

# VoIP in the Call Center

By Wayne Scaggs

Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) is a large, complex, and rapidly evolving technology. What makes this technology so attractive are the far reaching implications of what is possible. What is apparent today with this technology is only a gleam of what is to come. When your client comes in with their brand-new IP-enabled cell phone, and says “call me on my new IP cell phone,” what are you going to do?

We are riding on the crest of the digitalization of all forms of communication and information, which can send that communiqué at light speed to anywhere. The telemessaging industry is the oldest organized industry to professionally collect and distribute messages (information) via one of the first technological breakthroughs ever, the telephone. Now VoIP is another tool we must master, implement, and apply our applications to.

What is different regarding this technology is the speed in which it will proliferate in the communication industry as a whole and in our call centers specifically. Over the years, many new technologies elevated the type and/or level of service we provide. This will be no different, except in the speed with which it will be implemented. As an example, consider that Jet Blue’s call centers are located in the homes of the agents. Think about that: no office expense, no commute time, and no gasoline for the employees. This cost-effective arrangement is also being done in the telemessaging industry, thanks to VoIP.

Implementation of VoIP for the agent means that your agent can be anywhere, as long as they have access to a broadband Internet connection. VoIP for local DID numbers provides your call center with the opportunity to have a local presence in the next city, the next state, or the other coast. Now, this possibility is not anything new, except that doing it

with VoIP means the cost of the services has just dropped; since there are no usage charges, the companies that have implemented this technology are reaping the profits.

The implementation of VoIP can vary from hybrid (add-on equipment) to a pure VoIP system. A major consideration is the leveraging of the technology’s growth and cost. Are you going to be part of this new wave, or will you see a few more clients slip away because you cannot provide the service at the price point needed?

There are other reasons to implement VoIP:

- *Disaster recovery:* an IP agent can do their job by taking calls and delivering messages in a hotel lobby, a Starbucks, or any other hotspot with a broadband connection, a laptop, and a system to connect to. Your standby agents can be in the next city or state.
- *Remote office:* buy the accounts anywhere in the world, keep a local presence, and the calls can be handled on your IP system located in “Anywhere, USA.”
- *Shared agent:* move agents between multiple sites without any travel.

Figure out how to downsize or eliminate your office and expenses; other businesses are getting the job done with less expense, why not you? Jump into the VoIP pool, even if it is the shallow end, get your feet wet, and embrace the future of your business. VoIP is here and working. When will you start collecting your share of the profits? ☞

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