When is the right time to update to a modern business phone system?

Jelly

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If you're not prepared to modernise your business phone system, you could be left behind...

Doing nothing is not always the best option

It's very easy to make a case for updating your organisation's IT system. The latest operating systems will be faster and smarter. Updating your IT network will make it more efficient, while the latest software will bring new features. Moving forwards is usually the best direction, but often the business phone system is left overlooked.

Various reasons are often cited for this reluctance:

- Updating to a new phone system will be expensive
- Changing will cause widespread disruption to the business
- It will add complexity to existing processes
- Time will need to be invested in considerable staff training
- Employees are familiar with existing phone systems
- Adopting new technology is a leap in the dark
- The organisation is managing well with the current phone system
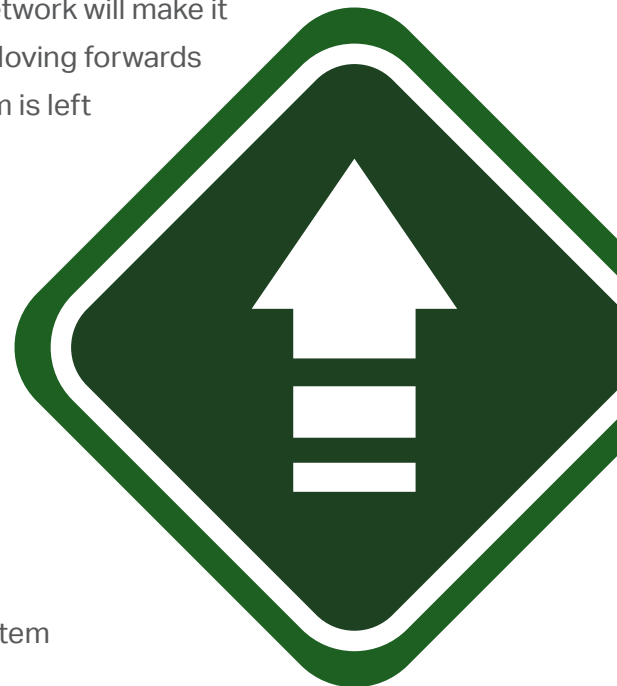
But remaining with an outdated phone system could mean that your organisation is missing out on efficiency gains. It could also be restricting employee productivity and having an adverse impact on customer service. It could also be costing you more than is necessary.

The warning signs

Phone systems don't become outdated overnight; the process can take years. As businesses grow and new applications and technologies are introduced, existing telecoms systems can struggle to provide the functionality and flexibility needed for these changes.

There are various warning signs that your existing phone system may no longer be the best fit for your business:

- Is it getting increasingly expensive to maintain?
- Are you reliant on a third party to make necessary changes to the system?
- Can an issue take hours or days to resolve resulting in considerable downtime?
- Are you using disparate phone systems across your organisation, resulting in inconsistent business processes? For example, is customer service being handled differently across the enterprise?
- Are you using bolt-on solutions to get your phone system to interface with key business applications?
- Is your phone system struggling to cope with increasing call volumes or seasonal spikes?
- Has your phone system stopped offering all the functionality your organisation now requires?
- Does your phone system make it easy to roll out new sites or is it always challenging to get new lines installed and integrate these sites with the rest of the business?
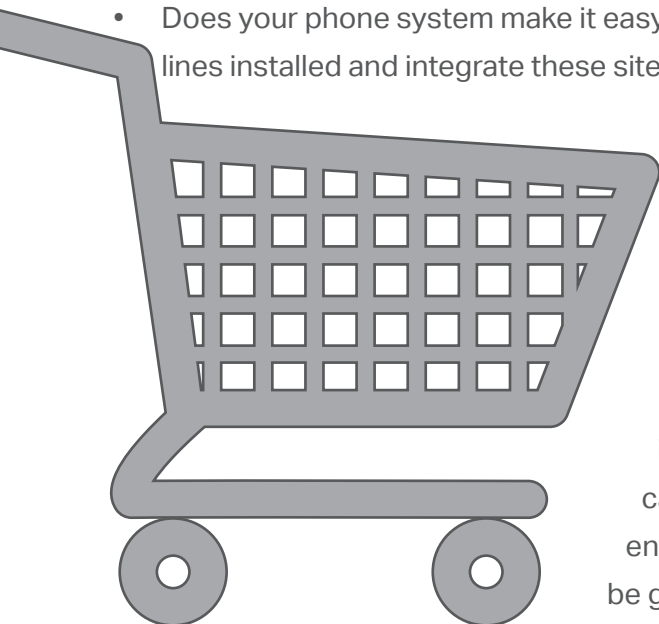
If your phone system is showing any of these warning signs, then it's time to consider updating to a modern system.

