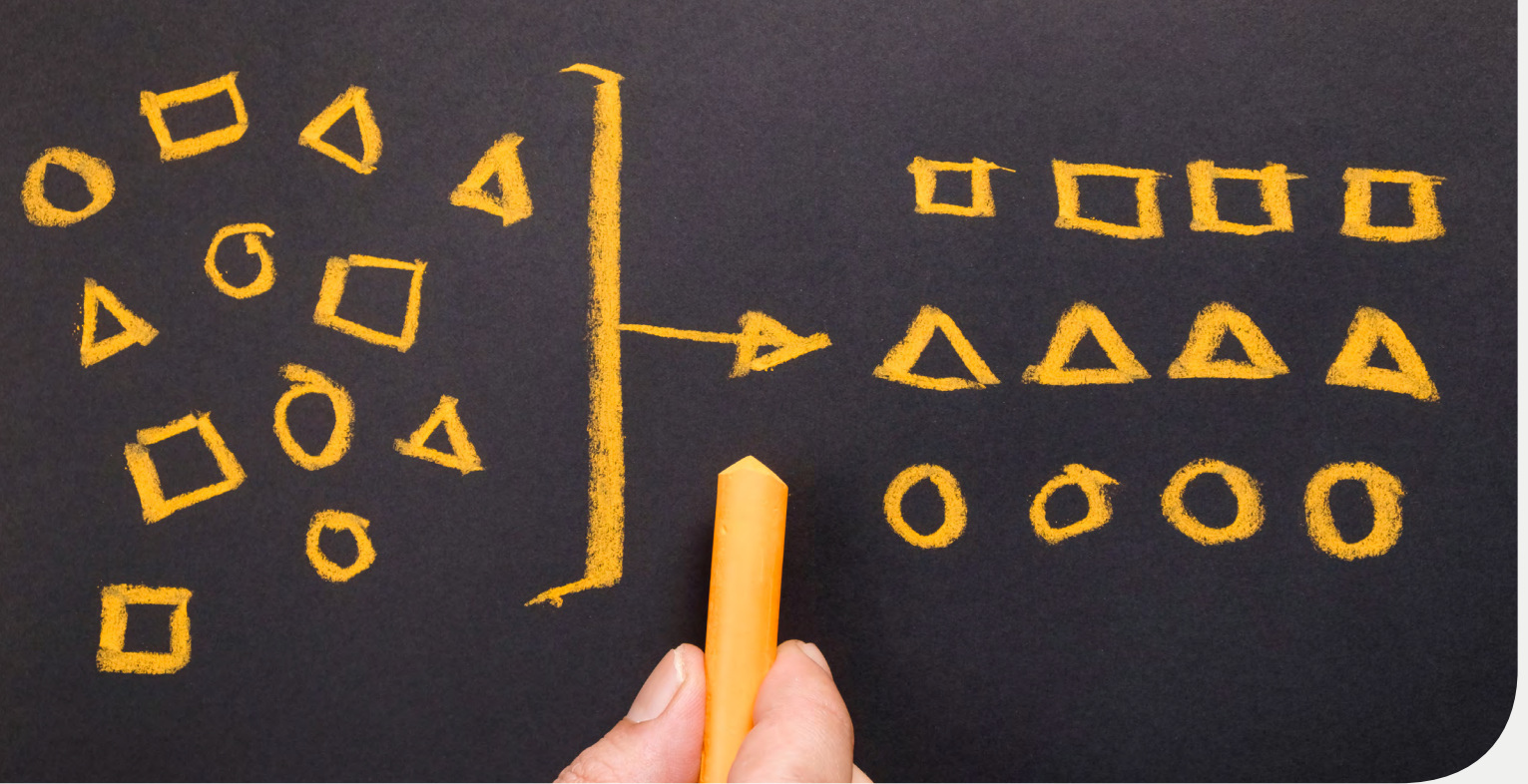




## MARKET BRIEF

# MODERNIZE YOUR COLLABORATION TOOLS FOR THE NEW HYBRID WORKSPACE

One of the key factors in creating the best customer experience is to assure that the enterprise has very satisfied employees. Happy employees for whom the employee experience has been optimized. This is especially true during this transitional time when many employees still working from home (WFH) due to the COVID-19 pandemic, while others have returned to the office, and still others are shuttling between the two, it becomes critical to pay close attention to the ways in which we can provide some stability and some return to unity for our collaborative teams.



