







onecom

Switching to Cloud Telephony

Everything you need to know



Contents

	<u>Switching to Cloud Telephony</u>	2
	<u>Why should you switch your business telephony to the cloud?</u>	4
	<u>Benefits of cloud telephony</u>	14
	<u>Challenges to switching to VoIP or cloud telephony</u>	18
	<u>How to switch your telephony system</u>	22
	<u>Telephony migrations with Onecom</u>	26





Switching to Cloud Telephony

Businesses are being encouraged to switch to the cloud or build it into their technology strategy as the foundation of their startup. But taking a legacy phone system to VoIP, or an on-premises VoIP system to the cloud is a daunting task. Communication is a business-critical function, so it's natural to be hesitant to change it if it's working today.

But is your communication infrastructure under threat? And is it able to adapt to change, whether that's internal or external? In this guide, we'll walk you through VoIP technology, the looming ISDN switch off, and the cloud solutions poised to replace it. We'll explore the business opportunities cloud telephony offers, tips for a successful migration, and share real-world challenges and solutions for businesses like yours.



Telecoms acronyms explained

VOIP

Voice over Internet Protocol.

Technology that allows voice communications over networks, like the Internet.

PSTN

Public Switched Telephone Network.

The circuit-switched telephone networks used for public telecoms. For BT, this means the network of copper wires that connect the UK.

ISDN

Integrated Services Digital Network.

The original digital technology that allows VoIP to function in a world of copper wires.

SIP

Session Initiation Protocol.

A means of translating voice comms to a data network instead of a traditional PSTN. It enables all the cost and productivity benefits of internet-based telephony.



Why should you switch your business telephony to the cloud?

For businesses in today's climate, we see several key reasons for switching your business telephony.

1. The lights go out in 2025

In 2025, BT will switch off their ISDN systems. By the end of 2023, it won't be possible to buy systems from BT that use ISDN.

With no technical or network support, any business still using these systems is going to be in trouble. It's like a Windows XP situation, only worse. As such, there's never been a better time to consider futureproofing your business communications with a cloud telephony solution.

It might feel like there's plenty of time until 2025 rolls around, but you'd be surprised. A recent UK ISDN market report by the country's national regulator Ofcom indicates a crossover point has already been reached. More businesses are now moving to alternative solutions, rather than opting for traditional ISDN.

Plan ahead and start your cloud migration today so that when the ISDN lights go out, yours stay on.

Why is BT phasing out ISDN & PSTN?

ISDN and PSTN are legacy technologies that have more costs and more limitations compared with newer technologies.

Today's telecoms users demand more data per second than copper wire networks can possibly accommodate. To meet those needs, BT needs to upgrade.

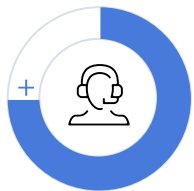
2. Customer experiences need to evolve

Consumer behaviour continues to change. Expectations are higher and we expect more personal, yet digitally-enabled, customer experiences. In a world of social media bubbles and instant review scores, more customers than ever are making buying decisions based on customer experience.



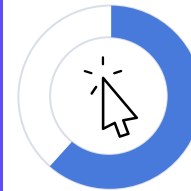
54% of customers have higher expectations for customer service today compared to one year ago

Microsoft



More than three-quarters of customers expect a service rep to be familiar with them and their service history

McKinsey 2020



62% of business leaders agree that more customers are making decisions based on customer experience

Forrester 2020

Thought leaders remain confident that, rather than dying out, contact centres will remain a key part of the customer experience for the foreseeable future whether, in reality, your contact centre is a team of 2 of 2,000, omni-channel or voice only. Most customers still prefer to use voice channels to resolve complex issues. But there are many stereotypes and challenges to overcome if contact centres are going to continue to deliver a satisfying customer experience.





"I don't feel listened to"

According to CCW Digital's 2019 Consumer Preferences Survey, only 11% of customers believe businesses take their feedback very seriously

Taking business telephony to the cloud doesn't just improve how people can reach you. It allows you to create an infrastructure and process to capture call data and use it to improve customer experiences.



"I always have to repeat myself"

A 2019 market study revealed that more than half (51%) of contact centres want to eliminate this stereotype by 2025



3. Businesses need to support new ways of working

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced many businesses to reconsider their approach to remote working. Resistant cries of “we’ve always done it this way” and “you can’t do your job from home” have lost all validity in the face of necessity.

Now that change has been forced upon us, employees and employers alike are looking at remote working and liking what they see. Increased productivity gives businesses a competitive edge, while employees will expect prospective employers to support flexible and remote working.



82% of company leaders plan to allow employees to work remotely

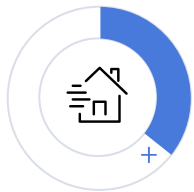
Gartner

Legacy comms technologies lack the bandwidth and features to support “the new normal”. Businesses that want to support employees anywhere in the world need to take their telephone systems off-premises and expand their capabilities.



