

What is VoIP?

VoIP and IP telephony are becoming increasingly popular with large corporations to consumers alike. Internet Protocol (IP) is increasingly viewed as more than just a way to transport data, but also as a tool that simplifies and streamlines a wide range of business applications. Telephony is the most obvious example. VoIP – or voice over IP – is also the foundation for more advanced unified communications applications that can have an increasingly transformative effect on the way you do business.

VoIP Terms and Technology

Understanding the terms are a first step toward learning the potential of this technology:

- **VoIP refers** to a way to carry phone calls over an IP data network, whether on the Internet or your own internal network. A primary attraction of VoIP is its ability to help reduce expenses because telephone calls travel over the data network rather than the phone company's network.
- **IP Telephony** encompasses the full suite of VoIP enabled services including the interconnection of phones for communications; related services such as billing and dialing plans; and basic features such as conferencing, transfer, forward, and hold. These services might previously have been provided by a PBX.
- **IP Communications** include business applications that enhance communications to enable features such as unified messaging, integrated contact centers, and rich-media conferencing with voice, data, and video.
- **Unified Communications** takes IP communications a step further by using technologies as Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) and presence along with mobility solutions to unify and simply all forms of communications, independent of location, time, or device.

Public Internet phone calling uses the Internet for connecting phone calls, especially for consumers. But most businesses are using IP telephony across their own managed private networks because it allows them to better handle security and service quality. Using their own networks, companies have more control in ensuring that voice quality is as good as, if not better than, the services they would have previously experienced with their traditional phone system.

