Is a Cloud-Based Phone System Right for My Business?

The cloud is a network of servers that companies use to host and deliver services. Companies like Salesforce® are renowned for providing cloud CRM, and Google and Microsoft® offer email, calendars, file sharing, and more in their cloud ecosystems.

Cloud services eliminate the need to maintain complex and increasingly outdated hardware and pay expensive technicians for time-consuming repairs. The phone systems of old rely on PBX hardware in this fashion. Now, businesses of all sizes can get much more than a phone system with RingCentral cloud communications. Voice is only the tip of the iceberg, and other features available include conferencing, fax, team messaging, and much more. Security and reliability standards are high, while costs are drastically reduced.

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How is it different from my existing service?

You have a basic phone service through your local carrier with a traditional hardware-based PBX, along with a tiny room somewhere in the back of your office filled with wires that some IT expert needs to manipulate every time you hire a new employee or make a change. With the cloud, all of this hassle goes away. No more PBX hardware. With a cloud-based solution, you can configure your phone system—add new lines, change your answering services, or record a greeting for callers—all from an easy-to-use web interface or your smartphone. Every change you make, from setup to adding new offices, is instant and as simple as clicking your mouse.

What are the benefits of a cloud-based system?

Cloud phone systems provide four primary benefits to businesses:

1. Rich functionality: Cloud phone systems bring you all the functionality of traditional enterprise phone systems, including fax in your inbox, advanced call routing, ability to make all changes instantly, and much more.

2. Cost savings: With no hardware to buy up front, no maintenance costs, and all-inclusive monthly charges, cloud-based systems are less expensive than traditional solutions. For a 20-person business, you save approximately $10,000 up front on the cost of a traditional PBX , and thousands more annually because of no maintenance and lower monthly bills.

3. Ease of setup and use: A cloud phone system takes just minutes to set up and all changes go live instantly.

4. Scalability and flexibility: Cloud phone systems are extremely flexible and customizable to meet the needs of your business, so you can configure your phone system exactly the way that you need it. And as your business scales, adding or deleting new users and locations is as easy as clicking a button.

Do I get to keep my phone number?

Yes. When you move to a cloud-based phone system you can transfer your existing numbers from your old system. This is often called LNP, or local number portability. That means there is no need to update all your business cards or ask your customers to learn a new phone number.

Do I need special equipment?

No, you do not need any special phone system hardware to use a cloud phone system. It is recommended that you get IP phones that are fully supported by cloud services. With these phones, getting started is as simple as "plug-and-ring."

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How reliable is the cloud?

Cloud solutions are extremely reliable and offer redundancy that is not available with non-cloud solutions. For example, if you experience a snow storm, a hurricane, or an earthquake, and your office is damaged or shutdown, your cloud–based phone system will not be impacted because it is not physically located in your office. You can simply log in from anywhere and reroute your customers' calls to employees working anywhere.

But what if my internet goes down?

With most cloud providers, even if your home or office internet goes down, you can use your smartphone to access your system and reroute calls. Basically, you carry your backup plan—your trusty smart phone—with you.

Can it meet the changing needs of my business?

Yes, that is the beauty of cloud-based solutions; they can grow and contract based on the needs of your business. Are you adding new employees? No problem. Do you need to add a new office? No problem; you can add an office with the click of your mouse and never have to buy another PBX hardware box. Changing your business hours to take advantage of a busy season? That's OK; it's easy to update. Your service can change as your business changes, without the risk of losing investments made in PBX hardware or long-term contracts.

Will it become obsolete when the next big tech thing comes along?

No. This is the power of cloud-based technology. Not only are cloud companies the leaders in technology innovation, but they never have to manage multiple versions of a product, and all technology changes go live instantly to all customers using the cloud service. For customers, this means that they automatically experience the most advanced and current version of cloud technology without having to do anything. And cloud services benefit from seamless feature updates because there is no hardware or software to upgrade. You'll get the latest features as they become available.

Who is using cloud-based phone systems to support their business?

Small to large businesses are reaping the benefits of cloud phone systems. A one-person IT consulting business can be mobile but also accessible to his or her customers thanks to the cloud. A real estate office can easily add a line when a new agent comes on board and create an auto attendant to direct calls virtually. So whether you are a four-person business or a 400-person business spread across many offices, a cloud phone system is right for you.

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About RingCentral

RingCentral, Inc. (NYSE:RNG) is a leading provider of global enterprise cloud communications and collaboration solutions. More flexible and cost-effective than legacy on-premises systems, RingCentral empowers today's mobile and distributed workforce to communicate, collaborate, and connect from anywhere, on any device. RingCentral unifies voice, video, team messaging and collaboration, conferencing, online meetings, and integrated contact center solutions. RingCentral's open platform integrates with leading business apps and enables customers to easily customize business workflows.

For more information, contact a sales representative at ringcentral.com or call 800-820-3676.

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