

Litepaper: If it's not broken why fix it?



As voice, video and data networks converge into a single user experience, more organisations are seeing the value in deploying IP-based unified communications solutions.

These solutions integrate telephony, unified messaging, voicemail, customer contact solutions, audio and video capabilities, rich-media conferencing, and presence and mobility solutions with business processes.

However, as with any technology, myths have evolved about the use, value, and effectiveness of unified communications. This paper looks at two of the most common myths and provides information that can help you make a decision about deploying an IP-based communications system.

My PBX isn't broken so why fix it?

PBX systems are reliable for making phone calls, but they have many limitations:

- They leave you deskbound - because they are static and hardwired, PBX systems do not provide any mobility or wireless capabilities.
- In the workplace environment of yesterday, workers remained at their desks most of the day; today, increasing numbers of workers are mobile. Using a PBX limits your potential to re-route calls or trace people when a call needs to be transferred.
- Moves, adds and changes can't be done easily in-house and often require external technical support therefore take time to organise and can incur additional costs.
- PBX systems will eventually become obsolete and more costly to maintain.

Switching gradually to IP-based communications will cut costs in many areas, improve workforce efficiency and allow integration of business processes.

In many cases, you can use other planned improvements or upgrades to your data network to help you make the change.

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The use of IP phones reduced monthly expenses for mobile phone and long distance charges by about \$1727.

Mobile workers save 40 minutes each day through greater communications convenience”

Sage Research Study

Responding to changing business requirements with a more flexible communications solution

Today's IT infrastructure must allow more mobility, more flexible and comprehensive ways to communicate, and more features for team collaboration.

IP-based unified communications accomplishes these goals by providing cost savings, more rapid access to information and by integrating disparate applications to allow for more streamlined workflows.

The Cisco® Unified Communications System - which also includes IP-based end-points, customer contact applications, IP telephony solutions and communications infrastructure products - provides applications for messaging, presence information collection and voice, video, and Web conferencing that integrate transparently with common desktop business tools to help users more effectively communicate with team members.

According to a Sage Research study:

- organisations using IP-based unified communications applications saved an average of 32 minutes per day per employee just by being able to connect with team members more efficiently.
- The use of soft phones reduced monthly expenses for cell phone and long-distance charges by about \$1727.
- And mobile workers saved 40 minutes each day through greater communications convenience.

Companies using integrated voice and Web conferencing services decreased conferencing expenses by 30% by making integrated conferencing capabilities available in-house and on the network, and reduced travel costs by about \$1700 per month.

Responding to change and growth

Today's fast-paced business environment necessitates a phone system that can respond to rapid change and growth.

Cisco Unified IP Phones are fast and easy to install and can be moved anywhere that a connection is available, greatly increasing worker mobility and reducing maintenance and installation costs.

Cisco Unified Communications Manager call-processing software allows for cost-effective, highly reliable call processing with IP telephony, video and data features. It provides outstanding investment protection for future growth, allowing companies to easily extend IP functions to small sites or remote offices.

What can an IP system do that your PABX can't?

- Bring systems all together to reduce communications costs and simplify management
- Improve communications such as transfer calls to anyone in your company regardless of their location or have voice messages relayed to email inboxes
- Record calls or call length per client to simplify client billing
- Give remote employees access to phone services using a secured virtual private network (VPN) connection to the office
- Provide tools to hold meetings where everyone can participate easily and collaborate more effectively
- Enable you to break free from your desk by using wireless telephony

To install an IP-based communications system, I would have to replace all the resources I have invested in already.

Most people believe that they have to start from scratch to deploy an IP communications solution. This, of course, is not economically feasible for many companies, most of which have already invested heavily in PBX-based systems and do not have the budget, time, or resources to devote to a complete overhaul.

The Reality

Unified communications solutions allow migration at an organisation's preferred pace. By integrating with most major traditional PBX and voicemail systems as well as with mission-critical business applications, the Cisco Unified Communications solution empowers customers to migrate their systems based on their business needs instead of as a result of technology limitations.

Migration to IP-based communications is more about process than technology; Cisco has developed detailed plans and processes that make migration smooth, fast, and easy for companies of all sizes.

Because services on the network are location independent, a company can use a building-block approach to migrate its communications to IP site by site, group by group, or application by application.

At the end of the process, you have a converged voice, video, and data network. You decide whether it takes a week, a month, a year, or longer, and a complete equipment upgrade is not required.

More information

[Read our independent test of Cisco's UC500 Series – Smart Communications System](#)

[Read about Cisco Telepresence and Cisco Web Conferencing solutions](#)

Need further help? [Contact STS](#)

We can specify and implement a suitable IP Telephony solution to suit your business requirements.

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