# THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO MANAGING THE TELECOMS NEEDS OF YOUR MOBILE WORKFORCE

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# Discover the limitations of traditional phone systems and learn why you should introduce a feature-rich, flexible alternative.

Mobility is a key aspect of building an agile business. Employees now have the legal right to request facilities to work from home but employers are also recognising the enormous business benefits that remote working offers.

When choosing remote working solutions, many businesses focus their attentions and investment on enabling data access to email and line-of-business applications that allow employees to perform as if they were at their desk in the office, yet voice is often forgotten. However, voice communications still play a major part in healthy business operations and how your employees work.
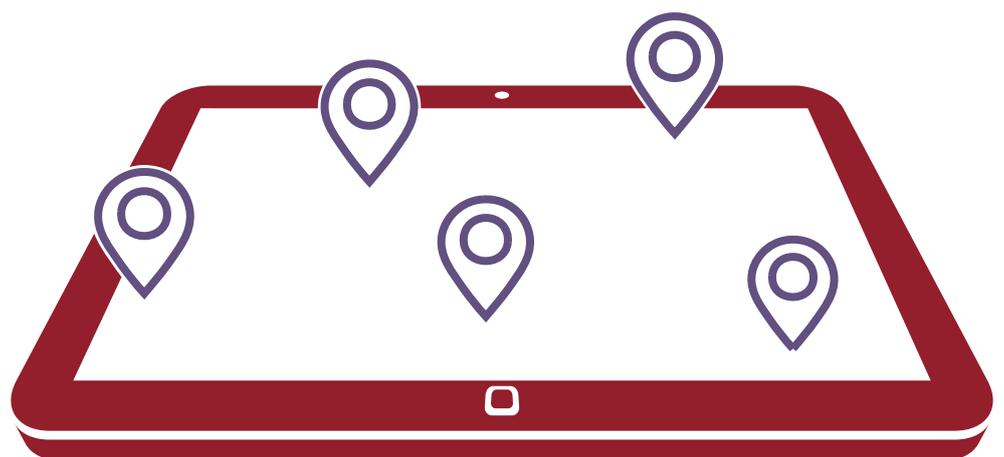
## The problem with traditional telephony in a flexible workplace

If your business puts a higher focus on data over voice you may find that:
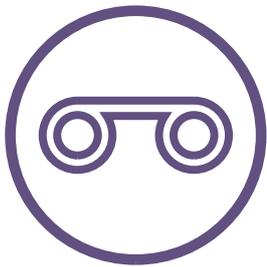


Incoming calls are
simply left to go to
voicemail, ready for
the employee's return
**to the office**

Calls are automatically
forwarded to a mobile
phone by routing
rules set at the
extension level

A colleague will initially
answer the call before
manually transferring it
to a mobile phone

A colleague will
answer the call and
take a message

In scenarios one and four there is no guarantee if or when the message will ever be collected. Conceivably, calls delayed or missed in this way could result in lost sales, lower customer satisfaction **scores and a direct hit to revenue and profits.**

Although scenarios two and three should see calls reaching the intended recipient, routing outside the **phone network often increases company phone bills. For businesses adopting flexible working and** focused on cost containment, this is also unsatisfactory.

Making do with an existing system won't deliver the cost savings or boost **profits in the way your business hopes to through the new efficiencies** of a mobile workforce. Similarly, your business is unlikely to be able to deliver the elevated levels of service demanded by the modern customer.

## The importance of presence

Image and appearance is incredibly important, particularly when building trust with customers. **Presenting a unified appearance is a vital part of that process, for example by ensuring that all work-** related emails emanate from the corporate domain and all calls look like they initiate and terminate from your registered company telephone number.

