WHITEPAPER

Integrating Hosted PBX Platform: How Channel Partners (MSPs and VARs) Can Help Small-Medium Businesses Improve Their Customer Experience & Make Better Business Decisions

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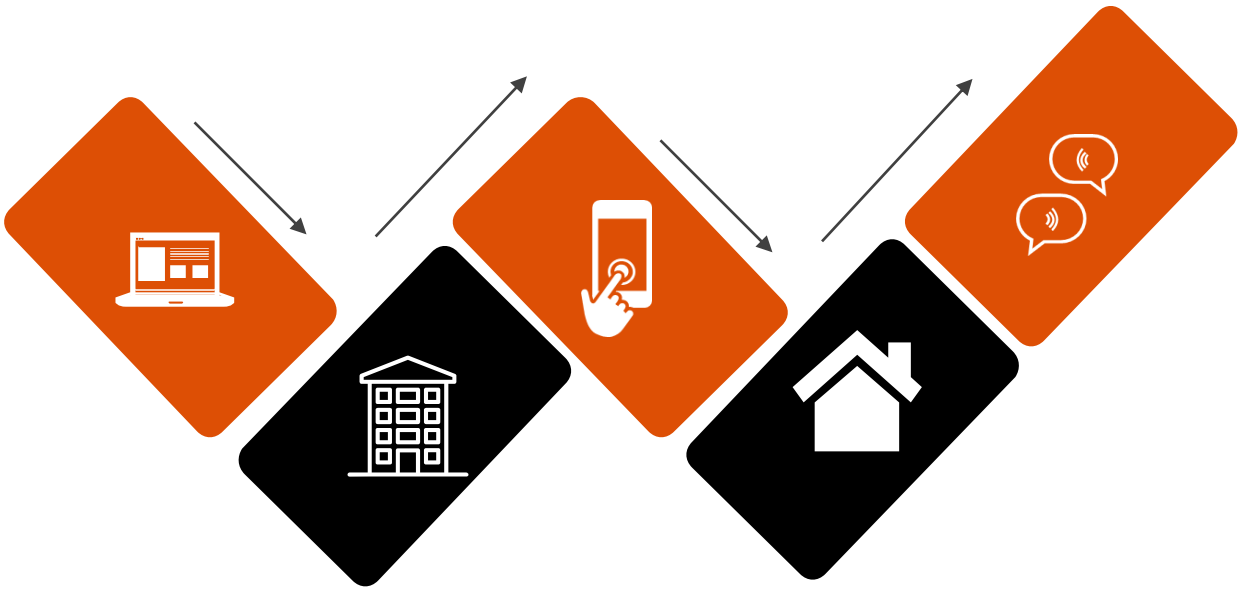
INDUSTRY OVERVIEW

Technology is no longer limited to the confines of the IT group within an organization. The need to be productive and efficient in all areas of life has compelled the organizations as well as the individuals to quickly adapt and use technology, both at work and in their personal lives.



Universal acceptance and adoption of technology have changed consumer behaviour and expectations, especially that of the millennial buyers. Today consumers have access to multiple channels across several devices through which they can connect with an organization, and they want a frictionless, comfortable, and prompt service. To survive and grow in this connected, always-on world, organizations must shift their focus from customer service to customer experience and engagement.

> **"BUSINESS TRANSACTION AND COMMUNICATIONS CAN NO LONGER BE SILOED."**

Organizations must be able to view, understand and take action on the holistic journey of EVERY CUSTOMER.

CUSTOMER JOURNEY MAP

Every business asset must connect and collaborate to be able to provide a complete view of the situation for quick problem resolution, better productivity and higher operational efficiency.

A significant technology trend influencing this change in the buying behaviour is the adoption of cloud and cloud-based platforms and solutions. This shift is driven primarily by the flexibility, lowered costs and intuitive features that cloud solutions offer.

An influx of cloud-based solutions provides new opportunities for managed service providers (MSPs) and value-added resellers (VARs).

New technology means faster growth, better efficiency, and more new customers for businesses.

But to achieve that, business processes must be transparent and be able to communicate with each other. **They look at VARS and MSPs to guide them towards and through this new world.**

PBX phone system too is at the forefront of this universal journey towards the cloud. Businesses of all sizes are now transitioning from hardware PBX systems to cloud-based platforms. But to fully leverage the flexibility, transparency, and cost-saving associated with cloud, the existing communications and business systems must be able to connect and share data with the new cloud-based solutions.

