# 9 Things to Consider
## Before Choosing a Cloud Phone Provider

# DIAL 9 BEFORE BUYING A CLOUD PHONE SYSTEM

Businesses today are turning to cloud phone systems more than ever, but how do you know which one is right for you? First thing's first, there are two types of cloud phone systems to consider: basic hosted VoIP and premium managed VoIP. To choose the one that's best for your business, we've dialed it down to nine simple questions you should ask before pressing one for yes.

**1** Is your business growing or scaling back?

**2** Is your business phone-dependent?

**3** Does your business have multiple locations?

**4** Do you need advanced features?

**5** Do you have the time and resources to manage a phone system?

**6** Do you need your phone system to generate revenue?

**7** Are your people on-the-go?

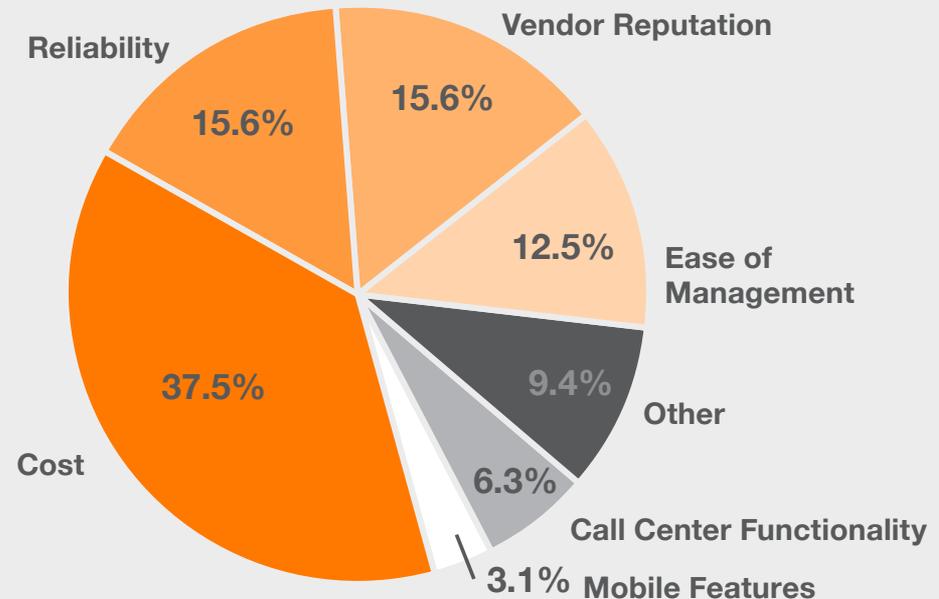**8** Does your business thrive on the latest technology?

**9** How will you know if you've chosen the right VoIP provider?

# 1. IS YOUR BUSINESS GROWING OR SCALING BACK?

Companies in growth mode are better off choosing a managed VoIP service provider that is able to keep up with ongoing changes in technology without interrupting service or requiring constant software downloads and updates. A company that's scaling back may be able to cut costs by using a basic hosted VoIP provider, but will need to set a budget to cover the expense of ongoing support.

By far, the biggest factor for selecting a new VoIP phone system is cost, followed by vendor reputation, reliability, ease of management and call center functionality.

*Source: Nemertes*



Reliability **15.6%**

Vendor Reputation **15.6%**

Ease of Management **12.5%**

Other **9.4%**

Call Center Functionality **6.3%**

**3.1%** Mobile Features

Cost **37.5%**

## 2. IS YOUR BUSINESS PHONE-DEPENDENT?

Basic hosted VoIP service providers are okay for companies that don't rely on their phones for revenue generation, but if your company requires employees to be in constant communication with clients and prospects, a managed cloud phone service is a wiser choice, given the higher call quality, security and reliability

Who relies on their phone systems to generate revenue and support customers?

