

White paper

Leaving Behind Legacy PBX for a Hosted Voice Solution

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Where business voice stands

Today's business communications market is barely recognizable as the same one from five, or even two, years ago. Mobile phones are an essential business tool and threaten to supplant the traditional desk phone. Tablets and smartphones combined with cloud-based video services let users make video calls without expensive equipment. And the ubiquity of the internet, coupled with managed applications and services, gives the business customer unprecedented choice in supporting their communications infrastructure.

A hosted or cloud-based phone system is one way to take advantage of these trends. With a cloud-based system, you gain ease of use, scalability as your business grows and business continuity benefits, to name a few. This white paper reviews these topics in detail and offers guidance for exploring the available options.

Legacy systems aren't working

A major driver behind modernization is the need to retire or replace aging premises-based PBXs. Systems installed during the early 1990s heyday of the TDM (non-IP) PBX are reaching the end of their service lifetime, and they are inherently ill-matched to the ways business users communicate today. Most do not offer the productivity features users now rely on, such as voicemail integration to email and find-me/follow-me call forwarding.

Some enterprises have already upgraded their premises PBX to an IP PBX. That is a step forward, but it doesn't resolve every issue. Depending on when it was deployed, an IP PBX might not have all the features you need. Upgrades are generally tied to a yearly, potentially expensive maintenance contract, and the underlying hardware may no longer be robust enough for the capabilities you want.

A final reason for modernization is to offer more services to users. Consider home office users. In the past they would have a second line installed by the phone company, treated by the PBX as an extension. Today that user could be anywhere in the world, and enterprises need systems that integrate them into the communications plan no matter what device they use.

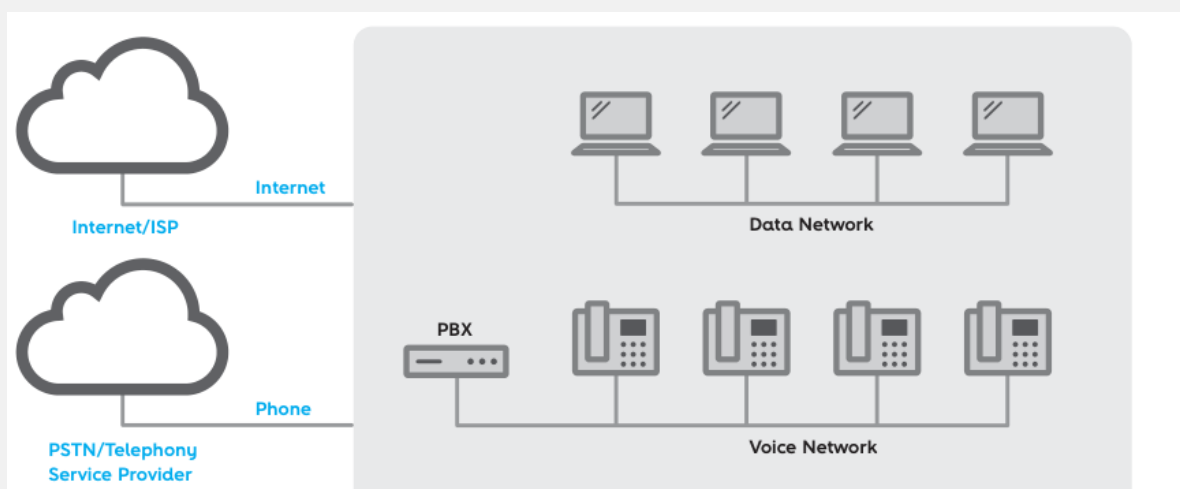
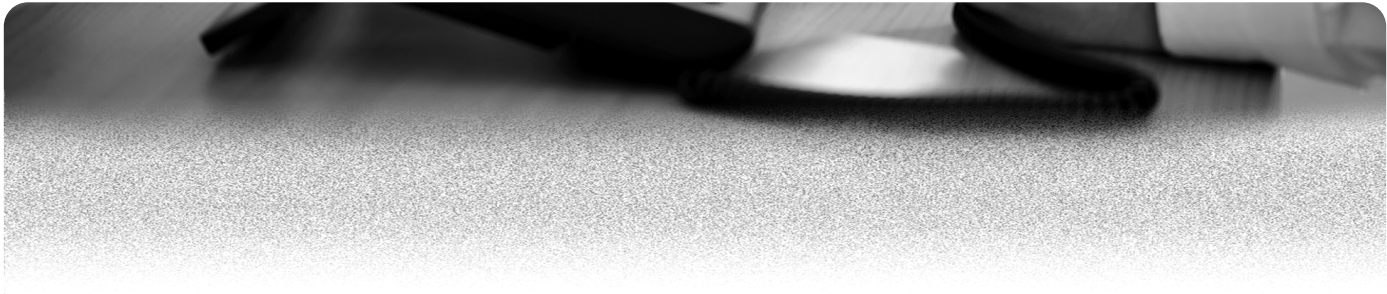


