

8x8

eGuide

6 Ways Small Business Can Benefit from
Cloud Communications



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Traditional phone systems present two main problems for businesses: limited features and high costs.

As a result, small businesses are migrating to a cloud communications solution—also known as VoIP or a hosted PBX. These cloud communications solutions are much less expensive than traditional phone systems. That all sounds good, but how much can a small business really save by switching?

Communications are the lifeblood of any business. Therefore, small business owners are often reluctant to take a chance on “new” telephone technology—no matter how attractive the pricing is.

VoIP-based telephone service was first introduced in the 1990s, and has become a mass market phenomenon. Improvements in network technology now enable service providers to offer highly reliable cloud communications solutions with outstanding call quality, on par with traditional phone systems.

The only difference will be reflected on your phone bill: it will be a lot less than you’re used to! But the savings are not just limited to reducing your equipment costs or long distance charges. In fact, there are six ways your small business can save when you migrate to a cloud based solution.



Enhance your productivity with advanced phone features.

In the past, many small businesses with premises-based PBXs had to make do with basic phone features like voicemail and call forwarding. Only big businesses could afford state-of-the-art features like extension dialing, auto attendants, email notification of voicemail, mobile apps, and corporate directories.



Consolidate all your telephone and conferencing services.

To reduce travel and training costs, many small businesses use audio conference bridges and web conferencing services in addition to their phones. These ancillary services are certainly less expensive than traveling, but they can add hundreds of dollars to your monthly communications costs.

With some cloud communications solutions, you can consolidate your telephone and conferencing services and pay just one affordable monthly fee to your service provider. For example, 8x8 Virtual Office offers both audio and web-based meeting capabilities, so there’s no need to purchase separate WebEx, GotoMeeting, or conference bridge services.



Eliminate PBX maintenance and upgrade costs.

Many older telephone systems are based on PBX equipment installed in the telecom closet at the business location. Businesses that use a dedicated PBX must maintain and operate the system themselves, which can be very expensive.

When you switch to a cloud-based solution, there is no need for a PBX in the telecom closet. You no longer have to pay PBX maintenance and upgrade fees: it's all handled by your service provider. Instead, you pay a predictable and more consistent monthly fee that allows you to manage a long-term fixed cost. And when it's time to upgrade to the latest software, your service provider automatically pushes the updates out to your system as part of your monthly service fee.

In addition, maintaining your own PBX requires either outside consultants or dedicated IT staff. With a cloud communications solution hosted by your service provider, you can reduce or eliminate outside consultant fees, and your IT staff can focus on business initiatives instead of your outdated phone system.

4 Easily make changes.

A traditional PBX phone system is difficult to grow or change. Consequently, you may end up purchasing excess capacity you don't need now just in case you need it later. And when you do need to add employees or change your setup, you have to pay your service provider additional fees, dedicate your IT staff to the project, and possibly hire outside consultants to help with the transition.

Cloud communications solutions, on the other hand, are hosted in the cloud, so you can easily expand and make changes to your phone system yourself. Some providers allow you to add lines by simply logging in to your own account and placing the order. And when you need to move an employee, it's as easy as unplugging their phone and plugging it back in at the new location.

Web-based system management also makes it easy to set up and modify your ring groups (hunt groups), auto attendant, voicemail boxes, and many other features. All without purchasing a service contract or hiring an IT consultant to help you.

5 Lower your monthly phone bill.

Many small businesses today have a distributed workforce, a distributed customer base, or both. This usually means separate phone systems for each location, and toll, long distance and international calls can quickly add up. Not to mention the complexity of managing multiple bills and service contracts with various local and long distance providers.

By migrating to a hosted cloud solution, you substantially reduce all of those costs—and streamline your service contracts as well. Because your service is hosted in the cloud, you can unite all your locations and workers under the same phone system. Another benefit: cloud communications offer local, long distance and international call rates that are typically much lower than what you are paying with traditional phone service.

6 Avoid long distance or international charges on your smartphone.

Using your cell phone for business calls can become prohibitively expensive, especially when making or taking long distance and international calls.

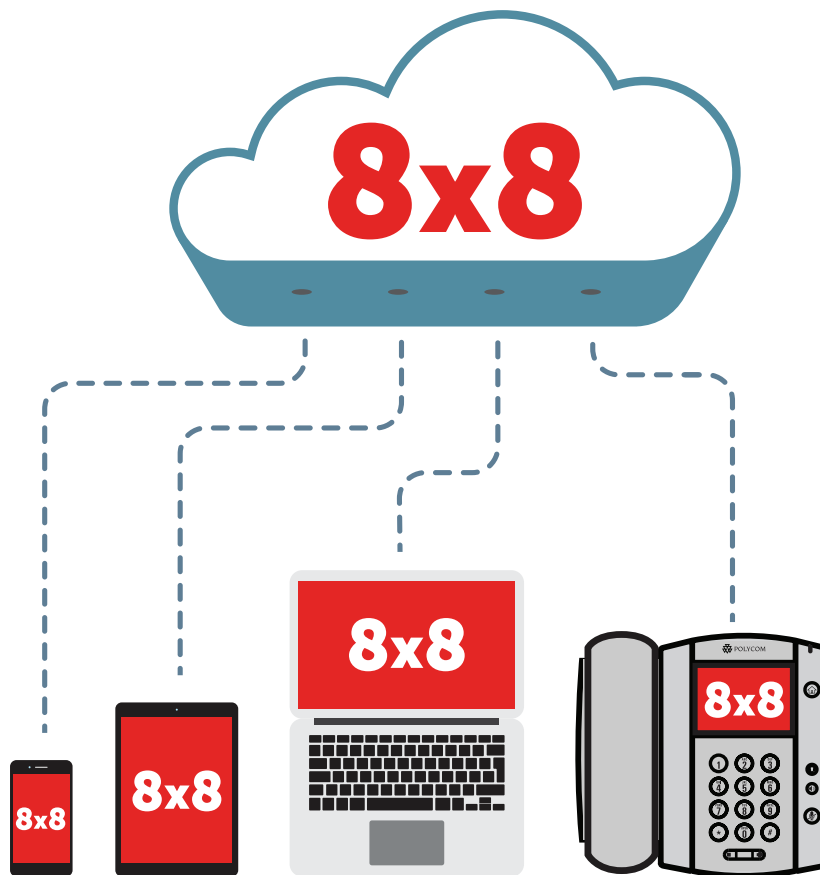
Cloud communications reduce your cell phone charges by allowing you to use your smartphone as an extension of your office phone. Instead of paying expensive cellular rates, you'll pay low-cost cloud based rates—even when using your mobile phone overseas.



What's the bottom line?

So what's the bottom line when it comes to business phone service? The bottom line is this: if you stick with a traditional PBX you'll continue to pay a lot of money for a limited set of features. That's why tens of thousands of small businesses have already made the switch to cloud communications.

If you're interested in learning more about what cloud communications can do for your business, contact 8x8. We'll help you explore the many ways you can save money and enhance employee productivity with our industry-leading solutions.



For more information, call [1.855.465.7904](tel:18554657904) or visit www.8x8.com

