

## 8 Things to Consider When Purchasing a Phone System for Your Business

Many business owners have heard of VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol), but don't really know how it fits within their business. But as business communications become more complex—and expensive—it only makes sense to assess your phone services and what you are currently paying for those business communications.

Combining voice and data will offer savings while giving you additional features such as conferencing, caller ID and forwarding for no additional fees, but choosing the right system and provider is critical. Just as VoIP gains popularity, it also attracts service providers that lack experience, longevity and the bandwidth to get the job done as promised.



**Use the following tips when looking for the right communications system for your business:**

1. **Reliability** – What happens if your business phone was down for an hour? Or a day or even a week? You would lose business and be unable to provide service to your customers. Look for a company that has a Disaster Recovery Plan in place. You'll want to make sure they have Analog line backup and redundant phone carriers so your company will have little to no down time. Also see if they offer redundant data centers to back up your settings and voice mail.
2. **Call Quality** – Oftentimes VoIP calls have a reputation of bad quality- the call cuts out or is dropped. Look for a company that assures voice traffic gets priority over data traffic to eliminate jitter, echo and latency.
3. **Added-Value Features** - Don't look for the system that has the most bells and whistles. Look for the system with the features you will use. Look for call forwarding to any device you choose. Make sure call transfers, ring groups, call queues, automated attendants, and shared operator features operate across all locations. Be certain that extensions can be individually configured to allow or restrict certain activities such as outbound calling and international calling.  
Some options to look for are Web based user admin options where the user can set up their own speed dial, call forwarding, find-me/follow-me and voice mail options.
4. **Coverage** – Are you limited by your location? Does your business need to service their customers no matter their location? Not all VoIP coverage is equal. And what if your phone doesn't work and you need to have a technician look at it? Make sure there is a technician locally qualified to service your system.
5. **Phone Quality** - What if your phone dies? Will the company replace it? Look for a company that guarantees their products and has strong written replacement policies and warranty. Not just for 90 days, but for the life of the phone. If the phone is no longer in stock, will they replace it with a comparable one? Will they replace or repair the phone at no charge to you?

6. **Customer Service-** Do they have someone to help you after hours or do you have to wait until the next business day for support? You will need timely support if your company has a night shift or works non standard hours.
7. **Cost--Now and Future** - Ask for the specifics and what a future bill will look like. Will you pay for each phone, each user license, voice mail, call forwarding, number porting? What happens if you need another line? Look for a company that pools phone lines across multiple locations so you don't have to pay for lines you don't use. A great feature to look for is voicemail to email. It records the voice mail and emails it to you as a wave file, so you can listen to it at your convenience. Also look for a system that is compatible with other phones. You don't want to pay for a phone that's obsolete in 3 years. That's a bad investment.
8. **What do you get out of it?** - We've all heard the phrase "If it ain't broke, why fix it?" For some things that may be true. However if you have a phone system that costs you thousands of dollars a month for the same old options with unreliable service – that sounds broken. Check your options, it can't hurt to look around and compare systems and services.

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## **We Solve That!**

**You can always ask us.** We are not here to sell you. We at Innovative have used VoIP systems since 1998 and are very familiar with the products and installation options for businesses of all sizes. We believe that an educated customer will be a much more satisfied customer.

**Ask us for the information you need to help you make an educated decision.**