

WHITE PAPER

SIX MYTHS OF SWITCHING BUSINESS PHONE SYSTEMS

Here are six myths preventing businesses from switching phone systems—and the realities of moving to a brilliantly simple ShoreTel business phone system.

Table of Contents

Myth 1: Our phone system doesn't have a big impact on the customer experience 3

Myth 2: Our workers don't care about the phones they use 3

Myth 3: It's too risky to change phone system vendors 4

Myth 4: It's too difficult to get employees to learn something new 4

Myth 5: It's too expensive to switch phone systems 5

Myth 6: It's too hard to integrate the phone system with our business applications 5

Make the switch to ShoreTel 6

Six Myths of Switching Business Phone Systems

Many business executives overlook the importance of their phone systems in their efforts to move their businesses steadily forward. But the reality is that your phone system is your lifeline to sales, customer service, and the innovation that drives your business ahead. Here are six common myths that prevent businesses from switching phone systems—and the realities of moving to a brilliantly simple ShoreTel business phone system.

Myth 1: Our phone system doesn't have a big impact on the customer experience.

Reality: Your phone system is at the heart of your business.

With so many ways to communicate with customers—email, chat, SMS, and social media to name a few—many business leaders think that the phone isn't as relevant to the customer experience as it once was. While the volume of incoming calls may be down, when customers or prospects pick up the phone, their need is often more important and urgent than ever before.

Whether it is a first touch, a major sale, or a support issue, your staff needs convenient communications tools. A decades-old phone system offers limited functionality that ultimately hampers your ability to stay in touch with customers quickly and easily.

ShoreTel is a brilliantly simple IP phone system with unified communications (UC) capabilities—VoIP telephony, instant messaging, video conferencing, mobility, presence, and collaboration—that can help your salespeople sell more, allow customer service representatives to resolve issues quickly, and enable workers to collaborate productively. And with ShoreTel, UC and contact center functionality is built-in; there's no need for additional licensing packs or extra servers.

Myth 2: Our workers don't care about the phones they use.

Reality: People have never had higher expectations for the ease of communications.

The unstoppable bring-your-own-device (BYOD) movement is a clear indicator that people value convenience and the ability to stay connected to work and home. The newest members of the workforce, the so-called millennial generation, expect to have all of their favorite technology tools to do their jobs. A 15-year old phone system looks like tin cans with strings. They expect three-way calling to be stress-free, web conferencing to be easy, and to be able to use whatever communication mode is most convenient at the moment.

Six Myths of Switching Business Phone Systems

With ShoreTel, your workforce can communicate how and when they want, using their preferred device. At the touch of a button, a phone call becomes a full-blown multimedia collaboration session. Smartphones and tablets are an integrated part of enterprise communications applications, and workers benefit from the freedom of mobile devices and the convenience of desk phones. They can even answer a call on their desk phone and then move to their mobile phones when they need to run out the door. And ShoreTel Conferencing enables your teams to engage and share at will, without hassle or assistance from IT.

Myth 3: It's too risky to change phone system vendors.

Reality: A careful plan mitigates the risk of technology change.

A new business communications system is a big step, but like with any IT decision, you can mitigate the risk of change by following best practices for vendor selection, management and deployment. Work with a consultant or solutions provider to help manage the selection process and plan the rollout. UC systems that can be deployed in phases, rather than as a single big-bang cutover, also lowers risk. A deployment plan should include thorough testing of the new phone system to iron out any issues as well as training for your users and the administrative staff to ensure that the migration is smooth.

Be sure to choose a UC system that your people will love. Customers endorse ShoreTel, and in turn, the company is obsessively focused on the satisfaction of its customers. It's a priority for ShoreTel, and it's backed up with independent surveys and carefully monitored feedback from customers. ShoreTel uses Net Promoter Score, a globally recognized metric that's used to measure customer loyalty, which measures an individual's willingness to recommend a company or product to others. Customers have rated ShoreTel with the highest NPS of 74, which is significantly above the peer group and the generally acknowledged World-Class NPS score of 50.

Myth 4: It's too difficult to get employees to learn something new.