## A CONSISTENT EXPERIENCE

One of the foundations of providing stability is to create consistency of user experience for our clients no matter where they are or what device they're using to access the network. Starting right from how they login, the interaction with their device is the same regardless of location, which means the interaction with their colleagues will be the same. The only difference may be the opportunity to interact in person when in the office.

Providers of Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) have been constantly streamlining their user interfaces (UI), their feature sets, and the breadth of applications with which they integrate. The result is an even more unified environment where users can remain throughout their working day to access resources, applications, data sets, and most importantly - each other. No longer do they have to jump from application to application to send text messages, make calls, start video conferences, share desktops or files, use the customer relationship management (CRM), marketing automation (MA), or enterprise resource planning (ERP) applications. They move effortlessly from one activity to the next.

UCaaS also suggests the potential to eliminate the cost and operational burden of maintaining a phone system and network in addition to the IP-based data network. Many are moving to replace aging PBX phone systems with UCaaS solutions that require no on-premises hardware or management. No more dedicated telephones to maintain either. Users can make any kind of call from any device they choose, from PCs with softphones to laptops, tablets, or smartphones.

Create consistency for employees no matter where they are or what device they're using to access the network.



# IMPROVEMENTS “UNDER THE HOOD” FROM UCAAS PROVIDERS

The NIST definition of cloud computing includes the concept of a “layer of abstraction” between the user and the underlying technology. While UCaaS vastly improves the user-facing side of the equation, much is happening to modernize what lies beneath!

The most prevalent challenge is always data and network security. When employees were forced to work from home network managers were suddenly confronted with a vastly expanded threat surface. Not only did they need to monitor and manage their corporate network environment, but they also had to figure out how to provide adequate protection to a wide variety of residential Internet access services.

It's obviously impractical to go about installing enterprise-grade firewalls, intrusion protection, and more at each employee's home, but now Secure Access Service Edge (SASE) is emerging as a way to convert data and network security into a cloud-delivered service making it practical to deliver protection wherever users may be.

## EXTENDING SELF-SERVICE

The layer of abstraction is not the only fundamental characteristic that is being expanded. Here at Advantage, we've developed a platform improvement that re-defines self-service. Not only can IT leaders readily request and release additional storage, memory, or processor power, they can now request any service Advantage provides directly from their self-service console.

This accelerates the opportunity to grow networks by removing friction from the initial processes including current-state assessment, solution development, provisioning, deployment, and user training. Time-to-value for new initiatives is slashed. Initial return on investment (ROI) comes far sooner. User support requirements enjoy far greater response and resolution times. The “shared pool of resources” so intrinsic to the definition of cloud computing now includes the expert members of the Advantage team.

**Gartner**

By 2024, remote work and changing workforce demographics will impact enterprise meetings so that only 25% will take place in person, down from 60% today.

- 2020 Magic Quadrant for Meeting Solutions

## THE PORTABLE EMPLOYEE

Today's employee must be truly portable. Smaller, thinner laptops and tablets. Foldable smartphones that unfold into usable-sized work displays. Roll-up keyboards. Ear buds. Phone-sized projectors. Even the size of the bag all these items can easily be thrown into is getting smaller and smaller. Where employers once gagged envisioning needing two complete computer setups for every employee, one in the office and one at home, now they see truly portable employees who can bring their entire ensemble with them wherever they go. The decision as to where to work is no longer based even in part on which office, home or work, has the better technology.

