Mitel MiCloud Connect Premier vs.
8x8 Virtual Office X5 and RingCentral Standard

Understanding the Business Case for
Mitel Cloud-based Unified Communications

January 2018

Executive Summary

Cloud-computing opens up significant opportunities for delivering a feature-rich unified communications (UC) experience. With decades of experience in telephony, Mitel provides UC suitable for all business needs.

Mitel has recently declared MiCloud Connect one of its two "go forward" cloud platforms. MiCloud Connect is focused on the needs of the small and medium business (SMB) market.

Mitel Networks Corp. commissioned Tolly to analyze the feature set of its Mitel MiCloud Connect solution along with comparable solutions from 8x8, Inc. and RingCentral using product documentation.

In all the key areas analyzed, the Mitel MiCloud solution is comparable to or exceeds the offerings from 8x8 and RingCentral. See Table 1 for an "At A Glance" comparison.

Call Management

The Mitel solution provides the same key call management functions as 8x8 and RingCentral and that one would expect in an business-class system. Mitel's options include: flexible call recording options, voice mail along with feature-rich call transfer, join, forward, park and various call pickup options.

Collaboration

From presence to multi-point video conferencing, to scheduled and ad-hoc conferencing and webinars - Mitel has it all. Mitel offers comparable audio/video conferencing functionality to 8x8 and RingCentral. Where Mitel and 8x8 support up to 25 users in audio conferencing, RingCentral Standard is limited to 4 simultaneous users.

The Mitel Teamwork collaboration application provides workspaces, file sharing, messaging, integrated conference calling and task list functionality to enhance team-based projects.

At A Glance Comparison of Key Areas

Vendor	Mitel MiCloud Connect Premier	Mitel +	8x8 Virtual Office X5	RingCentral Standard
Call Management	✔+	*Rich set of features*	✔	✔
Collaboration	✔		✔	✔
Contact Center Per-User Cost	$55.00		$50.00	$99.99
Desk Phone Capability	✔+	*Mitel-developed desk phones (five models) & 3rd-party phones*	✔	✔
Integrations	✔+	*More integrations than 8x8 or RingCentral*	✔	✔-
VoIP Per-User Cost*	$37.99	*Unlimited minutes*	$35.00	$24.99 (1,000 minutes)
Data Center Infrastructure	✔+	ANSI/TIA 942 "Rated-4"	✔	✔

Notes: *Pricing does not include phone rental. Given Mitel is the only vendor that manufactures phones, it is expected that Mitel provides favorable pricing for packages inclusive of phone rental.

Source: Tolly, January 2018   Table 1

Contact Center[1]

Mitel, 8x8 and RingCentral each offer contact center as a service (CCaaS) solutions as options in their communications suites. Mitel's and 8x8's CCaaS solutions are comparably priced while RingCentral's – an OEM from NICE inContact – is significantly more expensive (2x) for like functionality.

Desk Phone Capability

Like 8x8 and RingCentral, Mitel supports industry-standard SIP VoIP conference and wireless phones and accessories from vendors such as Polycom, Ascom, Spectralink and others. Unlike 8x8 and RingCentral, Mitel also designs and manufactures its own phones offering five different models, from basic through an executive color-screen model. Mitel also provides a soft phone desktop PC/Mac OS X application - as do 8x8 and RingCentral.

Integrations

Mitel MiCloud integrates with major as well as niche CRM, email and other vertical apps. Mitel supports Salesforce, Zendesk, Desk.com, Google G Suite, Microsoft Dynamics and NetSuite among other apps. Mitel also currently provides integration with Microsoft Outlook. RingCentral significantly limits available integrations with its Standard plan potentially forcing upgrades to more expensive plans.

Cost

While the three vendors do not have identical pricing approaches and models, a basic comparison shows that only the Mitel and 8x8 solutions provide unlimited minutes. Mitel charges $37.99 for the Premier plan and 8x8 charges $35 per user for its X5 plan.. While RingCentral charges $24.99 for its Standard plan, that includes only 1,000 minutes of usage. Prices exclude contact center functionality and exclude desk phones. Given Mitel is the only vendor that manufactures phones, it is expected that Mitel provides favorable pricing for packages inclusive of phone rental.

Data Center Infrastructure

Like RingCentral, Mitel maintains two data centers in the US separated by 1,000 miles. 8x8 maintains three US data centers. Globally, Mitel maintains 4 data centers to support Connect. 8x8 has 15 data centers in 9 countries. RingCentral does not publicly document its global data center footprint.

Of the three, Mitel is the only one that claims ANSI/TIA 942 "Rated-4" status (the highest possible) for its US data centers. To achieve this rating requires fault tolerant site infrastructure with expected site availability of 99.995%. With Mitel, there is full redundancy - power, cooling, storage, network connections, etc.

