

WHITE PAPER.

A BUSINESS CASE FOR MOVING VOICE TO THE CLOUD.

OCTOBER 2016.

Many businesses are aware they have outgrown legacy on premise telephone systems but hesitate to upgrade due to cost concerns and lack of knowledge of modern solutions.

As a result, businesses still running an on premise PBX system are missing out on new capabilities that help to improve productivity and foster business growth.

Is your business struggling with any of the following telephony issues?

- ✓ Maintenance problems due to an ailing communications system.
- ✓ Difficulty finding the skills and expertise necessary to maintain legacy systems.
- ✓ Costly repairs and extended downtimes.
- ✓ Problems with locating replacement parts as necessary.
- ✓ Complexities associated with adding employees to the system.
- ✓ Fear of system failure caused by an outdated on premise PBX system.
- ✓ Trouble with in-house system modifications as your business needs fluctuate.
- ✓ Communications problems that result from multiple on premise PBX systems across several office locations.
- ✓ Difficulty meeting the needs of mobile and remote workers.
- ✓ Rising costs of maintaining on premise telephony systems.

If any of the above issues sound familiar, our white paper will help you to learn more about the benefits of switching to cloud-based telephony. We will also discuss the different ways that cloud telephony can help you overcome a few or all of the above named issues and create unified communications across the board. Regardless if you are a small business, an organisation with several branch offices, or a company that employs in-house workers as well as remote staff, cloud-based telephony solutions are proving to be the way to go for many organisations.

Great reasons to switch to cloud-based communications.

As new technologies emerge, the world of business has changed significantly since the age of on premise PBX telephony systems. Companies are looking to reduce costs while improving productivity, workers are bringing their own devices (BYOD) to the workplace, and many organisations are looking to improve agility in order to compete in today's marketplace.

“According to Gartner, Cloud telephony spending is expected to surpass on premise telephony during 2017 where cloud telephony and messaging sales surpass premise-based revenue for the first time. Cloud-based telephony and messaging represent the most significant opportunity, with end-user investments projected to rise to \$13.25 billion in 2019.”

Gartner's prediction follows business technology trends which include modern capabilities such as mobile productivity, business application integration, video conferencing, the need for 24/7 support, unified communications, advanced productivity features, and more. These are new technologies and services that an on premise legacy PBX system is not designed to handle.

This limits your business as to what you can do in terms of acquiring new technologies while accommodating business fluctuation and growth.

Instead, there are many benefits of switching to a hosted cloud-based solution:

High Availability

If you are using an on premise PBX system, you are probably dreading the day something breaks and the whole system goes down. This is a significant worry to have when you are trying to focus on running daily business operations.

With a hosted cloud-based telephony system, service continuity is the vendor's responsibility. A 99.9% uptime guarantee typically is included in your Service Level Agreement (SLA).

Lower Total Cost of Ownership

If you are trying to maintain and support an on premise PBX system across multiple locations, this can prove to be quite costly. Legacy PBX systems tend to be a piecemeal of different parts. When it is spread across multiple locations, this represents a management and maintenance nightmare that can really add up in cost.

When you deploy cloud-based telephony, the entire solution can be managed from any location with the ability to easily scale up or down as needed. The service is delivered and maintained on a subscription basis which means you only pay for what you use.

The entire telephony infrastructure is housed in a secure compliant datacenter where the cloud provider employs a staff of qualified professionals that provide 24/7 support. The telephony platform provides carrier-grade communications that are future proof. The hosted cloud provider automatically implements the upgrades as they become available.

Flexibility and Scalability

It is really hard to predict where your business will be a few years down the road. As a result, many businesses with on premise PBX systems have unused technology and IT resources in preparation for business growth and expansion. This typically ties up budget money that can otherwise be used for important business initiatives.

When you use a hosted cloud-based solution, you can add or subtract staff, features, and tools as your needs change and accommodate mobility and BYOD. Plus, you do not have to wait forever for the changes to be completed. Instead, the hosted provider simply performs the changes using a unified dashboard.

Improved Disaster Recovery

If you have an on premise legacy PBX system spread across one or several locations, then you know this can be a recipe for a catastrophe when it comes to disaster recovery. It can even cause significant financial damage to your business if the outage lasts for several days.

When you use cloud-based telephony, the vendor is responsible for business continuity and deploys redundant IT resources to ensure rapid recovery. The strategy they use for disaster recovery is part of their ISO compliance certification which results from regular datacenter audits.

Enjoy access to the latest features and better control over your telephony system.

“The global unified communications market is expected to reach USD 61.9 billion in 2018. At present, North America accounts for a major share of the unified communications market, with Europe, UK, Middle East, and Africa expected to overtake North America by the end of the forecast period. Some of the factors that are driving the growth of the unified communications market range from the increasing mobile workforce and increasing penetration of mobile devices to virtualisation and the cloud and the mounting adoption of BYOD in businesses.” – Transparency Market Research

On premise PBX systems offer a selection of features but, they are also limited when it comes to integrating additional features and capabilities required to meet the needs of today’s workplace. With a hosted cloud-based telephony solution, you have access to a large selection of features and enhancements without enduring costly upgrades.

Some of the features include:

Call reporting and recording

Cloud-based telephony systems are capable of delivering call reporting and recording. This ensures you never miss a call and provides you with a useful reference for reviewing previous messages. Call reporting enables you to easily generate reports using customised templates, add custom information to data elements, drill down for additional report specifics, and more. Plus, call recording allows all calls to be recorded, retrieved, and then downloaded.

