JIVE

WHY VOICE IN THE CLOUD

TABLE OF CONTENTS

JIVE

Introduction

For the past 50 years, business phone system options have varied, with several different system technologies available on varying networks and platforms. Without a clear winner, the buying decision usually came down to balancing variables—typically feature needs, company size, and total cost. Organizations faced a dilemma in choosing, sacrificing functionality for cost or vice versa. None of the systems scaled particularly well as companies changed employee size over time, and keeping hardware and systems up to date was cost and labor intensive.

Due to changes in IP networks, cloud computing technology, and virtualization, the telecommunications landscape has dramatically changed. IP networks have achieved dominance as the preferred method of voice transmission, shifting the debate from traditional voice solutions to competing IP service delivery models. The question today is whether On-Premises or Cloud-based solutions best serve the modern organization's Unified Communications needs. Key advantages in cost and management make a strong argument for the Cloud.

Voice applications delivered via the Cloud provide the advanced enterprise-level features and reliability available with On-Premises PBX systems, without their high cost and expensive maintenance requirements. In addition, the Cloud offers the ability to easily unify all customer sites, scale gracefully with organizational growth, and provide customized solutions to fit complex needs. The Cloud service provider owns and maintains all necessary equipment, and service is delivered via public or private WAN connections.

Lower cost is the principal benefit of choosing a Cloud voice solution, with greater reliability and enhanced productivity close behind. This white paper outlines the value presented by Cloud voice, distinguishing the differences in Cloud vs. On-Premises systems in terms of lower cost, greater reliability, and enhanced productivity.

Lower Cost

Cloud voice allows the organization to save on both initial capital expenditures (CapEx) and ongoing operating expenses (OpEx). The pricing model unique to Cloud voice charges based on the number of users, allowing organizations to scale up and down conveniently with billing changes updating in real time. Compared to On-Premises voice, Cloud voice presents the greatest return for telecommunications budgets.

MINIMAL CAPITAL REQUIREMENTS

Cloud voice requires very little initial capital expenditure, especially if a data network already exists. Often IP phones are the only capital required, and these can be rented if a solution with no CapEx is desired. Broadband circuits and Internet access can also be acquired through your Cloud voice provider. Most reputable providers have extensive experience deploying Cloud voice over existing broadband networks. By comparison, On-Premises voice deployments require large capital expenditures to provide servers, phones, network upgrades, and implementation and licensing costs, which for many organizations is cost prohibitive.

COMMODITY EQUIPMENT

Cloud voice equipment is standards-based or commodity (generic) equipment. It works with any service provider that supports the same open standards. Commodity equipment offers the organization more flexibility and equipment options from a variety of different vendors. In contrast, On-Premises systems typically include proprietary equipment and contracts, resulting in limited equipment options, expensive upgrades and maintenance, and vendor lock-in—all at higher prices.

HIGHER RESOURCE UTILIZATION

Organizations often utilize two separate access lines to carry their voice and data traffic. Cloud voice allows the organization to consolidate voice and data onto a single network, freeing the excess lines to be combined for greater bandwidth, used for backup, or eliminated entirely. Converging voice and data can also assist in eliminating "stranded" capacity—capacity that is not consistently utilized and is being wasted. Adding voice to an existing data access line increases the traffic over the connection, thereby utilizing the stranded capacity.

PREDICTABLE MONTHLY EXPENSES

On-Premises solutions are often associated with unpredictable costs as organizational needs change, utilization patterns shift, or system components become obsolete or break down.

Cloud voice allows organizations to accurately predict what their telecommunications costs will be each month as the cost is based solely on the number of users. Unlimited local and long-distance minutes are typically included in the basic user cost. As a result, changes in utilization patterns don't affect monthly charges. In addition, there are no variable costs associated with software upgrades, licensing, or hardware maintenance.

LOW RISK OF OBSOLESCENCE

In many organizations, it is common to see outdated On-Premises technology and legacy equipment, as the prospect of upgrading is difficult and expensive. Cloud voice reduces the risk of obsolescence by shifting the responsibility for infrastructure to the service provider. Upgrades are deployed automatically via the Cloud, allowing the organization to stay up to date without dedicating internal resources or additional spend.

ALL-INCLUSIVE PRICING

On-Premises providers often use a-la-carte pricing for each basic and advanced voice feature they offer. Because many features aren't native to the platform, they require additional hardware, software, or licensing costs to integrate into the solution. These costs increase per-user prices and impact an organization's ability to efficiently scale the solution. The trend in Cloud voice however, is to integrate all features natively into the platform. As a result, Cloud voice providers offer all-inclusive pricing without per-feature add-ons and hidden fees. This allows the organization to implement powerful Unified Communications features and functionality at an all-inclusive price, forever eliminating the features vs. cost dilemma which used to dominate the phone system decision.

Greater Reliability

The reliability of communications is a critical element in most organizations. Cloud voice telephony has been engineered with this in mind, with distinct reliability advantages over On-Premises solutions. These advantages not only make standard communications easier, but also increase functionality in the event of a disaster or emergency.

PROFESSIONALLY MANAGED INFRASTRUCTURE

Few organizations would consider themselves expert data center operators. On-Premises solutions require organizations to host their phone system at their own location, and manage it at their own expense. Given the importance of communication, this creates a large staffing and resource burden on the organization. With Cloud voice, infrastructure management is in the hands of the service provider, who is better qualified to manage the resources and personnel necessary to keep data and hardware safe and up to date.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY

On-Premises systems are vulnerable to outages and interruption of service as their on-site location creates a single point of failure. Cloud voice solutions are redundantly hosted in data centers across the world, giving the service provider multiple points of failure and making interruption of service less likely. Multiple points of presence (POPs) allow the service provider to reroute traffic in the event of an interruption or failure of any component.

