Business telephone systems now no longer serve as a means for only making and receiving calls. Today’s communication systems are unified and give employees the flexibility to communicate with each other and with customers via phone, text and video. The business phone system market has rapidly grown in recent years. We now have many options to choose from, which has made it harder for businesses to choose the right solution suitable for their needs.

When we talk about small businesses, we see that their owners and employees often wear several hats, including the management of their organization’s technology. With no large-scale budgets to research, procure and install business phone systems, it’s vital for them to choose a small business phone service that is simple and straightforward for anyone to set up and maintain.

# What’s Important in a Phone System for Small Business?

For every business to sustain and be successful, communication is the key. Over the years, the ways in which businesses communicate have changed drastically. Starting from wired phones back in the days to using smartphones with seamless calling, we have come a long way. In fact, technology has played a big role in this journey.

As a small business grows, getting a business phone system makes work easier with advanced calling and collaboration features. At the same time, it’s important for businesses to ensure that communication remains an easy and seamless experience for their employees. However, the truth is that choosing from too many technologies with different user interfaces makes it rather confusing for the employees. From business perspective, managing compliance and security of different systems becomes a complex task to achieve.

Hence, when choosing from a wide variety of office phone systems, you need to adopt one that can meet or exceed your requirements, is easily manageable, can be upgraded with low expense and improves your total cost of ownership.

# Benefits of a Modern Phone System for Growing your Small Business

A modern business phone system can help your business grow in the following ways:

* **Saves your time and money**. Old-school PBX systems are expensive, bulky and take up space. They require specialized support for setup and need regular maintenance. Modern business phones are easy to set up, have advanced features and are more affordable and flexible than conventional PBX systems.
* **Provides all features in one system.** Whether you need call features such as managing call logs or call forwarding, or want to collaborate on tools like online meetings or conference calls, modern business phones simplify your small business communications by consolidating all features.
* **Allows you to stay connected.** Many businesses still use desk phones for their businesses. But the reality is that business does not only happen at your desk anymore. It also happens while you are away from your desk, working from home, or sitting in any part of the world. A business phone system allows you to work from anywhere without having any worry of hardware.
* **Helps you create a professional image.** When you run a small business, your employees are doing a lot of different jobs at the same time. But even as a small business, you want to look like professionals. A system like a cloud phone system can help you achieve that. You can set automated assistants, route calls, and use pro-level call notifications and voicemail to track your customer needs. It can allow you to hold music, transfer calls to another extension and even flip a call from desk phone to mobile device to help you provide seamless services to your customers.
* **Keeps your Personal Information Secure.** Using your personal phones for business can put your private data at risk. Giving your personal mobile number to your clients is good for mobility, but it also means that your customer can call you anywhere or anytime, even when you are with your family or on vacation. Though Bring Your Own Device is very common, it can put your business data at risk. If your client data is being sorted on employees personal devices, it can land in an unsafe place anytime.

# Cloud is the Solution

According to a survey by Gartner, around 54% of Australian Organizations increased their digital innovation investment in the pandemic. Around two-thirds of organizations expect to increase their digital investments further in the year 2021. Out of those investing in digital solutions, one-third have already deployed distributed cloud, for core system transformation and customer experience as their priority. These statistics indicate that most of the Australian businesses are now relying for their IT needs on cloud-based solutions.

Considering the statistics and important features to look out for in modern day office phones, we take a look at Telstra Calling for Office 365 as the best solution for small businesses. With Telstra Calling for Office 365, you can make use of your Microsoft public cloud for unification of communication for your businesses and boost collaboration between the employees and customers.

# What is Telstra Calling for Office 365?

Telstra Calling for Office 365 is a partnership between Telstra and Microsoft launched in March 2018. It is a cloud-based service that caters to your communication and business technology needs. TCO 365 works as a voice calling service which allows you to call on a mobile or landline number from your Microsoft Teams or Skype for Business account. By purchasing Microsoft Enterprise license from Telstra, you can boost productivity and enhance collaboration within the organization.

To put it simple, TCO 365 makes your business available and connected in every way, at any time. With Microsoft and Telstra combining their industry-leading expertise for creating an integrated solution for businesses, one can be sure of superior quality services, regular updates and round the clock customer support. You can save your time and efforts invested on juggling between multiple apps and screens as all your tools are on one platform.

With the integration of cloud-based IT Services of Office 365 with Telstra voice, communication and network services, you no longer need to manage two different providers for unified operations of your business.

# Key Features

Before we move onto how it works, let’s have a look at the key features of TCO 365.

## Flexible Working Possibilities

When 2020 started, nobody could have predicted how the rest of the year would go. However, organizations that already had or were in the process of switching to Microsoft Teams did not have much effect on their collaboration and communications during the lockdown periods. Whether employees worked from office or home, it did not matter. Give your Microsoft Teams deployment a boost by further taking your call plans to Telstra Calling for Office 365.

## Full Voice Functions

It includes all traditional call functions such as call transfer, hold, voicemail and call forwarding in the cloud. It also allows other call handling features through which you can:

* Join or host multi-party meetings with only a few clicks
* Display your availability status to let others know you are available for communication
* Send or receive messages and share documents in real-time over an IP network
* Configure the appearance of contact cards to others

## Simplified Calling

One business number allows you to make and receive long distance, local, mobile, audio and video calls.

## Budget Simplification

With TCO 365, you can simplify your budget planning with probable calling plans. Include unlimited mobile, local and national calls with standard charges applicable for international calls. Bring together your cloud voice and other apps under one solution provider.

## Contact Availability

You can see which of your contacts are available and contact them through any channel that is appropriate i.e. voice, video or chat.

