

## Ready for Telephony Revolution



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Sandra, the Office Administrator for Wonderful Widgets, a company based in Halifax, came to work 10 minutes earlier than normal on Monday. She booted her computer and went to her Graphical User Interface, a fancy name for her telecom enabled desktop.

She added extensions to the phone system for the three new employees starting that day. A few clicks on her desktop and that was done, along with removing an unneeded extension and moving several others to accommodate the office shuffle that was taking place. While she was at it she changed extensions in a couple of work stations at their New Glasgow satellite office.

Sandra did all this in a few minutes without having to call and wait five days for a technician to come and do it. The cost savings of not having to call for a technician to perform these tasks at \$100 per service call are evident.

This efficient exercise was available because Wonderful Widgets changed their telecom system over to VoIP.

The interest level in Voice over Internet Protocol is higher than a windmill at Inverness and that's why it is the subject of 'In Touch' more often than anything else. The evolution in telephony has become a revolution.

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operations in their company and increase their ROI over time, putting a VoIP system in place is something to strongly consider.

The features described above are barely scratching the surface of what a VoIP system offers. The convenient web-based control panel saves the receptionist a lot of time because he/she can see on their desktop where everyone is at a glance. Each employee's name has an icon which says whether they are on the phone, in a meeting, on vacation, at the branch office and so on. Not all VoIP systems operate through a desk top a computer instead of the old telephone console system.

Handling internal and external conference calls is a breeze and saves money. Automated attendant features allow the system to build phone menu systems, add call menus, transfer to voicemail and create flexible and programmable rules to handle all of these features.

Integration with Outlook or similar programs means incoming calls can be simultaneously matched with your client database so their file appears on your desktop when you receive the call. The same applies to outgoing calls by clicking on a contact to dial their number.

Voicemail and voice mailboxes can be greatly enhanced by allowing messages to be sent to email where they can be listened to on the employee's PC. They can then save them to a file and refer to them later on. They can also forward them

so they don't have to waste time making unnecessary calls or typing an email to someone else describing what was said.

There is nothing more convenient than coming from a meeting and seeing your phone messages on your email. Then you can prioritize in which order you want to deal with them instead of wasting time listening to them before you get to the one you were waiting for.

A major concern I run into is that CFOs think they have to buy all new phones with an IP-PBX. They worry for naught; there are systems that support existing phones although not all functionality is available.

Then again, all users in a company don't require all the available functionality.

Like automobiles, there are many different makes and models of IP-PBX. It isn't a

matter of calling your telco and saying: "Bring me one of those IP-PBX sets." Whether a company is small or medium-size, a needs analysis will begin the process to reveal the type of switch that is best for your company. Then a RFP followed by an analysis and a Q & A from the vendors will ultimately decide what is the most viable way to proceed.

It isn't something you would consider without the services of an independent consultant; someone who doesn't represent a particular vendor or service provider.

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