



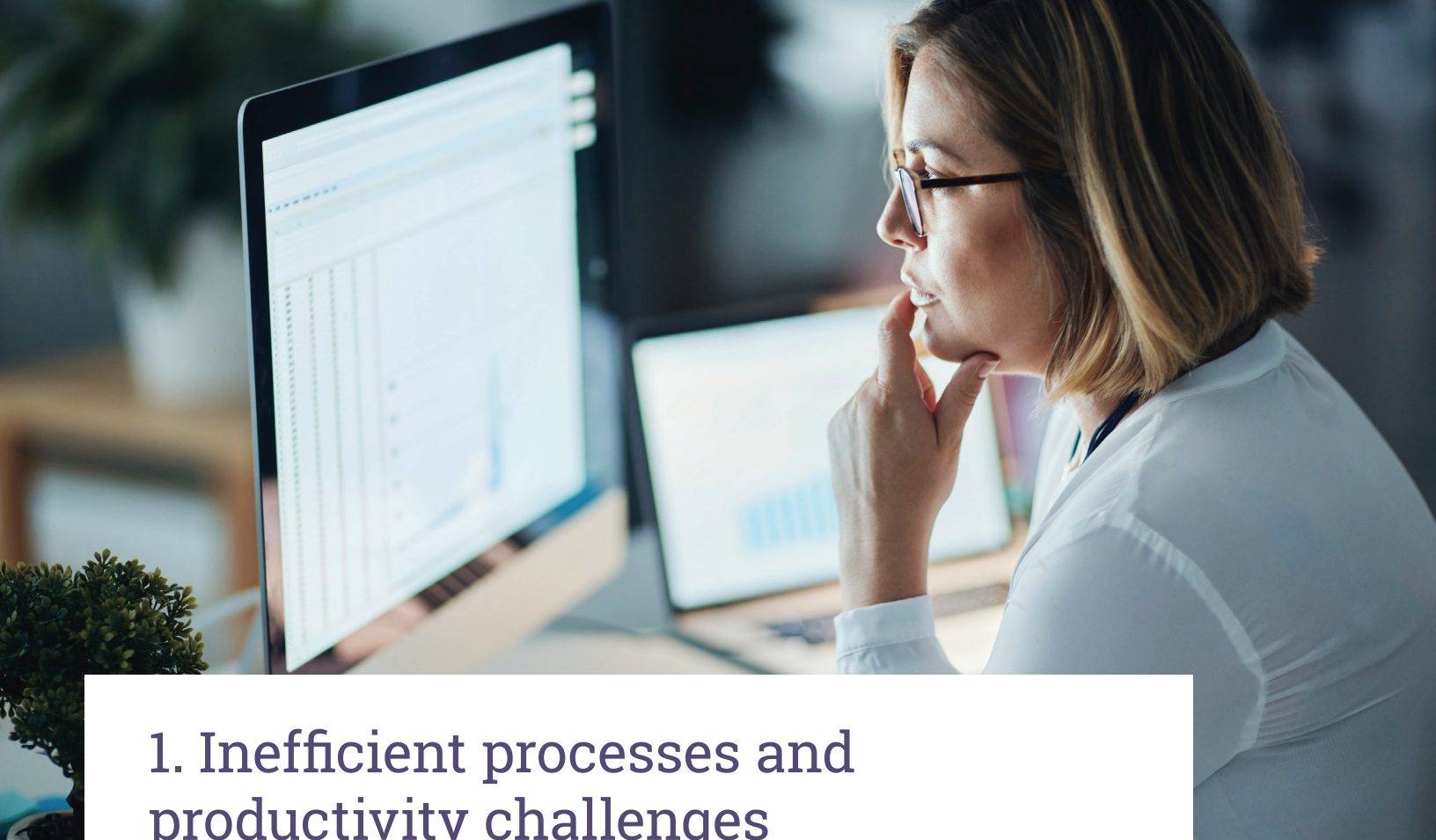
Small Business Growing Pains: 5 Ways Cloud Communications Can Help



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Business growth doesn't happen on its own. You need the right strategy, people and technology in place to expand your business in a sustainable manner. Many small businesses are ill-equipped to handle growth when it happens, which often leads to companies shutting their doors prematurely. According to the Small Business Administration, about 30% of small businesses close within the first two years.

One of the biggest stumbling blocks for small businesses is their communications technology. Rather than taking a back seat, your communications system should be top of mind. This will ensure you have the right tools in place to connect employees and customers. Here are five hurdles that owners of expanding businesses often face, and how cloud communications can help overcome these obstacles.



