RCN BUSINESS
HOSTED VOICE

HELLO, AND THANK YOU FOR CALLING...

Reduce Expenses, Work Smarter, and Increase Productivity With a Hosted Voice Phone System.

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INTRODUCTION

Did you hear the one about the CTO, the CFO, and the EVP of sales who all agreed on implementing a new piece of technology without disrupting the company?

As funny as it sounds, it's not a joke.

Senior leadership teams may not always agree on everything, but there will always be universal buy-in on any idea that can reduce operational expenses, improve efficiency for a distributed workforce, and minimize friction as facilities expand. That's why everyone seems to agree that it makes sense to abandon traditional telephone service in favor of hosted voice solutions.

Hosted voice services take advantage of VoIP (voice over IP) technology, which is a standard that uses an internet connection as the medium for transmitting signals rather than using old-school copper phone lines. Feature-rich, hosted voice technology offers a complete portfolio of business services that make it the clear choice over premises-based phone systems. Additionally, with cyber-security threats on the rise, business leaders are attracted to the built-in security measures that accompany hosted telephone solutions.

When you hear the term "VoIP," you might think of residential internet phone services, which is where many people first encountered the technology. But consumer phone services are a far cry from the high-quality, enterprise-level hosted voice solutions that are rapidly gaining ground. Consumer VoIP is typically an "over the top" (OTT) service that shares a broadband connection with your public internet service.

While those services are fine for residential communications, they only offer cookie-cutter packages with suites of features available in a few tiered levels. Providers delivering Hosted Voice service to corporate customers offer a more extensive range of features and capabilities over wholly owned IP networks with quality of service assurances. The features are highly customizable, and every installation is unique.

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EXPANSION MADE EASY

The migration from legacy Private Branch Exchange (PBX) systems to VoIP-based Hosted Voice solutions continues to accelerate because the older systems don't have the flexibility and scalability to expand and adapt to the changing business needs of today.

It may be possible to equip traditional premises-based systems with some of the newest generation of communications features, however, expanding a traditional phone system requires an additional investment in hardware. That means significant cost, planning, provisioning, and installation – which can temporarily disrupt service, and your ability to conduct business.

With hosted voice solutions, phone services reside in the cloud, allowing your provider to enable enhanced features. Since the service is hosted off-site, you don't have to worry about interruptions. It's that easy. Just select the features that are right for you today, and then expand or remove options as your business changes.

Making the switch to a cloud-based phone solution is a straightforward proposition when a company makes a top-down decision. However, it's a different story in large corporations or municipalities where departments operate independently but still need to share resources with other groups.

That was the challenge in a large Midwestern city where the Office of Inspector General wanted to replace their legacy PBX. The office had an old premises-based system that no longer met their needs. There were maintenance concerns because support was no longer available, and the department couldn't risk an outage or complete failure. It was clear they needed to switch to a VoIP-based hosted solution.

However, the Office of Inspector General doesn't operate in a vacuum, so they had one specific requirement that was not negotiable: The new hosted PBX needed to integrate with a city-wide hotline that connected all local law enforcement agencies.

> *Most companies wouldn't put in the time and effort to design a hosted solution that worked the way the department was accustomed," said Jeff Leas of RCN Business. "We not only solved the integration challenge, but we gave them a new system that, in one critical area, operated exactly like the old one. Replicating the original hot-line functionality made it a painless transition because there was no learning curve for the users.*

You might not be making hotline calls to a joint task force spanning multiple agencies, but your employees still need the advanced features and data capabilities of a 21st Century telephone system. They will save time, work more efficiently, and take better care of your customers.

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NO COOKIE CUTTER SYSTEMS

As we mentioned above, it may be possible to get some updated features in a traditional premises-based phone system, but gaining access to them takes a lot of cash and technological resources. The financial barrier to entry is far lower with today's feature-rich hosted voice solutions.

