Moving to Cloud-Based Calling:
Top Factors in Choosing the Right Partner

With the advent of cloud computing, small and medium sized (SMB) organizations have the agility to act on opportunities as quickly and competitively as larger organizations. SMB's can also provide additional personalized services to their customers using these new and proven technologies. In order to maintain their competitive edge, they need access to the same tools that larger companies can offer, such as the ability to receive communications anywhere and at any time, maintain collaborative workspaces and host video conferencing.

Regardless of a company's business vertical – retail, professional, medical services, educational institutions – SMB organizations often find it challenging to build out an effective communications infrastructure without incorporating heavy on-premises costs and IT administrative efforts.

Companies that are taking full advantage of current technology are shifting from building out their own infrastructure and moving to cloud-based communication services. This can result in substantial cost and labor savings with a significant increase in features and capabilities for the organization's workforce. To do so requires a shift away from the capital expenditure model where they build and manage their own infrastructure. Rather, by shifting spending to an operating expense model, they can use subscription-based cloud services to provide all communications they need for their day-to-day operations.

Evolving from On Premise to Cloud-Based Calling

Understandably, some organizations are cautious when moving mission-critical operations, like their communications and collaboration services, to the cloud. Real time conversations are too important to customer successes to risk failure.

Despite the confidence having on-premises equipment and services in a physical location brings, more organizations are moving to services like Cisco Webex. The Cisco Webex family of collaboration products includes: Webex Calling, Webex Meetings and Webex Teams. By introducing the

many benefits beyond traditional voice communications, it is an entire platform of capabilities that increases the productivity and agility of the workforce.

Video conferencing is the Webex feature that organizations understand and utilize the most in their day to day business. However, they often do not know how to deploy additional voice and video conferencing or the significant impact it can have on an organizations' bottom line. As a proven example, once companies have access to HD video conferencing and features like One Button to

Press, decision makers can see immediate savings with the reduction of employees traveling for meetings. They also receive a more personal level of customer engagement that can result in faster sales.

Video conferencing is just one of the many tools available through the cloud. The new Webex Calling and Teams features expands a moderator's tool set to include whiteboarding, screen and document sharing, instant messaging, group spaces and real time voice (*see Figure 1*). These features extend beyond the meeting itself, providing permanent workspaces that enable participants to continue collaborating in the cloud. All of these capabilities come in a single application, greatly simplifying ease of use.

Figure 1
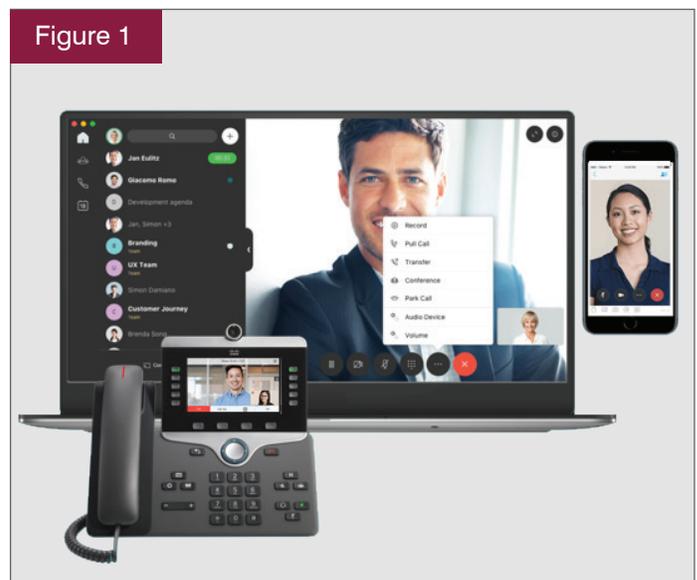
A traditional on-premises phone system requires capital investment to build. Adding new users requires a new equipment investment. Provisioning a physical phone can be complicated and requires a trained expert. The expert, either from an organization's internal IT team or from an outsourced firm, must take careful coordination to adhere to local and federal E911 laws. In some cases, it can take several days for new users or even simple configuration changes to be accommodated. These systems also require ongoing maintenance following a familiar and consistent "break/fix" cycle. Each year equipment breaks down more often, and the feature set falls further behind what is available on the market.

