



CONSIDERATIONS TO CHOOSING AN IP PHONE SYSTEM



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IP TELEPHONY SYSTEMS

The costly and uniform telephony systems that dominated businesses for years are quickly becoming a thing of the past. IP Telephony is a more economic and flexible option that makes sense for most companies today. Whether you are looking to start fresh with a brand new IP Telephony system, or simply to upgrade your current system to better fit your needs, the following topics will help you choose a new system.



WHO WILL USE THE PHONES?

While traditional legacy telephones served the sole purpose of making and receiving calls, IP Phones have a much wider range of capabilities and options for different users. Now all employees have phones and the type and function may vary based on the user's duties. From video to conferencing to messaging, considering how the phones will be used allows you to get the most of the system.

WHAT IS YOUR BUDGET?

Your budget will be based on whether your goal is to improve your system (invest) or to reduce costs. Is an upfront investment plausible? Do not forget all of the 'hidden' operating expenses:

- Maintenance
- Internet
- Consulting
- Mobile Phones
- Internal IT
- Conference calls



WHO IS THE VENDOR?

Get to know the vendors and determine whose business goals and visions align with your own. Which providers have made an effort to understand your business and offer features that would uniquely benefit its purpose? Ask about their long-term goals and plans. Take a look at the vendor's history to make predictions about the future. Ask to see case studies or testimonials from other customers.

WHAT IS YOUR TIMELINE?

Is your business at a point of stability where you expect to keep the same phone system for several years? Or do you often experience change that means upgrading and expanding your phone system? Decide if a big investment will last long enough to make it worth it. Even if your company is not rapidly changing, communications is evolving quickly and the latest today will be old news tomorrow.

WHAT FEATURES ARE NEEDED?

Telephony features are usually the first thing buyers think about when shopping for new service. But the truth is, features do not vary greatly from one option to another. So what should you look for? Rather than looking at the quantity of features, look at quality. Make a short list of the features that are most important to your company and then look for a service that has the most extensive versions of those features.



WHAT KIND OF TELEPHONES?

Desktop phones were the only option in the past, but IP phones come in a number of forms. Decide whether your employees need traditional-looking desk phones, softphones, or even wireless devices. Also consider the types of displays and screens available today - high definition screens, video calling, etc. If your company wants to begin shifting towards mobile devices, look for a system that will facilitate that move.

HOSTED OR ON-SITE?

Consider whether your company needs a hosted or on-site solution

ONSITE systems are less expensive if most employees are at one location and give your business more power to customize and control

HOSTED systems can offer unification across multiple offices, home offices, and mobile phones and allow for quick and simple scalability



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