**8x8, Inc.**

# 25 Business Phone Service Features Your Business Can't Afford To Do Without

**FREE Checklist:**
25 Must-have Features

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# 25 Business Phone Service Features Your Business Can't Afford To Do Without

## What you Need to Cut Costs, Satisfy Your Customers and Expand Your Business

When it comes to deciding which business phone service features you absolutely, positively, must have these days, there's good news and bad news.

### Bad news: Your customers probably won't tolerate outdated technology for long

The bad news is that the old-fashioned PBX sitting in your utility closet—and the expensive Grandma Bell services you get from a central switching facility that's older than you are— just don't cut it anymore. Not for you, and not for your customers.

In fact, a 2013 survey commissioned by Microsoft found that 91% of consumers surveyed said they would consider going elsewhere if a small business used old or inadequate technology. They expect their phone calls to be answered day or night by a pleasant-sounding person or auto-receptionist, and they expect to be routed efficiently to the right person. Consumers also want hear music on hold, have their voicemails answered, and be transferred internally without their calls being dropped.

### Employees need and expect more from your business phone service, too

And of course, your employees also need modern phone features to compete in today's marketplace. Features like voicemail-to-email, Outlook and Salesforce integration, call recording and management, and mobile apps that let them take the office anywhere. The bar has been raised by the consumer technology that many workers already have at home. The best workers want to use these same productivity-enhancing tools on the job.

### Good news: The right technology is cheaper, more reliable and more powerful than ever

The good news? Cloud technology and voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) make it easy and inexpensive to get the phone technology your business needs to thrive. In particular, cloud communications make high-end "big business" features—such as an auto-attendant, call transferring and forwarding capabilities, web chat, call conferencing, mobile apps, call recording and voicemail-to-email —affordable for small businesses.

"The 8x8 service gave us an improved experience and image for our clients, with music on hold and customized auto attendant. The auto attendant routes calls for us, which replaced the old process of answering the phone and tracking down the right person. And the ability to have phone service access from our desks to iPhones and Android phones with the app, then connect with our laptops, is the perfect match for our on-the-go schedule and fast pace of our business."

Scott Ochoa
Owner, Trust Computer Gurus

In fact, you'll probably pay a lot less than you do now for your outdated phone service. Here are some standard phone features that many VoIP solutions provide:

- **Caller ID with name**—for screening out junk calls and making sure your customers and associates get forwarded to the best person to handle the call.

- **Voicemail**—so callers can leave messages and have their calls returned quickly.

- **Call waiting**—so that important calls can get through even when the line is busy.

- **Call forwarding**—so you can send calls down the hall or even to other countries.

- **Call transfer**—so you can transfer callers to the right person no matter where that person is.

- **Three-way calling**— so employees and customers can quickly do conference calls, without scheduling them in advance.

- **Do Not Disturb**—for when employees are not available to take calls.

- **Music on hold**—for a more professional and pleasant user experience.

- **Extension dialing**—so you can reach any of your offices across the country.

## Get all the features people expect— plus advanced ones that make doing business fast and easy

VoIP-based phone systems give you access to new features, media and devices that can transform the way you do business.

Take auto attendant, for example. Auto attendant answers your business calls and lets your customers decide where they want their calls to go. You can route calls to a department, a particular employee, and even to an employee's smartphone. Here is how those capabilities helped one small business owner.

"The 8x8 service gave us an improved experience and image for our clients, with music on hold and customized auto attendant," says Scott Ochoa, owner of Trust Computer Gurus. "The auto attendant routes calls for us, which replaced the old process of answering the phone and tracking down the right person. And the ability to have phone service access from our desks to iPhones and Android phones with the app, then connect with our laptops, is the perfect match for our on-the-go schedule and fast pace of our business."

Auto attendant is just one of the features you get when you go from a traditional phone system to a cloud-based one.