Fig. 1: Layout of a typical legacy business network. This organization has to manage and pay for two network topographies, one for voice and one for data. Reducing that ongoing operational expense is a common reason enterprises cite for modernizing.

Communications challenges today

Business need	Considerations
Need both reliable phone and Internet service	Requires paying for and managing two pipes: voice and data
Premises-based PBX is at or nearing end-of-life	High maintenance costs. Static feature set
Integrate mobile and roaming users	Mobile costs high. Poor integration into the business extension dial plan
Offer richer services (e.g. conferencing, video calls)	Requires expensive equipment. Poor ROI on CapEx

Table 1: Business challenges of legacy PBX





Hosted Voice: a flexible alternative

Hosted Voice represents a rich approach to business communications. With a Hosted Voice deployment, the customer's premises-based PBX is retired, and all the services it offered, plus many more, are handled by the service provider's network.

The result is a voice platform that scales with the business, adds features over time and removes the burden of maintaining on-premises hardware, all delivered over a network the provider manages end to end.

What Hosted Voice looks like

After adopting Hosted Voice, the service supports softphones in addition to traditional desk handsets. This gives users a choice of devices, all on the same dial plan.

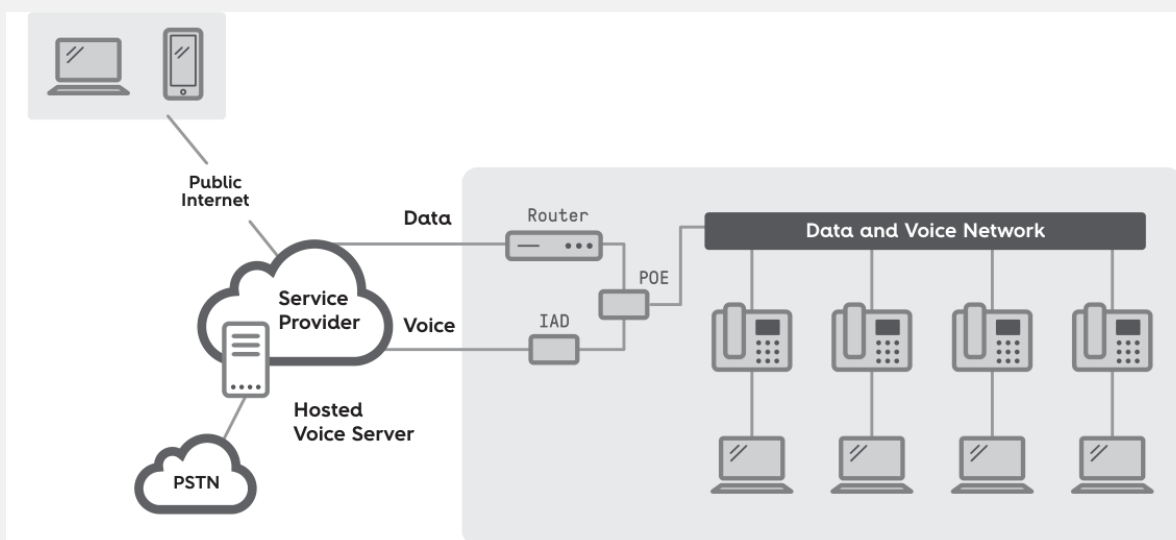


Fig. 2: Network after Hosted Voice

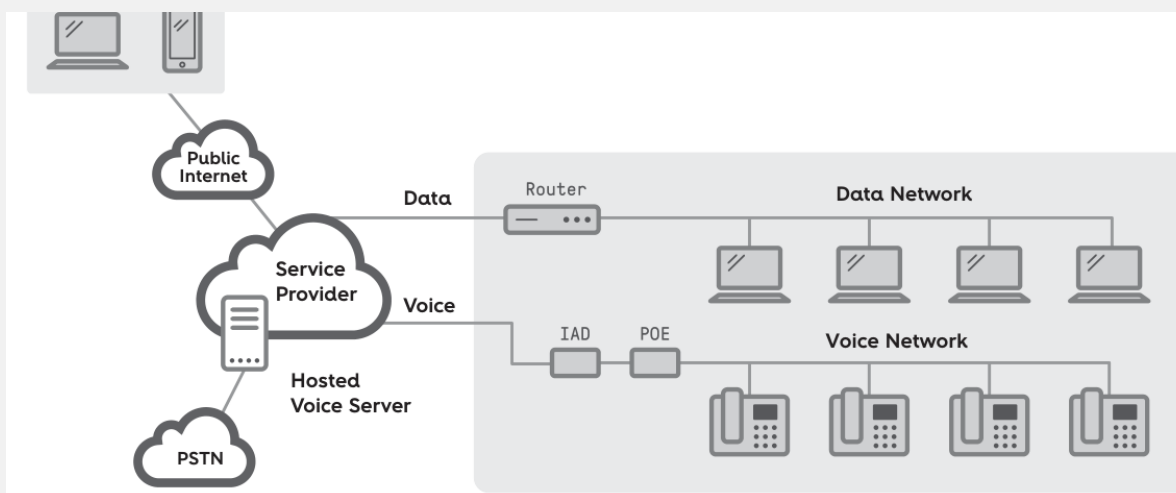


Fig. 3: Network after Hosted Voice, non-converged

The real value of Hosted Voice

Each attribute below delivers a dual benefit: it streamlines operations and opens new opportunities to build the business.

Hosted Voice attribute	Customer benefit
Network operations handled by the provider	Removes network management and lets the business streamline IT operations