Reality: Nobody likes having their cheese moved, except when you give them better cheese.

A new UC system will necessarily work differently than your old phones, and that's a good thing. It's about time that your workers have more convenient ways to interact with your customers, partners, and their coworkers. That flexibility will let them work the way they want—and that adds up to more productive and happier employees.

A ShoreTel UC system is brilliantly simple to use, and tight integration with Microsoft Outlook only adds to the convenience. And that means faster adoption rates and fewer calls to the helpdesk. ShoreTel brings plug-and-play simplicity to all of the applications your workforce needs to communicate effectively, including telephony, UC, collaboration, mobility, and contact center.

Six Myths of Switching Business Phone Systems

The same brilliant simplicity extends to system administration. You won't need to retain specialized systems integrators to do simple tasks like adding, moving, or changing users. Capabilities such as voicemail and conferencing are fully integrated and can be managed from a single interface. Nor do you need to buy and manage separate servers or additional licensing packs, as you do with other vendors.

Learning to manage an Avaya, Cisco or Mitel system can take weeks or months, while mere mortals (your receptionist or office manager) can learn to manage ShoreTel system in a few days. And that will save you a bundle of money and a ton of hassle.

Myth 5: It's too expensive to switch phone systems.

Reality: It's costing you big to keep your old phone system.

Many businesses have a patchwork of old phone systems, maybe even from different vendors, and cobbled-together systems are a hindrance. People are wasting time being unproductive and you're paying a premium to maintain a technology relic.

ShoreTel's UC system helps lower total cost of ownership (TCO) and boosts workforce productivity. ShoreTel has been designed from the ground up to take advantage of IP technology and eliminates the complexity found in other UC solutions that keeps you tangled up.

ShoreTel's upfront costs are among the lowest in the industry, but the company goes even further to drive home savings for its customers. ShoreTel guarantees the lowest TCO, so you know that when you purchase a ShoreTel UC system, you're investing in the right decision for your business. With its Lowest TCO Guarantee program, if the ShoreTel TCO Tool and/or additional independent data determine that its TCO is higher than a competing solution, ShoreTel will lower its prices to beat the competition.

Your UC system should grow gracefully as your business expands to new locations or hires new workers. ShoreTel is a single platform that can scale from 10 to 20,000 users. With other systems, such as Avaya, Mitel and Cisco, you may need to buy and install a completely different product if you want more UC or contact center functionality or need to support more users, and that adds up to more cost and higher complexity.

Myth 6: It's too hard to integrate the phone system with our business applications.

Reality: You can see immediate value from integrating communications processes with your business applications.

Many businesses see the value of integrating UC functionality into business applications, such as customer-relationship management (CRM), but find that the integration is simply too expensive or too difficult to be practical. Integration of voice, SMS and chat directly into your CRM or other business applications allows your workforce to maximize productivity and frees them from the inconvenience of having to constantly switch among applications.

Six Myths of Switching Business Phone Systems

With ShoreTel, you can take advantage of pre-built integrations with major business applications, including Salesforce.com, Microsoft Dynamics CRM and IBM Sametime, which increases the value of both your ShoreTel UC system and your business applications. With ShoreTel's open interfaces, it's easy to do custom integrations with your business applications as well.

Make the switch to ShoreTel

ShoreTel's brilliantly simple UC platforms, applications and mobile UC solutions promise a new rhythm of workforce engagement. Give your workers the modern communications and collaboration tools they need to deliver an exceptional customer experience and develop innovative new products and services. And with ShoreTel, you get a unified communications platform that's rich in features, rock-solid reliable, and scales from small to large organizations.

To find out how a ShoreTel premise-based UC system can benefit your organization, contact your local ShoreTel reseller today. If you are looking to put your communications in the cloud, learn more about ShoreTel's new cloud-based solution.

ShoreTel. Brilliantly simple business communications.

ShoreTel, Inc. (NASDAQ: SHOR) is a leading provider of brilliantly simple IP phone systems and unified communications solutions powering today's always-on workforce. Its flexible communications solutions for on-premises, cloud and hybrid environments eliminate complexity, reduce costs and improve productivity.

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