66% of SMBs plan to implement or upgrade to unified communications and collaboration solutions

Microsoft



Remote workers are 35-40% more productive than their office counterparts

Forbes



4. Delivery teams grow beyond capacity

Not all occasions to upgrade your technology are about sinking or swimming.

As organisations grow, comms networks must scale alongside. Creating an infrastructure for growth is easy when building a business from scratch.

But for existing businesses with legacy hardware, it's a much more complex situation.



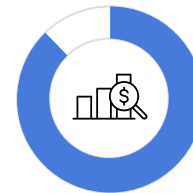
SMBs using cloud grow 26% faster than those that don't

[Deloitte](#)



Business Internet traffic has increased by 44% since 2015

[Cisco](#)



88% of small business owners want to increase revenue in the next year

[Brunner Consulting](#)

Cloud-based solutions help you tackle the question of scalability. The cloud allows you to quickly and cost-effectively scale up and down your capacity as required. Then, with data and effective forecasting, these systems can help you manage your capacity automatically.

A cloud-based telephony system gives you greater flexibility than an on-premise model. You can add or remove devices, increase or decrease bandwidth as needs require.



25% of businesses aren't aware of the ISDN 'switch-off'

[Talk Talk](#)

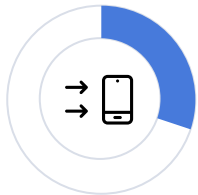


Benefits of cloud telephony

Cloud telephony business solutions allows your team to take calls anywhere. This frees up your employees, allowing you to exercise modern flexible working initiatives.

And it's all up and running quickly. VoIP circumvents the need to wait for the landline to be installed in the office. This also removes setup and maintenance costs. Any device with a stable Internet connection can be connected securely to your cloud network to keep the business running inside and outside the office. Or a Vodafone 4G/5G Gigacube could provide an additional layer of resiliency for pop up offices or remote working where a home broadband connection isn't sufficient.

This enables you to proactively pursue BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) initiatives to further enhance employee experience and business efficiency.



29% of companies switch to VoIP to simplify call forwarding to their mobile phones.

[NRRI](#)

Open the door for omnichannel experiences

Switching to cloud-based VoIP cloud creates a network to connect telephony with a range of other productivity tools. This could include instant messaging or video conferencing. Over time, your phone system has ability to scale, if required, into an omnichannel solution that allows staff to collaborate more effectively and customers to engage in any way.

Cloud-based telephony systems enable you to seamlessly record calls and pass information from one platform to another. Storing call data in the cloud also enhances analytics to support strategic decision-making. This further helps you to build a higher quality customer service function, promoting trust in your brand.



Cloud telephony is cost-effective for growing operations

Cloud telephony allows you to save money on hardware and associated repair and upgrade costs. Since everything is off-premises, you free up valuable office space, allowing you to optimise or even reduce your office footprint.

Finally, SIP trunking provides bottom line bill reductions. With traditional line rental packages, organisations are subject to a variety of one-off costs, from international calls and other sources. These costs only get higher when remote working is taken into account.

SIP trunking allows organisations instant access to simple, understandable pricing that's generally billed on a per-user basis. How? Because calls are made over the internet rather than the PSTN. Companies enjoy regular, predictable costs, giving them more control over their outlays. initiatives to further enhance employee experience and business efficiency.



SIP trunking can reduce monthly line costs by 50%

Gartner

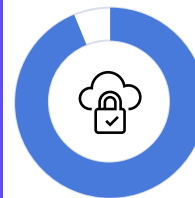
Scalability

Scalability means more than increasing capacity. It means having the transparency to review usage costs, forecast needs and react promptly. On-premise infrastructure is bought fixed. Any updates or expansions come at a cost to the business, which entails many hidden costs. Cloud systems enable flexible working – allowing you to spin up and cut back resources as required, in a matter of moments.

Stability & Security

On-premise landline telephony is physically vulnerable. It can be affected by power shortages, natural disasters, or theft.

Cloud phone systems enjoy the same level of security and data encryption as any modern cloud-based product. Large VoIP providers have multiple data centres located in different parts of the world. So, if one is down, the other will back it up. All the while, your data remains secure and GDPR compliant.



94% of SMBs have security benefits in the cloud that they didn't have with their on-prem service



Challenges to switching to VoIP or cloud telephony

Securing stakeholder buy-in can be a challenge for any business. Especially in an uncertain climate. The idea of cracking open your war chest to overhaul the phone system can be a hard sell. And beyond these emotional challenges, companies face logistical challenges in switching to cloud telephony.

Stakeholder buy-in & training

Some staff members see switching something as seemingly fundamental as a phone system to be unnecessarily disruptive. Getting buy-in from all stakeholders plays a critical role in bringing every employee along the journey of digital migration rather than making it feel forced on them. As well as simply telling staff the benefits of this new system, one of the best ways to get buy-in is to have them get their hands on the new system as soon as possible. Choosing a system with a user-friendly interface and proactive support will help staff feel more comfortable with new systems.