Obviously, a traditional system that routes calls to external networks or that requires remote employees to make calls from their mobile phones is unable to do this. The solution is to extend the corporate **telecoms system beyond the confines of your local network.**
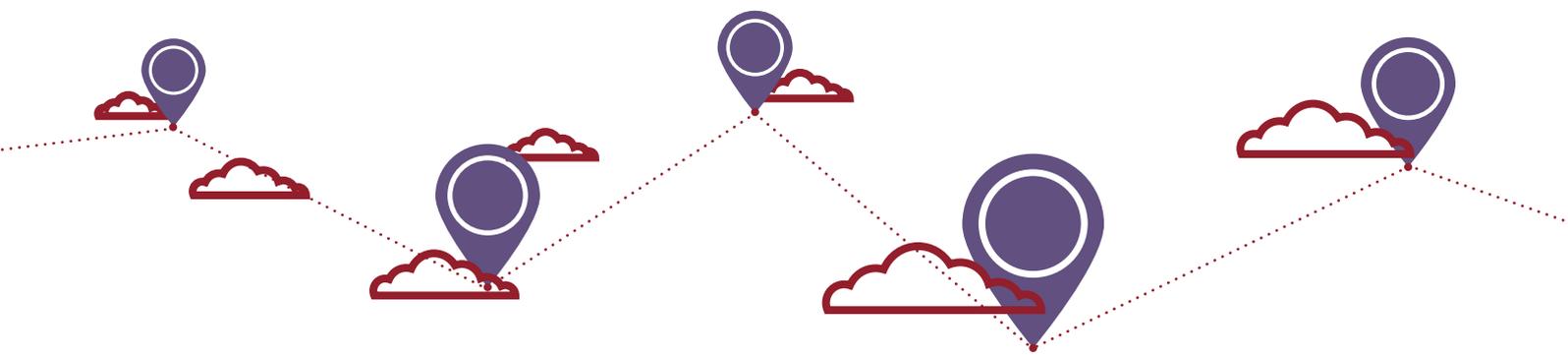
Traditional telephony systems, such as **ISDN-based PBX's, are simply unable to provide the flexibility required**, which goes some way to explaining why cloud-based alternatives are quickly becoming the solution of choice.

The fastest growing technology is SIP trunking - an IP-based service which enables you to route calls securely over the internet, maintaining the appearance of origination or termination from the company's **switchboard. Not only is SIP trunking cheaper than ISDN, it's also more flexible in terms of what** telephone numbers you can have and the locations in which you can have them.
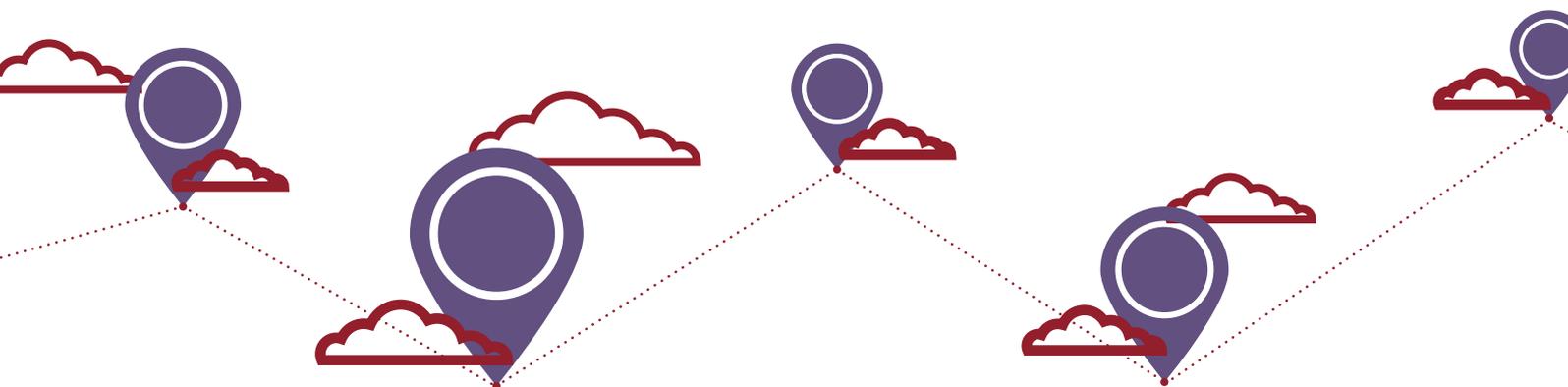
Another solution is hosted telephony, a cloud-based, feature-rich service controlled via an easy-to-use web portal. Some of the features of hosted telephony include call forwarding, call twinning and the **ability to use numbers and profiles on any device, anywhere, meaning your customers can reach you on your normal office extensions even when your workforce is out and about. Users can even access their corporate phonebook whilst on the move. These all contribute to a more efficient workforce, therefore** helping to boost productivity.

## Simplified bill management

As the decentralisation of workers continues, businesses are faced with the challenge of managing an increased number of mobile devices. The central management of mobile computing devices like laptops and tablets is already a well-established discipline with the help of Microsoft Active Directory and Mobile Device Management helping to administer corporate assets.

