A Digium® Whitepaper

5 Ways Switchvox® Keeps Pace With Your Business

Powerful Unified Communications, Flexible Deployment Options

Brian Ferguson

digium®
The Asterisk Company

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Introduction

The business world is changing fast. Today's customers are savvy buyers with an arsenal of information at their fingertips. Competitive pressure demands that companies constantly improve — or risk getting left behind. Adding to that competitive pressure is the fact that 543,000 new companies enter markets each month, according to Forbes. With this continuously evolving business landscape, companies must understand the need for flexibility in order to be successful and thrive. Systems and technologies need to be in place that not only meet these extreme market conditions, but continue to protect and prepare businesses for the changes that are coming down the road. Having to use systems that don't have the capability to adapt can force a company into a corner — making it difficult, if not impossible, to compete.

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There is no greater need for flexibility than in a company's communications system. In the past, companies have been forced to make extremely large investments on traditional phone systems, only to get stuck with out-of-date features, huge support fees, and no easy (or affordable) way out. With the appropriate planning and right solution, a communications system — whether a hosted VoIP or premises-based system — can deliver powerful, customer-centric functionality with the flexibility you need to keep up with change.

Switchvox is Digium's award winning Unified Communications (UC) system that provides the deployment flexibility and robust feature set to keep your company one step ahead of the competition. Widely known as the best value in UC, Switchvox and Switchvox Cloud offer "all features included" pricing model that makes either system affordable for small and medium businesses.

In this report, we discuss the different deployment options available to help your company thrive in today's competitive business climate, including:

- Cloud
- On-premises
- Hybrid

While cloud-based and on-premises deployments are both common, the hybrid rollout is a rapidly growing deployment option for organizations of all sizes. With hybrid, both Cloud and on-premises equipment are combined to solve specific customer problems.

This report also takes a closer look at features within Switchvox, such as Switchvox Mobile, Presence, and collaboration tools, like conferencing and video calling. We will show how these features can be used to provide flexible work options for employees, increased productivity levels, and disaster recovery preparedness options for the business.

#1 Flexible Deployment Options

The increasing use of hosted, or cloud-based, phone systems along with the general trend toward Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS), has sparked a debate within the communications industry as to the preferred deployment method for business phone systems: Cloud or on-premises. It's generally understood that each has its benefits and challenges. The industry has seemingly arrived at a consensus as to which key factors play into the decision for the best solution:

On-Premises

- Centralized work force
- Telecommunications expense handled with capital investment
- In-house IT staff
- Customization requirements

Cloud

- Distributed workforce/office layout
- IT staff limited, or completely outsourced
- Spending resources on phone system management not a priority
- Telecommunications expense predictable, billed monthly

Switchvox can easily be deployed as a hosted solution using Switchvox Cloud, or as a prem-based solution using an on-site Switchvox system. Switchvox is one of the only UC providers that provides identical software in both deployment options, meaning you don't have to be concerned with settling for a reduced features set or dumbed-down experience to realize the advantages of Cloud. Switchvox also delivers an "all features included" pricing model for both Switchvox Cloud and the on-premises system, so you don't have to worry about expensive or complicated feature licensing.

> Switchvox is one of the only UC providers that provides identical software in both on-premises and Cloud deployment options

#2 Hybrid

As you see, the UC industry has generally agreed upon the key factors to be considered when determining whether your company should deploy your next phone system in the Cloud or on-premises. But what happens if your company doesn't clearly fit into one of those nice buckets?

An example of a company that may not clearly fit into the mold for either a hosted or an on-premise deployment is one that is organized using the franchise style model. This type of organization is unique in that it is simultaneously centralized and distributed. It typically has a large corporate office with fairly extensive feature and customization requirements, along with the need for control and flexibility. In addition, it usually has a few remote offices with individual workers that need to be supported and integrated seamlessly into the organization, as well as multiple geographically-dispersed locations that also require some level of integration with the corporate headquarters. Companies with this type of structure, or a similar model, require the benefits of both hosted and on-premises, but demand an identical user experience for every person in the company, regardless of location.

The perfect solution for companies in need of a hybrid solution, Switchvox Cloud and Switchvox on-premises systems can be peered together to act as one big system, connecting employees together regardless of their work location.

Because Switchvox uses the exact same software for Cloud and on-premises, it is the perfect choice for companies in need of this type of hybrid solution. Switchvox can be deployed on-premises at the corporate office to deliver the scalability and customization required, and Switchvox Cloud can be used to deliver the exact same user experience to the company's remote locations and individual employees. Switchvox Cloud and Switchvox on-premises systems can be peered together to act as one big system, connecting employees together regardless of their work location.

