

# VoIP Buyers Guide of Success



## S-Net Communications

Our VoIP Buyers Guide of Success provides you with the right questions to ask before you upgrade or purchase a new phone system. Use this guide as a resource, to help filter through the numerous choices you have in selecting a phone provider.

## Traditional Service or Hosted Business VoIP Service?

Over last decade, the convergence of VoIP technology and the cloud-hosted PBX has revolutionized the business phone landscape. Hosted VoIP systems now provide SMBs the advantage of new and more-capable calling features, full mobile access, and dramatically reduced pricing. Managing change has always been an essential skill for business owners, but managing a business today isn't simple. No longer can an owner wait for the next big change in his/her business. With the pace of technological advancement increasing by the day, businesses are now managing transition, rather than change. It's hard to catch your breath. Thus, it's imperative that our technology is capable of keeping up with the ever-changing needs of your business advances. Because of this, many businesses are moving to cloud-based applications like S-Net's Complete Cloud phone system. With your phone system in the cloud, you no longer need to worry about your communication infrastructure's ability to keep up with the needs of your business. There's little to no expertise required and it provides every capability of a traditional phone system, and then some—all while reducing your costs upfront and over time. Additionally, our phone solution won't become obsolete, with new features and capabilities continuously being added without the need for a system upgrade.

### Which calling features do I need?

This is a question each business owner must answer. The key is learning what features are offered within each phone system and then considering the possibilities! All systems have a basic feature set that includes call forwarding, call hold, voicemail, etc. Cloud-based phone systems include features most organizations couldn't afford with their existing phone system – such as voicemail to email, Find Me (digital assistant), and computer desktop integration with tools like Outlook and Salesforce.com. Many hosted VoIP solutions provide powerful system call reporting capabilities that help employers evaluate trends and employee activity, and identify new opportunities. The S-Net business phone system comes preloaded with 60+ calling features including mobile apps, desktop plugins, voicemail to email, and more!

### Does the system support teleworking?

As modern businesses increasingly support teleworking and/or have sales teams on the go, the capability of having all employees tied to the same business phone system – wherever they are, on whatever device – is more important than ever. The trend toward “bring your own device” (BYOD) for business is also increasing, and business phone features such as mobile apps give on-the-go employees access to the full business phone system, even from their personal cell phone. Employers also appreciate that business mobile apps allow employees to maintain their business identity when

connecting with customers and business peers. Caller ID indicates a business number, instead of the employee's personal number, and employees using the mobile app aren't required to use their personal minutes to communicate for business. Of course, without mobile capabilities, once the employee leaves the office, access to the business phone system is lost. Mobile solutions are among the most robust and attractive amenities of hosted VoIP systems, enabled by Internet connectivity and cloud hosting. Traditional providers often support mobility, too, enabled by add-ons and/or integrations that can sometimes be costly to the customer.

## How much should I expect to save?

It's true that a quality business phone system is an investment in the company, but few businesses have the luxury of overpaying. Many business owners are shocked to learn about the considerably lower price point of hosted VoIP systems versus a traditional systems. But pricing has a great deal to do with the technology itself. Traditional premise-based providers build their feature-enabling PBX in a server room in each customer's office, which represents hardware costs, labor expenses and maintenance costs over time. Hosted VoIP providers maintain and refine their PBX in the cloud and manage it virtually – so there's no expensive equipment to maintain or technician visits to schedule. The result is that hosted VoIP solutions are almost always priced considerably lower.

S-Net's Complete cloud phone system offers several business plan options, with pricing that is at least 50% less than traditional providers and no annual contracts or cancellation fees required. Also, with the system's robust built-in feature set, its consistent reliability, and its on-call customer and tech support teams, many customers find our system to be one of the best values in the industry.

## Can my phone system scale with my business?

Successful businesses expect to grow and their business phone system must easily expand with it. Sometimes businesses simply need new business phone features to support new initiatives or service offerings. In either case, it's good to know up front how well your phone system will scale to meet ongoing needs. Traditional on-premise systems are notoriously inflexible, often requiring a billable technician visit just to add a new feature or phone line.

Most hosted VoIP providers, on the other hand, can add features and business lines virtually since their PBX is hosted in the cloud and not on premise at the business – and this certainly saves time and money. The ability of a phone system to scale as the business grows should be a consideration for any aspiring business, so ask about it up front.