Detailed call search

You can access a broad range of call handling features including detailed call search using the web based software portal. The dashboard provides you with tools that allow you to easily search voicemail messages, call recordings, and call history.

This saves time searching through hundreds of phone records to locate the information you need. The settings can also be customised to allow you to handle calls according to your preferences providing more flexibility and personalisation

Shared voicemail

Hosted cloud-based telephony provides you with advanced features such as shared voicemail. This feature allows you to easily share voicemail messages with other team members simply by configuring the dashboard tools to automatically designate the recipients. This prevents any headaches with miscommunication and makes collaboration easier and more productive.

Quick calling

Quick calling allows you to rapidly dial someone using their name by configuring the calling directory on the dashboard. This includes using extension dialing to place a call to a colleague simply by using their extension number. Quick calling also provides a way to contact a large group of people simultaneously.

Integration with CRM Systems

Hosted cloud-based telephony solutions can easily be integrated with a new or existing CRM solution. This speeds up the call handling time and helps to improve customer satisfaction. CRM integration is achieved by designing an integrated solution between the cloud-based telephony platform and your CRM solution.

Live stats wallboard

Access statistics that summarise all daily and weekly call activity, monthly activity, or across an entire year. You can also easily filter the results by configuring dashboard variables that allow you to view only the specific statistics you want to see. The variables can be dynamically modified or set within the configuration tool.

Company address books

Cloud-based telephony provides you with shared access to company address books. This feature allows everyone to easily communicate regardless of location. It also saves time when searching for a specific contact thanks to the unification of company addresses stored in one central location.

Holding music

Cloud-based telephony systems can provide your business with a professional touch. Using the dashboard, each user can set call waiting with holding music or promotional offers while the customer waits for the next available representative.

Call queuing

Cloud-based telephony systems offer call queuing which allows you to receive multiple calls and answer them in the order they are received. The calls are automatically distributed to the next available representative after they complete a current call. Call queuing also makes it easier for your callers to access the telephone services they need before being automatically forwarded to an available representative.

Hunt and reporting groups

Cloud-based telephony services offer a hunt and reporting group feature that allows for the distribution of phone calls from one destination number to multiple groups of call agents or phone lines. This feature automatically routes incoming calls as soon as they are answered by an IP telephony system. When an incoming phone call is received on the extension number for the hunt group, the cloud-telephony platform automatically rings all extension numbers included in the group.

Fax to email

Cloud telephony services provide a feature known as fax to email. Whenever a fax is received, it is automatically placed in your email account for easy access and viewing. Cloud-based telephony also provides a similar service known as voice to email where voice messages are automatically transferred to your email account.

Mobile communications

Staff members that use mobile devices for daily productivity can take their office extension with them wherever they go. This improves mobility and ensures workers never miss an important call. The calls are automatically transferred to the designated device without requiring the caller to dial another number.

High definition web conferencing

With cloud-based telephony you have access to HD web conferencing which offers a rich selection of features. The service can be scaled up or down according to business requirements while the cloud provider supplies and maintains the solutions from various vendors such as Vidyo Cloud, Skype for Business, and others.

All communications are encrypted to protect company trade secrets and privacy. Plus, you can host online meetings and webinars for up to 10,000 people for the purpose of collaboration, training, marketing, and lead generation.

Cloud-based instant and in-app messaging

Cloud telephony using an application such as Skype for Business provides you with instant access to colleagues without having to wait for them to retrieve a voicemail message or respond to an email.

The preference settings let others know the current status of your availability, allow you to share screens for collaboration, respond to multiple messages simultaneously, attach files to a conversation, and more.

Cloud-based call analytics

Cloud-based telephony services provide you with a centralised dashboard that allows you to easily view data and analytics in real-time. The data can include employee performance and response, call activity, phone call statistics for specific times of the day or year, and more. The dashboard can be used on both a desktop and a mobile device.

Cloud-based telephony provides better control

Although cloud telephony is hosted on the provider's platform in a datacenter, you still have better control over the system than you would with an on premise PBX solution.

With a cloud telephony system you can easily make changes using the central web interface and you no longer must be on the premises to manage the system. Any user can easily add an extension or number within seconds using the intuitive dashboard tools.

Conclusion

Legacy on premise PBX systems are quickly becoming antiquated and are not designed for new technologies and the ever growing mobile workforce. This is the main driving force behind more businesses making the switch to hosted cloud-based telephony solutions.

Cloud telephony provides a cost effective way to bring a communication system into the modern business world with access to a rich set of features that would otherwise be costly and labor intensive to implement on the premises.

Cloud-based telephony systems help many businesses curtail IT resources while quickly adapting to changing business needs. The hosted services enhance collaboration, support a mobile workforce, reduce on premise IT infrastructure headaches, and improve profits with easy integration of CRM solutions designed to increase efficiency.

All of this is accomplished without increasing capital expenditures, employing an entire staff of IT professionals, managing security and compliance requirements, and shelling out costs for the latest upgrades and capabilities.

Don't you think it is about time to start considering the switch to cloud-based communications to improve customer relationships, streamline business productivity, and empower your teams with next generation collaboration tools?

Contact us to arrange an onsite demonstration

Call **020 8501 7676** and speak with a member of our Business Development Team to arrange a no obligation onsite demonstration of our cloud-based telephony solutions.

Our cloud communication specialist will provide a detailed demonstration of the features discussed in this whitepaper, in addition to answering any questions you may have on the subject of cloud telephony.