#3 Migration From On-Premises to Cloud

Companies change. Cost structures and business processes that work for a company today are not necessarily the same structures or processes that will work tomorrow. Companies with the flexibility to make changes and adjust to market climates, competitive pressures and technical advances are the companies with the best prospect for longevity and competitive dominance.

For example, it's not uncommon for enterprises or mid-sized companies with the available infrastructure to install and maintain an on-premise UC system. As resource requirements change, the organization may want to transition their business infrastructure to the Cloud, and free up in-house resources to move to more value-add areas within the company. According to a recent report, "New Developments in the Cloud Office System Market," Gartner is predicting a major shift toward general office migration to cloud to over 300 percent by 2017. That being the case, the vast majority of these companies are going to need to move to an entirely new platform, which may lead to significant downtime, an increased cost of redeployment, and a significant learning curve for their employees.

Switchvox offers organizations the unique ability to seamlessly migrate from an on-premises deployment of Switchvox to Switchvox Cloud. This capability helps the organization avoid a costly forklift upgrade. Companies with prem-based Switchvox can move to Switchvox Cloud by taking the last backup made and moving it to a Cloud instance. Users will not need to learn a new system, and both the cost of redeployment and potential downtime are minimal. The risk of getting backed into a corner with an expensive and inflexible communications investment is gone, when deploying Switchvox.

#4 Migration from Cloud to On-Premises

Small businesses have the potential to enjoy significant benefit from UCaaS. Nemertes Research says in their *UC Market in Review* column that over 13 percent of small businesses use cloud-based phone systems, and that number is expected to grow over 46 percent in 2014. Small companies oftentimes don't have access to the required IT resources for installing and maintaining a prem-based phone system. A small business, especially those with fewer than 25 employees, may not have the time or desire to manage an on-site phone system. In either case, Switchvox Cloud is an ideal option. With this hosted VoIP solution, Digium handles maintenance, feature releases, bug fixes, and security patches for its customers, giving small companies the ability to free up resources to do the things needed to grow.

But, what happens when small companies find success? Growth is what companies strive for. Growth is what companies strive for — growth in revenues, profits, customer satisfaction, and company size. As a result of that growth the company has likely added an appropriate IT infrastructure, and in-house IT resources, and is now looking for more flexibility and customization out of its phone system. Most importantly, the managed cost structure that a Cloud deployment once provided may no longer be cost-effective for the number of users in a larger organization.

Switchvox, once again, is the answer. A small company that was originally a great fit for Switchvox Cloud due to company size, IT priorities, and the need for a predictable monthly phone expense is now a candidate for an on-site solution. The company can start with Switchvox Cloud and then seamlessly migrate to a prem-based model as the need for customization, control, and cost structure changes. Again, because the same software is deployed regardless of deployment model, the users are unaffected, and both the cost for redeployment and potential for downtime are tremendously reduced or eliminated.
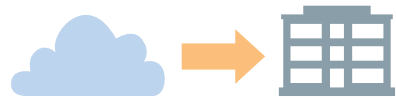
A growing company can start with Switchvox Cloud and then seamlessly migrate to a prem-based model as the need for customization, control, and cost structure changes.

#5 Flexible Work Options

A major trend in business today is the rise of flexible work options. According to Global Research Analytics, since 2005, the number of people with flexible work options has grown 80 percent. Flexible work options offer many benefits:

Cost Savings: When there are fewer employees in the office, the cost of running the building drops. The reduction in the cost of utilities and other operational expenses adds up to significant savings. Statistics show that **employers can save upwards of $11,000 per employee** when working at least half-time out of the office.

Disaster Planning: Companies that provide the means for their employees to work remotely set themselves up for success in the event of weather-related interruptions or other types of outages. If the office goes down, employees can still connect to each other and to your customers while waiting for the office to come back online.

Increased Productivity: Though there are some jobs that do not lend themselves to working remotely, it's been shown that productivity increases significantly in many job roles. It's true that it's not possible for a line worker to assemble cars from their living room, but writers, software developers, managers, engineers, salespeople, and many more jobs thrive from the flexibility and freedom of working remotely. In fact, it's been proven that employees that work outside the office usually end up working well beyond a 40-hour week.

Recruiting Talent: Being able to work remotely is an attractive benefit when recruiting and hiring prospective talent. Giving potential employees flexible options can be the difference between choosing to work for you or your competitor.

