

# Understanding the Business Impacts of Your Cloud-based CCM

## What communications are moving to SaaS CCM?

Until recently, customer communications applications with straightforward designs, low variability and simple data inputs have been good candidates for migration to a SaaS-based CCM solution. Banks and insurers have been moving common call center applications to the cloud when there is limited PII (Personally Identifiable Information) and complexity within the communication. Welcome kits, marketing communications and simple confirmations have been successful early deployments for SaaS CCM implementations.

In addition to CCM applications, many SaaS-native applications have been adding simple communications to single process applications, creating communication silos that are disconnected from a company's overall communication strategy. As organizations continue to focus on the customer experience, they recognize the importance of a well-coordinated communication strategy. However, the attempt at coordination is generally thwarted when multiple systems deliver communications.

Those in the organization responsible for communicating with customers are focused on delivering consistent communications that accurately reflect the voice of the company. To achieve this goal, they are seeking customer communications solutions that deliver that consistency with a variety of deployment options.

## What communications haven't been moving to SaaS CCM yet?

In addition to discussing which communications are moving to SaaS CCM applications, it's worth discussing which ones have not yet moved. Due to changing data management and privacy regulations, many enterprises have saved applications with large amounts of sensitive data for private cloud or on-premises deployments.

Recently, this has started to change as security in SaaS applications evolves and businesses get more comfortable.

Still, some complex communications, such as contracts and proposals, haven't been moved to the cloud as quickly due to design limitations of SaaS CCM platforms. Often, omnichannel design features in early SaaS CCM systems haven't been able to deliver efficient designs that leverage content across channels. Some applications haven't moved to the cloud because single channel designs require extensive internal IT processes to prepare data beforehand or redirect customer communications across multiple channels.

As you consider deployment options, it is important to understand the complexities of your entire communications portfolio to determine if all requirements for your varying applications are met. As you evaluate CCM platforms, ensure you are not overinvesting in infrastructure and underdelivering on customer experience.

## Understanding the ROI:

Understanding the ROI for a SaaS solution should be simple, but it hasn't played out that way for many enterprises. At its simplest, an ROI projection models future returns against current and ongoing investments. The calculation is easy when businesses' investments and returns are predictable. However, many of today's SaaS CCM contracts make it difficult to model future costs because communication costs are not tied to activities that are meaningful to the business. Businesses must understand how their SaaS CCM solution is monetized to accurately predict the investment.

If the charges are modeled on a metric that is out of the user's control, users unknowingly increase the cost of communications with normal activities like embedding fonts, adding graphics and including attachments.

Additionally, graphic designers who do not apply optimal image compression incur large cost overruns if their contract has a communication file-size billing metric. This is hard to manage as the team incurring the cost is not generally aware of the specific terms and conditions of their SaaS CCM solution. It may take months for the behavior that drove an upcharge to be associated to the expensive activity in an audit.

If the solution can't handle the complexity of your full range of applications, the CCM strategy and projected ROI may be negatively impacted. If the solution is unable to turn around some of your high-volume applications in time, you may incur outsourcing costs, additional platform costs or customer churn due to missing your commitments to customers or regulators. As you evaluate solutions, verify that the full range of your applications can be delivered on time. While the cloud is infinitely scalable, some SaaS solutions require on-premises appliance options which are not infinitely scalable. If your ROI calculation projects standardization on CCM technology, be sure to put potential vendors to the test on your toughest applications at your peak periods.

### Understanding your startup costs:

As you model ROI, there are data center costs, backup costs and other costs that leave the business. That is a welcomed drop in effort and spend that shifts to the SaaS CCM vendor. Make sure you get an accurate sense of what additional data preparation work you may have to do to prepare your customer data and content for your new platform, as many SaaS CCM solutions have restricted parameters for incoming data. If you must undertake an extensive IT data project, ensure this is included in your projections for costs and implementation time. Do not assume it is instantly available to you at no charge, especially if the solution requires highly specific data formatting.

Many SaaS CCM solutions require the customer to do a lot of heavy lifting when it comes to integration, putting customers in charge of cross-channel failover, data processing, production batching, data correction and other activities that are standard in comprehensive any-premise CCM offerings.

It's also important to understand your migration costs accurately. Migration is difficult and there are many AI-powered options to accelerate migrations to new

CCM systems. Many enterprises start down a migration path but stop before the project is complete because vendor services costs become larger than the proposed budget. This type of failure is doubly painful because the costs projected to disappear from retiring legacy technology remain, along with additional new costs. Failing to complete a migration increases systems costs, coordination efforts and complexity.

