



## The Buyers' Guide to VoIP Business Telephony Solutions

An FAQ of everything today's businesses need  
to choose the right voice communication system



# A proven technology yet some still miss out on the advantages

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Despite the first commercial system being launched in 1996, VoIP (Voice over IP) telephony is still not as widely deployed as some would have expected.

For many, today's advantages of VoIP make it the technology of choice when it comes to business voice systems.

However, some of the obstacles that have prevented many businesses from sharing in the benefits of the latest developments include:

- Lack of digital connectivity outside of major population centres and central business districts
- Investment and life cycle considerations over legacy conventional on-premise PBX based systems
- Contractual lock-in to incumbent telecoms providers
- Fear of unsatisfactory performance or failure of VoIP technology

Whether you are considering switching to VoIP from a legacy PBX system, or dissatisfied with your current VoIP service provider, read on!

In this guide, we'll help you understand how it works and how to recognise the best VoIP service providers. We use a Q&A to focus on the main considerations and provide the answers to some key questions.



# THE TECHNOLOGY

## What is VoIP?

Put simply, Voice over IP is the use of computer technology to carry voice communication over data networks. The 'IP' part of the term relates to 'Internet Protocol' which allows for information to be transmitted as packets.

Voice over IP is where streams of speech are digitised and sent in packets over a local area network (LAN) within a building, or a wide area network (WAN), such as the Internet, across the globe.

You use VoIP based talk services everytime you call on WhatsApp, or any mobile app that lets you talk without using 3/4/5G mobile telephony airtime services.

## What about using my existing telephone lines with a VoIP system?

You don't need to use existing lines with VoIP! If your connections still use PSTN lines or 30 channel ISDN lines, you can ditch them and use a single broadband connection to carry your VoIP traffic.

If you haven't done it already, ditching PSTN and ISDN is likely to save a significant amount of money.

## Can I keep my existing telephone numbers with a VoIP system?

In nearly all circumstances your existing telephone numbers can be ported to your new VoIP. It is worth an exploratory conversation with any potential new VoIP service providers to determine the premises situation for your numbers.

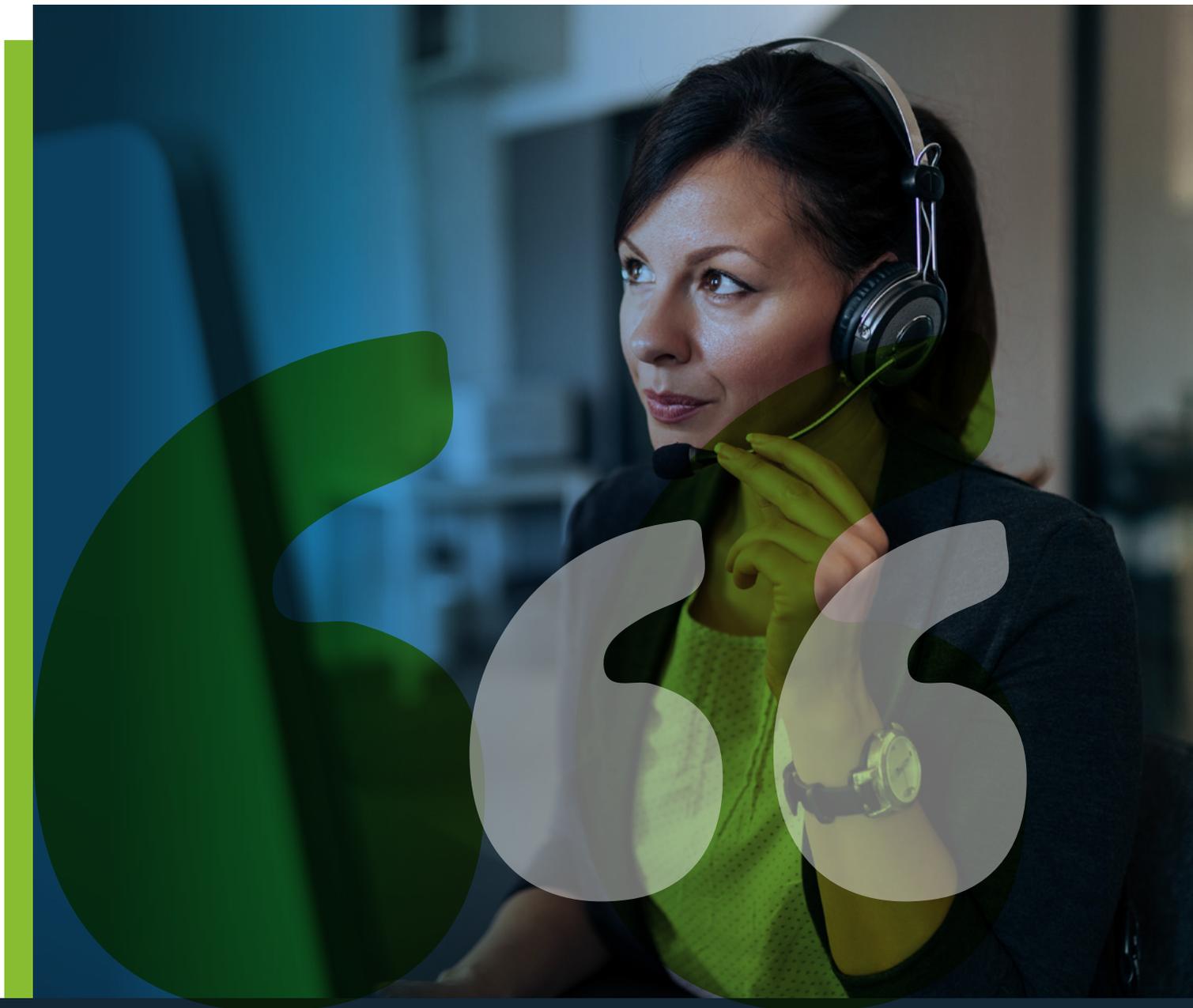
## What about my existing hardware - the handsets and PABX in my office?

