

Choosing a Business Phone System in 5 Steps

 ebook

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Any business, large or small, needs to have effective communications. The livelihood of any business relies on a communications system that enables the day-to-day networking that allows a company to thrive. Choosing a phone system for your company is no small task, and there are numerous factors to keep in mind when making such a choice.

 With technological advances, feature-rich phone systems are no longer limited to large-scale enterprises. In

today's competitive business climate, a modern IP phone system provides proven benefits like improved productivity and

cost savings. Now, with recent technological advances, IP phone systems are also affordable to small businesses looking for

effective communications solutions.

Businesses use communication in a variety of ways, from telephone, to face-to-face conversations, to email. Video conferencing provides a way to combine the audio and visual elements of communication at a long distance, allowing for a more personal and thorough experience. The role of communication in businesses of all sizes cannot be overstated—successful businesses rely on establishing worthwhile relationships with partners, clients, and coworkers. Maintaining these relationships requires effective communication to create a sense of trust. An integral part to any successful business is to build a reputation of credibility, and effective communication is the easiest way to positively affect all areas of the business.

Using outdated phone systems is not only a deterrent to effective communications, but can also be an unnecessary cost to your business.

In a 2013 Billings Gazette column, Matt Duray highlighted the difficulties that face a business using outdated phone systems:

Small to medium-sized businesses need to take a close look at their phone systems to evaluate when obsolescence will strike and what steps they can take to avoid this. Many of the existing phone systems that businesses are running have been discontinued [and] are no longer supported by the manufacturer. This basically means the technology has run its course, stopped being manufactured and is becoming exceedingly difficult to service. In other words, if a business is running its

communications infrastructure on obsolete technology when it breaks down, there won't be anyone to help fix it. This is a giant risk that business owners are taking when their customer relationships are on the line. An outdated phone system will ultimately crash. Businesses cannot afford to go down and cut off all contact with their customers.

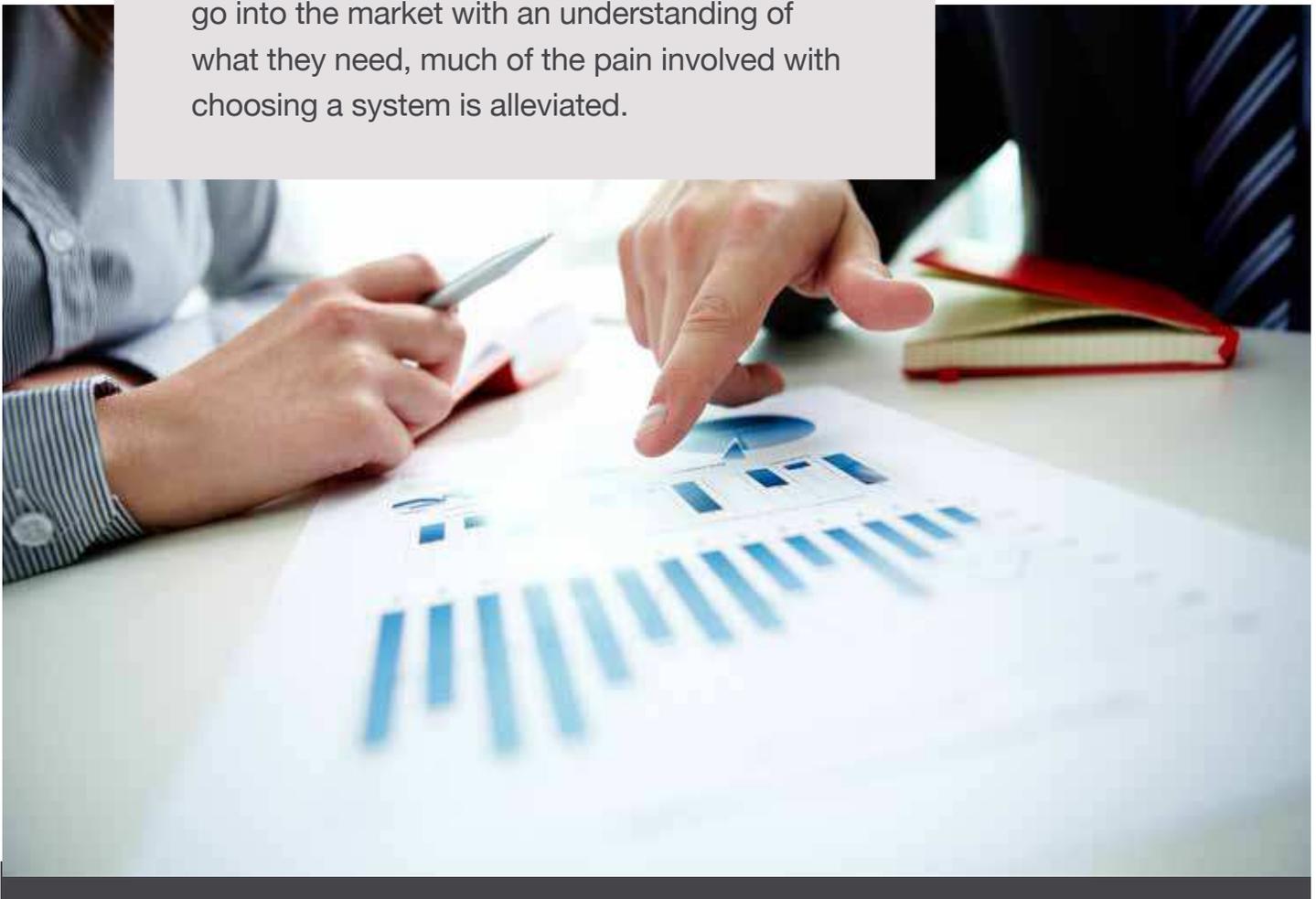
As Duray points out, a business's success in today's competitive market relies on using the most up-to-date technology. It also relies on using the technology that is best suited for a business's unique needs, and deciding on which phone system will work best is no small task.