CONSISTENT US-BASED SUPPORT

One of the more significant costs passed onto the service provider in the Cloud voice model is support. With On-Premises solutions, dedicated phone system support is a costly necessity often requiring dedicated full-time attention. The Cloud voice model transfers this responsibility to the service provider. This allows internal IT personnel to focus more of their time on IT initiatives other than the phone system and puts qualified support resources at the organization's fingertips. This specialized support is consistent and always available. Several Cloud voice providers are leading the industry with a commitment to 24/7 US-Based support, which can mean big advantages for organizations seeking to fully utilize their technology.

IMPROVED DISASTER RECOVERY

Cloud Voice brings the organization a variety of disaster recovery and management options which are unavailable in On-Premises solutions. Most Cloud voice solutions can be set up in advance to automatically reroute all calls in the event of a disaster to wireless numbers, a home phone, another company location, or a third party answering service. IP phones can also be simply taken off site and plugged in at any other location with high speed Internet access.

Enhanced Productivity

Although financial savings and service reliability are critical purchase decision considerations, it is the productivity-enhancing Unified Communications features of Cloud voice that organizations come to depend on daily for truly effective communications.

INTUITIVE FEATURES

Cloud voice offers powerful Unified Communications features that greatly enhance productivity and streamline business processes.

In contrast to an On-Premises solution, Cloud voice features can be configured intuitively with as little as one hour's training. Feature customization is accomplished in real time via a browser-based application from anywhere a user has Internet access. As a result, all features are easily deployed, managed, and scaled, including:

- **Voicemail-to-Email and Fax-to-Email:** Users can personalize call settings, forward voicemails and faxes automatically to their email inbox, and access them anywhere.

- **Find-me-Follow-me:** Users can be accessible via a single number regardless of their physical location. By setting up an activity profile, calls are automatically routed to the correct device and location whether mobile or desk phone, or can be set to ring both simultaneously. This ensures users never miss an important call.

- **Visual Dial Plan Editor:** Administrators can configure, update, and customize complex dial plans quickly and easily via a web-based, drag-and-drop interface.

- **Dial-In Conferencing:** Users can set up unlimited conference bridges as simple extensions, allowing them to host unlimited conference calls with multiple participants without a third party service or additional fees.

- **Auto-Attendant:** Organizations can set up automated answering options without additional hardware or cost. Routing calls to a dial menu, using custom hold music or recorded voice, and enabling after-hours service and call routing is done easily with a drag-and-drop web interface.

SIMPLIFIED MACS

Simplifying moves, adds, and other changes to an organization's phone system is one of the strongest benefits of Cloud voice. Traditionally, adding users, modifying settings, or making other changes (even simple ones) required complicated

configuration or expensive third-party services. With Cloud voice, these same changes are made seamlessly through a point-and-click web interface or even a mobile device.

REMOTE WORKERS

Cloud voice services eliminate the boundaries traditionally associated with office telephones. Since the PBX is Cloud-based, phone traffic can be routed to any location connected to the Internet, and functions typically exclusive to the office location can be accessed anywhere. This flexibility has far-reaching implications for mobile workers, geographically dispersed call centers, and organizations with multiple locations. The available-anywhere capability of Cloud voice extends to all system features, from voicemail and fax to call routing, transferring, and personal dial plan configurations. With an On-Premises solution, this same functionality is difficult, if not impossible to achieve.

MOBILE APPLICATIONS

The key identifying characteristic of the modern workforce is mobility. Cloud voice supports the mobile workforce, allowing users to access all the same features of their desktop phone from their mobile device. Users can control features, permissions, voicemails, and how caller ID looks from their mobile app regardless of which device they're using. The experience is the same.

FASTER UPGRADES

As the proliferation of new technologies continues to accelerate, the speed at which an organization gains access to upgrades and new versions of software becomes critically important. In an On-Premises solution, these costs and responsibilities fall upon the organization. With Cloud voice, updates and new feature roll-outs are performed by the service provider and are delivered seamlessly to the client. Passing this key responsibility on to the service provider not only greatly relieves cost and management burden for the organization, but ensures the organization always stays in sync with new feature developments.

Conclusion

The compelling benefits of Cloud voice combined with its lower cost explain its emerging status as the dominant solution for today's organizations and workforce. As the industry landscape continues to evolve and take shape, it is becoming increasingly clear Cloud voice service will represent the business standard. Organizations looking to gain the substantial savings and upgrades in features and usability available through IP telephony can rest assured the Cloud voice model presents a wise choice for those wishing to stay in sync with truly innovative technology without becoming babysitters of it.

ABOUT JIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Jive Communications provides enterprise-grade Hosted VoIP and Unified Communications to businesses and institutions. Jive is rapidly becoming the standard for business communications worldwide. All of Jive's hosted services run on Jive Cloud, a proprietary, cloud-based platform. The Jive Cloud architecture has been purpose-built to deliver the most reliable, powerful, and economical hosted communication services available to the enterprise market.

HEADQUARTERS	SALES	SUPPORT	PRESS
1275 W 1600 N, Suite 100	24 Hours, 7 Days/Week	24 Hours, 7 Days/Week	Mon–Fri (8am–6pm MST)
Orem, Utah, 84057	866.768.5429 *(General)*	877.548.3003 *(Toll-Free)*	801.804.7111 *(Local)*
866.768.5429	888.850.3009 *(Public Sector)*	jive.com/support	866.372.5429 *(Fax)*
jive.com	sales@jive.com	support@jive.com	jive.com/press
info@jive.com			press@jive.com