Cloud Telephony Solutions Elevate Multi-Location Business Collaboration

By **ROSE DE FREMERY** - **Contributor**

Many businesses that operate from multiple locations, such as franchises, have their many locations run on completely separate phone systems. Doing so poses some tricky logistical and financial challenges, and as a result, businesses are shifting from traditional wire-line services to cloud telephony solutions. Here's a look at why they're making the change and the benefits they enjoy upon moving to the cloud:

Cloud telephony solutions can help streamline collaboration at businesses with multiple locations.

Challenges Facing Multi-Location Businesses

Multi-location businesses already experience operational challenges out of the box, and streamlining communication across locations is chief among them. It's vital for businesses to support the collaboration needs of their employees across all locations so they can work as productively as possible. However, if they use different phone systems that do not integrate with one another, that can be an obstacle that results in some awkward communication fails.

Employees who can't dial an extension to reach colleagues in other locations have to input complete phone numbers to make such calls, often incurring long-distance charges in the process. If they want to bring teams together in a conference call or video chat, they may layer on an ad hoc patchwork of additional communications services that increase the overall cost of operating these separate offices but still do not integrate with the systems in use. If you've ever seen conference call rage in action, you know this can be a problem for workplace morale, to say the least. It also creates an inefficient communication environment that forces employees to learn different procedures to contact different colleagues, depending on their respective platforms.

In such a scenario, each location typically has to manage its own unique arrangements for billing and vendor support. Businesses could invest more staff time and heftier operational expenditures than necessary to simply maintain these siloed phone systems when they could instead streamline them under a single platform.

A Unified Communications Platform

To resolve these challenges — and perhaps soothe their employees' technology frustrations — multi-location businesses are adopting cloud telephony solutions that allow them to use one system across all locations. The many benefits they enjoy begin with efficiencies that simplify the way they use and manage their telephony services. The first improvement employees tend to notice is that they can easily pick up the phone and reach their colleagues (regardless of location) using an office extension. They can also enjoy the peace of mind that comes with knowing everyone is using the same platform to communicate, so they no longer have to keep a mental catalog of the different channels to use when reaching out to colleagues at certain locations.

This usually results in fewer snafus when attempting to collaborate. It also democratizes the telephony environment because it ensures all employees have access to the same powerful communications tools as their colleagues. This should be music to the ears of any IT leader who has heard the complaint, "But why do they get to have this fancy new technology while I'm stuck in the Dark Ages?"

One such tool is video conferencing, through which colleagues can engage in a face-to-face conversation about a joint project. That option is particularly valuable when communicating with colleagues across locations. Employees can also use presence tools to determine whether their colleagues are available for a quick messaging or screen-sharing session, keeping the work moving smoothly throughout the day. And, should they need to use these same features from home or while on the road, they can do so through mobile apps.

Cloud Telephony Cost Savings

Not only do cloud telephony solutions give multi-location businesses better tools for collaboration and enhanced productivity, but they can present some attractive cost savings as well. Instead of spending money to operate redundant infrastructure in multiple locations, businesses can simply add the exensions they need for their users in each location. This keeps costs more manageable.

Enterprise cloud solutions for business phone systems also allow multi-location businesses to quickly scale up in certain locations, and they can even provide answers to common communication growth pains. However, one of the greatest cost savings these systems offer involves long-distance charges. When multiple locations are linked through direct extension dialing in the cloud, they no longer incur such charges. These cost savings, multiplied across several locations, can quickly tally up to a compelling argument in favor of moving to the cloud.

Multi-location businesses that operate separate telephony systems in each of their locations face many challenges. By unifying their locations with a single cloud telephony solution, they reap several rewards simultaneously: better communications tools for the entire staff, more efficient collaboration, and often attractive cost savings.

Find out how Vonage Business can help streamline communications at your multi-location business.