Here is a list of advanced features that come standard with a modern phone service like 8x8's:

- **Auto attendant**—a flexible, easily customizable and changeable call-answering and routing feature that can be quickly re-configured on a moment's notice for emergencies, changes and holidays.

- **Customizable find-me, follow-me call forwarding**—so that important calls get to you quickly on whatever phone or device you're using.

- **Call transfers and ring-through to other offices**—even if those offices are out of town, out of state, or in another country.

- **Call recording**—lets you record training and coaching examples, and save call recordings for later follow-up or to check for compliance.

- **Presence management**—indicates which employees are on the phone or available to take calls. Works even with remote offices.

- **Meetings (with video)**— a robust virtual meeting platform that helps you schedule and conduct meetings from your desktop, laptop, tablet or cell.

- **Internet fax capabilities**—read and send faxes right from your desktop or laptop. Even view them on your smartphone or tablet. Never again worry about missing incoming faxes, or whether an outgoing one went through.

- **Integration with your desk and mobile phones**—so you can answer calls from your desk phone, cell phone or laptop "soft" phone, something that traditional phone systems can't do.

- **Integration with other business software**—such as Outlook, Salesforce, NetSuite, ACT and SugarCRM, which makes calling and tracking your contacts a snap.

- **Ring groups**—so you can efficiently manage the flow of incoming calls to departments, work groups and even far away offices.

- **Unlimited calling in the US and Canada**—for predicable monthly costs, so you don't get unpleasant "surprises" at the end of the month.

- **Unlimited calling in eight more international locations, and low rates elsewhere**—for easy-on-the-budget collaboration with international clients, suppliers and workers traveling abroad.

- **Chat and instant messaging**—for quick, instant communication and collaboration.

- **Virtual numbers**—to give you a local presence even when your offices are elsewhere. Calls to virtual numbers are instantly transferred to any number you choose, such as your main office.

- **Easy account management**—from your computer, using a simple web interface.

- **Cloud-based**—for flexibility, growth and simple administration and management.

## Why the cloud is a great place to put your business communications

Because cloud-based services are delivered over the Internet, your business can have the same phone features that big businesses have enjoyed for years—without the hassle and expense of maintaining a PBX system. Here are just a few of the benefits that a cloud-based system can deliver:

- Provides multiple communication services: phone, fax, web conferencing, mobile apps, call recording, and voicemail. You can access these services almost anywhere using office phones, smartphones, desktops, laptops and tablets.

- Services are hosted, maintained and regularly upgraded by your service provider. You don't need to pay an IT consultant to have the latest communications technology.

- Other than phones, your equipment is hosted somewhere else. You free up PBX closet space and reduce your power usage.

- Important data is secured off site. Your business has greater protection from outages, natural disasters and security breaches.

- Change or add new services whenever you need to. You don't have to wait weeks for a service tech to show up. .

## You need unified communications— even if your business is still young and growing

"Unified communications" is a phrase often used in large enterprises and by IT consultants. It really just means that all of your communications are tied together—and more importantly—are designed to work seamlessly together.

With unified communications, your phone, fax, web conferencing and mobile features all work together as one system. The advantage for your business is that you can do things that you could never do with your old PBX, because it wasn't designed to work with modern computer and mobile communications technology.

## The cloud is a great leveler for small business

Cloud-based unified communications gives you high-quality business phone features—and the flexibility to use them with office phones, desktops, laptops, and mobile devices. As many smart business owners have learned, this kind of flexibility is crucial for success.

"As the head of four small businesses, I understand more than most the critical need for this type of communications flexibility and the empowerment it provides me and my employees," says Robert Heller, CEO of Avyzo. "With our cloud-based phone system, we can respond to opportunities with speed and agility, giving us the necessary advantage in this competitive environment."