By definition, VARs focus on integrating various products, processes, and software to create a solution that addresses a specific business problem and provides added value than what each of those products or software would have contributed individually. Today, there is a need for integrating different software and application, more than ever, to drive better productivity and efficiency.

In this eBook, we discuss different integrate solutions that can be built using a VoIP platform & practical business application and benefits of these integrated solutions.

INTEGRATION IS THE FUTURE FOR BUSINESS VoIP

Two decades ago when VoIP was still a very new concept, businesses were apprehensive and untrusting of the "new voice technology" that promised to reduce their communication expenses by almost 70%. But over the years, companies of all sizes have come to rely on VoIP technology to deliver not only cost-effective and flexible service but also service quality.

> **"The global hosted PBX market is forecasted to grow at a CAGR of 14.9% from 2018 to 2023."**

Early adoption of the technology by small-medium businesses helped VoIP technology not only survive the introduction phase but also thrive to an extent where the Enterprise segment adopted it wholeheartedly. With Enterprise adoption customization became a necessity. VARs and MSPs that were able to provide integration thrived.

On the other hand, digitization removed the geographical barriers limiting a company from reaching its potential target customers. However, the competition increased simultaneously, creating a demand for operational efficiency and faster response time. Organizations are looking for solutions that can provide transparency and insight so that different customer-facing channels or individual business units have the data they need to make informed decisions, quickly and cost-effectively.

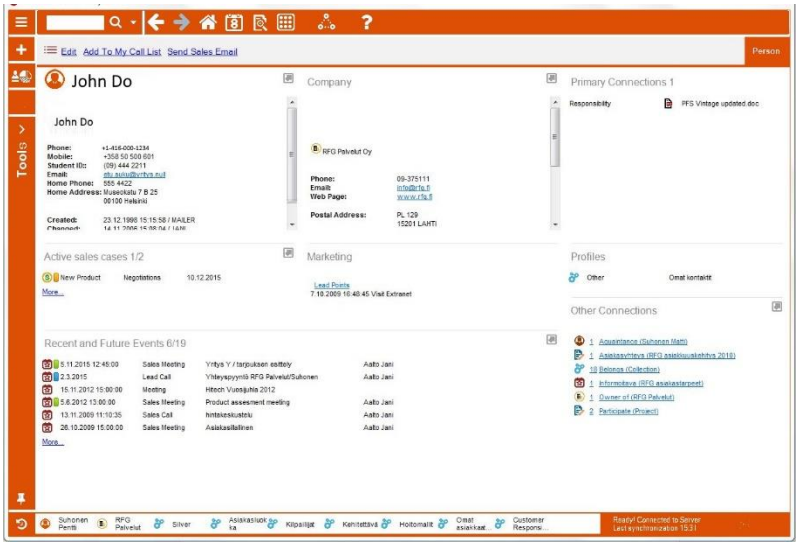
> This need for smart, connected systems makes customization an integral part for the majority of the communications projects.

Some common integration done by enterprise organizations include:

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Systems

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platforms are an integral part of most businesses today. They are a vital tool that helps companies to keep track of their interactions with prospects and customers. The hosted VoIP integration integrated with the CRM tool allows businesses to connect their front-line sale & customer service phone systems to back-end CRM software, and exchange data between the two platforms.

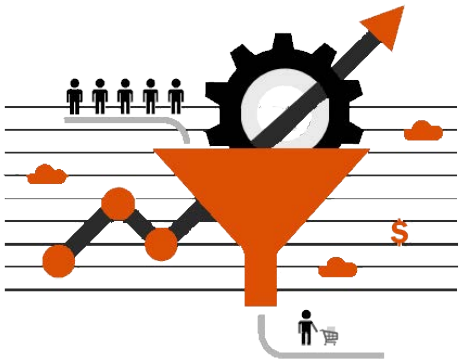
Integrating CRM platforms and tools like Salesforce, Zoho, HubSpot, NetSuite (Enterprise allow the front-line staff to access customer data in real time when responding to an incoming call, improving the time and quality of customer service.



Customer interaction can offer valuable insights into a business that can be used by sales, marketing and product teams for better customer interaction. While sales teams may use the insights to negotiate a deal, the marketing team may use these insights to run a more effective campaign or the product-team may use the feedback they receive through various customer calls to improve on the product. However, collecting this data manually can be a long, erroneous process.

