

Why your telephony should be moved to the cloud

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So you have your company's email, customer relationship management (CRM) system and firewall in the cloud already? In which case, is it so hard to believe that you can take your telephony system (also known as a private automatic branch exchange or PABX for short) to the cloud as well?



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For many years, IT as a Service (ITaaS) has enabled enterprises of all sizes to leverage off of the specialist skills, software and equipment of service providers with voice being the prominent exception. Recently IT decision makers have been under increasing pressure to justify the monumental spend on telephony every couple of years when everything else is available at arm's length, as a service, month-to-month. The traditional arguments of onsite reliability and buying an asset that can be sweat for years no longer hold water.

So what is the new school of thought? Why are organisations taking their telephony in the cloud as a service so seriously? Well, there are a number of unbeatable benefits:

It's about the money

Whether you're a small business required to commit thousands or a large enterprise looking to commit millions of rands to an onsite telephony system, you're tying up cash that could be put to better use. Due to the fast pace of technology, your onsite PABX will need to be maintained and upgraded every 6-12 months by staff and all the integration done on installation will need to be updated and maintained. All of this adds a significant operating cost to the initial once-off capital expense. Tin no longer has any value other than its weight as recyclable material.

The promise of cloud is zero capital expense with a fully inclusive and predicable operational expense.

It's about the flexibility

Does your telephony system need more functionality? In this instance, you can pay for more functionality. And, if you don't need all the bells and whistles as you thought you did, it's not a problem as you can downgrade easily and pay less. Or perhaps you'd like to try out a new reporting feature, without taking formal ownership? Then you have the flexibility to have it deployed in the cloud for free for a trial period.

It's about the scalability

Cloud serves and provides a huge benefit to the small business by providing enterprise-grade telephony features to the two or three extension business. At the same time, cloud serves the large corporate too by seamlessly scaling from one branch to many. Queue your calls in the cloud and deliver them anywhere where you have spare capacity. You can also spin up a new branch or business in days or close down or consolidate a non-performing business unit without worrying what you are going to do with the infrastructure spend onsite.

It's about reliability

Your service provider has a vested interest to ensure that their platform is robust and reliable, more so than you'll find you have on your existing telephony system. An outage on a hosted platform affects all clients, not just a single site so your provider will ensure they watch it like a hawk! Providers hosting in reliable data hosting facilities (such as Teraco in South Africa) will guarantee power, security and ensure high capacity internet access via peering facilities such as NAP Africa.

The current fibre land grab in the South African telecommunications market has driven the price of fibre connectivity lower than ever before making carrier grade IP connectivity a reality for many organisations in all segments. Furthermore, with the uptake of software defined networking (SDN) and more specifically VeloCloud delivered software defined-WAN (SD-WAN) the ability to implement service provider independent connectivity, load balancing, and link redundancy has put the power in the enterprises hands.

It's about the commitment

Or lack thereof. An on-premise telephony solution is sticky. Moving to cloud gives you the freedom to walk away from a bad service provider and switch to something better. The ball is in the provider's court to provide a rock solid service, if they drop it, they lose you; it's that simple.

It's about leverage

Moving to the cloud allows you to leverage off of the best hardware, software and people in the industry. It allows you to choose and ally yourself with the service provider that best matches your business's technological needs. It's no longer a question of whether you should move your telephony to the cloud, but a question of how and when.

Today there are more cloud telephony options for organisations to choose from than ever before. The market is on fire! The secret to successfully migrate your telephony to the cloud is by pairing your company with the service provider that has the goldilocks mix of leading edge technology, industry expertise and rock solid support that you require.

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