*"Listening to voicemails, transferring a line to our cell phone, and calling a number back has never been easier. Our system grabs all of our Outlook contacts and brings them into the communications directory. Then all you have to do is click, and you're calling that contact! And to schedule a meeting and invite contacts is easier than in GoToMeeting, where we had to set up a meeting and drag contacts over from Outlook, which used to be so time consuming."*

Edward Ustanic
Integrated Electrical Services

And as one unified communications customer put it, "The kicker is that it's a lot cheaper than what we were paying just for phones."

Even more important, small businesses just starting out do not have the huge investment in old-style phones that many established companies have, so it's easy for them to quickly embrace cloud-based technology.

### What does unified communications mean to "troops on the ground?"

Because unified communication solutions have become so affordable, even the smallest businesses can now have advanced features like call recording, web conferencing, and auto attendant. In fact, the cost is often a LOT less than for their current phone service. In addition to saving money, you get:

- **Freedom from being tethered to the office phone, fax and conferencing systems**—and the mobility that comes with call forwarding, mobile apps, and go-anywhere features that let you take your office with you."

- **A communications system that works with other popular business software**—such as Outlook, Salesforce, NetSuite, SugarCRM, eAgent and Sage ACT.

- **Security and compliance features**—such as secure login, and configuragle HIPAA and FISMA compliance, and more, so you don't have to worry about jeopardizing customer data or not complying with government regulations.

Let's just take one of these new unified communications features, Outlook integration. What does that really mean? For Edward Ustanic of Integrated Electrical Services, it means simplicity and a big gain in productivity.

"Listening to voicemails, transferring a line to our cell phone, and calling a number back has never been easier," says Edward. "Our system grabs all of our Outlook contacts and brings them into the communications directory. Then all you have to do is click, and you're calling that contact! And to schedule a meeting and invite contacts is easier than in GoToMeeting, where we had to set up a meeting and drag contacts over from Outlook, which used to be so time-consuming."

Perhaps the greatest benefit is looking bigger than you are, early in your growth cycle. Jahaziel Romero, owner of Red Eye media, says that "Being a small business, we were looking for a phone system that was able meet all our needs. Right away, we started receiving calls from our customers, and they were very impressed by the level of professionalism a cloud-based phone system had on our business."

Romero credits cloud communications as helping him grow his business. "I honestly do not know how we were able to stay in business without the cloud. As our business continues to grow and as we begin to expand to different locations, we know that we don't have to worry about the phone system situation."
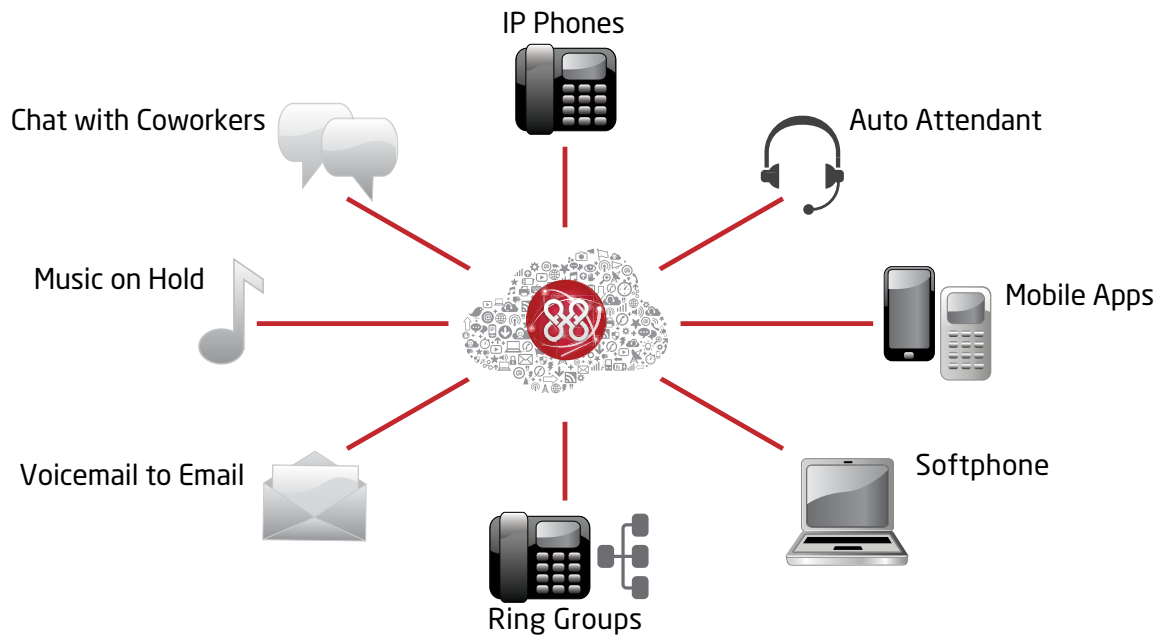
### The cloud makes for easy expansion