Hosted Voice gives you easy access to dozens of productivity-enhancing options, including:

- Auto call distribution (ACD)
- Call recording
- Directed call pickup
- Automated attendant
- Voicemail to email
- Voicemail transcription
- Efax
- Multi-line hunt groups
- An array of screening and forwarding options

Future-Proofing Your Company:

A top-notch hosted voice provider will invest the time upfront to evaluate your requirements and determine what's best for your business. Their proposal should offer exactly what you need now and have recommendations for future growth (e.g. increased bandwidth and additional services).

The long list of features available in a hosted voice solution might seem like overkill right now. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't consider the viability of those options for the future.

Think about it. Your business probably looks much different today than it did a few years ago. So it logically follows that you can't imagine what needs the company will have three years down the road.

One of the reasons scalability matters so much is because growth and expansion are unpredictable in a dynamic, entrepreneurial business climate. If the right opportunity comes along to acquire another company, you could suddenly need to integrate tens or hundreds of new users into your phone system. That's why it pays to know your options ahead of time.

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BUSINESS BENEFITS

When it's time to transition from a traditional hard-line system, the best news might be that the migration often happens without incurring any additional monthly spend. Sometimes, there is actually a net savings.

IT departments serve diverse operational needs, addressing security concerns, and enabling a mobile workforce. Hosted voice solutions give them the flexibility and performance they need to cover all the bases.

One of the areas in which hosted solutions excel is in supporting remote employees and those who travel frequently. RCN's Business Office Mobility app gives customers a secure, remote connection to their office phone and all of its features. By extending the capabilities of a business phone system through a mobile device or computer, employees can stay connected to customers, vendors, and other team members more seamlessly than ever before.

With a hosted voice system, your service provider can easily enable a feature for a trial period. If it's a good fit for your team, you can leave it on. If it gets a cool reception, then you can flip the switch and turn it off. Traditional systems can't come close to offering that type of low-cost, seamless experimentation.

For busy IT teams that always have too many projects and not enough time, one of the big advantages of hosted voice is that they don't have to worry about ramp-up time and troubleshooting. Premises-based systems are composed of controllers, switches, logic cards that all need to play nicely together. Compatibility issues and troubleshooting just go with the territory.

With a cloud-based system, however, all the technology is tested and optimized on the provider's end. You get all the benefits with none of the hassle or headaches.

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SUMMARY

It's not a matter of if your company will switch to a hosted voice solution – it's a matter of when. And you don't need to be an expert in hosted voice to implement the right solution. With proper planning and a comprehensive needs assessment, you can negotiate confidently with providers and select the appropriate suite of services for your current and future needs.

There are dozens of reasons why the switch makes sense, but they all boil down to one word: agility.

A hosted voice solution makes it possible for you to roll out the appropriate services for your company where and when you need them, and for anywhere from a handful of employees to tens of thousands. The decision to migrate to a hosted voice solution will benefit your sales team, customer service, operations, finance – and of course, IT.

Here are the top five reasons why:

Cost savings – Hardware costs drop significantly when you leverage your existing internet connection for voice, and long-distance charges are minimal.

Decreased maintenance – With less on-site hardware and wiring, you virtually eliminate phone system maintenance and troubleshooting.

Up-to-date technology – The infrastructure supporting traditional POTS lines (plain old telephone service) is old and gradually decaying. Enterprise-level hosted voice offers today's most in-demand features over technologically advanced networks.

Scalability – Add or remove lines, users, and features at little to no cost.

Portability – For employees who work remotely, travel frequently, or spend a lot of time in the field, hosted voice lets them make phone calls and send texts using a local number wherever they are.

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CONCLUSION

Migrating from a traditional premises-based phone system to a hosted system is a big step with far-reaching implications for any company. There are thousands of legacy systems still in service, and each one is unique. At RCN Business, we have the flexibility and industry knowledge to design a customized solution that serves your particular needs.

To learn more about how to transition from a legacy business phone system to a hosted voice solution on RCN's wholly owned IP network, please contact us to schedule a free consultation with one of our representatives.

Call 877.726.7000

Or

Schedule a free consultation

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