



Cloud Solutions

Cloud Communications: a Methodology for Successful Deployment



AVAYA
CLOUD OFFICE™
by RingCentral®

Cloud-based communication solutions offer benefits over traditional on-premise PBX systems, including peace of mind, unsurpassed scalability, and overall cost effectiveness. But while cloud technologies can reduce management and implementation complexity, the transition from legacy PBX solutions to cloud-based solutions can still involve unforeseen complications and challenges. The secret to a successful deployment is a well-planned implementation aligned with the organization's business requirements, objectives, and desired outcomes.

Keeping up with new requirements

The way organizations work has evolved dramatically over the past decade and will continue to do so as new business requirements and user expectations enter the picture. Employees are now more mobile, distributed, and connected than ever before. Legacy equipment and disparate meeting and team messaging solutions restrict the ability of teams to work at their full potential. The simple act of switching between applications is hindering productivity significantly. With an All-in-one cloud communications solution, you can improve productivity by giving your people all the tools they need in one place.



Benefits for making the transition from on-premises PBX to cloud communications

- Increase reliability
- Innovate and scale quickly and efficiently
- Consolidate vendors
- Lower costs
- Integrate with other business applications
- Gather business insights

The case for making the transition to cloud communications

There are six top benefits for making the transition from on-premises PBX to cloud communications:

1. Increase reliability

Reliability is a serious consideration when transitioning to cloud. Modern cloud applications are supported by multiple geographically redundant data centers, with flexible, highly reliable connectivity options that maximize availability and up-time. With as high as a 99.999% reliability rating, cloud applications can now match those of on-premises solutions.

2. Innovate and scale quickly and efficiently

Innovation and agility are critical to today's business success. The flexibility for a business to open or close offices, move locations, or use communications innovatively across the organization can have a direct impact on revenue and overall business success. Businesses today are looking to the cloud to provide the competitive edge in improving productivity, enhancing collaboration, and adapting to the changing business environment.

3. Consolidate vendors

The cloud enables businesses to consolidate and deploy a single calling, meeting and messaging solution across the entire organization. This not only centralizes management but eliminates shadow IT tools and applications to help mitigate cybersecurity risks at both headquarters and remote locations.

A Methodology for Successfully Deploying Unified Cloud Communications

Teams tasked with migrating systems often cite a number of concerns:

- How do we migrate from legacy to cloud seamlessly, including number porting?
- How do we successfully deploy this new technology?
- How do we implement in a timely manner, across numerous locations?
- How do we drive adoption of new capabilities?

Ensuring successful deployment may initially seem like a daunting task but with planning and a structured approach, businesses can smooth the path to a cloud-based solution.

4. Lower costs

IT leaders are often asked to deliver technology that both improves productivity and reduces total cost of ownership (TCO). Cloud communications allow companies to simplify equipment, management, and service requirements while also gaining the ability to scale and improve end-user productivity. Altogether, businesses have lowered total cost by 30–40% in their first year alone.

5. Integrate with other business applications

A recent study by CITE showed that knowledge workers lose up to an hour a day in productivity by simply switching between applications. With the average enterprise using many different cloud applications, integrating just some of these solutions can save employees considerable time and money.

6. Gather business insights

Communications analytics empower IT teams by providing access to reports on real-time calls, meetings and messages. This feature helps optimize the cloud communications system by presenting usage analysis and trending metrics in an easy-to-read graphical way.

Migration Methodology

Stage one: site qualification

Beginning by understanding existing sites, user needs and the desired future state of communications across the organization. Implementation will require a detailed project plan across each stage including the training and onboarding of end users unfamiliar with the new solution.

Before implementation, organizations must first gain a thorough understanding of where the cloud service will be used, the network conditions at each location, and user profiles for those using the service. This 360-degree approach is useful in gaining a complete picture, including any yet-unidentified limitations that will impact usage or quality of service.

Site expansion strategy

For businesses with multiple offices, IT teams may choose to identify select locations for a phased rollout strategy. Often headquarters and one additional location will be selected for immediate implementation, with a second and third phase of rollouts to follow in the coming quarters. However, even in a phased approach, it is important to clearly identify a complete strategy that resonates and can be communicated to all stakeholders.

Network-readiness assessment

A network-readiness assessment allows IT teams to understand constraints on network capacity, quality of service, firewalls, plus supported devices and configurations. Often cloud providers recommend that an enterprise network and soft-client computers support a minimal set of features to ensure high-quality VoIP, video, and communications services. For this purpose, requirements and recommendations are provided for some type of routers, DNS, NAT, etc.



Designing the new call routing structure is a critical task to achieve the full benefits of your new communications solution.

Stage two: planning and design

Frequently, one of the triggers in adopting cloud communications is the digital transformation of customer experience initiatives and workflows. Therefore, a successful transition plan must reconnect the project to the principles of the new user experience it aims to support.