Use-cases of Integrating CRM Tools With A VoIP Platform

Integration of CRM into the hosted voice system can allow businesses to record the customer call and track pertinent information such as the time of the call or phone number, etc. as well as the entire conversation. Some use-cases of integrating CRM tools with a VoIP platform includes:



Automation of lead-assignment that initiates a call and/or text to sales when a lead is generated in CRM through online forms, for faster response time

Automation of account update in CRM with information such as inbound & outbound customer call details (date, time and duration etc.), call recording, voicemail, faxes etc. so the salesperson has a consolidated view of all the information and can serve them better by maintaining conversation continuity

Automatically connect customers to a live agent directly from the web-page via click-to-call on the website, for reduced abandoned cart rate

Business Productivity & Mobility Tools

Another excellent use of VoIP integration is to bring advanced communications functions into daily business productivity apps used by the small-medium businesses like the Microsoft Office, G-suite, Project Management tools like Jira, Trello, Wrike, etc. and with cloud-based collaboration tools like Box.

Integrating communications into existing workflows by converging different technologies in a single network boosts productivity, collaboration and innovation in the workplace.

Use-cases of Integrating CRM Tools With A VoIP Platform

Enhance the delivery and support of business services through tight integration between admin and operational processes.

Respond to customer calls on your smartphone while maintaining the access to all relevant software and information required to serve the customer better.

Use your cell phone to make outgoing calls to customers or participate in conferences but display your work number to maintain the professionalism of the call while on-the-go

Security & Compliance: Extend security & compliance policies to remote workers without compromising data security with integration of back-end business productivity tools

Automate the collection and analysis of all communication data to gain valuable insights for planning and optimally managing current and future business needs

BENEFITS OF VoIP INTEGRATION

The integration of CRM solutions with the VoIP platform allows channel partners to present several business benefits to their customers. These integrations enable businesses of all sizes to get the transparency and connectivity required to streamline their communications and collaborate better with employees, customers and suppliers, improve workflow efficiency and productivity, and gain better insight for a timely response. As a result of this integration, organizations can improve customer experience, increase customer satisfaction, drive operational efficiency and better employee engagement & productivity and, improve overall profitability and revenue growth.

IMPROVED CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

> "Organizations focused on providing better customer experience outperform their competition."

In the most recent Customer Experience Benchmarking report by Dimension Data **72%** of respondents identified improving **customer experience** as the **most important benefit of digital transformation.**

PROACTIVE SALES & ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT

Sales team can be always available & professional no matter their location. With features that allow the calls to be forwarded to a mobile, landline or another VoIP phone – the customer's call will never be missed, and integration with backend enables the salesperson to assess the purpose of the call better, understand customer preferences and personalize the response to the customer's query in a professional manner.

FASTER AND MORE ACCURATE CUSTOMER SERVICE

Customer service teams can look up the incoming caller's profile, and can access all the pertinent details about the customer with a single click, making it easy for them to address the customer's concerns instantaneously and accurately.

FIRST CONTACT PROBLEM REESOLUTION

Technical support teams can access past tickets and the troubleshooting history which may reduce the number of questions they need to ask initially and can get straight into the problem resolution. It leads to shorter exchanges, smaller wait times, and higher customer satisfaction.

IMPROVED CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Another unique way in which businesses are using VoIP integration to improve customer experience is by providing direct emergency lines to key strategic account. Providing an after-hour contact ability is not unique to VoIP technology, but the integration with the backend makes it easier for the respondent to access the customer's security and compliance preferences, and deal with the situation efficiently and cost-effectively.

ENHANCED EMPLOYEE & ORGANIZATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY

Another great benefit of VoIP integration is improved employee and organizational productivity. For e.g., integrating emails and calendar systems like Microsoft Outlook reduces the additional number of steps required to schedule a meeting, book an appointment or to check availability.

Integration with workflow and business productivity tools not only give easy access to key performance metrics but also allow the manager to monitor and improve employee performance.

IMPROVED PROFITABILITY & REVENUE GROWTH

A customer doesn't wait for you to respond. 56% of customer go to the next option when they do not get the required response on their first contact as noted by a report in Forrester.

The ability to respond quickly and address customer query at first contact result in better closing rate and improved profitability. With access to the right information, customer service can transform any call into a sales opportunity.

Integration with the CRM allows the customer service rep to offer current promotions, apply discount coupon and upsell additional services increasing the revenue and customer satisfaction simultaneously.