**INDUSTRIES**
FINANCIAL SERVICES **REAL ESTATE**
STAFFING AND RECRUITING
BUSINESS SERVICES NOT FOR PROFIT
LEGAL SERVICES MEDICAL & RETAIL

**BUSINESS UNITS**
**SALES** CUSTOMER SERVICE
ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES PUBLIC RELATIONS

## 3. DOES YOUR BUSINESS HAVE MULTIPLE LOCATIONS?

Whether your offices are scattered across one city or 50 countries, multi-site management, scalability, and mobility support for employees on-the-go are a few of the features critical to the success of companies with multiple locations. Advanced features, like these, are found only in managed cloud phone providers.
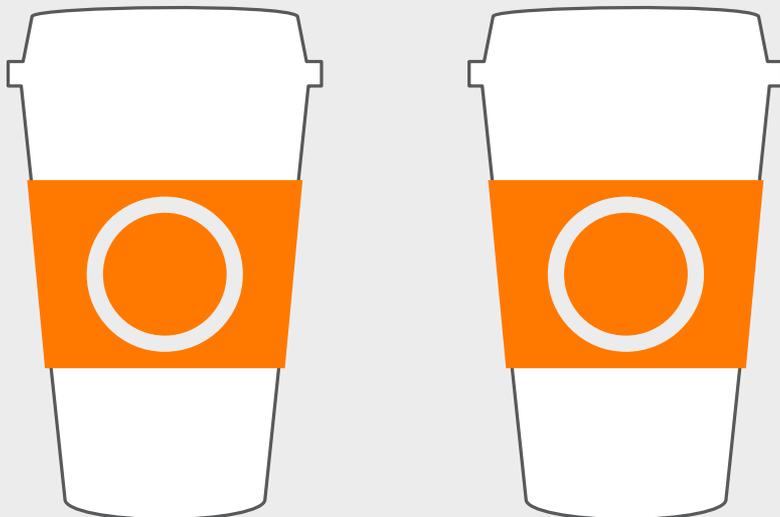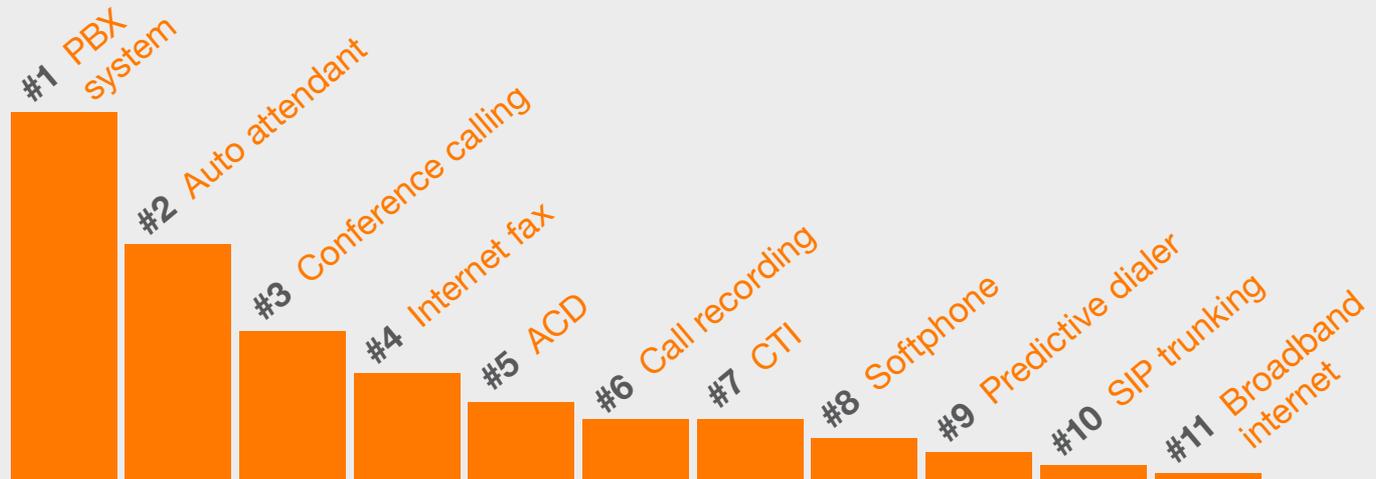
## FUN FACT

The total number of Starbucks stores worldwide has more than doubled from 2004 to 2014.