Higher Employee Morale: Employees with multiple work options typically have a higher satisfaction rate with their jobs and are more likely to stay with the company for a longer period of time.
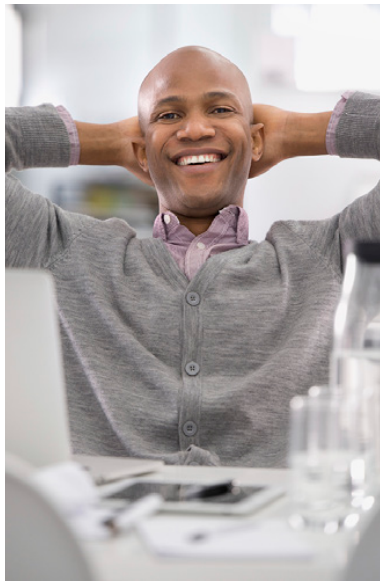
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Switchvox provides the features necessary to keep your employees connected to each other and to your customers from anywhere, using:

Web-based Interfaces: Every interface in Switchvox is web-based allowing complete remote connectivity options.

Switchvox Mobile: Included with every user, Switchvox Mobile allows a user to make work calls from a personal smartphone while keeping the work presence the same. This means that the caller ID associated with the office phone number is passed to your customers. You can also track employee calls to ensure productivity, while the employee maintains full mobile control of the office extension.

Presence: Remote workers can let co-workers know where they are and whether they're available by changing their status, or presence, in Switchvox. It's easy to see if an employee is on the phone, who he is on the phone with, and what his current status is, at all times.

Chat: Instant messaging is available for every user to stay connected, even if telecommunications are down.

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD): Employees can use mobile devices they already own, saving your company money in equipment and also offering greater flexibility for your employees.

Find-Me, Follow-Me: Employees are able to easily set up their own rules to send calls to their homes or mobile devices.

Conferencing: Each user has his own conference room that can be setup and accessed from anywhere.

Conclusion

There is a long list of internal and external factors that require a business to be flexible, today. Technological advances, fluid market conditions, and an increasingly savvy and demanding customer base are all among the issues not only facing small and mid-sized organizations, but threatening their longevity within the marketplace. With communications being the lifeblood of any organization, there is no greater area where flexibility is crucial. The challenge becomes finding a communications system that is both flexible and affordable to fit your initial deployment needs, while also providing a foundation for success for future organizational structure changes.

Switchvox and Switchvox Cloud deliver on flexibility and affordability. Digium's Switchvox solutions can offer a traditional on-premises deployment option, a reliable hosted solution, or the unique hybrid offering, combining hosted and on-site solutions for maximum flexibility. Switchvox ensures that your company is set up for success today and in the future.

Digium's Switchvox UC will help you easily transition from a basic phone system to a feature-rich Unified Communications solution.

Switchvox is the award-winning business phone system specifically developed for small- and mid-sized businesses, available on-site or in the cloud! Switchvox makes it easy to integrate all of your office communications and immediately start saving time and money. Recognized as the "Best Value in UC for SMBs," Switchvox offers a single powerful set of UC features at a price your business can afford. All-inclusive pricing means there are no costly add-ons or unexpected expenses for business-critical features—including mobility! You get **all the features of Switchvox with one low price!**

Looking for a cloud-based solution?
Switchvox Cloud is a scalable, hosted PBX solution with the same features as the on-site Switchvox UC system. It's competitively priced for companies with 5-30 employees that need access to UC features, but do not want to manage an on-site phone system. Special pricing options are available for larger companies that want the flexibility and convenience of a hosted VoIP phone system. Switchvox Cloud can also be peered together with one or more hardware appliances to create a hybrid solution, customized to meet your needs.

Digium's Switchvox solution delivers UC features everywhere you need it: on-site, in the cloud, and with mobile. Test drive Switchvox UC, and get a free 30-day trial of Switchvox Cloud.

Get started at **www.digium.com/switchvox**

Digium. We're changing the way businesses communicate.

Founded in 1999, Digium is the creator and primary developer of Asterisk, the industry's first open source telephony platform. More than one million customers in 125 countries have deployed Asterisk-based systems. Digium is committed to ending the days of expensive, proprietary telecom. The Switchvox family of Unified Communications solutions is built on Asterisk and is designed to provide enterprise class features at affordable prices for small and medium businesses. The award-winning line of Switchvox IP PBX phone systems provides more than a phone system – it delivers a Unified Communications platform that integrates multiple features that increase productivity and lower monthly communication costs. It's the affordable solution with a proven return on investment for businesses with 10 to 600 users.

Learn more at **digium.com/switchvox**

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