



# A Partner Perspective on Transitioning from Mitel to RingCentral

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## Executive Summary

The time is right to migrate from Mitel Connect to RingCentral, but don't start the process without considering your options.

When Mitel announced that it had struck a deal with RingCentral to help Mitel Connect customers migrate to RingCentral's cloud-based unified communications platform, many were understandably confused. Did it mean that Mitel Connect was phasing out? Did customers have to move to RingCentral? And if they had to move, how complicated would it be?

While there aren't hard-and-fast "yes" and "no" answers, it's clear that customers will experience a change in one way or another. There are some big questions involved, and the more customers understand the options, the better.

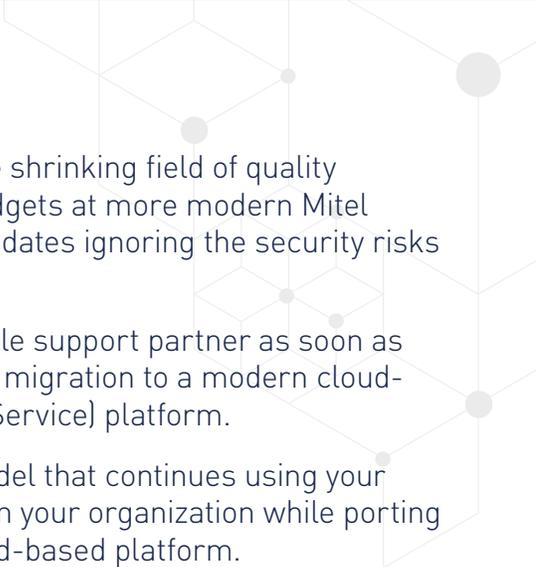
## Table of Contents

<b>Getting a Handle on the Big Picture</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>The Three PBX to Cloud Migration Strategies</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Training &amp; Support are Essential for a Successful Migration</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>6</b>

## Getting a Handle on the Big Picture

The most critical takeaway from this announcement is that the time to act is narrowing. It may be tempting to hold off until the dust settles on this partnership; for now, the Mitel Connect platform (formerly ShoreTel) still works, and your Mitel support partner may still be available when help is needed. But it's probably only putting off the inevitable since end-of-life announcements for the Mitel legacy platforms are coming.

When that occurs, many of Mitel's partners will also sunset their support, which is happening already. Some Mitel customers report unanswered support tickets as their partners try to conceive what's next for their businesses. Layoffs of senior support technicians have also been rampant the past few months. That leaves you sustaining the Mitel environment on your own, with global hardware shortages from the pandemic to boot.



Expect support instability to continue with the shrinking field of quality support partners and the pointing of R&D budgets at more modern Mitel platforms. In addition, with a lack of future updates ignoring the security risks is not a viable option.

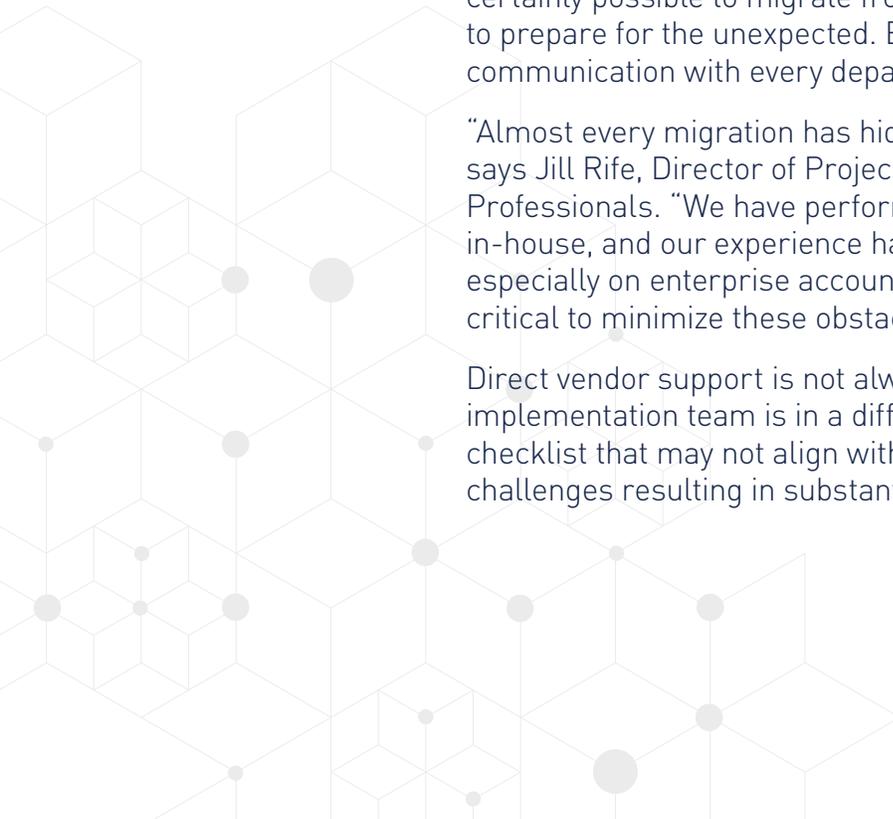
It is essential for organizations to find a reliable support partner as soon as possible and begin planning for the inevitable migration to a modern cloud-based UCaaS (Unified Communications as a Service) platform.