1. Inefficient processes and productivity challenges

Solution: Cloud communications has made advanced business phone features like extension dialing, auto attendant, email notification of voicemail and corporate directories affordable, even for very small businesses. More than just a convenience, these capabilities can have a dramatic, positive impact on employee productivity and workflow efficiency.

As your business expands, it's especially important for workers to remain connected with one another and to be able to communicate across various departments in your organization. Cloud communications provides robust messaging and video conferencing features that help staff stay in touch, no matter where they're located or what team they're on. What's more, these features are available on mobile devices, so employees can send and receive messages or hold virtual meetings even when they are away from their desk.

Modern-day cloud communications solutions also integrate seamlessly with customer relationship management services and productivity tools, such as NetSuite, Salesforce, Zendesk, Microsoft Outlook and Google G Suite. Such integrations not only help to improve customer service, but also give your employees access to products that streamline workflows and improve overall performance.



2. Lack of support for mobile and remote workers

Solution: Cloud communications gives mobile and remote employees access to the same phone service and features available in the office. Not only does this maximize their productivity, it also allows your business to present a unified, professional front to the world.

With cloud communications, mobile and remote workers can access your communications system using their laptop, tablet or smartphone. These capabilities are especially important as more workers are telecommuting and many are working flexible hours outside of the office. And, should the office lose power or a storm strikes, having your communications system hosted by your provider off-site means business can go on as usual.

For many small and medium businesses, enabling employees to work anywhere, anytime lets the company tap into all available talent. This means expanding your talent pool outside of your geographic location and hiring top talent located anywhere in the world.

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a silver smartphone. The person is wearing a dark suit jacket and a white shirt cuff is visible. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an office or business setting with soft lighting.

3. Overpaying for inadequate phone service

Solution: As your business grows, you don't want to worry about running out of minutes or incurring high long distance or international calling charges. These costs divert valuable resources and can quickly sink your business. Even locally, using your cell phone to make business calls can be exorbitantly expensive.

Cloud communications offers local, long distance and international call rates that are typically much lower than what you pay with traditional phone service. Additionally, cloud communications lets you use your smartphone as an extension of your office phone, thus reducing your mobile bill.

Furthermore, cloud communications provides many more features than onsite phone systems at a fraction of the cost. Features like auto attendant and call routing to the appropriate employee or department ensure customer calls are handled promptly and satisfactorily. Some cloud communications solutions even have more advanced capabilities that let companies manage their own call centers for sales operations or customer service.



4. IT headaches and resource strains when expanding offices

Solution: The cost of expansion goes down considerably with cloud communications compared to traditional telephony systems. The main financial advantage is that cloud communications scale easily. Based on your business needs, lines can be added or removed quickly. You don't need to dedicate IT staff to the project or hire outside consultants. Cloud communications truly grows with you, and does so without disruption to your business.

Should you need to add more functionality once you've expanded, such as supervisor-level analytics, some cloud communications solutions offer mix and match service plans so you have the right solution for each member of your organization. That way, you don't pay for features that only a handful of employees really need.

“When we moved our offices, the idea of having to ‘start over’ with a new phone system was overwhelming. But the next morning, our phones arrived. We were ‘up and operating’ in a few minutes, and the ease and ability of customizing our preferences online was unbelievable.”

– Dave Spetrino, President of Plantation Building Corp



5. Downtime during relocation to a larger office

Solution: The flexibility and mobility of cloud communications allow for easy relocation when more space is required. All you have to do is order and activate your new phones, which is much easier than installing new phone lines or upgrading onsite hardware. And if their desk phones aren't available, your employees can still access cloud communications through their laptops, tablets and smartphones without missing a beat. Downtime is no longer an issue when you have this kind of adaptability.

Additionally, as your business expands to multiple offices, having one communications solution used across each location makes managing the system simple and easy. You also have just one bill to pay and one set of data to review for information such as peak call times.



8x8—Powering Your Future

Switching to cloud communications is easy, efficient and cost-effective for your growing business. And by eliminating these five growing pains, cloud communications could be the catalyst that accelerates your business to the next level.

Ready for the Next Step?

To learn more about how your business can leverage cloud communications to lower costs, increase collaboration and engage customers, contact an 8x8 Solutions Expert at [1.855.465.7904](tel:1.855.465.7904) or visit 8x8.com.

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