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WHITEPAPER

3 Ways Cloud Communications Benefit Your Business

Don't let your legacy phones put business on hold

What's the common thread that affects both customer satisfaction and employee productivity? Your business communications system.

The phone is the front door for customers to your business and the primary tool for your employees to collaborate and get work done.

Research[1] indicates 65% of people still prefer to contact a business by phone versus only 24% who prefer a web form. And by 2025, it's estimated[2] that over 90% of the North American population will have a smartphone. Despite this, many businesses still rely on old on-premises phone technology that was installed before the smartphone was even invented. These legacy phone systems usually require a hard-wired phone switching system—a server box tangled in wires and randomly blinking lights, often hidden in a closet—that routes calls and manages telephone lines and phone features.

1Invoca Call Intelligence Index, 2016

2"https://www.gsma.com/mobileeconomy/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/GSMA_MobileEconomy2020_Global.pdf

But the advent of smart phones, tablets, and other mobile and connected devices, as well as the trend of moving business functions to the cloud, has evolved behavior and expectations from customers and employees alike. It's a new world—and competitive companies in all industries are switching to less costly and more flexible cloud-based business communications to keep current with customer needs. In fact, 86% of U.S. small businesses[3] claim they plan to evaluate new business communications systems in the next three years.

Cloud-based communications systems offer three advantages over hard-wired, on-premises legacy phone systems:

1. **They help you maintain better contact with your high touch customers.**
2. **They enable you to attract new talent and optimize productivity based on their individual needs.**
3. **They reduce costs and eliminate surprise expenses.**

Read on to learn how these advantages benefit your business.

Where Your Legacy On-Premises Phone System Fails Your Business

- **Mobile productivity:** Traditional phone systems are not built to seamlessly support mobile capabilities, which severely inhibits collaboration between distributed employees and their ability to address urgent customer issues while on the go.
- **Cost:** Even if you've paid off your traditional on-premises business phone system, you face continued costs for managing the system and adding new phone lines.
- **Complexity:** If you want to easily integrate modern business productivity and collaboration features such as video conferencing, screen sharing, team chat, and file storage and backup to your traditional on-premises phone system, well, you really can't. Plus, adding new phone lines as you bring on new employees takes too much time and costs too much with a traditional phone system.
- **Downtime:** Every minute your on-premises phone system is down due to a power outage or some other system failure that is out of your control is a minute that a customer cannot reach you. This lack of redundancy can be costly, adversely affect your reputation, and diminish your credibility.

[3] "Windstream/Allworx study says SMBs have a low awareness of business phone system technology trends," FierceTelecom, 2015

1 MAINTAIN CLOSER CONTACT WITH HIGH TOUCH CUSTOMERS

As the lifeblood of your business, business phones let customers contact you, place new orders, reach account managers, and get support. But legacy, on-premises phone systems are usually subject to downtime that's out of your control. Natural disasters like hurricanes or a simple power outage could take your phone system down for hours, days, or even weeks. This could cost your business thousands of dollars, or worse, diminish your reputation and credibility with customers.

But it isn't just the risk of downtime. In today's mobile world, customers expect to reach you the first time they call— wherever you are—and they expect everything to be "always available." Research[4] shows 73% of U.S. adults say that valuing their time is the most important thing a company can do to provide them with good service.

Other studies[5] report that when it comes to making a purchase, 64% of people find customer experience more important than price. This means businesses must quickly put customers in touch with exactly who they need—right when they need it. So, when a traditional on-premises PBX phone system can't integrate with your teams' mobile devices or goes down because of a thunderstorm, you leave yourself open to a poor customer experience. You worked hard to get that customer; why take the risk of missing the call?