One way to do that is by adopting a hybrid model that continues using your premise technology for essential places within your organization while porting employee-based phone lines to a newer, cloud-based platform.

## The Three PBX to Cloud Migration Strategies

Most organizations are likely to be more proactive about the situation, finding ways to migrate to RingCentral or another UCaaS platform sooner rather than later. In all three scenarios, it's important to evaluate the technical knowledge, workload, internal staff availability, and the required timeline and budget.

### OPTION 1: Migrate on Your Own with RingCentral Support



For most employees, a migration of this caliber is the largest internal project they have ever taken on, and the pressure to get it right is sky-high. While it's certainly possible to migrate from Mitel to RingCentral on your own, it pays to prepare for the unexpected. Expect a sharp learning curve and frequent communication with every department in your organization.

“Almost every migration has hidden challenges that increase the complexity,” says Jill Rife, Director of Projects and Service at Converged Technology Professionals. “We have performed countless Mitel to RingCentral migrations in-house, and our experience has taught us to expect the unexpected, especially on enterprise accounts with many locations. The planning phase is critical to minimize these obstacles.”

Direct vendor support is not always the answer. In many cases, the vendor's implementation team is in a different country, working from a standard checklist that may not align with expectations, which can lead to numerous challenges resulting in substantial delays.

## Reasons to Migrate to RingCentral Sooner Rather Than Later

- It is fully hosted in the cloud, providing more flexibility and scalability while eliminating the costs associated with maintaining aging PBX technology
- Provides modern communication features including voice, text, group chat, video and eFax
- Fully compliant with all U.S. federally mandated regulatory requirements to ensure that customer data is fully protected
- A modern mobile app enables employees to perform collaborative and unified communications functions.
- Integrates easily with critical applications via APIs
- Is a top performer, designated a UCaaS leader by Gartner for seven years running
- The new RingCentral/Mitel partnership offers multiple incentives to help offset your CapX costs

Keith Koons, the Senior Content Strategist at Converged Technology Professionals, shared a story that rings true with many large organizations trying to migrate on their own:

“We had a top agricultural prospect who had talked with us for years about a potential cloud migration. This individual felt confident he could complete the project internally with his own team. It quickly became overwhelming, though, and he called us for advice on how to get out of his contract. Fortunately, our team was able to take over the migration, and there was a successful conclusion for everyone involved. But it was a very tense situation for a moment there.”

### OPTION 2: Migrate with External Help from a Dedicated Partner

While you may be familiar with the Mitel Partner agreement that grants you a dedicated support partner, the relationship is quite different in UCaaS. Since the technology resides in the cloud, partners will not be required to maintain on-site hardware and configurations like premise-based technologies. Instead, your UCaaS partner will be there to help you plan for both short and long-term communications goals over the next several years.

Mark Johnson, a Senior Account Executive with Converged Technology Professionals, put it this way, “There’s a lot to consider when evaluating the communication needs of a large organization. Every client is unique based on how they communicate internally and with their customers. We look at how leading UCaaS providers align with their technologies, apps, and services already in use, plus what tools each department needs to succeed.”