As a cloud-based system, Webex Calling enables substantial savings in terms of infrastructure and capital expenditures. Users no longer need a physical phone installed at their desk. Webex Calling allows for use of existing phone systems, video units, mobile devices, laptops and desktops. This enables the organization to leverage the equipment investment already made for each employee and eliminates the need for new equipment.

Webex Calling does support simple and advanced desk phones for those organizations that want them, but they are not necessary for a successful deployment.

By eliminating the requirement of a desktop device, Webex Calling effectively untethers users from the desk, office,

building, and even region. Calls connect to and can ring on all devices: cell phone, laptop, and desk phone. There is no need to reconfigure the system when employees are out of the office. Their calls go to where they are, allowing for tremendous flexibility and freedom (see Figure 2). It also ensures that a customer call will not go unnoticed.

Another advantage of using Webex Calling is the reduced complexity of managing an organization's communications systems.

With a traditional on-premises setup, there is a need for a dedicated resource to manage the phone systems. In a smaller organization, this person may have other responsibilities, making them a bottleneck in implementing daily changes to the system when new employees are onboarded and for standard moves, adds, and changes.

Webex Calling gives autonomy to users to manage themselves. New features and functionality can easily be switched on and off without incurring costs from the end user dashboard. If administrative support is needed, the internal ticket can be supported remotely or off-net without having to touch the end user. Management of Webex Calling and all of its capabilities is through a 'single pane of glass' web interface, eliminating the need to go onsite or through the office VPN to make changes. Administrators and users can access the interface on the web from anywhere in the world.

Figure 2

Webex Calling untethers users from their desk and office so they can communicate and access their productivity tools everywhere they are.

Security is another critical aspect of Webex Calling. With traditional on-premises equipment, organizations must manage their own internal security. As the system grows older, it because more difficult and costly to update and maintain the necessary levels of security. Webex Calling comes from Cisco, the world leader in networking and security.

Cisco understands security and the importance of a secure collaboration suite. Webex Calling is constantly being updated so that communications are always secure. These updates can be transparent to users, keeping the business functional, without the heavy lifting of afterhours onsite support and patching.

Security is always current, and new features are continually being added to Webex Calling. There is no need to purchase new, higher performance equipment to take advantage of these features. Organizations can utilize the new features once they are available in their cloud.

The Shift from CAPEX to OPEX

With Webex Calling there is a shift from capital expenses to operating expenses. The initial upfront cost to deploy cloud-based calling is substantially lower than a traditional business telephone system. In fact, because there is no

need for new infrastructure – organizations already have an internet connection – capital expenses can be as low as $0 for hardware. Organizations can also deploy Webex Calling more efficiently because hardware and software licensing is immediately available in the web console.

This greatly simplifies deploying modern communications. There is no need to purchase new servers, routers, virtual machine (VM) licenses, or software and eliminates the need for any contracts with a telecom service provider. A single Webex Calling service replaces all of this hassle, streamlining the product to market.

For many SMB organizations, the cost of Webex Calling is comparable to the circuit cost from a traditional phone provider but offers superior benefits and services to a traditional phone system. For many organizations, the biggest challenge in moving to Webex Calling is making the shift from a capital expense model to an operating expense model. Many organizations have separate budgeting processes for capital expenditures and operating costs. With Webex Calling, the overall spend will decrease but the budget needs to be adjusted to accommodate for the monthly subscription costs.

Transformative Solutions

At SyCom, our business is connecting more than just technology. It's also about building lasting relationships with our clients and collaborating with them as a partner to solve their business challenges.

Serving the Mid-Atlantic area, with a focus in Virginia, for over 20 years, SyCom works with nearly every type of organization, and they all require collaborative services. They begin by analyzing and assessing an organization's environment to help develop a vision. SyCom connects with you by proving we understand what you need by designing and delivering solutions that have a positive impact, both in terms of efficiency and cost- effectiveness. Finally, SyCom transforms organizations by driving, consulting and supporting the proven technologies that we deliver and measuring success against expected results (see Figure 3).