Communications services are IP-based	Integrate telephony with other modes to improve productivity
Software-based platform drawing on a broad range of applications	Always the most current applications without managing updates internally
Service-based access and pricing	Reduces CapEx and lowers the cost of communications
Flexible, standards-based IP services	Adopt hosted without replacing equipment, then add features over time
IP is a borderless technology	An economical, fast way to extend services to branch offices, new sites and remote workers
Business continuity via 24/7 uptime and remote backup	Peace of mind that keeps the business running under adverse conditions
Web portal management	IT can manage systems remotely through a web portal

Table 2: Value proposition matrix for Hosted Voice

The benefits that matter most

Reduced to core values, Hosted Voice delivers a superior experience for end users and the business:

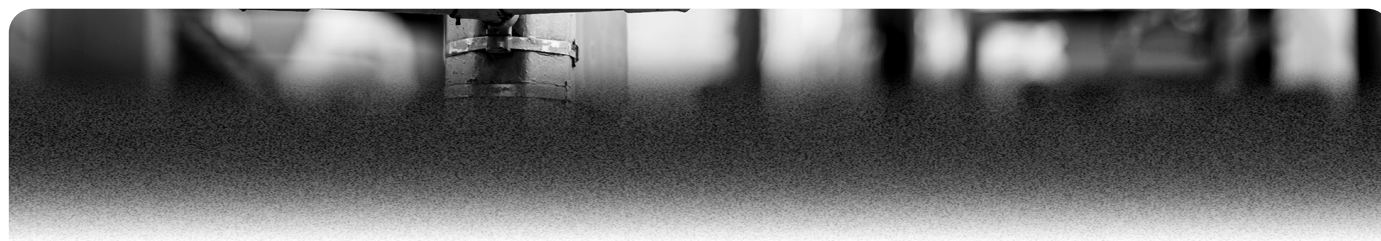
- **Ease of use.** Applications like visual voicemail and an integrated message inbox quickly become indispensable.
- **Accessibility.** A browser-based portal and downloadable apps extend features to multiple devices, so employees can work at their desk, a branch office, from home or on the road.
- **Support for every mode of working.** Enabled by SIP, the standard for real-time IP communications, with a consistent experience across screens, devices and endpoints.
- **Core PBX features at a fraction of the cost,** plus an essentially unlimited ability to add new and custom features.
- **Unified Messaging and Unified Communications** over a common network, setting the stage for richer collaboration.
- **Simpler provisioning.** Adding or removing users, configuring phones and running system-wide upgrades no longer ties up IT with routine help-desk work.