*Source: Statista*

## 4. DO YOU NEED ADVANCED FEATURES?

All VoIP phone providers offer basic call management features, such as caller ID, voicemail, and conferencing, but only managed VoIP providers deliver advanced features, like contact center call queuing, interactive voice response, computer technology integration, multimedia recording, and mobile phone management — to name a few. If your business needs more than the basics, a managed VoIP is for you.

**TOP REQUESTED APPLICATIONS FOR PHONE SYSTEMS FROM SMBS**

#1 PBX system
#2 Auto attendant
#3 Conference calling
#4 Internet fax
#5 ACD
#6 Call recording
#7 CTI
#8 Softphone
#9 Predictive dialer
#10 SIP trunking
#11 Broadband internet

*Source: VoIP Software Small Business BuyerView, 2014*

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## 5. DO YOU HAVE THE TIME AND RESOURCES TO MANAGE A PHONE SYSTEM?

A basic VoIP provider requires your employees to set up the phones, update the software and troubleshoot issues, so if you're leaning toward basic, make sure you have the time and IT staff to dedicate to it. Managed VoIP providers deliver expert installation, ongoing support and automatic software upgrades. Plus, they enable you to add new licenses and services without limit.

**20%**
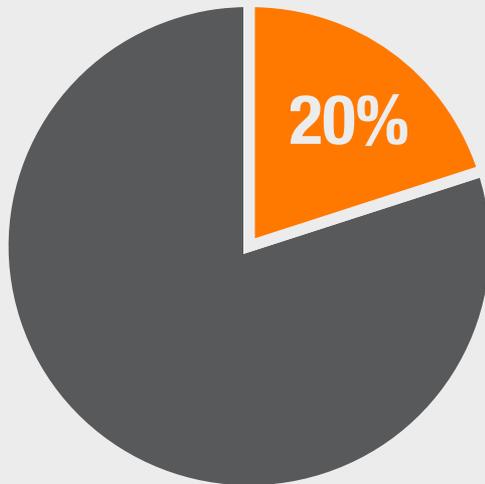
As a percentage of capital, more than a quarter of IT departments (39.9%) spend 20% of their capital on maintenance.

*Source: Nemertes Research 2015*

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## 6. DO YOU NEED YOUR PHONE SYSTEM TO GENERATE REVENUE?

If it's important that your phone system pull its weight, managed VoIP services are equipped to give you a few strategic advantages that a basic system can't. For example, a managed VoIP can be configured to integrate with your CRM, ERP, ATS and other apps. It can also cull information that will help you optimize staff levels, evaluate employee performance, analyze your marketing spend and better understand customer behavior.

## WHAT ISSUES DO COMPANIES NEED TO RESOLVE TO FULLY EMBRACE CLOUD?

**54%**
Ensure security of cloud service providers meets their compliance requirements

**40%**
Review efficiency of existing applications so they don't just move a problem

**34%**
Network testing to ensure SLAs can be upheld

*Source: 2014 IDG Cloud Computing Study*

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## 7. ARE YOUR PEOPLE ON-THE-GO?

Basic VoIP is great for static offices, but if your people are on the go, mobility features are important from a managed VoIP service provider. Managed VoIP systems enable you to transfer a call from wherever you are (home, airport, coffee shop) using whatever phone you choose, be it a desk phone, computer, or mobile.

A survey of business leaders found that 34% said **more than half** their company's full-time workforce would be working remotely by 2020.

*Source: Fast Company*

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## 8. DOES YOUR BUSINESS THRIVE ON THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY?