Or the better access! While many were already moving to WIFI throughout their offices to eliminate hard cabling, we may now be able to look to 5G to even eliminate the cabling required to enable WIFI access points. Even while we're still getting accustomed to serverless computing we can now foresee the advent of infrastructure-less computing.



## LOOSE COUPLING

Software architects speak of the value of “loose coupling” in which each process or procedure is less dependent upon others to continue functioning. In early programming with everything tightly coupled and fully interdependent the slightest error could result in catastrophic failure of the entire system. Loose coupling brought far greater resilience. By segregating each process into its own microservice packaged in highly portable containers that included all necessary resources and could easily be moved wherever in the network they were needed, today’s software provides infinitely greater resilience. If a microservice fails, its container is discarded and immediately re-instantiated. The application continues running. People keep working.

Our ability to modernize today’s computing, communicating, and collaborative environment brings this resilience and flexibility to the user community by loosely coupling everything and everyone.

## TAKE ADVANTAGE

None of what we’ve discussed here is a glimpse into the future. All of it is available today. The first step toward modernizing your collaborative environment and developing the agility required for such a mobile workforce is to talk with the team at Advantage. We’ll walk through your entire business environment with you, identifying areas where you can enjoy immediate improvements through smart investments all leading toward a truly optimized digital world.







# Why Advantage?

## We optimize the technology lifecycle

Advantage is a managed service provider that drives value to your organization through five key stages in the technology journey. Employing expert practitioners, efficient processes, and a unique software platform, we solve the challenges of managing technology in the modern enterprise.



### DESIGN

Based on your business drivers and global best practices, we create purpose-built solutions leveraging leading technologies and ideal providers.



### SOURCE

Leverage our experience, benchmarking, and global partner network to select service providers, negotiate the best possible terms, and contract for the lowest rates.



### INSTALL

Capitalize on our project management leadership for a seamless rollout of new solutions and the timely disconnect of legacy services.



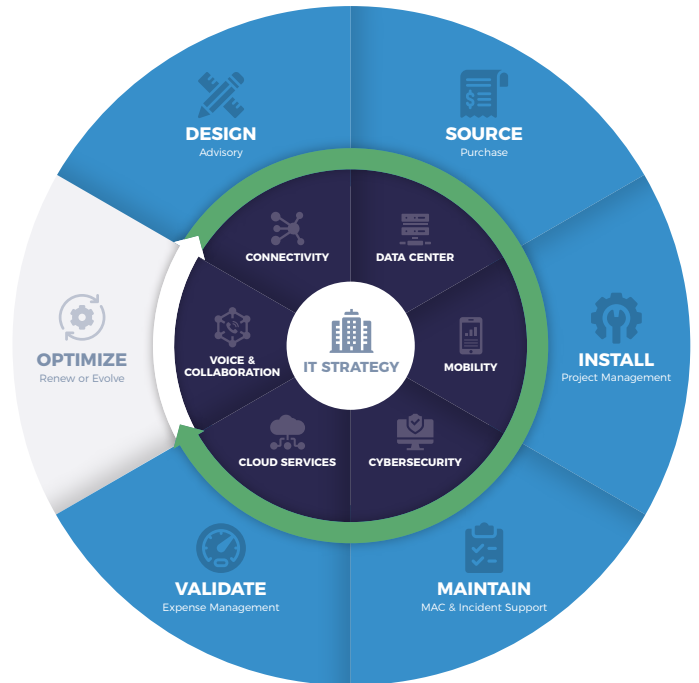
### MAINTAIN

Ongoing managed support of daily activities such as moves, adds and changes to your services, while having full visibility into your inventory through our Command Center platform.



### VALIDATE

Receive ongoing managed services to support the invoice lifecycle, including contract management, expense validation, dispute resolution, and AP/GL feeds for payment.



From procurement and provisioning through inventory and expense management, we optimize your communications solutions across voice, data, cloud, and mobility. Advantage is your team behind the scenes—so you can focus on success.



Learn more at [AdvantageCG.com](https://www.advantagecg.com)

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