



## BUYER'S GUIDE:

### 7 Questions To Ask Before Buying Your Next Business Phone System



#### Which Calling Features Are Most Important?

Imagine a typical day, week and month at your office:

- What are the best case scenarios for handling both inbound and outbound calls?
- What features and tools could help your team work more efficiently?
- Are there any business specific issues that you'd like to resolve?

While all systems have a basic feature set that includes call forwarding, call hold, voicemail, etc., cloud-based solutions include additional features that traditional premise-based solutions do not offer without costly add-ons and/or integrations. This includes mobility features, call recording features for training and compliance, soft client capability, and desktop integration with tools like your CRM system.

You might not think you want or need next generation features now, but ensuring the system you buy enables you to implement these features in the future easily and inexpensively should be a consideration.



#### Will The System Support My Mobile Workforce?

With sales teams constantly on the go and more and more businesses supporting teleworking, the capability of having all employees tied to the same business phone system -- wherever they are, on whatever device -- has become more vital than ever.

Mobility features give on-the-go employees access to the full business phone system, enabling them to maintain their business identify even when connecting with customers and peers from their personal cell phone. Mobile solutions are among the most robust and attractive features of hosted PBX systems. While traditional providers can support mobility, it often requires costly add-ons and integrations.

Knowing how the phone system can handle the needs of your team, both in the office and on the road, is important to understand before you buy.



#### How Will My Phone System Grow With My Business?

Successful businesses expect to grow, which means your business phone system must easily expand to meet that growth. The last thing you want to hear is that you're going to have to spend thousands to replace or upgrade your phone system because it can't scale easily. So it's important to understand in advance the process for adding more phones, increasing access, or adding more locations.

Traditional premise-based systems are notoriously inflexible, generally requiring a service call to a technician just to add a new feature or phone line. This becomes inconvenient and costly, especially for companies with multiple locations. Most hosted PBX providers, however, can add features and business lines virtually since the PBX is hosted in the cloud -- saving both time and money.



## What If I Need Customer or Technical Support?

Anyone who has ever owned a traditional PBX knows the incredible costs for maintenance, support and upgrades, with even minor requests such as adding a new calling feature requiring the added expense of a service call.

As hosted PBX systems are managed in the cloud, maintenance, support and upgrades can be resolved more quickly and efficiently without the need for service calls. Most hosted PBX solutions put the control in your hands, giving you the option of accessing or requesting new features directly from an online administrator portal. And when you do want to interact directly with a representative, some providers also offer live, on-call customer and tech support teams.

Making sure your new system can easily be maintained in-house (change extensions, add or delete users, change features) and choosing a company that will work as a partner, not just as a supplier, should be a top consideration when making your purchase decision.



## How Does My Phone System Factor Into My Disaster Recovery Plan?

How much business is lost when you're without phones for an hour, a day, or longer due to an outage in your power, phone or Internet service? What is your plan for recovering from a fire, flood or pandemic event? These are all questions you should be considering before making your purchase decision.

With traditional premise-based solutions, situations like downed telephone lines, fire, flood, theft or technical glitches can all compromise reliability. Hosted systems, however, operate in data centers with redundant power and cooling, and remain in operation even when your location is out of commission. Many providers have solutions in place to guard against local events such as Internet or power outages -- meaning that should an event occur at your office, your auto attendant will keep answering calls, you will get your voice mail, and you can easily forward calls and messages to cell phones until your office is back online.



## Is Quality of Service Guaranteed?

Quality of Service (QoS) can vary greatly across providers. Hosted PBX has many advantages over traditional phone lines, but without a QoS guarantee you may experience a lot of frustration. Some providers offer monitoring of their equipment, but if your voice packets travel over the open Internet you may be exposing your business to a loss of call quality and potential security risks.

Without QoS guarantees you could experience audio problems, slow network speeds, and interference which could impact your revenue and customer experience. Taking the time to understand how QoS will be handled will ensure your satisfaction with your system long-term.



## What About Installation, On-boarding and Training?

You've carefully considered your options and bought your new system, so now what happens? The level of post-sale attention you receive can also vary greatly from provider to provider. From a box of phones shipped to your business with "do-it-yourself" instructions, to a comprehensive plan that details what you can expect from planning and deployment through training and on-going support, the level of service runs the gamut.

When shopping for a new phone system, be sure to ask providers about their on-boarding process and what they'll do to ensure your system is 1) designed specifically for your business, 2) expertly installed and running smoothly and 3) professionally presented so your employees feel confident using it.

*When done right, deploying a new business phone system can significantly improve the way you communicate, translating to improved efficiencies, reduced costs and increased revenue. Our experts are here to help you understand your options and work with you to determine the solution that best fits your requirements and your budget.*