The S-Net Complete cloud phone system scales easily with most businesses needs. In fact, since the system can be easily managed through an online Admin Portal, many customers choose to add new business lines or features themselves. Or, they can always contact our 24/7 support team directly for assistance.

## Who do I call for customer or technical support?

Most small to mid-sized businesses don't have an IT staff, and even if they do, maintaining the phone system is usually not a staff function. SMBs usually lean on their phone provider for this, and the fact is that customer and technical support can differ greatly from provider to provider. First, remember that traditional providers most often build their PBX in the customer's office, so there is a great deal of equipment to maintain over time. Customers may call, for example, if service is down – or if they wish to add a new calling feature – and a technician visit is scheduled to complete the work on location. Billing for these visits will vary from carrier to carrier.

Hosted VoIP providers, on the other hand, manage their systems virtually. Their feature-enabling PBX is hosted in the cloud, so service calls are managed without the need for a technician visit. And generally, service issues can be resolved much more quickly and efficiently. Many hosted VoIP solutions are easily self-managed, too, giving customers the option of accessing or requesting new features directly from an online Admin Portal. Business owners should certainly look closely at the level of service offered by each provider and factor it into the purchase decision.

## Is the system reliable?

In the simplest terms, reliability refers to customers having continuous access to their phone system. In today's marketplace, most providers have dramatically improved their overall reliability, particularly hosted VoIP providers. With traditional premise-based solutions, situations like downed telephone lines, fire, flood, theft or technical glitches can all compromise reliability. Hosted systems operate in data centers with redundant power and cooling, and remain in operation even when the customer's location is out of commission. Also, many hosted VoIP providers have solutions in place to guard against local events such as Internet or power outages.

## How do I know my communications are secure?

Whether system communications flow over traditional copper wires through an on-premise PBX – or over the Internet through a cloud-hosted PBX – businesses are advised to be conscious of system security. Fortunately, today’s top business phone providers are invested in ongoing efforts to maintain superior security and deliver solutions that customers use with confidence. It wasn’t long ago, for example, that businesses considered “the cloud” an emerging technology with the need to prove its viability. Cloud security has always been a priority, but today’s businesses maintain an unprecedented level of confidence in the cloud due to ongoing advancements and a more involved and educated business community. It is now quite common for small and mid-sized businesses to migrate all their business systems to the cloud, including their business phone system.

## How long does it take to set up and is there any downtime?

As one might guess, equipment-heavy copper-wire systems take longer to install because most providers build their system PBX on premise at the customer business (the familiar “closetful of wires”). Most often, these traditional providers first require a contract be put in place, followed by a scheduled installation and service setup. The process can take weeks. With hosted VoIP solutions, there is really not a lot of heavy installation involved, so it is actually possible for service to be set within a couple of weeks.

It is common for new customers to request service as soon as possible, and the S-Net’s project management team is trained to consult and recommend an appropriate plan, assist with ordering phones and porting phone numbers as needed, and set up the customer account – all within the course of a few phone calls. S-Net understands that your phones are the lifeblood of your business, so we take every precaution possible to ensure porting your phone numbers from your current provider to S-Net is a smooth and seamless transition with ZERO downtime.

## Is onboarding and training included?

There's nothing like starting strong. When shopping for a new phone system, ask providers about their onboarding process and how your team can become familiar with the system quickly.

S-Net assigns a project manager & engineer to each new customer account, charged with making the transition as smooth as possible.

## Ready for a better business phone solution?

The business phone landscape has changed forever, so it's a particularly good time for business owners to shop around and learn about the solutions available. In many cases, they'll discover new features that truly help organizations compete – and pricing that is more efficient than ever. It pays to ask questions, to carefully compare offerings, and ultimately, to discover the solution and the provider that best fits the business. We trust this Buyers Guide is useful in your journey to find a business phone solution that best fits your organization.

If you wish to explore the S-Net Complete cloud phone solution further, we encourage you to contact a technology consultant at 1-866-404-7638.

**Get A Quote Today! Plans Starting at \$19.99/month per extension**

[www.snetconnect.com/lets-talk](http://www.snetconnect.com/lets-talk)