

Solving
flexible working
challenges with cloud-
based calling



How Microsoft's cloud phone systems can support long-term success during turbulent times

Telephony in today's business environment

Phone systems have long been the staple communication system for businesses. Before email and other digital communication methods like chat and social media, the telephone was a stand-alone tool for connecting businesses to customers and helping them succeed.

Despite the vast range of communications options available to businesses today, as well as the ever-growing reliance on email, telephony is still essential. For businesses from 10 employees to 10,000, the telephone is instrumental in winning new business, taking care of existing customers and collaborating with suppliers and partners to move projects forwards.

Traditional phone systems connected to physical telephone lines and operating carriers (like BT) through the PSTN (Public Switched Telephone Network) are familiar to most professionals; many employees have spent many a day in their offices with their desk phones.

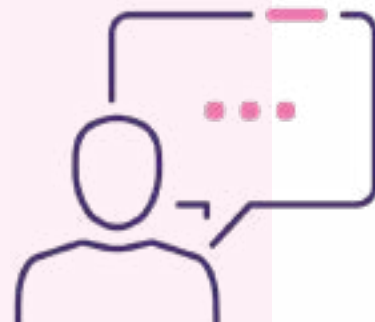
However, in an era of digital transformation, a traditional phone system comes with challenges. Businesses are increasingly looking to improve the efficiency of their communications, and a traditional, unconnected phone system could mean more admin, forgotten follow-up and technical issues. In the current climate, with many companies looking to continue more permanent remote and hybrid working, traditional phone systems serve little use as a primary telephony solution.

By switching to a cloud-based calling solution, businesses can free themselves from the chains of desk phones and take their phone systems on the digital transformation journey too. A cloud-based phone system can integrate seamlessly into wider business IT, meaning businesses can enjoy a unified, cloud-based solution that no longer connects employees to a specific place. Telephony solutions are available today that are designed to make businesses of all shapes and sizes more agile, more proactive, and less reliant on inefficient methods.

It has never been more important for businesses to invest in flexible tools and services that can support employee productivity whilst keeping businesses and users secure. Cloud-based calling can provide employees with a hassle-free, secure solution to communicate efficiently and stay motivated in the virtual workplace.

The **global cloud-telephony market** is set to grow by over

17% in 2021



A vital communication tool for all business sizes

Cloud-based telephony used to be an expensive solution only suitable for and attainable by large enterprises. Thanks to recent developments in the cloud technology space, businesses of all sizes can reap the benefits of cloud telephone systems that integrate with IT tools used by businesses every day.

Cloud-based calling solutions like Microsoft 365 Business Voice (up to 300 users) and Microsoft 365 Phone System (over 300 users) specifically address challenges faced by both SMBs and enterprises, providing you with the peace of mind that there's a solution to suit you and your workforce.

Cloud-based calling, which enables calls to be made online via IP networks, removes the need for fixed lines and dedicated devices. There's no need to scrap your existing set-up or hardware though; you can take advantage of Microsoft's Teams calling solutions using your existing set-up and devices. Keeping reading to find out how.

Benefits for enterprise

1. Extensive integration with business systems

Cloud telephony can integrate seamlessly with your business communication systems, streamlining workflows and helping deliver better results.

2. Improvements in sales and support efficiency

A cloud system can jumpstart customer-facing functions by reducing manual work to practically nothing and making follow-up quick and easy.

3. Reduced carbon footprint

Enterprises are under increasing pressure to show how green they are. Cloud services remove the need for energy-draining infrastructures.

Benefits for SMBs

1. Cost efficiency

Cloud-based telephony eliminates costs incurred on desk phone systems, installation, maintenance costs and office space, and reduces spend to a single monthly fee.

2. Scale and flex as required

In a volatile business world, companies need solutions that can change as quickly as they do. Cloud-based systems allow you to increase or reduce your usage at a moment's notice.

3. Comprehensive communication tracking

Desk phones don't keep track of your business communications. Cloud-based calling, integrated with your business systems, means you can keep tabs on all customer communications, so you never miss a thing.

Voice calling with Microsoft Teams



Microsoft's calling solutions give you and your business the functionality of virtual calling, backed up by the security and reliability of Microsoft Teams.

Microsoft Teams calling options sit within the Microsoft 365 suite, meaning users can rely on excellent connections and clear audio every time. Extensive functionality helps employees stay productive and agile; users can dive straight in by starting a call with screen sharing, and easily add participants to a call already in progress.

Call management is easy for both the user and central admin. Users can reverse number look-up, set voicemail, and change their status. From within the Microsoft 365 admin console, administrators can provision users, assign phone numbers, and port existing numbers.

