

White paper

7 business benefits of moving from an on-premises PBX to a cloud communications and collaboration system



Tipping points: Factors typically driving the transition from a legacy PBX to cloud VoIP

Essential business apps are now born in the cloud. Whether you have a CRM solution, something for HR, or simple file storage, it's probably in the cloud. But for any number of reasons – not the least of which is the relatively large investment required for a new PBX – many businesses have delayed upgrading their PBX and moving it to the cloud. Consequently, you may be living with a communications system that lacks the capabilities and flexibility to support rapid growth or business agility. Or you may be dealing with the worry that you are literally one ageing component away from complete failure of your company's business communications.

Do any of these issues sound familiar?

- System downtimes impacting offices or locations for hours or even days
- Too much time spent trying to maintain multiple PBXs – often from different providers and scattered across many locations
- Vendors taking days or weeks to make minor repairs or replace broken parts
- Exponentially rising support and consultant costs
- Lack of specialised in-house telephony expertise required to maintain the system
- Searching on eBay for phones or porting cards to replace broken components or add employees
- Paying systems integrators to integrate core business communications and apps

This white paper discusses seven compelling reasons for replacing your company's on-premises PBX system with a unified communications as a service (UCaaS) system. This paper describes how a unified communications system overcomes issues regarding the cost and complexity of legacy PBX, and how it can transform your company's business communications. The benefits include a cloud communications phone system that serves the needs of your entire workforce – including remote and mobile workers—and integrates with your critical business systems.

According to Network World, the average lifespan of a PBX is 8.5 years. But given the cost and difficulty of replacing one, you might find a PBX lurking in a back closet at one or more of your locations that's 10 or even 20 years old – in some cases, predating smartphones.



The need for agility, flexibility, and mobility

The on-premises PBX has served companies well for a long time. But the world has changed. An uncertain economy makes it necessary for organisations to become more nimble. Workforces have gone mobile. And IT needs to find efficiencies in basic business systems in order to free up resources to support growth or other more strategic initiatives.

Business technologies have also changed. The original designers of your current PBX may never have envisioned advances like video conferencing, connecting mobile workers, or integration with cloud business applications such as CRM, support centre systems, and other popular services.

Many businesses today are looking for platforms that can handle these new advances while providing the flexibility to accommodate rapid growth or business change. When selecting your next communication system, it pays to ask how it will:

- Readily adapt to changes that impact your business i.e., scale up and down as needed
- Support multiple locations without taxing valuable IT resources
- Provide the flexibility you need today and meet future needs yet to be identified
- Support BYOD and mobile workers along with a distributed workforce
- Relieve the headaches of managing simple changes, upgrades, or fixes
- Unify communications across your organisation
- Integrate easily and quickly with the communications tools your company uses such as your meetings and collaboration solution
- Minimise costs now and in the future



The proliferation of mobile devices and the growing BYOD phenomenon has pushed legacy on-premises communications systems beyond their capability to serve today's distributed and mobile workforces.”

Robert Mahowald, IDC Program Vice
President for SaaS and Cloud Services



7 key advantages of moving to a cloud communications system

As with many cloud applications used to run mission-critical parts of the business, UCaaS has come of age. The rapid adoption by businesses of all sizes attests to its reliability. In addition to carrier-grade reliability for your business phone calls, a cloud communications and collaboration phone system like RingCentral Message Video Phone (MVP) offers dramatic advantages over on-premises systems. These include benefits for your business and employees, as well as your network, data infrastructure, and IT resources. A full-featured cloud communications solution such as RingCentral MVP also offers all the integrated capabilities of team messaging, meetings, and contact centre to address the challenges of today's business environment.

1. Unifies communications across your company

The typical company with an on-premises PBX uses a patchwork of business communications tools – stand-alone fax machines, individual internet fax accounts, third-party audio and video conferencing, and web meetings, and now team collaboration. This approach typically lacks connection or synergy among the various tools. In addition, as the service accounts have accumulated over time, you may need to manage multiple, and sometimes redundant, bills from the various providers.

RingCentral MVP integrates phone, video, meetings, and messaging into one reliable, easy-to-use solution.

It also integrates with cloud and back-office business applications. This one-stop service not only saves costs and delivers the synergy of linking various modes of communication, but also eliminates the management, unwieldy billing, and cost tracking associated with multiple vendors.

The RingCentral solution also unifies the image that your organisation presents to the world – a single identity. All employees, whether they work in an office or on the road, make or receive calls from a single business number, giving your company's communications a consistent and professional appearance. Even remote workers' outbound calls are routed through the cloud and appear as if they are calling from the corporate location. It eliminates the need for a salesperson to have to provide a personal mobile phone number to continue with business when out of the office. When employees leave the office, calls automatically follow them to their smartphones via the RingCentral mobile app.

2. Simplifies multi-location management

Maintaining and administering phone systems at multiple locations – especially where there are PBX hardware and phones from different vendors across various sites – can present a management nightmare for IT. However, by having the entire phone system in the cloud, RingCentral enables any IT team to manage the phone system from any location using a simple web interface or mobile app. This means you save the cost and headache of sending an IT person with telephony experience to remote locations to perform maintenance or make simple changes, such as adding numbers and provisioning new employees. Or, it can eliminate calls to a local service provider and the frustration of waiting for changes or repairs to be made on their schedule, not to mention the high cost of service calls.