## Unified Workspace

With Telstra Calling for Office 365, you can have all your key desktop and mobile business tools integrated under one single business number so your staff can effectively work on the go with a unified user experience. The simplified management also allows you to manage and support a variety of tools and systems.

# Advantages of Using Telstra Calling for Office 365

If you want a service that does everything within a single platform, Telstra Calling for Office 365 is the right choice for you. You will no longer have two different systems for your business’s phone and IT system needs. This means that you will not have to deal with old-school internal phone system’s clunky services and pay heavy costs for their maintenance and repair. Rather, you will have all your communication at your fingertips.

Let’s look at some of the benefits of using TCO 365 in detail:

## Boosts Productivity

It helps boost employee productivity by saving time and providing all communication and collaboration tools in a single workspace

## Simple to Use

With TCO 365, you no longer need to learn a new tool or switch between different tools while making calls. With a unique number associated with your respective Office 365 client, your call lands on your application directly and lets you receive the call from the interface. You can also reallocate numbers to users with changed roles.

## Consistent Experience

You no longer have to bound yourself to your office desks while handling important communication. Enjoy consistent call experience whether at home, office or on the go.

## Simple IT Setup

With a simple setup, you no longer have to manage complex on-premise business phone systems or dedicated PSTN voice networks. By integrating with Telstra, you can bring your calls to Office 365 application provided you have adequate bandwidth and active internet connection available.

## Streamline Administration

Streamline and manage phone numbers and users through the administration portal.

## Start Immediately

Avoid waiting for long times to set up, integrate and test the equipment.

## Move at Your Pace

If you don’t want to route your business communication over the cloud, you can also try other options for deploying TCO. For instance, you can go hybrid, which means that you keep complex users on current on-premise cloud solution and migrate other users to your Microsoft public cloud. Move as much or as little voice to the cloud with the availability of hybrid options.

## Save Costs

With Telstra Calling for Office 365 business phone system, you can save your costs such as

* Employee wages for travelling to meeting locations
* Airfare, ground or train transportation
* Online webinar service fees
* Local and international voice calling services costs
* Costs incurred from setting up and integration of other similar services

## Present a Professional Image of Your Business

With one business number, as you make and receive calls from anywhere, you no longer have to carry two phones or share your personal number with anyone while also presenting a professional image of yourself and your business. Additionally, having a full-featured meeting and calling platform ensures that your meetings go smooth with internal and external stakeholders.

# How Telstra Calling for Office 365 Works?

Business telephone systems like Telstra Calling for Office 365 is an integration between cloud voice communication and Microsoft tools like Skype for Business and Microsoft Teams. For instance, if you want to highlight points in a file that you shared with your colleagues over Microsoft Teams, instead of writing lengthy messages, you can simply pick up your phone and call the recipient to explain. You can convey your message without any confusion while ensuring that you and your team are on the same page.

Telstra Calling for Office 365 makes your calling experience very simple. It provides you with a link to allow you to bring your entire voice calling activity directly to the Office 365 cloud. In the past, organizations had to install on-premise non-scalable and expensive hard-wired equipment and infrastructure for delivering voice calling solutions. Now, all a small business needs to set up a phone system is a laptop, adequate internet speed, and a speakerphone or headset. With this equipment in hand your employees can utilize full featured audio and video conferencing, voice calling and all other communication tools at their fingertips.

On a basic level, administering TCO 365 is just as simple as Office 365 itself. All users are allocated their unique phone numbers in their Office 365 Admin Portal. A small business phone system can choose to use its existing numbers and port them to Office 365 or choose new numbers to allocate. When your small business begins to grow, you can allocate every new member their Office 365 license to start with their new number. In order to enable TCO 365, you must have your right Microsoft 365 license and a current Microsoft Office 365 subscription. In addition to that, your small business organization must have at least twenty users.

However, if you don’t renew your Office 365 subscription, your Telstra Calling for Office 365 service will discontinue. Hence, the service is dependent upon your Microsoft 365 subscription license. For the service to continue, you must renew your Office 365 license.

Moreover, Microsoft 365 has multiple accounts available for a cost. None of the accounts are free though. But it’s important to note that Telstra Calling for Office 365 can only be deployed on some particular Enterprise licenses. Though, substantial discounts are available for non-profit organizations and education customers.

# Which Businesses Can Qualify for Telstra Calling for Office 365?

When the Telstra Calling for Office 365 service came, it was hard for businesses to qualify for the conditions to utilize the service. This was to easily manage the influx of all organizations interested in availing this service. However, the service has been around now for a while and the only requirement for businesses to meet is that they must have at least 20 users having Microsoft 365 license. Once you meet this requirement, you can set up Telstra Calling for Office 365 as your business phone system.

# Skype for Business or Microsoft Teams?

You may ask yourself which one is better. Is it Skype for Business Online, Skype for Business On-Premise or Microsoft teams? The answer to that lies in your business’s specific requirements. All three calling solutions have their own pros and cons, and you should choose the one that fulfils your business phone systems requirements the best. Choose the one that helps your IT strategy move forward.

However, it’s important to note here that one cannot possibly access Telstra Calling for Office 365 through Skype for Business On-Premise. That’s because the PSTN calling functionality, i.e. the ability to dial external numbers, relies on cloud capability. Hence, you can only port existing telephone numbers if your users are homed online.

Additionally, deployment of Skype for Business Server is a very costly and lengthy process. For many organizations using conventional PABX business phone systems, its wiser to move to a cloud phone system.

Essentially then, the question is whether you should go for Microsoft Teams or Skype for Business Online.

# Key Takeaways

The bottom line is, Telstra Calling for Office 365 is the best modern office phone solution of 2021 for small businesses. With all the advantages it has to offer at nominal costs, it is the ideal and most lucrative choice for small business phone systems to adopt in the coming year.