



Small business connectivity

Four questions to consider

From law firms and hair salons to pizza places, floral shops, dental offices and real-estate companies, voice and data communications and television service continue to evolve and improve, providing businesses with more choices, power and flexibility than ever before. However, with so many alternatives to choose from, business owners and managers can face a dizzying array of options that can lead to dead ends, frustrations and unnecessary costs.

Unfortunately, as a small-business owner/manager, you're wearing countless hats, which makes it challenging to envision the right communications strategy that gives you a sustainable competitive edge and financial advantage. And since your competitors can sometimes be around the corner – or sometimes around the world – you need a cost-effective way to stay connected with customers and suppliers – wherever and whenever you need.

In the following paper, learn some of the key factors to consider as you make these crucial decisions for your business.

Which approach fits your business?

It's a deceptively simple and powerful question:
What are you trying to do?



Simple and personal

Before you choose any connectivity or communications solution, it's important to decide what your business is aiming to do. For example, a simple telephone connection for your business is one that focuses on the basics – which can be exactly the right choice for delivering a personal touch in your customer engagements. Basic telephone service might be an ideal choice for a small takeout restaurant that wants an actual person to answer each inbound call.

For Internet connectivity, the simple choice can let you launch a website with menus and contact/ordering options.

Interactive and professional

But, when you want to achieve a more corporate/professional image, your connectivity needs to increase. Now, instead of a simple phone line, you'll want an autoattendant, interactive voice response (IVR), extensions and voicemail. In addition to your own connectivity needs, you might want to offer complimentary WiFi access to visiting guests. You might even want television service in a waiting room or seating area.

Once you've defined your business objectives, you're in a much better position to make key connectivity and communications decisions for your business.



From email to a basic website to cloud applications and e-commerce, virtually every business needs some form of Internet connectivity. But what's the right speed and breadth of service? The following questions can help you make that determination:

Question 1

What Internet services do you need?

Security – No business can afford lax security, but if you're a retailer processing credit/debit card payments, you need rigorous security for payment card compliance.

Number of Users – How many employees will be accessing the Internet through your connection? What about your customers? Do you plan to offer complimentary WiFi access? If so, what security protocols will you implement to protect them – and your data?

Types of Applications – If your finance team uses a cloud-based accounting application, for example, you can expect an intense level of traffic for a business critical application. Or if you're running a medical office that shares medical images, your bandwidth demands can spike. But if you're simply looking for basic email and web surfing, the demands are smaller. Will you need streaming capabilities? And if so, what content and data will you make available?

Types of Devices – Will your employees use desktop/laptop computers, cash registers, debit/credit card terminals and kiosks? Will they need access from smartphones and tablets? screen-sharing and voice-to-text features.

Question 2

What telephone services do you need?

The same Internet connections you use for your business applications and data can also carry your telephone calls through a service called “hosted voice” or VoIP. By routing your calls through the Internet (and through your provider’s servers), you can build in far greater levels of intelligence and functionality than you would see in “plain old telephone service.”

You can achieve a “big business” feel for your small business by incorporating such features as extensions, an auto-attendant, hold music, conferencing, voicemail and more. You can provide capabilities like remote extensions for mobile and home workers, web conferencing, screen-sharing and voice-to-text features.

Best of all, you’ll still enjoy excellent quality at a fixed monthly price. And unlike an on-premises system, you don’t need to worry about owning, operating or maintaining telephone equipment. Ask yourself these questions when deciding on phone service:

- Does your business have multiple phones that must be able to transfer calls from one employee to another through extensions?
- Do you need the ability to create a call queue where customers can patiently wait on hold until a representative becomes available?
- Do you need a voicemail box or multiple voicemail boxes in a tree structure for your specific needs?

Best of all, you’ll still enjoy excellent quality at a fixed monthly price.



Question 3

What television or video services do you need?

Many businesses want television services as part of their communications package. For instance, in many bars and taverns, TV service is a virtual requirement. How do you know what level of service is right for you?

Service Quality – High-definition signals will cost more, but in a sports bar, HD is virtually a must, for competitive reasons. Some locations will use HD on some main screens, but standard-definition programming in lower-traffic areas.

Number of Televisions – Determine how many screens will need television programming – including back-office locations.

Hardware Requirements – Does your business plan to host pay-per-view events, Super Bowl parties or other sports championship events?

Channel Lineups – In a pediatrician’s office, you’d probably want an expanded tier with Disney Channel and Cartoon Network to keep young patients entertained while awaiting their appointments. A sports bar will want numerous sports channels to attract and retain customers.

Question 4

What support do you need?

One of the most overlooked – but crucial – aspects of communications services is the level of technical expertise you'll need. Most small-business owners have neither the interest, time, talent nor tools to become an IT technician.

They want someone they can call who is responsive 24/7 – without the finger-pointing and multiple calls to faraway support centers.

IT outsourcing and consultants can be very expensive. In addition, researching, diagnosing and initiating fixes can be time-consuming, tedious and costly. Most importantly, these headaches take you away from tasks that can improve your bottom line.

By working with one company for Internet connectivity, wireless connections, phone service, phone hardware and television service, you have the high level of accountability that you want for a critical business partner.

If your small business is aiming to improve its efficiency, service and expense management, a smarter communications infrastructure encompassing anything from voice and data communications to business-class television service can be crucial. Whether you're seeking to create a personal touch or put forth a robust big-company professional image, Breezeline offers the range of services to meet your business needs.

To learn more about Breezeline services, call: 855.284.3804 or visit breezeline.com/business

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