Since the goal with UCaaS is to integrate mission-critical apps directly into the platform, understanding both departmental and organizational usage is key to a successful deployment. If, for example, the company relies heavily on Salesforce or Microsoft Teams, that needs to be accounted for early in the planning process to ensure proper alignment.

Converged Technology Professionals is the only RingCentral Premier partner and Mitel Platinum partner nationwide that perform implementations in-house on behalf of their large enterprise clients such as Brunswick, the Milwaukee Brewers, Axia Women’s Health, and Echo Incorporated. In each migration, they ensured a smooth rollout by understanding specific needs down to the department level.

### OPTION 3: Remain with Mitel Through a Hybrid Deployment

The third and perhaps the most popular option with large organizations is to remain on their Mitel/ShoreTel deployment as long as possible while also moving key personnel to the RingCentral cloud platform. This strategy can help offset recent hardware investments and other premise-based costs while allowing your workers to immediately gain UCaaS calling, messaging, file sharing and video conferencing.

“When it comes to UCaaS and CCaaS in modern business,” says Chris Frey, the Vice President of Cloud and Contact Centers at Converged Technology Professionals, “people prefer softphones and work from anywhere mobility while locations may choose hard phones. It is essential to plan for these initiatives in advance since it will ultimately determine the platform’s adoption rates, support levels, and overall ROI.”

Frey also notes that extensive research and planning goes into each site discovery for clients to create a comprehensive plan to deal with traditional communications scenarios in a cloud-based world. Each site must be evaluated, from internal paging to elevator hard lines to desk phones in key physical locations.

Evaluating your current needs also includes understanding how employees are using communications technology today or what tools or functionality they’re missing to provide higher service levels. For example, employees are messaging each other more than they are calling. Executives may use video conferencing in lieu of in-person meetings, while the sales team may rely more heavily on phones and file sharing.

After conducting an in-depth study, you may find that an immediate move to cloud communications is ideal. It may make sense to take a more phased approach over time, in other cases. While both options are viable, the key is to begin planning immediately while also finding a Mitel support partner that will meet your needs throughout the process.

## Training & Support Are Essential for a Successful Migration

No matter your organization’s route toward migration, choosing the right partner to properly train your employees is critical to success.

Vendors such as RingCentral host training sessions—typically recorded walk-throughs of how to perform specific functions. That’s a good start, but these sessions can’t address the specific functions that each department’s users find important and relevant. Custom training is the glue that can make the difference, especially immediately following implementation.



Eric Collins, a Technical Account Manager with Converged Technology Professionals says, “I recently spent several weeks hosting on-site training sessions for a large school district. Providing this level of hands-on training ensures that the district’s teachers and staff members can quickly absorb RingCentral right away without overburdening their IT department.”

One final point to keep in mind is to make sure that your UCaaS partner is unbiased. Unfortunately, many resellers recommend solutions that will generate the most profit instead of which platform would fit your organization best. While Converged Technology Professionals is transparent in being a fan of RingCentral, they also equally represent other prominent Gartner Magic Quadrant leaders to their clients as needed.

“At the end of the day, we worry about the best long-term fit for our clients,” says Joe Rittenhouse, President of Business Development at Converged Technology Professionals. “Our top partner status and advisory board appointments with Gartner Magic Quadrant leaders ensures are clients are not treated like a small fish in a huge pond.”

## Conclusion

While it’s not strictly necessary to migrate from Mitel to RingCentral immediately, a deadline is quickly approaching as Mitel plans to exit this failing product line swiftly. If nothing else, start planning by asking hard questions and better understanding each team’s unique needs across various departments. Whether alone or with a partner, careful planning and evaluation are critical to a smooth transition.

## About Converged Technology Professionals

Converged Technology Professionals is an IT leader that specializes in unified communications for modern business brands. We take a consultative, hands-on approach in everything we do to simplify the cloud journey for our clients, from mid-market and enterprise brands to professional sports teams. We provide an unbiased, no-nonsense approach to evaluating, designing and implementing modern UCaaS & CCaaS solutions.

You can learn more about Converged Technology Professionals at [www.voipswami.com](http://www.voipswami.com) or visit us on [LinkedIn](#).