End of Executive Summary.

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[1] Contact Center analysis in collaboration with McGee-Smith Analytics, LLC. www.mcgeesmith.com

Solution Analysis

Analysts compared documented features of the three SMB-class cloud solutions. See Table 2.

Enterprise UC Cloud Solutions Analyzed			
Vendor	Cloud Solution	Collaboration Component	Contact Center Component
Mitel Networks	MiCloud Connect Premier	Mitel Teamwork	MiCloud Connect Contact Center - Essentials
8x8	Virtual Office X5	Virtual Office X5 collaboration. No team functionality	ContactNow X5
RingCentral	Standard	Glip	Contact Center Basic

Note: 8x8 provides collaboration capability but does not provide a teamwork component.

Source: Tolly, January 2018

Table 2

Call Management

Call management is the core feature area and foundation of unified communications. UC systems need to deliver the full range of communications functions across all manner of access -mobile devices, handhelds, desktop computers and desk phones.

The Mitel solution provides the core call management capabilities that 8x8 and RingCentral feature as important areas. These include voicemail, presence, recording and call management functions. See Table 3 for an overview. Mitel offers users client applications for desktop and mobile devices. To maximize flexibility, Mitel also has a web client as well a soft phones for PCs and mobile devices.

Some additional highlights:

Call Forward & Transfer

Mitel provides a rich set of options. Calls can be forwarded internally and externally as well as on busy and no answer. Call transfer choices are: blind, consultative, intercom, mailbox and whisper.

Call Recording

Mitel's call recording approach is flexible allowing for both "on demand" and "always on" recording.

Call Management Summary

Area	Solution		
	Mitel MiCloud Connect Premier	8x8 Virtual Office X5	RingCentral Standard
Desktop & Mobile Apps	✔	✔	✔
Call Forward	✔	✔	✔
Call Transfer	✔	✔	✔
Call Park	✔	✔	✔
Call Recording	✔	✔	✔
Voice Mail	✔	✔	✔

Source: Tolly, January 2018   Table 3

Collaboration

Integrated collaboration is essential for optimizing interactions among both internal system users and outside partners, prospects and customers. Mitel offers a full-featured collaboration solution that includes audio, video and application-based conferencing and sharing. Mitel checks all the boxes when compared to the collaboration offerings from 8x8 and RingCentral. See Table 4.

Conferencing

MiCloud Connect offers comprehensive audio/video/web conferencing system provides for ad-hoc as well as scheduled conferences and webinars. Where Mitel and 8x8 support up to 25 simultaneous users for audio conferences, RingCentral limits usage to four simultaneous users in its Standard plan.

The video conferencing component supports multi-point video and can be used with ordinary webcams. 8x8's X5 plan supports 25 video conferencing users where MiCloud Connect's Premier plan supports 12 and RingCentral's Standard plan supports four users.

Team Collaboration

Recognizing that collaboration is typically an ongoing process often requiring shared document storage and work spaces, Mitel provides these key functions to support team-based projects. Mitel's Teamwork collaboration application provides workspaces, file sharing, messaging, integrated conference calling and task list functionality to enhance team-based projects. RingCentral offers a teamwork client known as Glip. 8x8 does not appear to offer any specific teamwork client or functionality.

Unified Messaging

Mitel users can retrieve and manage voice mail, text and fax messages from one synchronized data store. For fax senders, transmission status information is pro-actively provided right in the email inbox. The Mitel plugin for Microsoft Outlook installs an additional toolbar within the application that allows users to manage their voice messages in the same environment as their email messages.

Collaboration Summary

Area	Solution		
	Mitel MiCloud Connect Premier	8x8 Virtual Office X5	RingCentral Standard
Teamwork Client and Functionality	✔	✘	✔
Presence	✔	✔	✔
Instant Messaging	✔	✔	✔
Desktop & Application Sharing	✔	✔	✔
Scheduled/Ad-hoc Conferencing and Webinars	✔	✔	✔
Multi-point Video Conferencing	✔	✔	✔
Conference Recording	✔	✔	✔
Web-based Collaboration	✔	✔	✔
Remote Control	✔	✔	✔

Source: Tolly, January 2018   Table 4

Contact Center Capability

As has been true for the past 35 years, contact center functionality is a key component of an overall communications suite. As the size of a company increases – both in number of employees and revenue - the need for a contact center increases as well.

One advantage of cloud-based communications solutions is that feature-rich contact center applications, earlier the purview only of larger firms, are now accessible to smaller firms. Whereas a large cost outlay was required in the past, today even firms with fewer than 100 employees can purchase contact center applications for as few as 5 or 10 agents for a low monthly charge.

As a result, starting about ten years ago cloud contact center became the deployment option of choice for many small businesses with correspondingly small contact centers. Organizations with less than 100 employees and 5-10 agent seats became the early adopters in the cloud contact center market.

