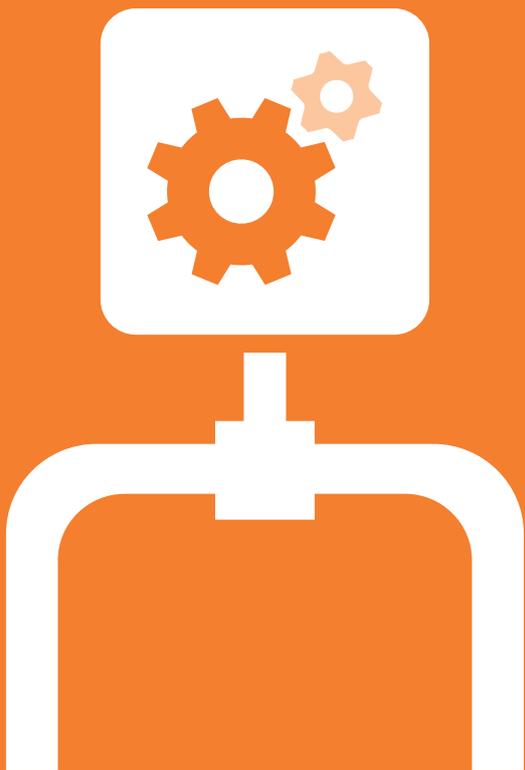




How to manage change:

When introducing a new phone system



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Implementing new systems can cause the IT team a major headache. This article will show you how to make the process much easier.

Infrastructure projects are – by their very nature – complex. Many IT managers calculate that the complexity of the system upgrade process can outweigh the benefits of the upgrade itself.

So how can you ensure that this isn't the case when planning your move to a hosted phone system?

Traditional problems

Implementing new systems is, invariably, a massive headache. Even after the initial requirements have been defined and a suitable solution purchased, a large amount of work is still to be done.

When installing any traditional telecoms solution, you may have encountered the following challenges:

- Physical PBX and handset installation.
- Software installation, configuration and (where appropriate) deployment.
- Transition between old and new systems – including managing downtime.
- Administrator training.
- End-user training and rate of adoption.
- An initial drop in productivity as users get up to speed with the new system.

Any one of these factors could cost your business in terms of lost productivity and ultimately, money.



Benefits of a healthy ROI system

If you are to demonstrate a healthy ROI, minimising each of these issues is paramount. But the concern that the ROI will be minimal – or that the disruption will be too great – means that many businesses put off replacing their telecoms system, despite the benefits.



Why hosted rules

Hosted voice solutions can help minimise many of these deployment problems. For businesses keen to minimise disruption and make an agreeable ROI, a hosted phone system could be the ideal solution.

Minimal hardware installation

Hosted telephony replaces your on-premise PBX completely. Instead of routing calls from handsets to an internal PBX and out to the public telephone network (PSTN), IP handsets connect via your broadband connection to a virtual PBX, hosted in the cloud.

Choosing to outsource your telecoms infrastructure in this way:

- Reduces your management burden – maintenance and management of a PBX is no longer necessary.
- Frees up valuable space in your server room for other technology applications.
- Reduces secondary costs like electricity usage.

Due to this, a hosted phone system can provide a rapid return on investment.



Simple software deployment

Depending on the applications your business uses, the switch to a hosted voice solution can be completely seamless. Much of the transition can be performed in the background, with minimal impact on the user. the right place at the right time, improving efficiency.

Seamless deployment

Your existing PBX uses ISDN lines for its voice connectivity, while a hosted voice solution sends and receives calls via your existing broadband connection. Due to this, a hosted voice solution can be installed alongside your existing on-site system without any negative impact on your day-to-day business, as your existing lines can remain in use until your new service is up and running.



User training

To ensure user adoption to any new system, it is important to provide adequate training to allow your staff to adjust to any changes and ensure that the transition completes smoothly.

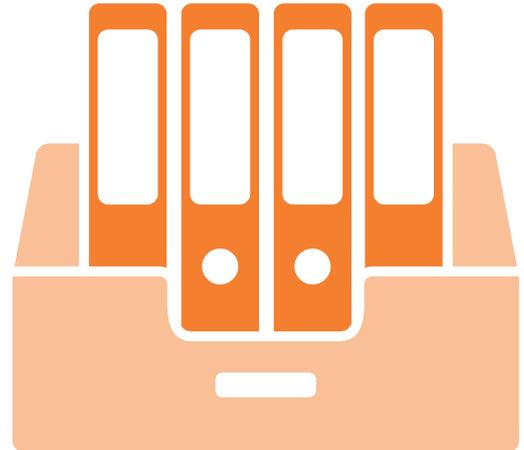
Depending on the hosted voice solution you adopt, there may not be any need for additional training for end users at all. At worst, you may need to demonstrate new handsets and how to access the most common functions.

It is also important to ensure that all staff are briefed on any changes as early as possible in the project lifecycle. By keeping staff up-to-date on the deployment progress, they will be better prepared when the time comes for them to get 'hands-on' with the new system.



Minimal handover required

Your workload should decrease, whether you take a staggered or big-bang approach to hosted voice deployment. In many cases, end-users won't even notice that the supporting telecoms system has changed.



Putting it together

Moving to a hosted voice solution can solve many of the major hurdles that hinder a new system deployment:

- Minimal hardware installation requirements.
- Simple software deployment.
- Parallel deployment allows you to identify and resolve issues in advance without impacting user productivity.
- Straightforward user training that can be targeted to individual needs.

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