

Technology advances enable businesses to move into the cloud

Advances in communication, IT and internet technologies are combining to address the many difficulties companies encounter with business-critical PBX systems. That's according to telecoms specialist TeleMasters which says the next step in PBX solutions will bring immense benefits to companies of all sizes.

Telephonic communication, both incoming and outgoing, is critical to business operations and cannot be compromised, says Riaan Pietersen, TeleMasters' corporate enterprise head. As a result, businesses have been required to tread a delicate tightrope between ensuring sufficient telephonic access on the one hand and securing acceptable returns from investments on the other.

"TDM-based PBX systems, currently in use by the bulk of the local market, are typically marked by a lack of flexibility, features and ability to scale to meet emerging business requirements. The last has been particularly problematic for companies forcing decision makers to engage in corporate fortunetelling to predict the demands that are likely to be made over a multi-year hardware lifecycle," Pietersen says.

Easy to scale and simple to maintain

"Failure to factor in growth in employee or customer numbers for instance could result in the company being forced into replacing the system well ahead of its time simply because it lacks the capacity to manage additional incoming lines or cannot service increasing extension requirements. Alternatively, the company may find that it over-invested in a system for added capacity that is never utilised."

An alternative to these TDM-based systems is now available enabling companies to leverage the benefits of IP telephony, increased Internet access efficiencies and cloud computing to deliver greater power to business telephony solutions, says Pietersen. "Technology advances in a number of areas have opened up a whole new way of managing corporate telephony and enabling businesses to move their PBX system into the cloud. This virtual PBX solution is easy to scale, simple to maintain, feature rich, and makes use of operational rather than capital expenditure.

"It also addresses the pain points companies have had to deal with historically. Extensions are inexpensive to deploy, the solution is not locked to a geographical location, custom applications are available to address specific business requirements, and investment in equipment that will require costly replacement over time is no longer required," he explains.

Removing the customer's irritation factor

Essentially, a virtual PBX solution offers full control, encourages increased productivity and is able to effectively adapt and grow with the business' needs. The virtual solution also offers additional functions such as the ability to configure the solution so that incoming calls can ring on multiple devices and/or multiple numbers in the background.

Says Pietersen: "This is particularly valuable for companies with a mobile workforce. Customers looking to contact such an employee need only dial a single number to reach the person regardless of whether he is

his desk, in the car or out in the field. This removes the customer's irritation factor in having to call several numbers before making access and ensures that the company does not lose valuable opportunities from missed calls."

TeleMasters also offers a transitional solution to assist companies tied into TDM-based systems that have not reached end-of-life to make the move to an IP-based system. "This entails deploying customer premise equipment that enables the legacy systems to make the transition to the IP world. As a start this enables the customer to terminate traffic onto an IP network and in so doing gain efficiencies and to save on telephony costs," says Pietersen.

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