To address the disruption question, there are two solutions:

1. Choose an implementation partner with a track record for quality of service and reliability
2. Create a transparent roadmap so all stakeholders can understand the plan

Successful migration relies on knowledge of both legacy voice and your new IP network. Bringing together a combination of in-house and external expertise will help avoid any unnecessary mistakes.

When implementing a new solution, there will be a learning curve. You can't rely on a single training session to provide the info they need to master the platform. Implementing a training programme and investing resources to help get every user up to speed is key.





Unlocking the real value of cloud telephony

To leverage the full benefits of cloud telephony, businesses need to unite resources into a unified communications strategy. This will involve reaching beyond your IT department or call centre.

To unlock the value of your investment you need to know the capabilities of your new solution, and the opportunities available to you. From there, new processes need to be created to leverage those opportunities and take the operation to a new level.

Working with a technology partner can help unlock this value. Working collaboratively to understand your needs, they bring knowledge and experience in cloud technology to help you find ways to work better.



Knowing when to switch

Every business is at a different place in its journey. This makes determining the right time to switch rather difficult. We've already discussed some of the reasons why you should switch, but when is a question only you can answer. We recommend that businesses make the switch to VoIP and the cloud sooner rather than later. Don't wait until 2025 to make the change.

We're living in challenging times. Business leaders and innovators know that this is the time to invest and take advantage of the market to get ahead. They know that no matter what industry they're in, their business is driven by technology. All businesses are these days whether we like to admit it or not. So the only question is: where do I invest?

Given the advantages cloud telephony provides and the ticking clock of the ISDN switch off, which will force change anyway, investing in a new phone system now could be a wise choice.

Doing so means you can bring better customer experiences to your market sooner and create a scalable framework for future business growth.



How to switch your telephony system

The technology that sits behind a VoIP or cloud-based telephony system is the same no matter which vendor or brand you choose. This is sophisticated technology where upgrades are built into the technology, not released in new versions of hardware, like smartphones.

The physical implementation is, therefore, standard wherever you go. The three things you need to think about are:

1. **Business goals**
2. **Budget**
3. **Technology partner**

Set clear objectives

What are you trying to achieve by adopting cloud telephony? Are you hoping to streamline processes, offer more personalised customer experiences, or free up IT resources for other projects? Or are you simply trying to futureproof your business?

Cloud communications offer plenty of benefits but understanding which outcomes are most important will help you select the right solution.

Review your budget

Accurately comparing costs for your existing on-premise system and a cloud-based alternative means looking at more than just the price tag. Gather data about your existing investment, including licensing fees, hardware, and infrastructure costs. Then there are all the one-off costs, such as upgrades and maintenance fee on legacy hardware.

Evaluate which outlays will go away under a new system and when, how expenses will change (i.e. Capex to Opex) and shifts in resource allocation to get a holistic picture of your communications costs.

With your objectives and budget in place, it's time to roll up your sleeves and plan your cloud migration project. As with any initiative, giving your team proper time to plan, analyse, test, and communicate will be the key to success. Use this step-by-step timeline to keep your cloud migration on track.

Engage a partner you trust

Changing a phone system isn't a static activity. Your operation is a moving vehicle, requiring minimal downtime and maximum business continuity. It's important to work with a technology partner who understands this and can implement your new technology seamlessly.

It's also important to engage a partner with the ability to provide a single window into your new systems. This is one of the key challenges to leveraging the power of cloud telephony and ensuring quality performances.

If you're producing an RFP for the market, take care to include questions around experience in these areas, as well as your market specifically. When it comes to technology implementation, it isn't always about the price – it's about the quality of service and expertise on hand.

“
**Enterprises often lack proper monitoring tools,
challenging their ability to assure quality performance.**

[Gartner](#)





Telephony migrations with Onecom

Make it easier to do business and deliver simply brilliant customer experiences with agile and effective mobile, networking, and communications solutions from Onecom. Whether your business is always on the move, you're working from home, or you're just out of the office, we help you be there for your customers wherever you are.

We've created a customer engagement ecosystem that provides secure and simple access to best-of-breed tools. Delivered as a single cloud service, you can provide powerful digital customer and workforce experiences flexibly and efficiently.

Our platform allows you to work smarter. Removing duplication, complexity, and cost gives you the agility to scale and flex in line with operational requirements. This is all delivered through a single portal for implementation, reporting, and invoice management.

We also work with a range of VoIP solutions, including:

VOX

Increase your ability to delight customers by merging your landline and mobile numbers across devices.

Mitel Micloud Flex

Harness the power of Google Cloud to connect your teams and promote collaboration.

Connect4Teams

Link your existing on-premise telephony system to Microsoft Teams to leverage the full VoIP and collaboration capabilities of Teams, anywhere, on any device.





Your Next Step

We hope the information in this ebook enables you to take the first steps in transforming your business into a mobile-first, truly agile enterprise.

Why not check if your town or city is 5G enabled to begin reaping the benefits of a superfast connection, or talk to us directly to discover how your business could become mobile-first, without compromise.

Talk to us