The cloud RingCentral phone system allows you to quickly start up a new location. And for new or existing locations, it does away with the cost and complexity of managing MPLS or other business exchange line connectivity between sites. Instead, all voice traffic travels over the internet backbone.

3. Flexes when your business flexes

When you are growing or simply competing in today's competitive markets, you cannot afford anything –including a business system – that holds you back. You can't wait for a service provider to add new numbers, or send an IT person to a remote location every time you need assistance. And you cannot afford to be locked into inflexible systems.

MVP can't predict where your business will be in two or three years, how many phone lines you will need, or how many locations you will have. A cloud system is inherently flexible and scalable. This isn't the case with on-premises IP PBX that still needs PRI lines, for example, and each line is limited to 23 simultaneous calls. The RingCentral system provides instant access to virtually limitless inbound and outbound call capacity.

4. Reduces infrastructure management headaches and costs

Buying and installing a new premises-based system can be very costly. RingCentral MVP eliminates the need for upfront investments in costly PBX hardware, as well as separate building wiring for phones and data, and maintenance items such as additional cards required for adding new employees. Also, few companies can afford to invest in or support a PBX at every site.

The entire infrastructure for your phone system resides in secure, redundant, and geographically distributed data centres where telephony experts manage the system 24/7 (which results in carrier-grade reliability). This becomes an even bigger cost advantage with multiple locations as you eliminate more than one piece of PBX hardware, along with costly MPLS, PSTN, or other business exchange lines. You no longer need skilled IT staff to manage one or more PBXs, or the expense and distraction of travelling to remote locations or calling a local service provider to make changes or repairs.

Many customers also consider investing in IP PBX, as it offers an option that enables IP connectivity, and having one on-premises may appeal to managers who feel it gives them more control over their systems. However, before making a purchase decision, it pays to roll up all the necessary costs, including outlays for network upgrades, which can be significant. RingCentral MVP requires no upgrades to the network core, except for a QoS-enabled router where one is not already installed.

5. Connects mobile and remote workers

Premises-based phone systems inherently lack direct connectivity to remote and mobile workers, and more advanced systems can charge you separate licensing fees. With RingCentral MVP, workers at remote locations or home offices are connected in the same way as employees in the main corporate office. Additionally, the mobile app – which works on any iOS® or Android™ device – essentially transforms a mobile phone into a desk phone and a powerful communications device.

Calls automatically follow workers wherever they go, and customers always see your business number rather than the employee's personal home or mobile number. For example, rather than mortgage brokers at a bank providing their personal mobile numbers, they give customers the corporate number. This offers customers greater confidence; and if the broker leaves the company, the number is easily transferred to residing staff. Therefore, customer loyalty is retained with the company, not the individual. Additionally, all of the employee's valuable contact information resides in the cloud, where it can be easily retrieved by your IT department, rather than on an employee-owned device.

Mobile and remote workers also have access to voicemail, fax, email, and all other company communications as if they are working in the office. The conference calling and HD video meetings further enable mobile and remote workers to easily and cost-effectively work from any location. Finally, the single RingCentral system eliminates the nightmare of accounting for hundreds or thousands of personal phone bills, which can be onerous for employees, their managers, and corporate accounting.

6. Instant access to the latest features

Some legacy PBX systems come with a limited feature set, and more advanced products may charge extra for basic features such as voicemail or the latest UC tools as they become available. With RingCentral MVP, the latest features and capabilities are continually integrated into the system.

A complete cloud communications system, for simpler management, reduced IT costs and less end-user training.

7. Greater control

While having your phone hardware and software on-premises might seem to offer control, having it in the cloud actually affords a greater element of control that includes easier management. For example, with cloud VoIP, you no longer need to be in the same physical location as the phone system to manage it. When traveling or at home, you can make urgent changes to the system via a simple web interface using your laptop or smartphone. This direct access to the system also means you no longer have to deal with a third party or wait for them to make adds, moves, or changes. For example, any IT person can make changes using the web interface.

Conclusion

Ageing hardware and the antiquated model of the PBX-based business communications system are driving more and more enterprises to switch to a cloud communications and collaboration system.

RingCentral MVP and Wavenet offer you a faster, Gartner-endorsed route to powerful, future-proofed communications. In an age of globally-dispersed, ultra-mobile workforces that rely on agile, multi-channel collaboration, traditional PBX telephony is struggling to cut it. Cumbersome and costly to maintain, these outdated systems are increasingly approaching end-of-life, while innovation and investment flow in one direction only: the cloud.

Fast, cost-effective migration, with near-instant benefits. Compared with upgrading your PBX system, migrating to cloud-based Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) is both easy and transformative – especially with Wavenet and our partner RingCentral MVP – a leader within the UCaaS Gartner Magic Quadrant.

We can help your transition from yesterday's outdated technology to today's modern innovative solutions – and prepare you for tomorrow's challenges.



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