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# **Your Phone System Is Holding You Back**

A plain-English guide to modern business phone systems  
for owners who are tired of workarounds

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## Introduction

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Voice is a complex system. Most business owners don't realize how complex until something breaks, or until they see what a modern phone system actually does compared to what they've been living with. The gap is usually significant.

This guide is for the business owner who has a nagging feeling their phone system is behind — but hasn't been able to justify the project, or doesn't know where to start. It walks through the signs that it's time to upgrade, what modern systems actually do, how to choose the right architecture, and what a good cutover looks like. Seems simple. There's a lot that goes into it.

In 26 years of installing and managing communication systems for businesses on the Central Coast, I've had this conversation hundreds of times. The businesses that make the move almost always say the same thing afterward: they wish they'd done it sooner.

## Ten Signs Your Phone System Is Holding You Back

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Some of these are obvious. Some are so familiar you've stopped noticing them. All of them are worth fixing.

### **AT&T keeps raising the price of your copper lines**

Legacy copper phone lines are expensive to maintain and the carriers know it. They've been raising rates steadily for years because they want you off the old network. You're paying a premium to keep a system that does less.

### **You can't move a phone without calling someone**

You unplug a phone, carry it to another office, plug it into the wall, and it doesn't work. In a modern IP phone system, a phone is just a device on the network. Plug it in anywhere and it works. The days of hardwired phone extensions should be behind you.



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## **You don't know who's calling from the office**

When someone calls you from the main office number, your cell shows the main number. Not the person. You're on another call so you let it go to voicemail — but they don't leave a message. Now you have to call back, and whoever answers may not know about the call. A modern system sends calls with the caller's direct number or extension. You know who it is before you answer.

## **You can't SMS back**

When a client or vendor calls from their cell, you can text them back. When your own staff calls from the office main number, you can't. That asymmetry is a friction point that adds up across dozens of calls a day.

## **Your contact center has no visibility**

A group of people answering calls with no reporting, no call recording, no way to monitor a call that's going sideways. No way to back up an employee who handled a difficult customer correctly. No way to investigate a complaint. A modern contact center platform gives you all of it.

## **You have multiple locations on separate systems**

Each location is its own island. Transferring a call between sites is awkward. Reporting is fragmented. If one site goes down, those calls are gone. A cloud phone system unifies every location on one platform — and can automatically reroute calls to another site if something goes wrong.

## **Onboarding a new employee takes a week**

You need a phone for someone starting Monday. Your current system requires a vendor visit, physical wiring, and a waiting period. A cloud system provisions a new user in minutes. The phone ships to the desk, plugs into the network, and works on arrival.

## **Your employees use personal cell phones for business texts**

Staff texting customers from their personal numbers. No record of the conversation. No way to hand it off. No separation between business and personal. A modern system gives every user a business SMS identity that the whole team can access.

## **You can't flip a call between devices**

You take a call at your desk but need to leave. You interrupt the call, hang up, and call back from your cell — now the customer has your personal number and the conversation was disrupted. A modern system lets you flip a live call from your desk phone to your mobile without the other party knowing. The call continues. The transition is invisible.

## **You can't transfer a call from your cell**



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A customer calls your mobile but needs to reach someone else at the business. You tell them to call the office and ask for so-and-so. With a modern mobile app, you have the same call controls on your phone as on your desk — hold, blind transfer, consultative transfer, transfer to voicemail. You handle it without breaking the call or giving out personal numbers.

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## Cloud vs. On-Premise — How to Think About It

The core question is simple: do you want your phone system to live on hardware in your building, or in a data center managed by someone else? Both have legitimate use cases. Here's how to think about it for a business your size.

On-premise systems — traditional PBX and IP PBX — give you local control and can be highly capable. But they require hardware, maintenance, and someone to manage them. When that hardware reaches end of life, finding replacement parts gets difficult and expensive. We've seen businesses scramble to replace a PBX that died on a Friday afternoon because the parts simply don't exist anymore. The older your system, the more exposure you carry.

