

Buyer's Guide
What Every
Business Needs
to Know When
Selecting a
Phone System



Introduction

On-premise 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 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, let's first 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.

Small

fewer than 50 employees

Feature-rich phone system on any device, anywhere

- Integrated voice, SMS, web meetings, audio conferencing, and fax
- Easy to use and manage
Call, text, and fax from your business
- line on your mobile device
- Scale and manage multiple locations easily

Mid-sized

50–499 employees

Powerful phone system made simple

- Industry-leading reliability and uptime ratings
- Bank-level security with end-to-end 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

Enterprise

500+ employees

Multi-location, easy to use, integrated with contact centre

- Easy to use and manage
- Intuitive product interface, simplified management
- Responsive, omnichannel contact centre solution integrated with 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. Let's take a look at the top “must have” system capabilities based on business needs.

Small

fewer than 50 employees

- Easy and fast activation, with plug-and-ring-ready phones
- Convenient online access for admins and users
- Professional call management features
- Cost-effective, subscription-based pricing

Mid-sized

50–499 employees

- Flexible custom settings and workflow configurations
- Intuitive admin and user interface
- Mobility via smartphone apps and desktop clients
- Innovative features such as Business SMS and Google/Box integrations

Enterprise

500+ employees

- Reliable and flexible platform; easily add locations, departments, users
- Centralised system; one solution for all users across multiple locations
- Robust; advanced call management and workflows, integration with business software and cloud services
- 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-premise 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-premise 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 on-going 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, reduces 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, productivity suites such as Google and Microsoft Office 365™.

Making a decision that is right for you

Tools and resources

At this point you should access these helpful documents:

- [How business needs must align with phone system requirements](#)
- [Different kinds of phone systems available](#)
- [How to manage the system evaluation and selection process](#)
- [Best practices for a successful implementation](#)

Now, let's get to the fun part

The following provides you with a variety of tools and resources to assist you as you consider phone system options and begin your selection process. In this section you will find:

- [Business Needs Worksheet](#)
- [Vendor Shortlist Criteria](#)
- [Total Cost of Ownership Worksheet](#)
- [Links to additional resources you might find useful](#)

Next steps

Learn more about cloud communications. Download these informative white papers:

[How a Cloud Phone System Benefits Multi-Location Businesses](#)

[The 7 Business Benefits of Cloud VoIP](#)

[The Future of Cloud Communications](#)

[Calculating the Real Cost of a Business Phone System](#)

[How to Ensure a Smooth Transition to a Cloud Phone System](#)

Support your workforce

[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](#)

About RingCentral

RingCentral is the leading provider of cloud-based business communications and collaboration solutions. Easier to manage and more flexible and cost-efficient than legacy, on-premise communications systems, RingCentral's cloud solutions are meeting the needs of modern distributed and mobile workforces. Delivered on a state-of-the-art cloud platform, RingCentral solutions unify communications by bringing together voice, video, conferencing, team collaboration and contact centre solutions into a seamless experience that integrates with leading cloud-based tools and business applications. RingCentral enables more than 350,000 businesses, from SMBs to enterprises around the world, to empower their workforces, more easily connect with their customers, and streamline their business communications.

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