Call routing

For organizations looking to quickly connect consumers with the right associate, call routing gives organizations the flexibility to create structured, multi-layer call menus that efficiently connect consumers to associates, call queues, or contact center locations seamlessly and quickly.

To further enhance the customer experience, organizations can take advantage of multi-level routing that enables them to design, deploy, and modify custom intelligent inbound call flows that simplify call routing management for multiple locations. This typically offers connections to the dial-by-name directory, system extensions, voicemail, or external phone numbers.

Designing the new call routing structure is a critical task to achieve the full benefits of your new communications solution. During this phase, a successful deployment relies on experts that can map out the desired call flow routes, central and local menus, and connections to external numbers. Teaming up with product experts who can optimize your organization's customer experience principles and match them to the right numbers, product features, and settings will ensure a positive result.



Once the design of your new cloud communications system is complete, be sure to record all the requirements in a formal project document that lists specific dates and owners.

Integration opportunities

When organizations migrate to cloud communications, they have an opportunity to align business communications with their larger digital transformation goals through integrations with apps such as Office 365, Google Suite or Salesforce. As part of mapping out the new system, organizations should team up with project experts to identify what workflows can be further improved with the addition of integrated communications features. Common candidates for enhancement are the sales and service workflows. Engaging the right project experts can result in incremental productivity gains to your cloud migration project that will further improve the return.

Business requirements documents

Once the design of your new cloud communications system is complete, be sure to record all the requirements in a formal project document that lists specific dates and owners. Known as a Business Requirements Document (BRD), it should include covered locations, network connectivity, user profiles, number porting, call routing designs, custom app integrations, and phone hardware requirements. The BRD becomes the blueprint for your implementation and provides a clear overview of project timelines, required resources across the organization, roles, and responsibilities.

Stage three: managing deployment

For a successful project execution, your organization should work with your vendor to ensure you have unique point of contact for the duration of the implementation phase. Successful deployments rely on a designated project manager who takes over from your account manager as your primary point of contact for the project and coordinates the work across your organization and your cloud vendor. Based on your BRD, your project manager should identify the different stakeholders, manage both internal and external resources, and establish project milestones with timelines. Ensuring a clear and constant flow of information across both organizations is a critical pillar of successful deployments as it avoids last-minute surprises, provides complete project transparency, and ultimately demonstrates full accountability for the commitments established in your BRD.

Stage four: implementation and adoption

Once your organization is ready to start implementing your cloud communications migration project, three main workstreams lie ahead. First, your cloud communications vendor will build your account. This includes creating individual users, assigning the correct user entitlements, and implementing your billing rules. Next, your legacy numbers must be ported (or transferred) to your cloud communications provider. Finally, a project manager will oversee the entire number-porting process and ensure that on the day your account is ready to go live all numbers are properly ported to your new cloud vendor.



About Avaya

Businesses are built on the experiences they provide and every day millions of those experiences are built by Avaya (NYSE:AVYA). For over one hundred years, we've enabled organizations around the globe to win—by creating intelligent communications experiences for customers and employees. Avaya builds open, converged and innovative solutions to enhance and simplify communications and collaboration—in the cloud, on premise, or a hybrid of both. To grow your business, we're committed to innovation, partnership, and a relentless focus on what's next. We're the technology company you trust to help you deliver Experiences that Matter. Visit us at www.avaya.com.

One of the key reasons organizations migrate to cloud communications is to consolidate all communications applications into a single platform and eliminate unnecessary spend in redundant tools. Therefore, successful deployments must incorporate training and adoption initiatives that focus on both end users and administrators. These can be done either in person or remotely, including with on-demand, pre-recorded videos. Ensuring your organization has been trained on the new system is very effective in preventing users from bringing in new applications or communications vendors that will erode the financial benefits of your cloud communications transition project.

Implementation partnership

Avaya is always ready to support you to ensure you get the most out of your communications platform. The Professional Services team has deep expertise in multiple deployment scenarios—whether it's businesses with multiple locations, complex network infrastructures, limited in-house IT resources, or customized workflow requirements. You can count on the Professional Services team to help you optimize your investment and get the implementation right. By first identifying your business needs and then working with you through the implementation, the Professional Services team delivers a communications platform that is robust, can grow with your business and is fine-tuned to boost performance.

To help with your journey, we have created multiple packages that range from having a remote implementation advisor available to a comprehensive end-to-end on-site implementation.

Summary

A cloud-based communications solution offers a number of benefits including increased reliability, scalability and simplification through vendor consolidation. In addition, both management and implementation complexity are greatly reduced.

The secret to a successful deployment is to first start with a strategy that recognizes the current situation, the future desired outcome, captures the specific needs of the users, develops a logical and sequential deployment plan, and ensures end users are able to access and use the product as needed.

IT organizations with multiple locations, complex network infrastructures, limited in-house IT resources, or those requiring minimal business disruption may want to partner with a professional services team to drive all stages of migration to ensure the planning, designing, project management, implementation, and ongoing support will deliver the best results possible.

