

## THREE WAYS TO MAKE A PHONE CALL : HOW DO YOU MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE ?

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DURING THE PAST DECADE, THE VOICE COMMUNICATION WORLD HAS CHANGED SIGNIFICANTLY. HOWEVER, ORGANISATIONS ARE STILL STRUGGLING TO DETERMINE THE RIGHT MIX OF DESK PHONES, MOBILES AND SOFT PHONES THAT THEY NEED. WORSE, SOME ORGANISATIONS ARE DEVISING STANDALONE STRATEGIES FOR EACH OF THESE TECHNOLOGIES. ORGANISATIONS NEED TO DEVELOP A ROBUST VOICE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND HOLISTIC BUSINESS CASE THAT CONSIDERS DESK PHONE, MOBILE AND SOFT PHONE REQUIREMENTS.

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## 1 DESK PHONE: THE TRADITIONAL CHOICE

Fixed desk phones, connected to a centralised call platform still represent the mainstay of enterprise voice services. Many organisations have made the move from time-division multiplexing (TDM) technology to IP-based telephony (IPT), or have a plan in place for an IPT roll-out. However, with the advent of new communication mediums, call volumes from fixed desk phones are dropping, although they are still often the preferred choice for conference calls and inter-office calls.

## 2 MOBILE: UBIQUITOUS COMMUNICATION ENABLER

Distributed and mobile workforces have become the norm in today's globalised enterprises. According to IDC, by 2015, the world's mobile workforce will reach 1.3 billion; representing 37.2% of the total workforce. Mobile communication devices and technologies have redefined the way people conduct business. As fast as fixed-line calls volumes fall, mobile call volumes are rising even faster and organisations are being challenged to manage high costs and complex mobile tariffs.

## 3 SOFT PHONE: BLURRING THE LINES:

Soft phones can provide access to either enterprise hosted call platforms or, increasingly, cloud-hosted voice services from a software client on any PC. With suitably hardware-enabled laptops or PCs, soft phone client software can also often facilitate desktop video conferencing and other collaboration capabilities. According to a survey conducted by Global Industry Analysts Inc, global enterprise soft phones market is projected to record volume sales of 2.9 million soft phones, worth \$217.2m by 2017.

## 4 HOW DO YOU TO SELECT THE RIGHT COMBINATION?

You need to decide the optimum combination of desk phones, mobiles and soft phones by considering four key factors.

### 4.1 NATURE OF BUSINESS

If you are operating through a fixed location, desk phones and soft phones are ideal. Likewise if your organisation requires contact centres you need a desk or soft phone contact centre solution. Whereas, if you have a mobile workforce, a combination of desk phone, mobile and soft phone is needed depending on the magnitude of their mobility.

### 4.2 HISTORICAL AND FORECASTED VOICE TRAFFIC

You need to assess your employees' usage patterns by analysing traffic profiles: inter-office, local, national, international, fixed-to-mobile, mobile-to-fixed, conference calls etc. What types of calls are your employees making and how are they making them? How do you anticipate traffic profiles changing over the next 3 – 5 years?

### 4.3 EXISTING INVESTMENT

You need to understand what voice investments you have already made. What assets do you have? What contracts are in place? What does your existing voice estate cost you? Until you have a clear view of the existing environment you will not be in a position to analyse the impact of changing your voice technology

### 4.4 COST OF CHANGE

The next step is to assess the cost implications of changing your voice technology. The implementation of a soft phone is generally cheaper than a desk phone, as the former requires no hardware other than a network-connected PC, but if these PCs are not voice and video capable, additional investment will be required. Upgrading fixed desk phones and enterprise voice platforms may, on the other hand,

require high initial capital investment to cover the cost and complexity of migrating existing services and infrastructure.

Once you have all the current and future costs of each option in your model you can perform scenario analysis to assess the impact of all the different permutations available to you. This information will then enable you to develop strategy recommendations and a business case. You also need to remember the practical implications of the strategy – phones are a very personal choice, what will you need to do to change the behaviours of your employees to realise the benefits of the strategy?

## 5 CONCLUSION

Organisations often develop their voice, mobile and desktop application strategies in isolation. When everything is in place then they realise that certain technology isn't getting used in the way they anticipated. Instead you need to develop a holistic voice communication strategy that considers all the possible mediums for making a phone call and assesses what is right for your business to optimise your return on investment.

## ABOUT US

Wavestone is an international consultancy that provides connected thinking, insight and capability to industry leading organisations. We work collaboratively with our clients to plan strategic business transformation and seamlessly turn strategy into action.

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