Updating your business telecoms system can make it easier to gain maximum ROI through improved efficiencies, increased productivity and reduced call costs. Employees can do more with less time. Customer service can be enhanced and the downtime caused by a disaster at a site can be greatly reduced or even eliminated.

Why SIP is more cost effective than ISDN

More and more organisations are migrating from ISDN to SIP trunking for its cost saving capabilities alone. SIP offers a number of cost benefits over ISDN:
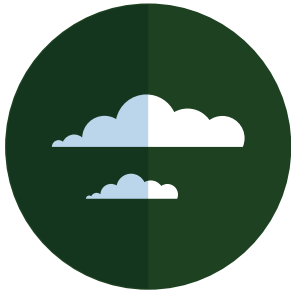
IP connectivity is less expensive than ISDN, with lower call costs

Internal calls between extensions and sites are often free

Line rental cost is also lower

If calls need to be rerouted due to a disaster, there are no call forwarding charges

There is much scope for additional cost savings with SIP. Converging voice and data onto a single connection also reduces infrastructure complexity, reduces time spent on managing networks and increases efficiency. By deploying SIP trunking, organisations can rationalise their hardware estate by reducing the number of PBXs and/or ISDN lines. These cost savings can bring competitive advantages to your organisation as you are able to offer enhanced services at little or no extra cost.

Moving to SIP trunking is easier than you think

Moving to SIP trunking is not taking a leap into the unknown. The technology is tried and tested and is being used by thousands of organisations of all sizes across the UK.
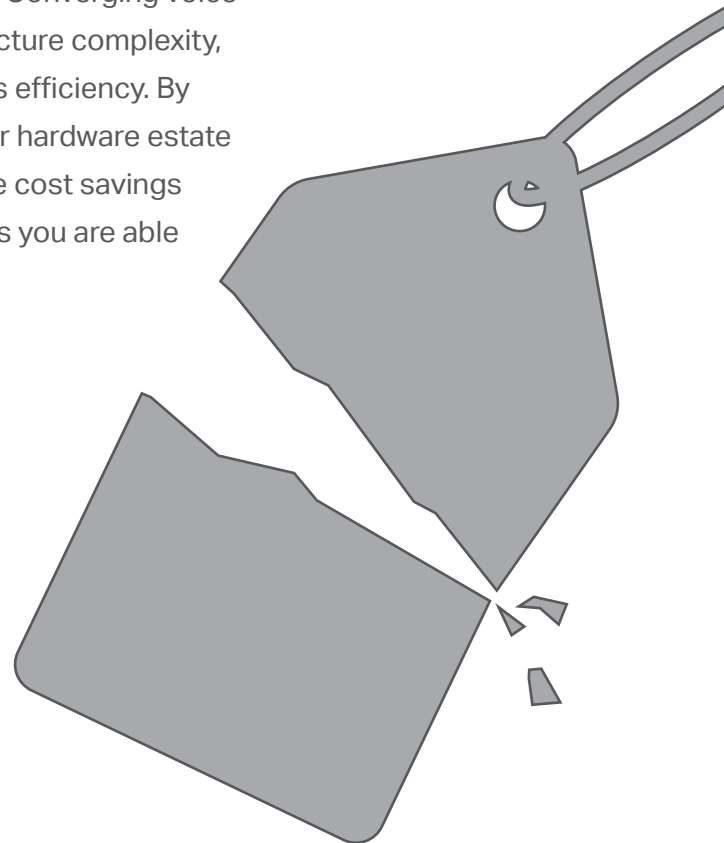
Nor is it expensive - you can use your existing resources. SIP is compatible with a wide range of PBXs, so it's highly unlikely that your organisation would need to invest in additional hardware to gain the many benefits of SIP. IP connectivity can be provided via an existing broadband or Ethernet connection. A SIP trunking solution can be set-up with minimal disruption to your business - there is no need to wait weeks for lines to be installed or systems to be configured. Existing ISDN lines can also be kept operational during installation. Instead of having various third parties maintain your voice and data networks, a single SIP provider can manage everything, with robust SLAs in place to maintain quality of service.

The benefits of embracing modern phone technology

Technology never stands still; business is constantly changing. By upgrading to a modern phone system, your organisation can reap the benefits of the latest technology and become more agile in the process. Many organisations have deployed Microsoft Lync, a powerful communication and collaboration tool that combines real-time and non real-time messaging features. SIP trunks can be integrated with Lync, enabling colleagues to communicate with each other using instant messaging, conferencing and voice. The ability to find and communicate with colleagues saves time and boosts productivity. It can also help to deliver an enhanced customer service.

