

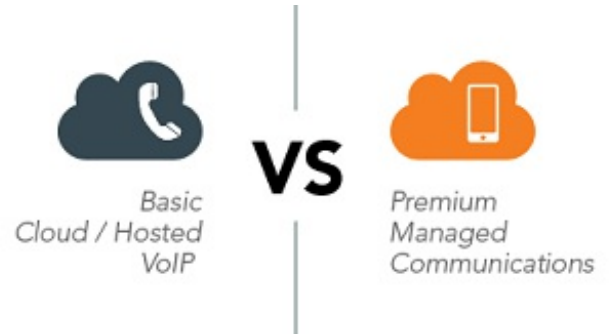
Compare VoIP Options and Providers

Basic Cloud/Hosted VoIP Providers vs. Premium Managed Communications

Not All VoIP Solutions are the Same Nor are All Providers

If you are researching [cloud phone systems](#), you've probably noticed that there is a broad range of features, service levels and prices available across VoIP service providers.

Should you simply compare VoIP providers and pick the one with the lowest price or are other considerations important for your business? This comparison of hosted VoIP services is designed to help.



Basic Cloud VoIP Providers

Many providers offer basic Cloud VoIP service. So many, in fact that it is becoming like a commodity with vendors generally competing on price.

What does it include? Service from basic cloud VoIP providers typically includes dial tone with inbound and outbound local and long distance in the United States. It includes voicemail features and sometimes comes with limited call routing capabilities. In some cases, desk phone handsets are bundled in the monthly price; in others you can use existing or separately purchased phones.

How does it work? With basic cloud VoIP, voice data is transmitted over the public internet. Voice quality is dependent on the customer's internet connection as well as the amount of internet traffic at the time.

How is it installed/set up? This is a key question because most people assume that by choosing a cloud vendor, they are removing their need to be "in the phones business." With a basic service this is not the case. For example, in most cases, the vendor will ship phones to the client. *The client is then responsible* for setting up the phones, ensuring internet connectivity and configuring their own call flow. Instructions are provided.

How much does it cost? Prices vary widely, but can start as low as \$9.95 per user per month.

Who should consider it? Basic cloud VoIP service is sufficient for companies that don't rely on the phones for revenue generation and/or who must maintain a quality brand experience via interaction with their customers. Similarly, basic cloud VoIP may also be sufficient if a company does not mind the additional overhead or ongoing user support. If your main priority is reducing expenses, look to basic VoIP.

What is the downside? There are two main downsides to consider. The quality of the voice signal is reliant on the public Internet. This means that variations in the calling experience are likely. If the client's ISP experiences problems or downtime, users will not be able to make or receive calls from their desk phones. The other issue is related to service. Cloud VoIP service providers that compete mainly on price must manage

resources tightly. Therefore, users of basic VoIP should be prepared to deploy and support the solution with minimal involvement by the vendor.

Do you value your phone quality? Read on below or contact us to see a Premium Managed solution for yourself.

- [View Demos](#)
 - [Contact Sales](#)
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Premium Managed VoIP Communications

ShoreTel Sky is a premium service and offers an alternative to basic cloud VoIP. Our solution includes a unique [customer experience](#) as well as a variety of sophisticated, yet easy to use applications to fully unify a corporate communications.

What is included? Our solution includes all of the [features](#) you would expect from an enterprise class phone system; including, auto attendants, personal call routing, coaching tools and desktop call management. At no extra charge our clients also get ShoreTel Sky [Communicator](#), a desktop application that provides instant messaging, screen sharing, presence and video chat. We also provide, at no charge, [integration](#) of call activity to the most popular CRM applications as well as click-to-dial from any browser and from Microsoft Outlook. Our clients have the ability to add solutions for contact center, voicemail to email transcription and [mobility](#). Finally, each customer gets the industry's most sophisticated business intelligence package to help them identify key performance indicators to run the business.

How does it work? Most of our clients connect to our data centers through private circuits designed for this purpose. We also deploy backup connectivity to ensure service in the rare event that a primary circuit experiences a problem.

How is it installed/set up? We believe that a smooth and [painless implementation](#) is a key component in our customer's long term satisfaction with their solution. Therefore, each client is assigned dedicated resources who will assist with the deployment from beginning to end. We complete an on-site survey for virtually every location, ensuring that we understand the network architecture and can avoid any unexpected issues. Clients can choose between remote and onsite assistance for go live and training. Professional services are also available for complex network or location configurations.

How much does it cost? The price for our clients is determined by several factors including the type of network connectivity, the number of users and the services needed for each user. On average, clients pay about \$35 per month, per user, but this varies based on volume and needs. The price for installation services depends on the number of users and locations as well as the customer's selection of remote or onsite assistance.

Who should consider it? Our premium service is designed for clients who want to be out of the business of managing a phone system. We [fully manage](#) the deployment, the phone system and support all end users via a unique and unparalleled customer service experience. Premium service is essential for companies that rely on the phones to generate revenue and maintain customer loyalty. If your calls are primarily between your employees and prospects or customers, and poor quality or service interruptions are unacceptable, you should strongly consider a premium solution.

What is the downside? The resources to manage and monitor the network, provide personal installation assistance and support end users are expensive. There is no debating it, premium service costs more. However, our clients find that the scale of our organization and our experience providing outstanding solutions

provides value that outweighs the cost.

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- [Contact Sales](#)