RingCentral®

WHAT EVERY BUSINESS NEEDS TO KNOW **WHEN SELECTING A PHONE SYSTEM**

Buyer's Guide

Introduction

On-premises private branch exchange (PBX) hardware served companies well during a time when technology was based on hardware and hard wiring. As the world changed around it to virtual services, businesses are faced with the challenge of adapting for a new model based on agility, flexibility, and mobility.

Businesses looking to new cloud-based platforms discover a reliable solution that is highly adaptable to their changing needs, prepared for new advances and integrations, and mobile-ready for today's workforce.

There are several vital points to consider when selecting your next communications solution:

- How easily will the system scale to support your fluctuating needs?

- Does supporting multiple locations greatly tax IT resources?

- Is the provider flexible and adaptable to your current and future requirements?

- Can the service enable 'bring your own device' (BYOD) and mobile workers across a distributed workforce?

- Will the system make it easier for your IT, admins, and users to make small changes, updates, and fixes?

- Is it possible to unify your communications across your global organisation?

- Does the service reduce costs now and into the future?

Defining your business needs

Before examining your business phone system options, take stock of your needs as they are key in determining the kind of phone system you will want to use and the vendor you will want to select.

Typical needs according to business size

Small	Mid-sized	Enterprise
Fewer than 50 employees	50–499 employees	500+ employees
Feature-rich phone system on any device, anywhere	Powerful phone system made simple	Multi-location, easy to use, integrated with contact centre
• Integrated voice, web meetings, audio conferencing, and fax • Easy to use and manage • Call and fax from your business line on your mobile device • Scale and manage multiple locations easily	• Industry-leading reliability and uptime ratings • Bank-level security with robust encryption on any device • Top-rated white-glove onboarding and support teams • Scale across distributed offices with ease • Unify powerful communications tools under one system • Integrate communications with Salesforce, Google, Box, Outlook, and more	• Easy to use and manage • Intuitive product interface, simplified management • Responsive, omnichannel contact centre integrated with a cloud phone system • Build customer integrations to meet your business needs with open APIs, tools, and tutorials • Collaboration functionality

Identifying your phone system requirements

Understanding what you need out of a phone system is only half the equation. Without a firm understanding of how to meet your needs, you run the risk of being "sold" a solution that might look great in the demo or has all the feature boxes checked, but doesn't work the way you work. Here are the top must-have system capabilities based on business needs.

Typical needs according to business size

Small	Mid-sized	Enterprise
Fewer than 50 employees	50–499 employees	500+ employees
• Easy and fast activation, with plug-and-ring-ready phones	• Flexible custom settings and workflow configurations	• Reliable and flexible platform allowing easy user management
• Convenient online access for admins and users	• Intuitive admin and user interface	• Centralised system with one solution for all users across multiple locations
• Professional call management features	• Mobility via smartphone apps and desktop clients	• Advanced call management and workflows that integrate with business software and cloud services
• Cost-effective, subscription-based pricing	• Innovative features such as Google/Box integrations	• Smart communications reporting and analytics

Understanding your options

The good news is you have options. Fundamentally, there are two types of phone systems: traditional/on-premises and hosted/cloud phone systems. One of the biggest challenges in any vendor selection process is truly understanding your options, the pros and cons, and how each will impact your business. The following summarises what you must know about phone systems.

Traditional, on-premises PBX systems

- Requires hardware that is costly and complex to manage.

- You need to have a PBX at every location.

- IT staff is heavily taxed for setup, management of system and service reps, as well as ongoing maintenance.

- Generally cumbersome for upgrades, requiring modules at additional costs.

Hosted/cloud phone systems

- No hardware means fast setup and no maintenance or extensive management involved.

- Service is flexible and scales to your needs while reducing infrastructure and costs.

- One system is used to manage all of your locations across the globe.

- Systems update fluidly and can support advanced features, including video conferencing, contact centres, and integrations with CRM and productivity suites such as Google and Microsoft Office 365.