STEP 1

Evaluate Business Need

Before choosing a phone system, any business needs to go through a comprehensive overview of its specific goals, needs, and problems. Only after independent analysis of these areas can businesses know what solutions will fit them best. This needs to be done before even entering the market as a prospective buyer to remain uninfluenced by vendors who only have a vague idea of what the business needs. If businesses go into the market with an understanding of what they need, much of the pain involved with choosing a system is alleviated.



STEP 2

Compare and Contrast On-premise and Cloud-based Solutions

After a business has developed an understanding of its needs, the next step is deciding whether a cloud-based or on-premise phone solution will be the most effective. Large scale enterprises have often opted for the on-premise solution due to the ability to leverage in-house IT resources that can handle and support the system. Cloud-based solutions have risen in ranks in recent years, as technology has made great leaps in the area of communications. The advancement of the cloud has made it so that businesses of all sizes can take advantage of the same quality of communication that enterprises have been using, but at a more affordable and manageable price and without the requirement of in-house support teams and pricy installations.

By utilizing a cloud-based solution, businesses eliminate their reliance on legacy switched telephone networks, instead using the Internet to deliver phone calls and other communications. This technology significantly reduces cost and increases flexibility. Some vendors can provide a hybrid solution of switched and internet telephone service. While not common, this approach may be the best solution, allowing your business to utilize the benefits of both technologies.



STEP 3

Identify the Features You Need Today

Today's most up-to-date phone systems carry a plethora of advanced features that can be beneficial for your business. When choosing a phone system, a key factor to consider is which advanced features your business requires and can be improved by. Instant messaging, video conferencing, and collaboration capabilities are just a few examples of the advanced features offered by today's most innovative phone systems. Compatibility with other equipment in usage is also important to keep in mind when choosing a phone system. A functional phone system must not only interconnect with your business's existing equipment, but also be capable of interfacing with new innovations.



STEP 4

Consider Your Needs for the Future

When looking at business needs, it is also important to take into account a company's mobility needs when deciding on a phone system, as many workforces are on the move, and need a system that can accommodate them. Mobile technologies like smartphones and tablets have changed the landscape when it comes to how business is done. Some people have their lives on their mobile devices, and any modern business needs to be able to use those devices to their fullest potential.

Advancements in technology have enabled businesses to utilize their mobile devices without complex IT infrastructure. Solutions for mobility have become increasingly available and affordable, allowing small and medium businesses to utilize the same capabilities available to large-scale enterprises.

Another important factor is the projected growth of your business. Any successful business relies on growth, and having a communications system that facilitates growth is vital. As a company expands and adds on new employees, it is important to have a phone system that can adapt to change in the scale of an enterprise.

STEP 5

Research Providers and Plan Purchasing

When looking for business phone solutions, it is important to take the time to do research on different providers and what they have to offer. Not all providers are equal, and many will offer different packages that include features businesses might not need. A provider should be a partner in your business, as its involvement in understanding the needs of the business will make for an effective execution of its service. Success with a provider is entirely down to how responsive it is to serving your business needs.



Reference: Duray, M. (2013, May 1) Tech Connection: Obsolete telecommunications systems can cost you money, productivity. Billings Gazette: Business. Retrieved from www.billingsgazette.com

THE NEXT STEP

Talk to FracTEL about your communications needs



FracTEL is an industry leader in both customer satisfaction and technology innovation, consistently providing its customers with cost-effective, transformative communications solutions. Established in 2007 as a wholesale provider to other carriers, FracTEL has extended its reach to provide superior service directly to businesses of all sizes – from entrepreneur to enterprise.

FracTEL offers patent-pending Cloud PBX technology that provides unprecedented levels of flexibility, scalability, security, and reliability. In fact, FracTEL has the confidence to offer a unique 100% uptime guarantee. FracTEL is uniquely positioned to meet the needs of the modern dynamic business, and has the experience to help you leverage its technology for maximum benefit.

Ask us about how we've been perfecting a better business phone system



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