloud-based contact center technologies is long:

- Self-service experience, day or night.
- Omnichannel engagement with customizable integrations and add-ons.
- Rich customer and engagement analytics with real-time reporting and delivery.
- Flexible pricing models.
- Real-time authentication and fraud prevention.
- Rapid implementation.
- Enhanced customer/user experiences driven by call optimization tools that result in more successful – and profitable – customer interactions.



The communication and engagement technologies or tactics that an institution or department call center leverage depends on the specific use cases and needs. The athletic department may want to integrate a CMS dashboard to facilitate ticket sales. Others may look to offer chatbot capabilities.

"It's important when we are talking about higher education, that we don't try to fit the entire campus into a small box per se. Each department can pick and choose what works best for them and their staff," Armstrong said. "It comes down to those individual departments and what their specific cases are."

CCaaS advancements thanks to AI

Some platforms, like Talkdesk, embed native AI capabilities or support third-party AI solutions that add a rapidly evolving means to personalize customer and student interactions, and maintain customer preferences for future interactions.

AI-enhanced features also allow teams to deploy, train, and accelerate automated response through custom, low- or no-code tools. The technology is particularly powerful where location-specific information or translated responses are desired, according to a recent column from Paul Mahoney, Head of Library and Learning Services at Staffordshire University.

"It's important to be realistic about what the technology can do," Mahoney advised. "While it may not yet be realistic or desirable to have Robby the Robot answering calls at your customer service desk, AI technologies can help relieve a team from the repetitive task of answering high numbers of basic questions and save students the time and effort of visiting staffed desks."

Competitive differentiator

One of the primary reasons colleges and universities share for adopting CCaaS, Armstrong said, is to set their institutions apart. "They want to be different from the rest of the competition, so that first experience of a student visiting campus, communicating with them via text message or staying connected with them via that omnichannel experience, is really important. That's usually the number one reason we hear when we ask why they want to get started on this path. Number two is increasing enrollment, but equally if not more important is student retention."

The robust analytics and reporting features included in most providers' CCaaS solutions offer real-time visibility into trends, and immediate access to student or customer needs and engagement histories, which may help employees quickly access the most helpful information. Real-time content recommendations or shortcuts based on student or customer needs can be surfaced and shared rapidly, enhancing customer service and the department's or team's reputation for successful service.



Understanding CCaaS, UCaaS and CPaaS

Teams undertaking the work to weigh the value of on-premises versus cloud-based contact center tools may be considering whether to implement new UCC platforms that embed contact center functions, or even CPaaS (communication platform as a service).

Understanding where similar capabilities and feature divergence exist is important before undergoing discovery with vendors.

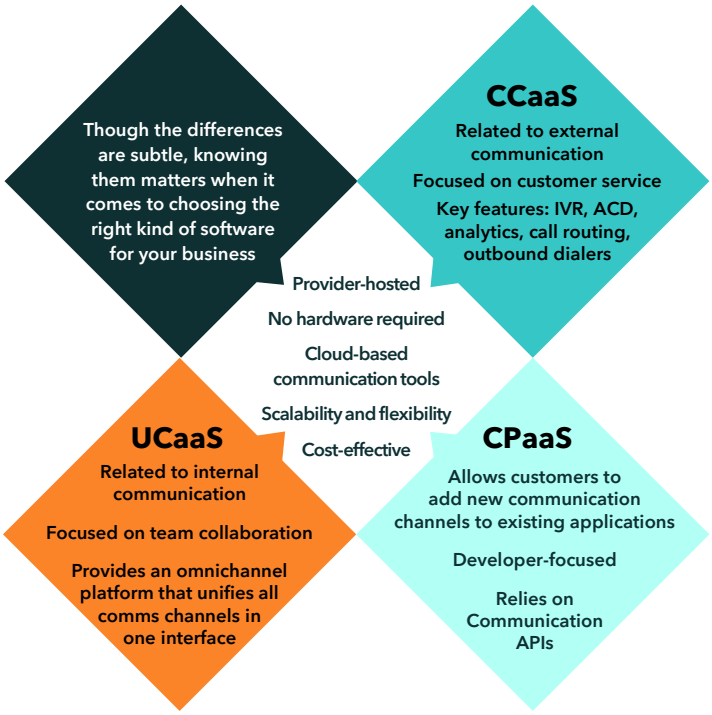
Providers of **CCaaS** offer advanced contact center features that can be selected or customized to meet specific departmental needs. Advantages over on-premise solutions include rapid deployment, scalable growth or seasonality adjustments, refined customer service capabilities, and robust, real-time analytics.

UCaaS providers streamline and synch realtime omnichannel UCC services in one interface. Customer service tends to take a backseat to internal communications needs, but that doesn't mean contact center functions aren't available. More and more providers are working to embed contact center function into UCaaS platforms, moving toward a truly converged internal and external communications experience for anyone who interfaces or engages with a college and university.

CPaaS, or communications platform as a service, uses communication APIs to add or customize distinct communication channels such as voice, video, or messaging to existing business applications or software. The platform tends to require more coding to implement and manage versus CCaaS or UCaaS, and no features are built in. Each platform will be uniquely customized to fit the customer's needs.

As with any cloud-based service, all three offer cost-effective solutions without the need to provision or maintain hardware, deploy updates, or implement up-to-date security patches or other requirements, resulting in reduced time or focus required of the institution's IT teams. Lumen shares insights on trends in customer experience transformation projects, strategic considerations for fine-tuning customer experience and engagement, and more at https://www.lumen.com/en-us/collaboration/contact-center.html

UCasS vs. CCaaS vs. CPaaS



See how Lumen helps colleges and universities support student success and keep their campuses connected.

Why Lumen?

With a comprehensive portfolio, Lumen can help your university deliver high-quality connectivity, minimize costs and complexity, and enhance your security posture. Rely on the extensive and deeply peered Lumen global network, Black Lotus Labs' threat intelligence, and our team of experts to help deploy and manage your solution.

CAMPUS TECHNOLOGY

866-352-0291 I lumen.com I info@lumen.com

Services not available everywhere. Business customers only. Lumen may change, cancel or substitute products and services, or vary them by service area at its sole discretion without notice. ©2025 Lumen Technologies. All Rights Reserved.

LUMEN