

VoIP Adoption on the Rise: What Does it Mean to You?

Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) adoption is growing in spite of the current strains on the economy. That's because the technology, which transmits voice, fax and voice-messaging and video applications via the Internet, can deliver a more efficient, dynamic and cost-effective enterprise.

You might be trying to determine the advantages that VoIP can offer your business. Use this article as a guide to determining if VoIP is the right fit, and find the right vendor to help you develop an intelligent plan for successful VoIP deployment.

Is VoIP Right for You?

How can VoIP positively impact your network and business communications? To help make this determination, answer the following:

- How strong is the integrity of your network?
- How many phone lines do you currently employ, and what does it cost to maintain them?
- How many long distance calls is your staff making per month?
- How mobile are your employees?

That first question is probably the one that concerns you the most. It's true that to ensure a smooth transition to VoIP, you must examine your current network capabilities, and current bandwidth availability. And you must compare that to your current data traffic levels, and your estimated needs for voice traffic. Any equipment shortcomings will need to be corrected before moving forward with VoIP.

But the good news is that any qualified VoIP vendor should be able to perform this type of network analysis, and guide you through every step of optimizing your network to handle voice traffic. And you don't have to upgrade your entire network to support a new VoIP system. The best VoIP vendors now offer converged systems that can be deployed as a digital, analog, hybrid or VoIP phone system. This eliminates expensive network upgrades to support the increased bandwidth, security and call quality required for VoIP calls.

According to a recent Infonetics Research survey:

- Sales of pure IP PBX phone systems increased 6% quarter-on-quarter in the second quarter of 2009, driven by the continued migration from hybrid to pure IP switching.
- Shipments of IP phones, which are forecast to have a bright long-term future, increased 4% in 2Q09, more than the overall PBX market.
- VoIP gateways are expected to be a \$1.7 billion market by 2013¹.



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102 Timbertrace Ct.
Columbia, SC 29212
1-866-IDEACOM (433-2266)
www.ideacom.org

Advantages of VoIP

There are many advantages to VoIP that make this effort well worthwhile. With VoIP, you can greatly reduce long distance charges. Let's say you have a corporate office in Philadelphia, with a remote office in San Diego. A call from headquarters to a client in California can go over your network and originate from the San Diego office, eliminating long distance charges. Charges are also greatly reduced when placing long-distance calls outside of this approach.

With a typical T-1 line, there are more lines than an average business will use for voice communications. This means that there are resources being wasted. With VoIP, there are the same amount of lines, but now voice and data are combined, making the most of the available bandwidth.

VoIP also offers tremendous benefits such as centralized voicemail. Even if there are multiple systems networked together, employees can still access, receive and forward voicemail messages from one, unified system.

With Presence Management, an inbound caller will be unaware that their call has been routed automatically to an employee's desktop extension, another employee's extension, an outside number, or their cell phone. Presence Management is also now capable of running on mobile devices. This means that employees can now access the full features and functionality of your phone system from almost any location.

Finding the Right Vendor

When selecting a vendor to deploy your VoIP system, be sure to ask the following questions:

- Are the technicians certified in the manufacturer's VoIP platform that you are considering?
- Are there licensed, experienced, certified service technicians available for service calls?
- Are there samples of work available that are similar to your project?

With the right vendor and the right strategy, VoIP can deliver real competitive advantage to your enterprise. Just make sure that you have done your homework before taking that first step.

¹ North American Enterprise Phone Systems Sales Up 12% in 2Q09," Infonetics Research, (August 26, 2009), <http://www.infonetics.com/pr/2009/2Q09-Enterprise-Telephony-Market-Highlights.asp>



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