Cloud Communications Business Advantage

- **Uptime delivered:** Cloud-based phone systems usually come with a much higher level of uptime than on-premises systems—up to 99.999%.
- **Reliable:** In the event of a natural disaster, cloud-based phone systems that offer mobile integration allow you to conduct business over your mobile phone as if you were in the office.
- **Versatile:** Complementary mobile apps help ensure employees never miss important calls by extending their business phone number and extension to their mobile device. These same apps can turn most any mobile device into a complete communications and collaboration tool, offering video conferencing, screen sharing, team chat, file sharing and more, in addition to being a highly reliable phone.

[4] "Your customers don't want to call you for support," 2016
[5] "75 Customer Service Facts, Quotes & Statistics"

2 YOU CAN ATTRACT TALENT AND OPTIMIZE THEIR PRODUCTIVITY

More than one in three American labor force participants (35%) are millennials who grew up living in a mobile world, making them the largest generation in the U.S. labor force, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data[6]. And they aren't the only part of the workforce that expects to be able to work from anywhere, optimize their commute time, take calls outside of business hours, and more. Leading companies realize that speed and agility offer a distinct advantage against the competition, including providing employees with the tools to connect and collaborate whenever they need to, wherever they are, and on any device.

In fact, one in four employees say they wouldn't take a role at a company if it didn't offer mobile phones, video conferencing, or instant messaging[7]. And on top of that, companies that support remote work experience 25% lower employee attrition than companies that do not[8]. Giving employees access to essential tools that empower them to chat, share files, or attend a video conference from a remote location may be the very best way to pull the right team members together on the spot for issue resolution. Being forced to wait for the entire team to travel back into the office may delay a critical solution until it's too late to act.

Additionally, legacy phones lack other critical features that employees need to do their jobs—like call flip (transferring calls from a business phone to a mobile device and vice versa without interruption), screen sharing, and team chat. Even if your traditional business phone system supports some of these functions through add-on features from multiple vendors, the expense, complexity, and management challenges outweigh the benefits. More than ever, employees want the freedom to work from anywhere, in the ways they feel most comfortable. It's highly unlikely that your traditional on-premises phone system is equipped to support the mobile and remote capabilities your employees demand. So, what's the risk? The inability to hire and retain top talent.

Cloud Communications Business Advantage

- Mobile-ready: Built to handle mobile and remote access, cloud phones offer employees the ability to work from their desktop or mobile phone
- Easily integrated: Cloud phones often integrate collaboration tools that include video conferencing, team chat, file sharing, screensharing, and more
- Simple to manage: Cloud phones enable you to benefit from many services, with the ability to get them all from one provider, with one bill, and one support number

[6]"Millennials are the largest generation in the U.S. labor force," 2017
[7]"How Technology is Redefining the Workplace, Workday, and Workforce, 2018
[8]"Global State of Remote Work," 2018

3 YOU CAN REDUCE COSTS AND ELIMINATE SURPRISE EXPENSES

Many businesses have invested large sums of money installing an on-premises business phone system. But an aging on-premises phone system can be hard to scale and complicated to manage during periods of business growth or consolidation. Further, on-premises phone systems require regular maintenance for everything from hardware updates, to surges in call volumes, business expansion, new offices, or service resolution. Over time, these support costs—often unexpected—can become very expensive.

Still, some companies are scared to abandon sunk costs, and choose to patch together several other collaboration tools to work alongside their legacy business phone system. Though adding disparate tools might work, it will likely cost more, and require additional support costs that could otherwise be avoided. For example, simply adding a video conferencing service can run an additional $30 per user per month, on top of the phone bill.

Cloud Phone Business Advantage

- **Easy to set up and use:** Cloud-based phone systems can be activated in minutes.
- **Less expensive:** Costs shift from capital expenditures to operating expenditures through a flat, per-user rate that scales with your business—you buy only what you need.
- **No surprise expenses:** All infrastructure, support, and management/admin costs are usually included in one predictable subscription fee.
- **Additional collaboration tools:** Discover useful new features as they are often included as part of the package for no additional charge.

QUESTIONS? CONTACT US TODAY!

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