

WHITEPAPER

THIRTEEN QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN EVALUATING HOSTED VOICE SERVICE PROVIDERS

OVERVIEW ◀

Increasingly reliant on cloud technologies and services, organizations are turning to cloud-based Hosted Voice to replace aging on-premises voice communications systems.

Hosted Voice simplified communication and collaboration to support today's work style and fast-paced business environment. Cloud-based voice and collaboration technologies also save money and drive the businesses forward with capabilities such as:

- > Advanced call management helps customers reach the right person the first time
- > Simpler implementation and “plug-and-play” management make for a seamless voice system transition
- > Intuitive features promote widespread user adoption
- > Mobile integration supports remote workers and an always-on, anywhere work style
- > Services are typically available nationwide and are scalable: just order more seats as you need them



INFORMED SHOPPING



There are many providers today that offer Hosted Voice solutions. It would be handy to shop based on price per seat and available features. But if you base your decision primarily on these factors, the information on a provider's website, and what the sales rep tells you, you may be in for a surprise.

Take pricing, for example. To secure the lowest advertised price, most providers require customers to sign a contract for a minimum number of seats and/or pay for 12 months up front. The same minimum purchase is often required to secure any advertised satisfaction guarantee and even to access around-the-clock customer support.

Think about service guarantees as well. Did you know that most providers deliver their phone service on a "best effort" basis? In case of an outage, you could be stuck without a phone system for an hour, a day, a week, or longer. Imagine the high cost to your business.

These are just some of the reasons it's advisable to consider a broad range of factors when you evaluate a service provider. This white paper offers advice on how to find a Hosted Voice service that will meet your needs and a provider that will serve your interests.

ASK QUESTIONS FOR AN INSIGHTFUL COMPARISON



We offer 13 questions that will help you dig beyond the marketing claims and the list price to achieve an "apples-to-apples" comparison.

We include MegaPath's answers to these questions to help you compare.

1. How long have you been in business? MegaPath was founded in 1996.

2. Where is your customer service and technical support located? MegaPath's Voice Support is 100% US-based and available 24/7/365. Our voice implementation, support, and engineering teams are co-located in Virginia, Colorado and Washington to ensure synergies throughout your deployment and future support needs. If another voice provider promises



“We manage a wealth of properties, including more than 5,000 multi-family units, so we couldn't afford to go without a phone system during a lengthy switchover. **MegaPath offered the shortest implementation and the best price.** We now have unlimited calling, and we're not paying any more than we did for our previous service.”

Karen Cambell

Director of Office Services
Foresite Realty Partners

US-based support, read the fine print because they may offer US-based support only during certain hours and/or to a certain subset of customers (e.g. those with a minimum number of users).

3. How many outages did you have in the last 12 months and how long did they last? None. If you choose MegaPath voice services, your service would rely on our modern voice platform that has not experienced a single outage since it was built in 2010.

4. How many data centers do you have in the United States? Our communication centers are distributed across the US to provide optimal performance based on each customer's geographic location. We have a total of 6 centers that support high-availability, business-grade communication services.

5. How many failovers do you have before a network outage occurs? Our voice network doesn't have outages. In fact, its reliability exceeds 99.999%, the best in the industry! Our communications network is designed so that the number of failovers does not result in an outage. If a device fails, there is always another device ready to take over. Any faulty device is recovered or replaced immediately. For comparison purposes:

- > Five nines (99.999% uptime) equates to less than 5.26 minutes of downtime per year.
- > Three nines (99.9% uptime) equals 4.38 hours of downtime per year.

If your business can't afford to have such outages, look closely at the provider's voice network availability before you buy.

6. Who are your largest customers? Our Voice customers include household names like State Farm Insurance, AlphaGraphics, Applebee's, Benefit Cosmetics, Comfort Inn & Suites, Colorado Natural Gas, The Salvation Army, Uno Restaurants, Lucy Activewear, Mrs. Fields, and Peet's Coffee. MegaPath's entire customer base includes thousands of customers including Yum brands (Taco Bell, KFC, Pizza Hut), Papa John's, Public Storage, Abercrombie, Zales, Shell, Brookstone, Gap, Wells Fargo, and Procter & Gamble.

SCALES EASILY AND AFFORDABLY



7. Are you using a third-party backbone, or did you design your platform?

MegaPath takes a best-in-breed approach to providing communication services. We leverage multiple platforms to provide the most robust, feature-rich solutions available on the market. The advantages of this strategy is that we are establishing a network of communications capabilities born from leveraging our knowledge, cutting-edge technologies, and proven practices.

8. What do you do to ensure call quality? When MegaPath provides voice with access, all voice packets are tagged core-to-edge with priority across the network. That means that—unlike other hosted VoIP providers—we can provide true Quality of Service (QoS). Plus, our new HD Voice ensures crystal-clear call quality.

9. Is the price you advertise really the price I'll pay? Unlike other providers, we don't place user or seat minimums on our low pricing. So whether you purchase one seat or 1,000 seats, you'll get the price we advertise.

10. How many seats do I need to purchase to get the level of customer support and satisfaction guarantees you advertise? Read the fine print, because some providers offer extended support hours only to customers that purchase a certain number of seats. MegaPath gives you access to our knowledgeable technical experts 24/7/365 regardless of how many seats you purchase. Some providers limit their guarantees to customers that sign for 2- or 3-year terms. Our 30-day satisfaction guarantee comes standard with every Hosted Voice purchase. If you're not satisfied, simply cancel within 30 days and we'll refund your money.

11. Are you in debt? MegaPath is cash flow positive, has a very strong balance sheet and is backed by some of the largest financial investors in the US. We offer a diverse product portfolio and operate a national network with state-of-the-art, next-generation network elements.

12. Do I have to upgrade to a premium package to get the features my users want? MegaPath Hosted Voice comes standard with over 50 features that increase productivity and support mobility. Unlike other providers that require you to upgrade to a premium package to get certain features such as call recording, MegaPath lets you purchase Hosted Voice features individually, so you buy only what you need.

CONCLUSION

13. What kind of training and user help do you provide? MegaPath offers free customizable user and administrator training to help employees get the most out of Hosted Voice. We also offer a wealth of helpful information on our Voice Learning Center portal to help your users and voice administrators.

Offering a diverse set of advanced features, choice of installation options, 24/7/365 customer care, and industry-leading reliability, MegaPath may have what you're looking for in a voice and unified communications solution.

- > Leading, award-winning VoIP platform with 99.99% voice network availability, the best in the industry
- > Over 50 calling features to enable mobility, productivity, and collaboration
- > Flexible install options. If you need to get up and running quickly, you can opt for self-install and get your phones within 7 days, the industry's first installation SLA backed by service credits. Or if you'd rather have us perform the installation, you can choose a fully managed installation with dedicated project management.
- > Free customized training for a smooth transition. Live user and admin training, plus on-demand recordings.
- > True quality of service and HD Voice for excellent call quality
- > Available comprehensive Unified Communications features help companies support collaborative mobility with chat, presence, IM, voice and video calling, screen share, and SMS texting across devices.
- > Get voice, broadband, security, and cloud services from one provider, with one bill and one call for support for all your locations.

“With MegaPath, Risk Strategies can expand with low capital costs and consolidate ongoing expenses. The ability to share a pack of minutes between all our West Coast offices works great for us.”

Shannon LeColst
Director of IT, Risk Strategies

NEXT STEPS

If you're considering a cloud-based voice system, please call **877.611.6342**. One of our business consultants can discuss your needs and help you devise a solution.