Your PBX and the associated handsets are legacy items that are not supported by a VoIP system. A VoIP system provides a virtual PBX and is totally in the cloud, so it has no requirement for a hardware PBX. Your existing handsets are often proprietary and only work with your hardware PBX, so they are not supported by a new VoIP solution.

## Do I have to invest in new deskphones for my staff?

Some 'power users' or managers and 'C' level executives maybe budgeted for new desktop handsets. However, for the majority of staff, softphones are a great option.

Only requiring a suitable headset, installing a softphone software app from your VoIP service provider on laptops, desktop computers or mobile devices significantly reduces the amount of new handset investment you need to make. And it also means they take their office number with them when they work from a different location.



# BUSINESS SETTINGS

## What sort of businesses does VoIP work best for?

Every business that needs voice communication between employees, customers and third parties benefits from VoIP.

Whether it is a small office with 10 staff, a contact centre with hundreds of agents, or an enterprise multi-site operation with thousands of direct dial or extension numbers, the best VoIP systems effortlessly accommodate customer needs.

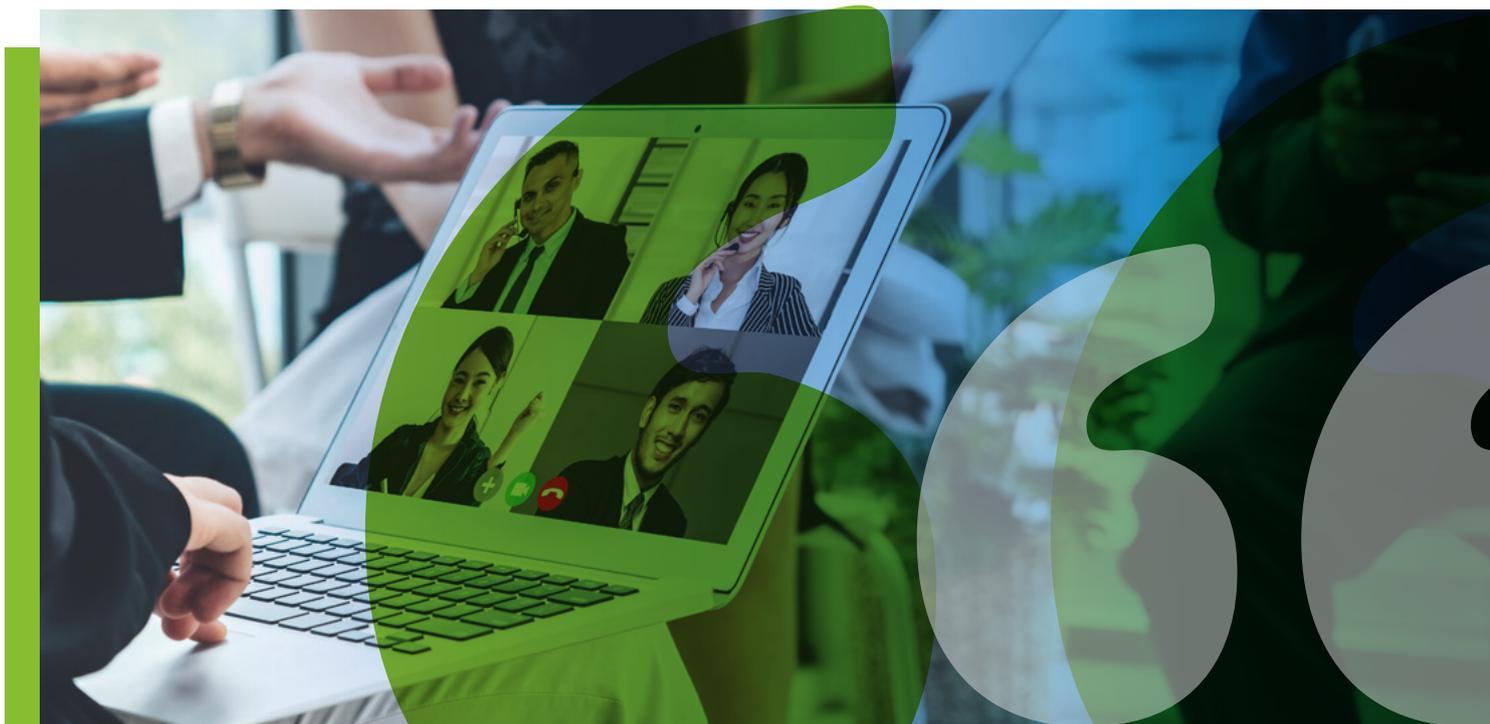
## What about growth - I expect to expand and add staff in the next 12 months?

