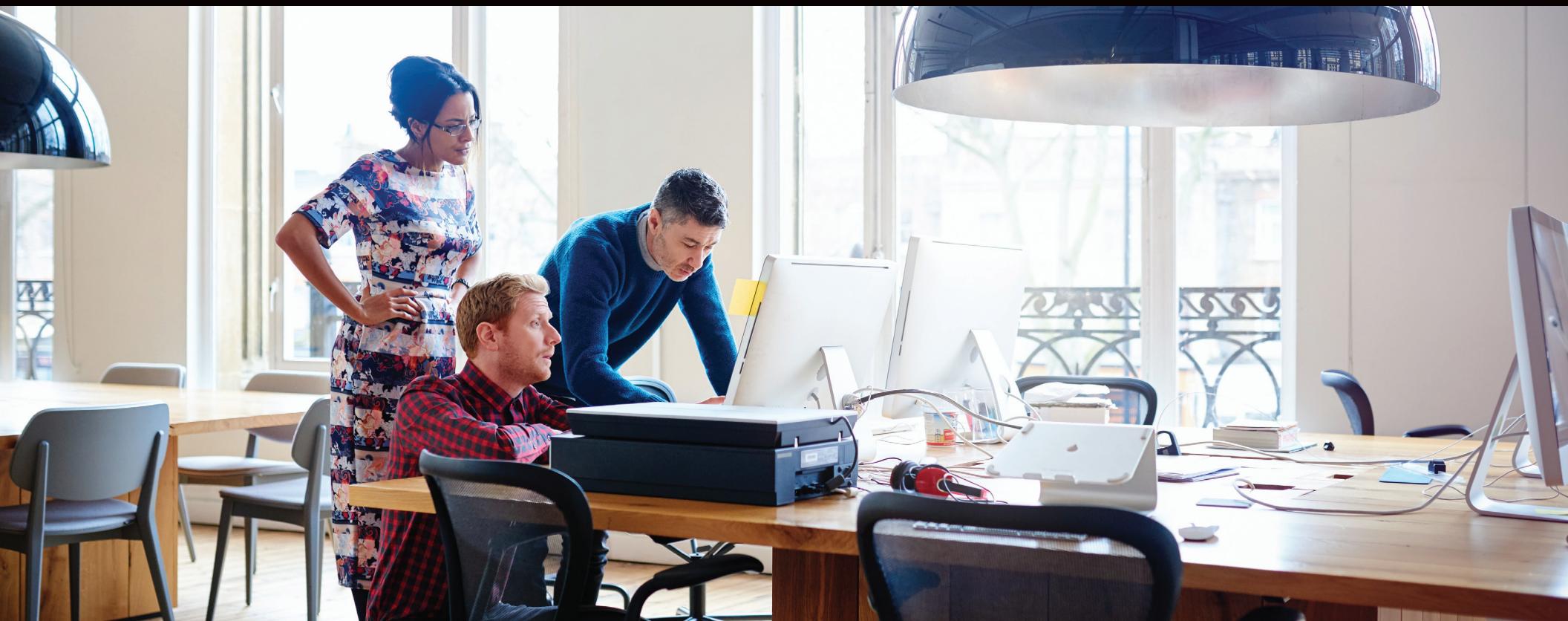




7 Reasons More Businesses Are Moving Their Communications to the Cloud



Cloud-based tools give today's small or medium-sized businesses (SMBs) a competitive edge by empowering them to communicate and collaborate more efficiently. Case in point: SMBs' rapid move to cloud-based communications systems due to IT teams being fed up with managing and troubleshooting multiple communications solutions and paying multiple invoices.

Sound familiar? Not surprising. For these SMBs, cloud-based communications offers better voice, mobility, and collaboration tools within a single solution. Plus, an SMB can manage it virtually, eliminating the inflexibility, inelasticity, and stagnant innovation of legacy systems. With cloud-based communications, the potential to streamline processes and decrease costs is clear.

Consider 7 Top Reasons More Businesses Are Moving Their Communications to the Cloud:

1

A Better Customer Experience

It takes a lot more than a great phone system to cultivate happy customers and respond to them in a timely manner anytime and from any place. It takes serving them in the channel of their choice. And quickly adopting reliable cloud-based communications with clear, service-oriented HD voice, efficient routing, and collaboration features is a good start.

In addition, some cloud systems offer integrations with leading CRM applications, allowing more insight into the customer on the call, right on the computer screen. For example, let's say an employee uses the Salesforce integration and receives a call from a customer. The customer's account information instantly pops up on the employee's screen, enabling them to reference key information — *in real time* — to communicate with, collaborate with, and serve the caller more efficiently.

Also, the information collected, entered, and analyzed can help improve customer engagement and experiences today and well into the future — particularly in a cloud-based *call-center* environment.

Indeed, cloud-based communications offers outstanding call-center functionality designed to enhance employee productivity and ease operations management. Such solutions offer the SMB easily customized call pathways, fluid messaging opportunities, and a seamless ability to scale up or down as needed.





