

# How VoIP Technology Can Transform Your SMB



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Smaller organizations thrive on simplicity. It's a basic fact of business and a compelling reason why businesses across industries have made the switch from traditional branch exchange (PBX) telephony to Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) communication. When one option's faster to set up, easier to maintain, and more affordable and feature-packed than the alternative, a company would be remiss not to explore the possibility of moving over.



VoIP technology can help transform small to midsize businesses.

VoIP technology brings numerous advantages to the table, and in many ways represents the next evolutionary step for small-business communication – not to mention a smarter, leaner take on the baseline tools organizations need to survive. Here is a look at those advantages and the impressive utility they display in SMB settings:

## (Very) Basic Needs

To be clear, telephony is always a complex solution. The difference between VoIP technology and PBX falls in where that technology is hosted. In the old days, getting business phone service required lots of up-front cost, lots of up-front work, and (perhaps most notably) lots of wires. Once your vendor's technicians came out, added the necessary back-end hardware, and wired every phone on the premises to it, you were ready to talk.

Now, let's look at the hardware and infrastructure a business needs to implement when it embraces VoIP, thus moving all the "heavy" communication technology to the cloud:

- Computers, aka the laptops and desktops your organization already has
- Microphones for those computers, presuming they don't come built-in
- An internet connection with suitably fast upload and download speeds

Realistically speaking, only that final point has potential to be a significant barrier to entry. However, even then, overcoming it is generally a matter of calling your business broadband provider and upping your speed package.

Of course, the point here isn't to pick on PBX or even suggest it doesn't have utility once it's set up and ready to go. Instead, it's to say that VoIP often works on the back of technologies businesses already use as a matter of course. Calling back to the need for simplicity, that's a major difference – and one that's definitely worth exploring.

## Simple Scalability, Prime Portability

Another basic fact of SMBs is that they often occupy more than one location (and, for that matter, geographical region). Whether this distributed environment arises from natural growth or the business is designed that way from the ground up, VoIP technology makes maintaining a consistent presence across locations, states, and even countries a simpler affair with little of the complexity and cost that come with installing and managing a singular PBX across multiple locations.

For instance, take the act of transferring a call to a phone line in another location. Since VoIP systems can easily function as if all employees are together in the same building, a business' clientele can have seamless access to the whole business, with the complex technical aspects and equipment handled and managed on the vendor's side. Naturally, this lack of complexity can negate a great deal of hassle and expense when adding new locations to the network, a considerable advantage in times of growth.

Things work much the same way on the micro scale. Individual employees can use business VoIP apps installed on smartphones and tablets to place and receive calls from the company's internal phone system. They can even do this from their personal mobile phones, if the business chooses to allow this functionality. For offices with mobile sales or support staff, this allows for further consistency of presence in a time where even the smallest businesses are expected to provide an impeccable customer experience.

## Feature-Rich Telephone Use

However, individual and business-wide benefits don't stop at VoIP's elevated scalability and mobility. By consolidating communications into the computers employees utilize daily, SMBs can utilize a combination of intended features and naturally occurring side benefits that stem from this marriage of technologies.

One such benefit, the ability to engage in a call from a computer and simultaneously perform other tasks from the same device, is decidedly useful. You've likely seen this during web-based conferences, where presenters talk as they navigate to shared-screen web pages, draw charts, and perform other actions. How much harder would this be if the presenter had to cradle a phone to her ear with her shoulder at the same time? How badly would the call quality suffer if she handled the talking from a speaker phone?

Obviously, this simple advantage can equate to a big boost in productivity. That's especially true for remotely distributed teams, members of whom may need to talk to colleagues while using both hands to operate the computers they're working from.

In terms of intended features, remote teams may also see big benefits from intended features such as presence notification and VoIP call recording. For instance, leadership could use presence tools to confirm attendance before sending out invites and use the recording feature to capture another member's technical advisement.

SMBs do best when their tools offer simplicity, flexibility, and utility. VoIP technology offers all three in buckets. In a business technology climate where innovation tends to come in small increments, the tech's built-in features and ability to mesh with existing processes is perhaps best described as "deceptively disruptive" — a step or three toward better-integrated, more productive communications for every location in a company's stable.

*Is your phone system flexible enough to work with your team, or is it falling behind? Speak to a Vonage Business representative to see what VoIP technology has to offer.*