One of the most important features of a good VoIP system is that it is instantly scalable. All your numbers are hosted in the cloud so it is limitless. Adding new extension numbers can be actioned in minutes. This supports business agility, enabling businesses to rapidly reconfigure their telephony arrangements based on demand.

During Covid, for example, where many businesses experienced spiky demand, VoIP proved perfect for increasing or decreasing capacity to meet business needs.

## What about working from home or other locations remote from the office?

Wherever in the world members of your team connect their softphone equipped devices or laptops to the Internet, they can be available on their company DDIs or extensions, fully enabled with access to all the VoIP systems features.





# OUTBOUND CALL BUSINESSES

## How can VoIP work for my outbound call operations?

Fundamentally when compared to a conventional hardware based contact centre, VoIP-based solutions have far superior performance and features. Quite simply VoIP has superseded 'old school' on-premise hardware contact centres.

The technology rapidly speeds up deployment minimising disruption while your operations switch to VoIP system. The superiority of the technology makes for a far better experience, for both contact centre staff and customers.

VoIP produces exponential increases in key contact centre metrics, such as contact rates. As a digital technology it is fully integrated, providing real time tracking and reporting across every aspect of the contact centre operations that run through it.

This lets your business focus on key areas, allowing business processes to be analysed and intelligence extracted. The cost savings are shown to drive down the overall cost per acquisition. This boosts profits which when ploughed back in power further expansion often driving further increases in profitability.

# COSTS

## What are the cost benefits of switching to VoIP?

VoIP reduces overheads, full stop!

There are multiple ways VoIP reduces costs:

- Consolidation of line rental charges. Eliminating the need for multiple lines and ISDNs, a single broadband line provides VoIP and internet connectivity, reducing costs dramatically.
- No call charges or significant reductions with a suitable price plan. VoIP call traffic carried as data by a broadband line, which for many business tariffs has unlimited data volumes, so will not attract a charge from the broadband service provider for voice carried as data packets.
- There is no need to budget for an on-premise PBX. All costs for Private Branch Exchange hardware are eliminated. No burning liquid assets. No servicing debt. No depreciating asset sitting on the balance sheet.
- Eliminate PBX maintenance. A PBX is a business critical piece of hardware and needs to be covered by a maintenance contract that is appropriate to its importance. Quick response SLA contracts are pricey, with your PBX eliminated, so are its maintenance costs.
- Reduce or even eliminate office costs. VoIP's support for hybrid working models allows businesses to rethink and slim down the size of their office requirements, reducing costs. For companies that can adopt a no bricks approach, it may even be possible to ditch the concept of a centralised geographic location altogether and eliminate all real estate costs.
- Switch to VoIP or switch VoIP provider. The most competitive VoIP service providers are likely to be able to work with your most recent telecoms bill and those relating to the costs for your PBX and give you a very accurate calculation of your savings potential from switching to VoIP, or switching to a more competitive price plan.





# SUPPORT

## What happens when VoIP goes wrong?

Like any other technology, VoIP may malfunction. However, cloud-based services are highly resilient, with multiple data centres, data replication and automatic failover, VoIP is essentially self-healing, with customers experiencing little or no service disruption.