A complete solution

Revisiting the earlier challenges shows how Hosted Voice resolves each one.

Business need	Hosted Voice capability
Need both reliable phone and Internet service	QoS capable to maintain voice quality
Premises-based PBX is at or nearing end-of-life	Puts features in the cloud. Customizable and extensible feature set
Integrate mobile and roaming users	Mobile apps including softphones. Direct integration into the business extension dial plan
Offer richer services (e.g. conferencing, video calls)	Requires no equipment. Zero CapEx outlay

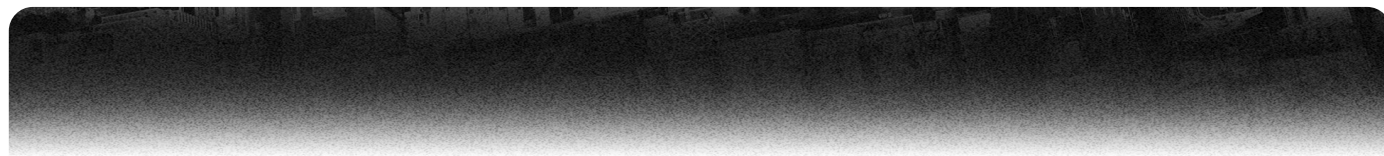
Table 3: Communications challenges resolved by Hosted Voice



The day-to-day difference

"Mary" is an employee at ExampleCorp, a Hosted Voice customer. Here is a typical day.

6:30 am	Her overseas colleagues have been busy overnight. Using the app on her mobile device, Mary catches up on voicemails over breakfast.
7:00 am	Something urgent comes up. Mary calls her colleague overseas using a softphone on her laptop, carried over her home Wi-Fi and broadband connection.
7:15 am	Time to travel. The call is still going, so Mary uses Call Jump to move the live call to her mobile phone without interrupting the conversation.
11:30 am	In the office, she uses click-to-dial from her email to call a colleague back. It rings her desk phone, then connects her.
1:00 pm	Mary runs her weekly conference call, seeing who is present in her web browser while talking to co-workers on the phone.
5:00 pm	Expecting a call from a supplier as she leaves, Mary knows the Hosted Voice app on her phone will route it to her wherever she is.



Where next?

Hosted Voice presents a strong value proposition for businesses of all sizes. Three things make it stand out.

Low or no capital costs, predictable monthly expenses. With no equipment to purchase, upfront costs are limited and often included in your monthly bill, which stays predictable with no charges for maintenance or service calls.

Scalability. A Hosted Voice platform handles tens of thousands or even millions of users, so a customer never hits the capacity limits common in legacy PBXs. Because the platform is maintained and updated centrally, new features arrive regularly at no cost.

Business continuity. Hosted Voice resides in a provider-owned, geo-redundant facility with backup power and equipment, so an event at your location such as a power outage would not stop your business. Calls can be configured to route to an alternate number and work continues.

Upgrade to Hosted Voice

The status quo can seem like the safest bet, but the pace of technology has made an impressive array of capabilities possible. Now might be the right time to evaluate your needs and see whether new capabilities could make your business more productive, often while spending about what you spend today or less.

About Lightpath Hosted Voice

Lightpath owns and operates an all-fiber network that organizations across major U.S. metro markets have trusted for more than 30 years. We deliver reliable connectivity and essential communications services, including managed services like Hosted Voice, designed to help you operate more efficiently. Lightpath Hosted Voice combined with the Internet Voice Bundle offers a complete IP voice solution that simplifies voice management, increases productivity and reduces costs. Benefits include a fully managed and customizable voice service, voice packets carried exclusively over the Lightpath network to protect quality, all equipment installed and maintained by Lightpath, flexibility to add bandwidth and minutes, over 40 advanced call management features and predictable flat-rate billing with no upfront costs. To learn more, visit lightpathfiber.com or call 877-544-4872.