Mitel, 8x8 and RingCentral each offer CCaaS solutions as part of their communications suites.

- Mitel's MiCloud Connect Contact Center is offered as a multi-tenant solution hosted by Mitel.

- 8x8's CCaaS offer for the small and medium-sized business market is ContactNow.

- RingCentral has since 2015 offered a white label of the NICE inContact multi-tenant CCaaS solution.

For purposes of comparison, the solution and package most suited to the needs of a small business was selected, i.e., the requirement for full routing, reporting and queueing of voice interactions to agents as well as IVR and recording functionality.

All three solutions check most of the boxes relevant for an SMB CCaaS solution. From a pricing perspective, Mitel and 8x8 offer packages similarly-priced, while RingCentral's Basic package is almost double that of the other two vendors.

- Mitel's MiCloud Connect Contact Center Essential includes graphical reporting, which with 8x8 requires an upgrade to the ContactNow Ultimate package, at $75 per month. 8x8 includes recording while Mitel changes $15/month. If one assumes both capabilities are required, the cost of each solution is comparable.

- Even with its higher list price, to equal several of the features offered by Mitel and 8x8 requires an upgrade to one of two more expensive RingCentral packages. Callback requires the Advanced package ($119.99/month) and advanced IVR and outbound dialing require the Ultimate package ($179.99). On the plus side, the NICE inContact OEM solution does offer a broader array of out-of-the-box CRM integrations.

Comparing the more equally-priced Mitel's MiCloud Connect Contact Center and 8x8's ContactNow, Mitel has a slight functionality edge. With Mitel's MiCloud Connect Contact Center, a workforce management (WFM) solution is optionally available from partner Teleopti. In a premises-based environment, contact centers of 5-10 agents typically would not choose to deploy because of the high cost. In a cloud world, even small companies are finding value in WFM solutions that can be purchased on a per month, per agent basis as opposed to a high one-time cost.

Contact Center Summary

Area	Solution		
	Mitel MiCloud Connect Contact Center	8x8 ContactNow	RingCentral Contact Center
Package	Essentials	Pro (X5)	Basic
List Price Per Month	$55	$50	$99.99
Multi-Tenant Architecture	✔	✔	✔
Voice + Callback	✔	✔	Upgrade required
IVR with Graphical User Interface	✔	✔	Upgrade required
Recording	$15/month	Included	Included
Workforce Management	Optional	✘	Optional
Graphical Reporting	✔	Upgrade required	✔
Outbound Dialing	✔	✔	Upgrade required
CRM Integrations	✔	✔	✔+

Source: McGee-Smith Analytics, January 2018   Table 5

Desk Phone Capability

In this age of mobility, the desk phone remains an important communications tool. VoIP users worldwide benefit from the universal adoption of the session initiation protocol, more commonly referred to as SIP, by VoIP system vendors.

Thus, all three UC cloud providers support a variety of SIP-based phones (desk, conference and wireless) from vendors such as Polycom and others.

Mitel, however, is the only one of the three companies that designs and manufactures desk phones. Thus, only Mitel can deliver desk phones designed and optimized for its VoIP systems. See Table 6 for a summary of desk phone/accessory support.

Desk Phone Support Summary

Area	Solution		
	Mitel MiCloud Connect	8x8 Virtual Office X5	RingCentral Standard
Vendor-designed Phones	✔	✘	✘
Executive Phones	✔	✔	✔
Standard Phones	✔	✔	✔
Wireless Phones	✔	✔	✔
Conference Phones	✔	✔	✔
Headsets	✔	✔	✔

Notes: See vendor websites for full list of phones supported. Only Mitel offers desk phones designed to complement its offerings.

Source: Tolly, January 2018   Table 6

Integrations

Integrations are essential for leveraging existing CRM and other environments with the UC cloud system. Mitel integrates with popular application and CRM systems such as Google Apps, Salesforce, NetSuite, Microsoft Dynamics and Skype for Business, Desk, Zendesk, Oracle RightNow as well as various niche and vertical systems such as LexisNexis TimeMatters. For RingCentral a plan upgrade would be required to have Salesforce, Zendesk, Desk.com and many other common integrations. See Table 7 for a list of Mitel integrations compared to 8x8 and RingCentral.

Mitel has or will have integrations with all the key environments supported by 8x8 and RingCentral - and then some.

Integrations Summary			
Area	**Solution**		
	Mitel MiCloud Connect	8x8 Virtual Office X5	RingCentral Standard
Salesforce	✔	✔	**Upgrade required**
Desk.com	✔	✔	**Upgrade required**
Microsoft Dynamics	✔	✔	**Upgrade required**
NetSuite	✔	✔	✔
Oracle RightNow	✔	**Not documented**	**Not documented**
Zendesk	✔	✔	**Upgrade required**
LexisNexis TimeMatters	✔	**Not documented**	**Not documented**
Microsoft Outlook	✔	✔	✔
Microsoft Skype for Business	✔	✔	✔
Google Apps	✔	✔	✔

Note: Microsoft Skype for Business formerly knows as Lync.