Cloud phone systems — also called UCaaS, Unified Communications as a Service — move the core system to a managed data center. Your phones, your mobile app, your softphone on a laptop all connect to that platform over the internet. There's no server to maintain, no hardware to replace, and the system scales up or down with your business. For most small and mid-size businesses in 2026, cloud is the right answer. The exceptions are environments with very specific integration requirements or locations with unreliable internet — and even those cases are becoming rarer.

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## Microsoft Teams as a Phone System — An Assessment

Teams is okay. If your business is already deep in the Microsoft 365 world, using Teams for voice is a reasonable choice and it gets the job done for basic use cases. The interface is familiar, the integration with calendar and chat is convenient, and the licensing can be simple if you're already paying for Microsoft.

The limitations matter though. Teams runs on Microsoft's systems, which means when Microsoft has a data center outage — and they do — your phone system goes with it. Teams is also built around the



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Microsoft hardware and software world, which limits your flexibility in desk phones and SIP devices. If you want to use a Yealink or Poly desk phone, a 2N intercom, or an Axis network speaker, Teams puts friction in the way. It's a collaboration platform that added voice. GoTo is a phone system that does everything else too.

### Why We Recommend GoTo

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GoTo is a true cloud PBX built from the ground up for voice. It's not a collaboration tool with phone features bolted on — it's a phone system that also handles video conferencing, team messaging, contact center, and SMS. That distinction matters in how it performs and how it scales.

Reliability is where GoTo separates itself. Their architecture runs on three data centers simultaneously — your system is live on one, with two independent failover sites as standard service. When Microsoft has an outage, Teams goes down. GoTo's triple-redundant design means your phones keep working. For a business that depends on incoming calls — a contact center, a multi-site operation, a professional services firm — that reliability is not a luxury.

GoTo supports SIP — the open standard for IP voice. That means you can use Yealink, Poly, or Cisco desk phones. You can integrate 2N intercoms and Axis network speakers. You're not trapped in a hardware world built for one platform. And every standard GoTo user license includes GoToMeeting — a full video conferencing platform. If Teams goes down or a client can't figure out the Teams invite, you have a backup that works.

GoTo also includes a network readiness assessment tool that measures your internet connection for voice quality over an extended period — testing jitter, packet loss, and latency before we ever configure a phone. We leave it running in the background after deployment, alerting us if the connection falls out of compliance. That's the kind of proactive management that prevents call quality problems instead of diagnosing them after your staff has been complaining for a week.

#### Your Network Is the Foundation of Your Phone System

Voice, video, and data all share the same network. When they compete for bandwidth without traffic management, voice loses — and call quality suffers. Before we deploy any cloud phone system, Lattis validates network readiness and provides best practices guidance for a well-built voice network — regardless of what firewall or switching platform you're running. QoS configuration, VLAN design,



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PoE verification, and jitter and packet loss testing are part of every deployment. We work with your existing network or help you upgrade it — whatever gets you to crystal clear calls on day one.

Think of QoS as an HOV lane for voice traffic. Your calls get priority. Everything else waits its turn. That configuration happens at the network level, in the background, so every system — voice, video, data — just works without fighting for the same road.

A redundant internet connection is also worth serious consideration for any business that depends on incoming calls. GoTo's mobile app and cloud architecture mean your core system stays online during a local outage — but your desk phones and on-site integrations need a live internet connection. A backup ISP closes that gap. We've designed networks where the failover to a backup circuit is automatic and takes less than a minute. Your staff may not even notice it happened.

## What Happens to Your Numbers — Porting Explained

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Porting your phone numbers to a new system is like switching wireless carriers on your cell phone. You keep your number, move to a new network, get new hardware, and life goes on. The process is managed, documented, and has a defined timeline. It is not a reason to stay on an old system.