Typically the availability of cloud services is at least 'four nines' - that means they are available 99.99% of the time.

Put another way this means that services are offline for about 52 minutes in any year.

A single broadband cable is always just a single cable, and it is always going to be a single point of failure. Many businesses commission a second broadband cable to provide redundancy and protection against the proverbial accidental damage to cables caused by infrastructure maintenance works.

## How can I be assured a VoIP service provider gives good support?

Social proof is one of the best indicators of the quality of support services, so to identify the best, look for VoIP providers with exceptional reviews.

Case studies and testimonials are also good indicators, however, don't just rely on one type of proof point. Look for clues to the quality of their solutions and support across a range of indicators.

It is also worth noting that many VoIP service providers use software that is developed by 3rd parties. This impacts a service providers ability to support their customers because they are not able to directly control or fix software issues.

The best VoIP service providers are likely to use software that they have developed themselves. This means they are able to control and rectify software issues directly, accelerating any support requests.

# FEATURES

## Does VoIP have costs for add-on telephone services like call waiting, forwarding and barring?

Good VoIP systems have an excellent range of extended features that reach way beyond what many PBX systems could provide. The best VoIP systems provide these features as part of an all inclusive pricing plan.

## What value-added features could I expect from VoIP?

VoIP is God's gift to business...! Here's a list of some features that you might find in VoIP solutions. Please note that some vendors may charge extra for some of them, whereas the best VoIP service providers may include such capabilities with a call plan. It is always well worth checking what is included:

NAME	FEATURE
<b>3-Way Calling</b>	Ad-hoc conference with you and two others callers.
<b>Call Recording</b>	Record all calls and retain for as long as 6 years.
<b>Call Delivery Assurance</b>	Calls are answered by a real person, not voicemail.
<b>Call Waiting</b>	See when callers are trying to get through and switch between calls.
<b>Call Whisper</b>	Set a recording to be played to you on an incoming call.
<b>Caller ID</b>	Inbound caller ID display. Show or hide your caller ID on outbound calls.
<b>Dial by URL</b>	Dial external telephone numbers through a web URL.
<b>Hunt Groups</b>	Direct calls to ring on multiple VoIP devices at the same time.
<b>Inbound Call Filtering</b>	Block any unwanted and nuisance calls.
<b>Line Display Name</b>	Know which of your VoIP numbers a call has arrived on.
<b>Music on Hold</b>	Professional quality music for when customers are on hold.
<b>Music whilst Ringing</b>	Play music to your caller instead of hearing a ringing tone.
<b>Time of Day Routing</b>	Alternative routing for when your business is closed.
<b>Voicemail to Email</b>	Send all voicemails to a designated email address.

## Does VoIP provide opportunities for further efficiency?

VoIP add-on products can vastly improve efficiency and customer experience around how your business handles inbound call traffic.

A virtual switchboard style service, called Interactive Voice Response (IVR), provides the voice driven menus that help direct callers by letting them navigate to the extension number or department that is appropriate to their needs.

Virtual Receptionist services are able to provide call pick up services to give customers personal call handling out of your business hours.

# THE FUTURE

## Is VoIP likely to be overtaken by another voice technology?

VoIP is at the forefront of voice communication and unless something radically different emerges, it is likely to remain the method of choice for the foreseeable future. The best VoIP service providers follow a process of quality control that drives the continual development of their products and services to ensure customers always obtain the best value, richest feature set and superlative performance.

It is interesting to note that Openreach, who manages much of the UK's fixed line telecoms infrastructure, announced they are switching off PSTN and ISDN in 2025, with the same baseline shift similarly scheduled for the Republic of Ireland. Quite simply, it's better to tackle your business telephony issues sooner rather than later!



# ABOUT SOHO66

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Established in 2008, Soho66 has grown year-on-year and serves tens of thousands of business customers across the UK, Ireland and internationally. Our self-built platform, developed in-house, handles hundreds of thousands of calls per day.

Our reliable and easy-to-use solution helps businesses bring their telecommunications into the 21st Century, enabling newfound flexibility, smarter and more efficient working, the ability to build a professional image and, crucially, significant cost savings.

We are VoIP evangelists, promoting the benefits of top quality VoIP services that provide an all-inclusive approach to the features that others may see as chargeable extras. One of the reasons we are able to adopt this no-holds barred approach to providing top value-for-money is that we have developed our VoIP platform in-house from scratch. As a consequence, we are able to build in rich features without licensing the technology from other vendors or developers.

We are a UK limited company and have been profitable since year one. We have a positive balance sheet with no debt.

Stop wondering what switching to VoIP or a better VoIP service provider could do for your business.

**Get started with us today!**

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