Similar tools are available to provide technical management of mobile handsets but the contract billing attached to each adds a new layer of complexity. Each mobile phone user is free to make calls independent of the corporate system, creating problems including:

1. Unpredictable and increased calling costs

2. Additional administration required when managing mobile bills

Twinning mobile phones with the corporate network helps to reduce the problems caused by these factors. If all calls are routed via the company phone system for instance, charges for calls only appear on a single bill – that for the main system. The mobile becomes a gateway to the corporate voice communications network creating consistent presence and appearance.

As well as a reduction in calling costs through the introduction of SIP trunking or a cloud-based service, secondary savings can be realised through streamlined bill and account administration. So how do you build a telecoms system that better supports your mobile workers and business goals?
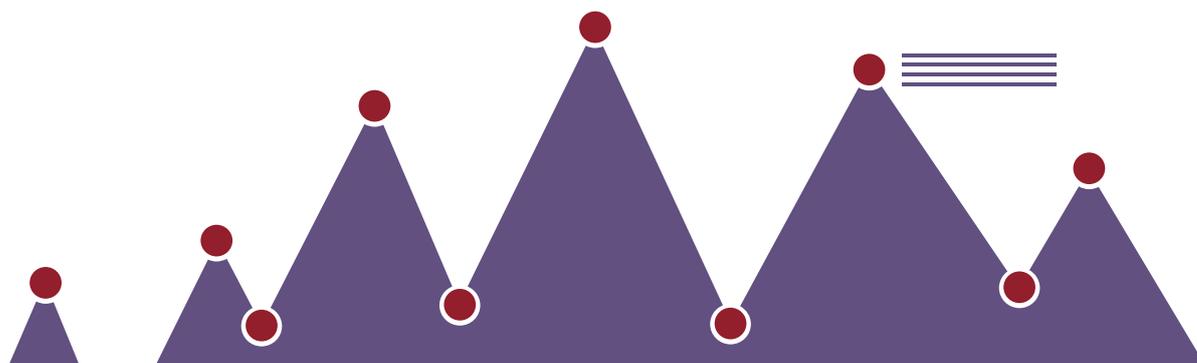
## 1. Dump outdated technology

The unavoidable truth is that traditional telephony solutions are unable to deliver **the flexibility required for maximum productivity. Consider replacing outdated ISDN lines with cheaper, more flexible SIP trunking or move your on-site PBX to** the cloud with a hosted solution.

## 2. Design with mobility in mind

At the same time as updating your traditional telephony your business needs to consider how to support its mobile workforce. Its likely this will continue to grow, so building a platform that is capable of scaling to meet demand is essential.
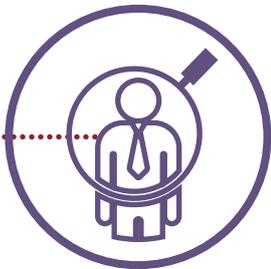
## 3. Choose a single supplier

To ensure that your telephony solution is simple to manage and as cost effective as possible, you should minimise the number of suppliers involved. For example did you know that many telephony providers could also supply your data too?

Reducing the number of suppliers will help to:

- Decrease overall telephony costs
- **Simplify account management, creating new in-house efficiencies**
- Create a consistent, cohesive communications system for users inside and outside the corporate network
- Make it easier to report, troubleshoot and resolve any communications issues inside your switchboard

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## 4. Ensure voice has priority

Whilst data is a key part of any business it's important not to forget your voice services. It is therefore imperative that your new communications **system prioritises voice traffic to reduce instances of dropped calls,** echoes and missed messaging. Call failures are frustrating for employees and customers alike and can be avoided simply by choosing a telecoms system that is right for your business.
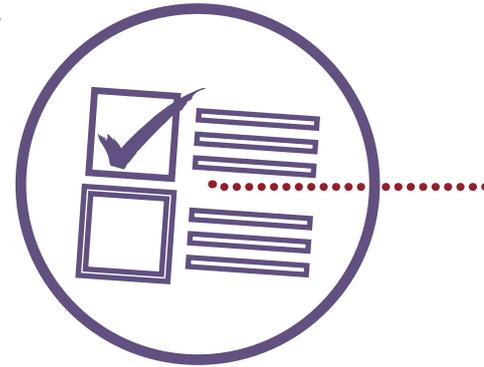
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