The practical considerations: porting takes time — typically two to four weeks depending on the carrier — so it needs to be planned into the project timeline. During the transition, your old system stays active and your new system is configured and tested in parallel. On cutover day, the port completes and calls land on the new system. Your clients and customers notice nothing except that your phones work better.



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## What a Good Cutover Looks Like

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A phone system cutover doesn't have to be disruptive. Done right, it's almost invisible to your staff and completely invisible to your callers. Here's how we approach it.

Before we touch anything, we document your requirements. Auto-attendant design, call routing logic, hunt groups, ring strategies, DID mappings, voicemail-to-email, button mappings, paging integration, hold music, after-hours handling. Voice is a complex system and every business has specific call flow requirements that need to be captured before configuration begins. Getting these right before go-live is what separates a smooth cutover from a chaotic one.

We install the new desk phones in parallel with the old system. Your staff gets trained on the new phones while the old system is still running. They have time to get comfortable, ask questions, and report issues before anything goes live. We verify every design requirement — every call flow, every button, every voicemail — against the actual configured system. When we're satisfied that everything is right, we schedule cutover day.

On cutover day, the old phones come out and the new system goes into production. Because we've done the parallel installation and the testing, there are no surprises. The transition is clean. Your staff is ready. Your callers don't notice. That's the goal — and it's achievable every time when the project is planned correctly.

## Resilience — What Happens When Things Go Wrong

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One of the underappreciated advantages of a cloud phone system is what happens during an outage. If your building loses power, your desk phones go offline — but GoTo's platform is still running in their data centers. Incoming calls are answered by your auto-attendant. Voicemail still works. Staff with the GoTo mobile app can receive and make calls from their cell phones. Your callers don't know anything is wrong.

If you're a multi-site business, a cloud system gives you a level of resilience that a traditional PBX can't match. If one location goes down — power failure, internet outage, anything — you can reroute calls to



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another location with a configuration change. No emergency vendor visit. No calls going unanswered. The system adapts because the core platform isn't in your building.

Redundant internet is the complement to cloud resilience. Your desk phones, your SIP integrations, your on-site paging — these need a live internet connection. A backup ISP keeps them online when your primary circuit has a problem. We've designed networks where the failover to backup internet is automatic and takes less than a minute. Your staff may not even notice it happened.

## What a Modern Phone System Actually Includes

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If your current system can't do most of these, it's time to talk.

- ✓ **Cloud PBX hosted in redundant data centers** — your system stays up even when your building doesn't
- ✓ **Mobile app with full call controls** — hold, transfer, conference, flip to desk phone, all from your cell
- ✓ **Softphone for laptop or desktop** — work from anywhere without a desk phone
- ✓ **SMS from your business number** — text clients from your business identity, not your personal cell
- ✓ **Shared SMS threads** — contact center teams see the full conversation, not just the last message
- ✓ **Auto-attendant and call routing** — professional call handling configured to your exact requirements
- ✓ **Hunt groups and ring strategies** — calls find the right person, not just the first available line
- ✓ **Voicemail to email** — every voicemail delivered as an audio file to your inbox
- ✓ **Call recording** — protect your employees, investigate complaints, train new staff
- ✓ **Contact center reporting** — real-time and historical data on call volume, wait times, and agent performance
- ✓ **GoToMeeting included** — redundant video conferencing that works when Teams doesn't
- ✓ **SIP device support** — Yealink, Poly, Cisco desk phones, 2N intercoms, Axis network speakers
- ✓ **Network readiness assessment** — voice quality validated before cutover, monitored after



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- ✓ **QoS and VLAN configuration** — voice traffic prioritized and isolated at the network level
- ✓ **Number porting** — keep your existing numbers, move to the new system cleanly

### **Voice is complex. The upgrade doesn't have to be.**

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We've designed and deployed phone systems for businesses across San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties for 26 years. If you're not sure whether your current system is holding you back — or you already know it is — let's start with a conversation. We'll tell you what we see and what it would take to fix it.

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