SIP trunking also offers increased resilience, whether it's the ability to keep your business running when disaster strikes or balancing calls during peak periods. SIP also delivers high quality voice calls, and is highly scalable, enabling you to add or remove lines as your business demands. ISDN lacks this flexibility. All these features can help your organisation to boost business performance and gain a competitive advantage over rivals who are still using traditional phone systems.
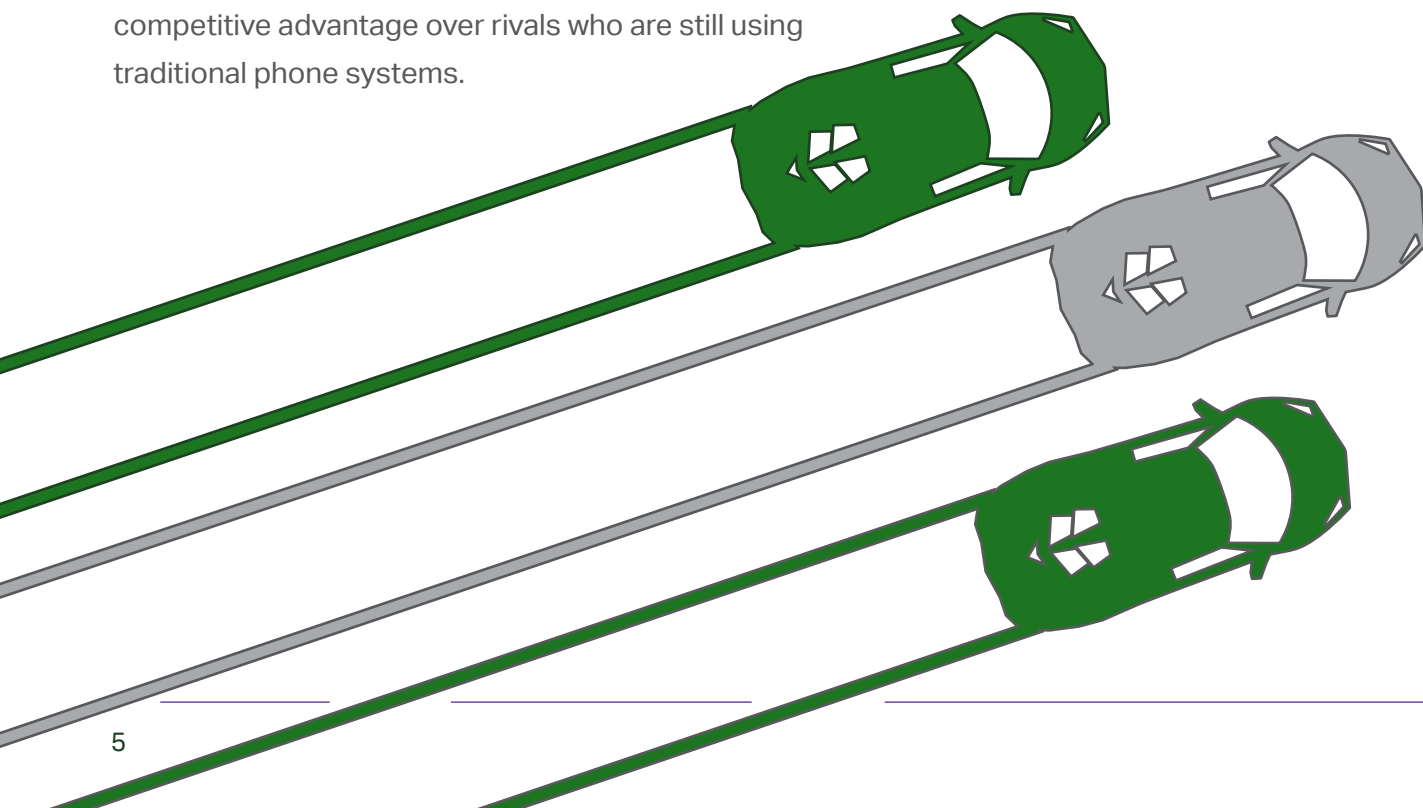
Businesses thrive on agility and adaptability and that means adopting technologies that help support this. If your existing phone system no longer offers the flexibility your business needs, it could be stifling your growth and ability to achieve your business goals. Upgrading to a new phone system doesn't have to be expensive and nor does it have to disrupt your business. The benefits offered by modern telecoms technology are too great to be ignored.

Takeaways:

- Carry out an audit of your existing phone system - how much is it costing you to manage and maintain?

- SIP trunking can save you money and boost productivity

- Moving to SIP trunking will increase resilience and the quality of your communications

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