L2

More Workforce Productivity

When workers and offices using an on-premises PBX (private branch exchange) need to communicate with customers and colleagues while working remotely, they're forced to set up their own communications systems and/or resort to personal cell phones. But with cloud-based communications, these employees can easily communicate, stay productive, and access the system on their mobile phones, tablets, or other devices. They can even take their IP deskphones home, plug into the internet, and enjoy the same business phone features they have back at the office, like unlimited calls and call queues.

Cloud-based communications also extends business-grade hosted VoIP services to cloud-based business applications, such as customer relationship management (CRM) systems, to capture rich customer data like never before. From video calling and conferencing to instant messaging and more, increased collaboration makes work more productive.

L3

Savings and More Efficient Spending

The prospect of saving money with cloud-based communications, versus an on-premises PBX, is significant. Consider that cloud-based systems don't require expensive on-premises voice and data hardware. Plus, cloud-based systems are managed virtually, so setup is simple, updates and scaling are easy, and provisioning communications tools in remote locations won't impede employee productivity.

For many SMBs, the move to a cloud-based system represents an efficient shift from capex to opex, and an opportunity to reduce total cost of ownership. In addition, by working with a capable cloud solution provider, businesses can consolidate their vendor services — such as ISP services, local and long-distance services, conference call provisioning, IT consultancy, PBX maintenance, etc. — and have a single partner to manage. This can be a big relief (i.e., "one throat to choke"), especially if they've ever experienced an issue where multiple vendors point at each other for answers.

4

Business-Enabling Voice and Collaboration Features

We all rely on instant access to information and new technology, and cloud-based communications provides just that for today's and tomorrow's employees. With cloud-based communications, the SMB can eliminate the hassle of a technician visit by seamlessly delivering the latest features, including updates to *existing* features.

Employees have access to premier calling features, mobile solutions that integrate with the full phone system, collaboration tools such as video conferencing, and integration of devices and data – all through a single app. Also, many applications seamlessly integrate cloud-based communications with popular productivity applications from Google, Salesforce, Microsoft, and others.

With a true cloud-based unified communications platform, businesses can improve productivity across the organization. They can also attract top talent by leveraging the unified communications tools that employees *actually* use and mobility features that allow them to work remotely.





5

Integrated Mobility That Keeps Business Moving

With more employees distributed across multiple locations, it's no wonder SMBs demand better mobility solutions. Cloud-based and traditional communications differ greatly in mobility. With a cloud-based solution, an employee's mobile device becomes just another endpoint. This is referred to as "integrated mobility," where the recipient's caller ID recognizes a call from the mobile platform as a call from the business. And users have the same communications functionality they have back at the office — like messaging with customers through SMS and social media — which protects brand reputation by ensuring timely replies.

Traditional providers can offer separate business mobile lines, but they're not tied into the company's business communications. Instead, employees maintain separate office lines and mobile lines. And, of course, adding business lines to accommodate traditional mobile needs also involves significant costs.

With the integrated mobility of cloud-based systems, employees can leverage their mobile devices to create a true unified communications network. For the SMB, integrated mobility makes it easier to establish an entire workforce all on one platform, with voice, video, messaging, and collaboration capabilities accessible wherever they work and on any device.

6

Easy Scaling as Business Grows

Unlike traditional communications, cloud-based solutions enable businesses to scale quickly without the need to configure complicated hardware or address a lack of IT resources. Instead, a growing business can quickly — and *virtually* — add plug-and-play extensions and features.

Also, unlike a traditional PBX, cloud-based communications doesn't require an SMB to take on extra equipment to get the advanced features necessary for communicating at today's breakneck pace. Whether the business utilizes a cloud-based solution from the start or gradually migrates to the cloud, the business can scale easily and cost-effectively on demand.

7

Business Continuity, Even Through a Disaster

A traditional PBX is hosted on-premises at the business location, while cloud-based systems operate in data centers with redundant power and cooling. So cloud systems can remain in operation — with employee access on any device — even during emergencies or when the business location is compromised. SMBs can also manage unexpected events like a natural disaster, power outage, or internet issue — or expected ones like holidays or after-hours closures — and avoid frustrating customers by automatically redirecting calls to mobile numbers or other locations.

Traditional on-premises PBX systems address emergencies like this differently. Events such as a downed or cut phone line, for example, can halt service indefinitely. And most traditional systems don't offer remote access. If the office location is out of commission, so is the phone system.

The name of the game is reliable service and business continuity, and the cloud supports these priorities very well.



Looking to Move to the Cloud? Vonage Can Help.

Our cloud-based platform empowers SMBs with a full suite of feature-rich solutions that solve top SMB communications pains, including high call volumes, use of personal phones, social media messaging, and more.

Every business is different, and our teams work with you to deploy a solution that serves your organizational priorities and integrates with existing technology. A partnership with Vonage comes with ongoing support, on-demand technology, and the reliability of the Vonage cloud.

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