Tools and resources: Needs worksheet

This worksheet summarises the basic information the vendor needs to determine pricing. Over time as your business grows and scales, these numbers will change, so flexibility and incremental pricing are important.

Item	Your best estimate
Number of office employees	
Number of remote employees	
Number of locations	
Total number of user licences	
Number of calls per month	
Average additional annual spend per tool: — Audio conferencing — Video conferencing — Team messaging — Contact centre — Call recording — Analytics	
Optimal times for business operation (e.g., 24 hours a day, 7 days per week)	

Tools and resources: Vendor shortlist criteria

There are certain key questions to ask a potential provider to make sure they're the right vendor for your company. Here are the top 10 questions you should ask when creating your vendor shortlist.

Top 10 questions to ask before you decide	Vendor A	Vendor B	Vendor C
1. What kind of platform does the phone system run on? (e.g., on-premises, hosted/cloud)			
2. What resources are necessary to maintain/upgrade the system?			
3. How long does it take to get up and running? What about when you need to add a new user or new location?			
4. What happens if there is a disruption in service? Who do you call and how long does it typically take to get back up?			
5. What is the all-inclusive cost? (hardware + software + maintenance + support + additional features)			
6. Is there a proof of concept? Do they let you try before deciding on the purchase?			
7. How often do they have a new release? How often do they innovate? How much do they put into R&D?			
8. How many customers do they have? Do they have reference clients?			
9. Do they have experience in your industry?			
10. Can you integrate their product into the tools you currently use (e.g., Google, Microsoft, Zendesk)?			

Next steps

Download and read these white papers to learn more about cloud communications:

How a Cloud Phone System Benefits Multi-Location Businesses
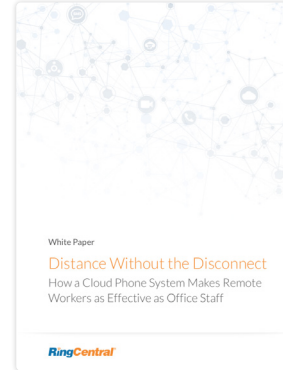
The 7 Business Benefits of Cloud VoIP

Calculating the Real Cost of a Business Phone System
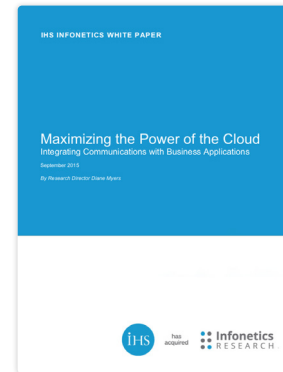
Cloud Phone System Buyers Guide

Further resources about the connection between cloud communications and business productivity:

Distance Without the Disconnect: How a Cloud Phone System Makes Remote Workers as Effective as Office Staff

How a Cloud Phone System Uniquely Supports Your Mobile Workforce

Maximising the Power of the Cloud: Integrating Communications with Business Applications

Using Microsoft Office 365 with a Cloud Communications System

RingCentral: A leading UCaaS provider

RingCentral is a global leader in cloud communications, providing businesses like yours the capacity to adapt to changes in the digital workplace. RingCentral Office®, a cloud-based unified communications system, satisfies the unique requirements of the mobile world of work, where everyone in your business needs to be able to communicate, connect, transfer calls, and manage their phone system from any device, anywhere.

Recognised as a Leader by Gartner on the UCaaS Magic Quadrant for 2019*, RingCentral invests up to 20% of its total revenue into

R&D, constantly innovating to keep customers and partners relevant with evolving times and technology. RingCentral operates a global infrastructure, running at 99.999% uptime, managed and monitored by a global NOC 24/7.

RingCentral's market leading cloud communications platform and service, combined with a consistent record for innovation and delivery, has resulted in leading organisations choosing RingCentral to fulfil their communications needs.

For more information, please visit ringcentral.co.uk or call **0800 098 8136**.

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