The cloud also gives small businesses the ability to enter markets and expand easily—without buying another expensive PBX or waiting for it to be installed. Houston Harrison, owner of Senior Benefit Group says cloud-based unified communications have transformed his business. "VoIP phone service has not only been reliable for my financial services company, but has also given my company a presence in our space that allowed us to immediately compete with the larger players," he says.

And, as Harrison's company grows, communications are one less thing to worry about because of the flexibility that VoIP offers.

"We are able to make changes with zero downtime as we add lines to meet our business growth," he says. "With the ease of activation we have, we feel we have a telecommunications strategy that will stay ahead of the technology curve, and meet our telecommunications needs for years to come."
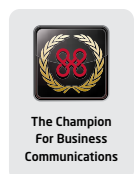
IP Phones

Auto Attendant

Chat with Coworkers

Mobile Apps

Music on Hold

Softphone

Voicemail to Email

Ring Groups

## To learn more, call 1.866.862.2811 or visit www.8x8.com

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The Champion
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Communications

## Money-saving features

1. An integrated communications system that ties together phones, web chat, conferencing, fax, etc.—all in one

2. Predictable billing and expenses—no surprises, and bills for all offices managed under one system

3. An easy-to-use administration interface—so you don't need expensive consultants

4. Cheap and/or free international calling—lets you save money for other things

5. Online meetings with video—for easy collaboration, without paying for a separate service

## Mobile and telecommuting capabilities

6. Find-me, follow-me features—to get calls to employees anywhere, on any device

7. Call forwarding to other offices and cell phones—no matter where they are

8. Accessible from any device—for maximum productivity and flexibility

9. Mobile apps—to support a staff on the go

10. Presence management—allows you to manage your availability, and see the availability of other users on the system

11. Voicemail-to-email,—for fast, easy voicemail notification and pickup

12. Extension dialing—reach colleagues by dialing just their extension, even if they're in an office across the country

## Features that make your business look bigger

13. Auto Attendant—to route calls efficiently and quickly

14. Music on hold—for a more professional image and better user experience

15. Virtual numbers—so you "look local" in other area codes, even though you might only have one office

16. Ring/hunt groups—that help you distribute calls to different employees, teams or offices

17. Call recording—to capture important details and help with compliance

## Disaster recovery

18. No PBX closet to be damaged or repaired—saving money and time to recovery

19. Service not dependent on local conditions—so you could be up and running even during severe weather or power outages

20. Mobile apps, easy forwarding, and plug-in phones—for easy relocation and telecommuting

## Safety, security and easy upgradability

21. Secured and upgraded in the cloud—so you don't need consultants or to download and install software

22. Caller ID to instantly see who is calling—for easy call screening

23. High compliance and standards management capabilities —e.g., HIPAA, FISMA, PCI and other similar needs

## Integration

24. Integration with other software—including Outlook, Salesforce, and other popular CRM software

25. Use your preferred device anywhere, anytime: office phones, desktops, laptops, smartphones and tablets