A rich set of features

Voice calling within Teams is packed full of essential features, including:

- **Auto attendant**

Answer calls and route them to the right call queues. You can set parameters to route calls by language, time zone or availability.

- **Calling plans**

Add-on calling subscriptions are available across 18 countries, giving you a wide range of options for domestic and international calling – find out more below.

- **Cloud voicemail**

Access messages and transcriptions from any device and easily manage your mailbox.

- **Cloud compliance recording**

Connect easily to compliance recording solutions for guaranteed legally compliant recording and analysis of Teams calls.

- **Audio conferencing**

Add a dial-in number to every online meeting, allowing participants to call in from anywhere.

- **Call queues**

Create custom greetings, play waiting music for those on hold and set-up shared voicemails.

- **Direct routing options**

It's easy to keep your existing systems by directly connecting their SIP (Session Initiation Protocol) trunks to Teams.

- **Teams-certified devices**

Upgrade your devices to Teams-certified hardware, so you can enjoy a consistent and integrated experience.

Calling plans available

Microsoft Voice options work as add-ons to existing Microsoft 365 (previously Office 365) subscriptions, so it couldn't be simpler to switch to a cloud-based phone system with Microsoft.

As mentioned, there are two plans available:

1 Microsoft 365 Business Voice

Launched in November 2019, Business Voice is designed for SMB businesses with 300 users or less. Business Voice offers a cloud-based phone system for small and mid-size businesses that includes call transferring, auto attendants and call queues.

A standard plan includes 1,200 domestic minutes per user, per month within the UK, and allows for dial-in audio conferencing for up to 250 people. It's easy to add on international calling options and increase user minutes.

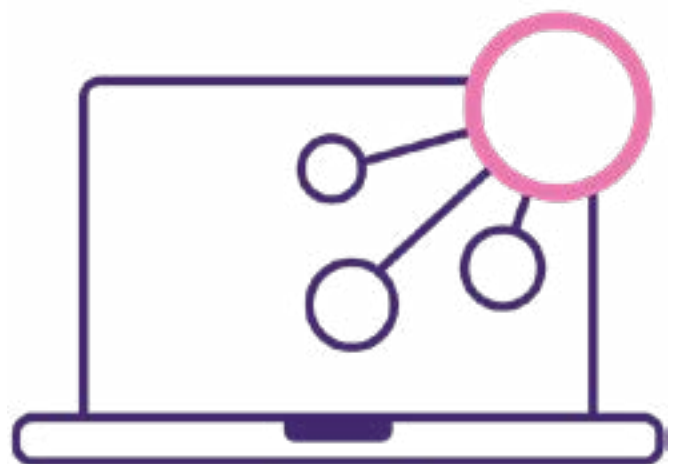
With Business Voice, users can call from anywhere, on any device through the Teams app on desktop, mobile, web and desk phones.

You can find out more about [Microsoft 365 Business Voice](#).

2 Microsoft 365 Phone System (E5)

The phone system designed for larger businesses to leverage calling capabilities through Microsoft Teams.

For businesses with 300+ users, you can save money by putting the first 300 users on a Business Voice plan, and any remaining users on the Phone System plan.



Your current system

Some businesses might want to take advantage of the Teams calling features whilst continuing to use their existing PBX phone system and handsets, which is no problem. Businesses can move to Business Voice with the help of a simple add-on, Call2Teams, which can connect any PBX system to Business Voice.

Learn more about [Call2Teams by Qunifi](#)

It's also perfectly fine for businesses to keep their existing calling plans and still reap the benefits of the Microsoft Voice offerings. With direct routing, you can select your preferred telephony carrier and calling plan. Direct routing solutions like Gamma can offer businesses cost savings, increased functionality, and support for migration.

Learn more about [Gamma Direct Routing](#)

Hardware and Devices

With Microsoft Voice offerings, you have the choice between keeping your existing telephony hardware or upgrading to some new, certified devices.

Microsoft 365 Voice and Teams supports a wide variety of devices that can provide employees with a unified voice experience and improve seamless communication. Regardless of whether employees are working remotely or in the office, devices such as desk phones, headsets, speaker phones and cameras are available to suit every type of caller and meeting.

Find out more about [Teams certified devices.](#)



What's next?

If you're interested in Microsoft Teams Calling and would like to learn more about how it could help your business, we can fully support you. Whatever phone system or set-up you currently have, we can work with you to find the right solution, that will enable your business to improve communications and remain resilient long-term.

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