HOW TO FIND THE RIGHT TECHNOLOGY PARTNER

As a Value-added reseller (VARs) or a Managed Service Provider (MSPs), what does all this mean to you? If you follow technology trends, then you already know that the development of front-office SaaS and application development spend is exploding. In this new world where businesses are investing heavily in point solution for every expected business outcome, the role of VARs and MSPs are changing drastically. The ability to connect these different technologies to create a single transparent system that integrates well into each subset is the key to be successful in today's business communications world.

So how do you make your life a little less complicated? Finding the right partners to work with goes a long way, especially when working with multiple providers. This section discusses the qualities channel partners and service providers must look for in a technology vendor when working with integrated solutions.

> "In the 2017 Channel Partner Conference, the top channel partner problems discussed were related to time management, cost efficiency and lack of proper guidance and support."

Channel partners have a set of expectations when it comes to partnering with a service provider. Hence the top qualities you want to look for in a technology vendor should be

PLATFORM OR SOLUTION CUSTOMIZATION ABILITY

To be able to offer innovative turnkey solutions to business clients, all the VARs and MSPs must regularly integrate with third-party IT software and hardware. Companies today should focus on developing a fully customizable platform backed by a strong support team. The support team must be aware of all the aspects and features of the given platform, to improve the overall efficiency of a specific situation. Companies all around the world develop and sell innovative solutions to business clients or simply enhance their existing backend application by easily integrating it with various platforms.

Different businesses need systems that cater to their needs and the nature of the operations. Companies today are aiming for having robust, innovative platforms for conducting their activities so that partners can focus on what they do best without having to worry about maintenance cycles or service downtime.

PARTNER SUPPORT AND DEPLOYMENT SIMPLICITY

A channel partner always would prefer a provider offering easily deployable solutions and which are easy to engage. With highly flexible platforms, resellers and channel partners could bring their innovative ideas in life. These solutions are provided with hassle-free deployment and easy installation procedures.

The growth in technology and the increase in the number of integrated telecom solutions have made it easier for channel partners to do business throughout the world. Some companies give their partners the control they need to visualize, build, test and deploy in a few simple steps, by offering a fully open API architecture and a broad suite of development tools. Channel partners can drive demand, scout prospective clients and help channel partners grow their revenue, with access to every aspect of the service from switching, admin portal and billing through easy to use API.

Some companies build solutions without any third-party software. To ensure the end projects are completed successfully, there is a team of experts who are available to collaborate with partners to develop additional functions of the organization and give the maximum support to them. Technology vendors must provide partners with the whole kit they need to succeed, from switching, web, database, network to development tools and support.

SERVICE RELIABILITY AND BRAND RECOGNITION

Rather than just providing partners with effective solutions, providers today want to be reliable at every step, right from providing the best-integrated solutions to supporting them in activities like marketing, finance and generating leads. Telecom providers understand the face value or the visibility the partners have to maintain with end customers. They have to maintain the quality of their service towards their business clients and continuously make sure that they work with the best partners.

Hence providers make sure that they offer the right support & are the most reliable at the backend. To deliver an integrated solution quickly, providers give the required amount of support & expertise needed by the partners.

Some technology vendors are implementing the practice to have dedicated channel partner teams for different areas, right from customer services, to advice on lead generation and finance. Since generating leads has become an essential aspect of every business, providers should take a step ahead and study for new techniques and solutions for the same, keeping the latest trends and algorithms in mind.

Providers are taking the game ahead by providing easily deployable solutions and installation which requires no hassles. As mentioned earlier, increased costs are becoming a problem for the partners; one of the reasons why they think and analyze before choosing a provider for themselves. That is why providers are taking steps considering the factor of increasing cost in mind by introducing features like either having no development fees or charges or having reliable services with almost no fee on maintenance. Since all channel partners need to think before they commit to a proposal, providers must think of offering the solutions with no minimum commitment or investment required to start a partnership. Such steps will help in improving engagement and earn trust for providers, as well as maintain their brand name in the industry.

ABOUT CALLTURE:

Callture is a leading Hosted VoIP Service Provider in Canada delivering value-added voice serviceto businesses.

Our business services include our proprietary cloud-based business phone service with its business class features. Other business services include enhanced toll-free service, fax, SMS and video conferencing. All Callture services include a user-friendly online portal with automated order processing.

Since our launch in 1997, we have valued our partners and have been committed to helping them grow. Our industry-leading, constantly evolving technology, holistic cloud-based hosted VoIP solution, and unparalleled end-to- end support are just a few of the things that provide our partners with a competitive edge.