Figure 3

Analyze   Connect   Transform
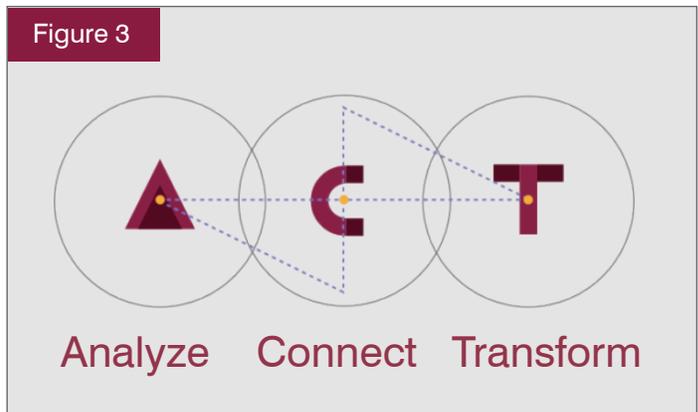
The foundation of any cloud-based calling application is the incoming internet connection. Organizations rely heavily on the internet for their day-to-day operations. A reliable internet connection is likely already in place, given its importance in keeping everything connected.

Because of the importance of communications to an organization, SyCom begins every customer engagement with an evaluation of their internet. SyCom assesses the quality of the connection, and makes sure organizations have a Service Level Agreement (SLA) in place that guarantees their Internet – and thus phone system – will always be available. If a connection does not pass the evaluation, SyCom works with them to improve their internet connection. This not only impacts the reliability of the phone system but improves efficiency and reliability across all internet-based operations of the company.

Choosing the Right Partner

With the many advantages of cloud-based calling, it is not surprising that there are many services providers offering it at varying price points. Certainly, the subscription cost is important, but an organization's phones are crucial to its successful day-to-day operations. Having a communications failure or outage is simply not an option for most organizations. The cost can be substantial and thats why it's important to look beyond the subscription price and at the entire service offering, as well as the reliability and quality of the provider itself.

Built on Cisco: Cisco is the market leader because they provide the best equipment with elite features and support. Organizations need phone service that works 24/7. They need to be confident that the features will always work as expected.

Built on Proven Technology: Webex Calling is an established technology platform. People are familiar with it because it works.

Quality: SyCom has been serving the Mid-Atlantic community for over 20 years and are a company of trusted advisors focused on providing the best, most reliable service possible. We never take shortcuts that would comprise their service. SyCom does not offer services on equipment or software that don't meet our own internal standards.

Trusted Ecosystem: SyCom only works with evaluated and proven vendors. Their partners must be as committed to providing the best service as we are.

Expertise: At SyCom, their goal is to help their customers make decisions that will help them prosper. They are a trusted advisor for all of their client's IT needs. They understand which technologies can help an organization, how to cost-effectively implement these solutions, and advise them on their technology roadmap as an organization grows. SyCom prides themselves on their technical training and support offering that helps customers get up and running and stay running.

Unparalleled Service and Support: Organizations don't want to become experts in IT. They want to focus on their core competency. By working with the right partner – one who supplies more than equipment and services – organizations can take advantage of the right solution to maximize their budget and achieve their business goals.

Security: In today's world, security is essential in every aspect of an organization's operations. However, security is a constantly evolving, and keeping communications systems up to date can be extremely challenging. As a Cisco partner, SyCom keeps on top of security, providing the latest security measures from the largest communications company in the world. They have a dedicated security team that provides on-site evaluations to help determine which regulations an organization must follow and how to meet those regulations.

Future-proof: Owning equipment can slow an organization down as the equipment ages. Eventually, they can be stuck with outdated phone systems they can't afford to upgrade. With SyCom's subscription services, organizations can take advantage of the latest features within minutes.

SyCom is dedicated to connecting people to technology. Their services extend across the entire network, including infrastructure, communication systems, and various services. SyCom is an engineering company, with teams dedicated to deploying and managing networks, using technology like Cisco Unified Communications, and preventing outages through disaster recovery.

We are committed to meeting the needs of their SMB customers, and Cisco Webex Calling service provides the ideal solution to help them remain competitive and save money.

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CISCO
Partner
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Learn more about how Webex Calling from SyCom can transform your organization.