### Selecting a vendor partner:

As the expectations and market offerings trend towards easier, faster and more complete deployments of communications projects to SaaS platforms, it's important to make certain you evaluate the most important criteria. Here are the top five:

- Real-time dashboard of actual versus projected usage
- Continuous reporting of costs with project attribution
- Metrics regarding communication file size to ensure a great customer experience
- Direct tracing of actions that create additional costs
- Offboarding plan for recovering your application internet protocol (IP) if you want to change vendors

Businesses of all sizes working to digitalize and automate their business-critical customer communications are seeking software solutions that can support those efforts quickly and easily. A CCM platform that answers such broad stroke demands can be found in Quadient's Inspire Suite of CCM solutions. The Suite includes Inspire Flex (an on-premises and hybrid cloud CCM solution), Inspire Evolve (a high-performance SaaS solution) and Inspire Journey (a SaaS customer journey mapping and orchestration solution). It is a robust portfolio of capabilities designed to help speed digital transformation. By offering on-premises, fully SaaS or hybrid options, each solution in Quadient's Suite brings its own strength to the process of customer experience engagement.

In evaluating cloud-based investments, Quadient recently introduced Inspire Evolve as a stand-alone solution within the Inspire Suite to address the growing demand for a cloud-based customer communications solution that integrates with existing technology and offers minimal implementation lead times. Madison Advisors found the solution to effectively handle the complexity of a full range of applications with its

ability to deliver intelligent communications to multiple channels that include one-to-one SMS and on-demand emails. Additionally, Inspire Evolve responds to the increasing demand from those in the organization responsible for communicating with customers to manage content.

Over the years, as CCM has become more sophisticated, so have the demands on its capabilities, such as expectations of conducting personalized query-and-response interactions between an organization and its customers in something close to real time. One of the top features Madison Advisors believes is necessary in moving to a SaaS CCM solution is a dashboard that has extensive interactive and reporting capabilities. Inspire Evolve is designed with a robust dashboard that collects real-time data from multiple sources and offers workflow approvals, version control and a consolidated view of important business metrics. An additional consideration in choosing any SaaS platform is security. While it is a positive for the in-the-moment interactions customers require that Inspire Evolve can pull data from any source and scale to create personalized information, the built-in compliance and security certifications (HITRUST v9.1, SOC2 Type 2, HIPAA, GDPR) ensure the right controls are in place for safeguarding this data and mitigating the risk of non-compliance.

## The final analysis:

Today, several operational CCM solutions are available. Deciding which fits best with your company's needs depend on several things: the size of your organization, what kind of CCM infrastructure you have already, if any, and what kind of resources you're willing and able to commit to it. Which way will CCM go in the future? Perhaps every way. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many employees, including programmers, are working remotely, making a SaaS platform especially appealing. How to decide which option works best for your organization should start with an assessment of how much you're spending on customer communications now and exactly where you want to go in the future.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Under Kemal Carr's direction, Madison Advisors has established a market niche as an independent analyst

and market research firm that addresses the needs of the electronic and print customer communications Management (CCM) marketplace. The firm provides retainer and project-based strategy services designed to assist clients with technology selection and alignment and business process optimization decisions.

Kemal is regularly sought out by some of the leading output technology publications to write about or comment on the industry's key issues and topics, including articles on the impact of eDelivery and multi-channel delivery, advancement in communication technologies, and electronic document presentment. He is also asked to speak at trade events, including key sessions at Xplor's Global conference, DOCUMENT Strategy Forum and numerous vendor trade events.

In 2010 Carr received the Xplorer of the Year award from Xplor International at its Global Conference. The award was in recognition of Carr's "volunteer service to the Association, dedication to the Xplor mission and promotion of the interests of the electronic document systems industry at large."

Kemal earned a B.B.A. in management information systems from the University of Wisconsin and is a M.B.A. candidate in management at Texas Christian University.

## ABOUT MADISON ADVISORS

Madison Advisors exists to advance the print and electronic communications objectives of Fortune 1000 companies.

Since our inception in 2001, Madison Advisors has helped our clients:

- Assess their competitive industry standing through our Best Practices Assessment
- Develop and implement effective enterprise communication strategies
- Identify growth opportunities in the enterprise, service provider and technology provider markets
- Understand the impact of market trends on their business

For more information about Madison Advisors, visit our web site: [www.Madison-Advisors.com](http://www.Madison-Advisors.com).