Source: Tolly, January 2018

Table 7

Cost

Where Mitel offers cloud, hosted or hybrid deployment models, 8x8 and RingCentral solutions are cloud-only. As an established vendor of enterprise-class solutions, Mitel also takes a more granular approach to pricing. Thus, readers should be aware that an actual Mitel price quote would reflect the specific number of, say, user seats and contact center agents.

Mitel, 8x8 and RingCentral costs were as advertised as of January 2018. Contact center pricing is extra for all vendors and is discussed separately.

The per-user cost for Mitel is $37.99 per month which includes unlimited minutes[2]. 8x8 charges $35.00 per month and also includes unlimited minutes. RingCentral includes only 1,000 minutes per month. This is roughly equivalent to 30 minutes per day of usage each day of the month. Additional usage is billed at 3.9cents per minute. Vendor prices do not include desk phone rental costs. Because Mitel manufactures its own phones, the company can likely offer more favorable rates for phone rentals than the competitors. Furthermore, RingCentral will only rent phones to customers that sign up for two-year contracts. See Table 8.

Cost Summary

Area	Solution		
	Mitel MiCloud Connect	8x8 Virtual Office	RingCentral
Plan Name	**Premier**	**X5**	**Standard**
Monthly Cost Per User*	**$37.99**	**$35.00**	**$24.99**
Included Minutes	**Unlimited**	**Unlimited**	**1,000**
Cost For Extra Minutes	**0.0¢ (No cost)**	**0.0¢ (No cost)**	**3.9¢**

Note: Vendors have different plans. The plans across vendors do not have exact matches. Prospective users should request vendor quotes for specific features and numbers of users. **Pricing does not include phone rental. Given Mitel is the only vendor that manufactures phones, it is expected that Mitel provides favorable pricing for packages inclusive of phone rental.

Source: Tolly, January 2018

Table 8

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[2] Mitel Unlimited does not include Toll-Free charges. See Mitel representative for Toll-Free charge rate.

Data Center Infrastructure Considerations

Data Center infrastructure, ultimately, dictates security, reliability and availability characteristics of any hosted UC solution. Mitel and RingCentral provide two data centers in the continental USA - and East coast and West coast data center presumably all over 1,000 miles apart. 8x8 maintains three US data centers. Perhaps for security or other reasons, details about 8x8 and RingCentral data centers are minimal.

Globally, Mitel Connect is supported by 4 data centers in all. These include the aforementioned two USA data centers plus one in the UK and one in Australia. The Mitel data centers have received the highest rating, "Rated-4" under the ANSI/TIA 942 standard. This rating indicates a fully fault-tolerant environment. Mitel's data centers have multiple, independent paths serving both telephony and data networks with each path entering the building at a different location. All AC power is sourced from independent, redundant power grids with multiple, independent power sources entering the building in different physical locations. Similarly, all HVAC units are independently powered from multiple sources with multiple physical paths. The MiCloud Connect system/servers are built as "N+1" at all layers. This means that spares are always available and will automatically "fail over" should that become necessary.

Mitel's integrated solution is cloud-enabled and geo-redundant. Thus, it provides a flexible and secure solution for global companies looking to reduce CapEx and optimize OpEx.

A RingCentral Data Center Overview document from 2012 notes only that RingCentral has multiple data center sites that are geographically diverse. Apparently, one needs to contact RingCentral and 8x8 directly or sign a non-disclosure document to get more details. See Table 9.

Data Center Infrastructure Summary

Area	Cloud UC Vendor		
	Mitel	8x8	RingCentral
USA Data Centers	**2**	**2**	**2**
Global Total	**4**	**15 (9 countries)**	**Not documented**
Redundant Power	✔	✔	✔
Redundant Cooling	✔	**Not documented**	✔
Redundant Storage	✔	**Not documented**	**Not documented**

Note: Infrastructure information for 8x8 and RingCentral as found on websites and public documents. Readers should check with those providers for details.

Source: Tolly, January 2018   Table 9

About Tolly…

The Tolly Group companies have been delivering world-class IT services for nearly 30 years. Tolly is a leading global provider of third-party validation services for vendors of IT products, components and services.

You can reach the company by email at sales@tolly.com, or by telephone at +1 561.391.5610.

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About Mitel MiCloud Connect

MiCloud Connect delivers secure and flexible cloud phone services and unified communications. MiCloud Connect lets you move communications and collaboration to the cloud with confidence.

For more information visit:
http://www.mitel.com/products/cloud/micloud-connect

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