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**WHAT DOES VOIP *REALLY* MEAN FOR YOUR BUSINESS, ANYWAY??**

VOIP is a widely used term which unfortunately means many things. The meshing of IP technologies and live communications offers many opportunities. Here's how we break it down.

IP - Advantages	IP Disadvantages
1. Transport – moving live voice conversations through network-routed IP packets, instead of on a single copper pair to a digital or analog phone.	
May save cabling cost in green-field installation	Legacy Cat5 cabling may not support static-free VOIP; costly recabling may be needed
Relocation of phones is automatic plug n play	requires upgrade to Power over Ethernet LAN switches companywide
no IP-related echo, latency, or static - ever!	IP transmission of voice introduces additive delay - can interrupt the natural rhythm of conversation, and cause talk-over. Variation in network load, traffic from malware, video, or streaming media can adversely impact VOIP quality
	requires LAN switches be Quality-of-Service enabled; may require upgrades
	Some vendors implement a completely separate LAN for VOIP - this isn't convergence, it's a crutch!
2. System Management – using IP-centric tools like a web browser to easily administer and back up a telephone system	
Fast, Easy, Intuitive	Too Easy - be sure to back up before making changes!
3. Call Control & Presence – Seeing who is where, writing rules to control what calls might follow you to your cell phone, drag and drop control of live calls.	
Fast, Easy, Intuitive	None
4. Messaging & Recording – managing voicemail and faxmail via Email client, recording conversations for quality audits or compliance, sending faxes from the PC desktop without first printing on paper, receiving faxes	
Fast, Easy, Intuitive	Some UM brands push fat message content into the Exchange Server, which can severely overload the mail server. (Synertel's approach doesn't suffer this drawback)

Some brands (which only offer 100% IP-based systems) prefer to blur these distinctions!

With Synertel – you can have Management, Call Control & Presence, and Messaging/Recording features and functionality with or without using IP to actually transmit voice – and you can mix and match as best suits your needs today – and tomorrow!

For example – a regional distributor of high quality ethnic food products had the following challenges:

- customer calls were often juggled by reps on 2 or more lines at once, irritating customers, increasing employee stress, and prolonging phone calls.
- reaching warehouse staff and management was nearly impossible in real-time, so last-minute orders or stock checks were difficult. Some ‘right-now’ orders were being lost to competitors.
- Customers couldn’t reach outside sales staff easily, so messages were taken. By the time the sales reps called back – sometimes the order had been placed with a competitor. Management wanted outside staff to be just as reachable as people in the office.
- The customer service manager had a new baby – and wanted to work part-time from home, but her work is heavily centered on assisting her team with resolving problems which arrive by phone.

A Synertel cable performance test showed that the firm’s 9 year old network cable was adequate for data, but would not support VOIP (IP transport of voice to the desktop). Re-cabling its facility (office & warehouse) would be a significant cost.

Solution:

- Digital phones were deployed for most on-campus users – using existing voice cabling.
- Selective re-cabling for 3 wireless access points allowed wireless IP-based handsets to be deployed in the warehouse and loading dock areas.
- Call Center functionality allowed reps to efficiently handle just 1 call at a time, while other calls were held briefly, or routed to backup staff.
- Call Center tracking software documented patterns of peak call traffic -- which helped the firm revise its staffing schedule to best meet customer needs
- Calls to sales reps were automatically transferred to their mobile device of choice.
- The customer service manager who needed flexibility to work from home received an IP telephone. She liked it so much that the firm is planning to allow other reps to work from home, also!

The distributor achieved 100% of its application goals – while avoiding the cost and business disruption of an entire-campus re-cabling project. That’s true flexibility!