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Do you VoIP? If not, you've probably heard the buzz. Voice over IP or "VoIP", is the hottest telecommunications technology to hit the marketplace since the cell phone. Its promise to deliver significant cost savings and increased functionality has incited the curiosity of business executives from coast to coast.

What is VoIP?

VoIP stands for Voice over Internet Protocol, and simply put, is the transmission of voice over an Internet network. It is a method for taking ordinary analog audio signals and turning them into digital signals that can be sent over the Internet. The pervasive adoption of broadband Internet service has driven a surge in the growth of VoIP. Collectively, businesses are saving millions of dollars each month by replacing (or supplementing) their traditional telephone service with VoIP telephony.

Voice is just one of several applications that make up the Voice over IP solution. IP encompasses voice, data, Internet, video, instant messaging and unified communications. VoIP service providers provide a surplus of sophisticated features such as name and number caller ID, call forwarding, call blocking and voice mail that traditional phone companies sell as premium services.

With existing communications systems nearing the end of their lifecycle, many companies are migrating to VoIP. When measured against traditional telephone services, the advantages of VoIP make it an attractive upgrade option for small and start-up business to large corporations.

Why VoIP?

Efficiency - Using IP, enables businesses to own and operate ONE network as opposed to having both a data network (LAN/WAN) for Internet/computer traffic and a voice network (PBX, centrex) for telephony.

Cost Savings - Businesses can leverage existing investments on telecom infrastructure and optimize administrative resources when moving to a VoIP solution. The cost of maintenance, upgrades, and growth is drastically reduced. Complete multimedia packages converge voice, video, data, and Internet services over one VoIP network and long distance costs decrease with toll free calling between office sites on the same system. By switching to VoIP, expenditures can be re-focused on core business activities.

Enhanced Productivity - VoIP changes the way people work by allowing them to communicate more often and more effectively. VoIP offers unparalleled mobility and accessibility, with features like Find-Me-Follow-Me and Unified Messaging. Users have ONE number connected to all their communication devices as well as the ability to retrieve all voice messages in one central mailbox.

Ease of Transition & Support - Whether built on current PBX systems or offering a completely new hosted solution, VoIP integration is seamless without any service interruption. Most technical issues can be resolved remotely within a few minutes, without a site visit.

Reliability & Security - With the right VoIP provider, all core systems are isolated on a private network and protected by firewalls and secure login-ins, ensuring the utmost security. A key consideration when choosing a solution is to ensure that is powered by a carrier grade Multimedia Communications Server. In addition to the primary server, standby servers guarantee reliability.

As more and more businesses move to this new technology, the question will change from "Why VoIP?" to "Why not VoIP?" Incredible capital savings, increased employee productivity, and reliable technology make IP communications the future of telecommunications.

In short, if your business doesn't VoIP, it should!