The wonderful thing about cloud based technology is that you have access to the latest solutions. How quickly you are able to access the latest and greatest depends on whether you choose basic or managed VoIP. As stated before, basic VoIP requires a do-it-yourself approach to hardware and software upgrades. Managed VoIP automatically takes care of the hardware and software upgrades for you.
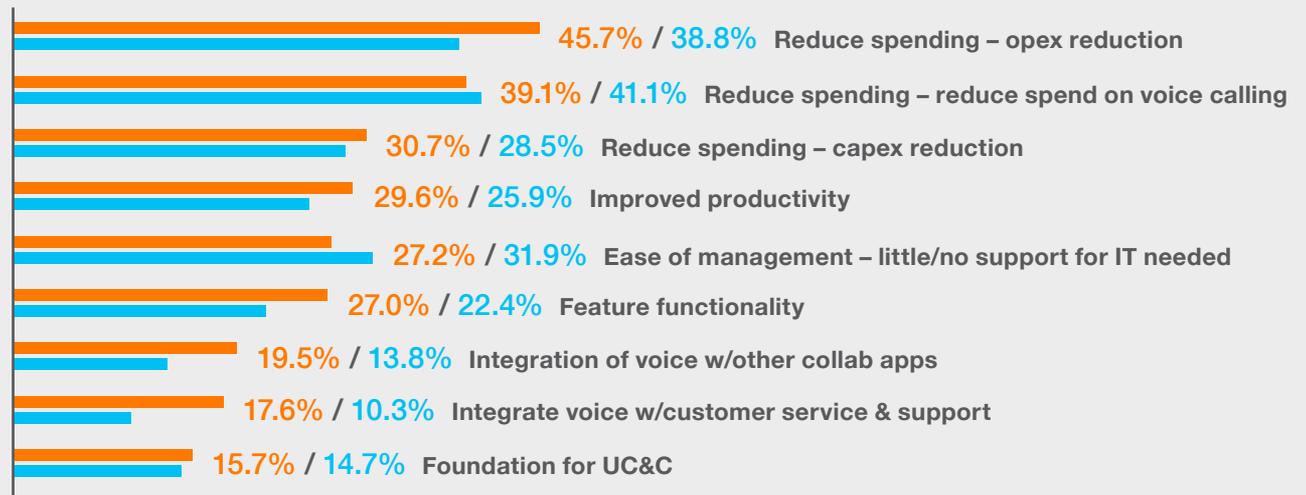
**RULE OF THUMB IS THAT BUSINESSES REPLACE A LEGACY PHONE SYSTEM ONLY ABOUT ONCE EVERY SEVEN YEARS.**

# 9. HOW WILL YOU KNOW IF YOU'VE CHOSEN THE RIGHT VOIP PROVIDER?

Businesses searching for a VoIP phone provider that supports the way they work should use technology, service and vision to benchmark potential providers. Be sure to ask each VoIP vendor you consider what kind of technology they use, and how they intend to service your system when issues arise or upgrades are needed. Lastly, consider the reputation of the VoIP provider; do they stay current or have they fallen behind? Are they visionary or reactionary?

## VOIP DEPLOYMENT DRIVERS:
### CURRENT AND
### PROSPECTIVE USERS

*Source: IDC 2014 U.S. Enterprise Communications Survey*

| | CURRENT | PROSPECTIVE | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Reduce spending – opex reduction | 45.7% | 38.8% | |
| Reduce spending – reduce spend on voice calling | 39.1% | 41.1% | |
| Reduce spending – capex reduction | 30.7% | 28.5% | |
| Improved productivity | 29.6% | 25.9% | |
| Ease of management – little/no support for IT needed | 27.2% | 31.9% | |
| Feature functionality | 27.0% | 22.4% | |
| Integration of voice w/other collab apps | 19.5% | 13.8% | |
| Integrate voice w/customer service & support | 17.6% | 10.3% | |
| Foundation for UC&C | 15.7% | 14.7% | |

# WE HOPE "DIAL NINE" HAS SAVED YOU TIME

in determining which type of VoIP provider is best for your business.

## REACTIONARY OR VISIONARY