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VoIP systems or Voice over Internet Protocol systems are new ways of office communication that are not only more efficient but also more cost effective.

A small business VoIP can be an asset to the business because of the many new features that are there in the system vis-Ã -vis the any PABX Office phone system.

There are many benefits of having small business VoIP systems:

â€¢ Since broadband Internet access is the primary requirement of VoIp telephone systems, you can make VoIP calls from your computer without spending on telephones at all.

â€¢ It is simple to use VoIP systems as voice and data can be handled by one type of network protocol and wiring.

â€¢ VoIP telephone systems (with any dedicated software, hardware, and VoIP-enabled handsets) are cheaper than the traditional PABX telephone systems.

â€¢ If all employees use their laptops to make VoIP calls, they can always be in touch wherever there is Internet access and they can work from anywhere where there is a stable Internet connection.

There are some disadvantages to the use of VoIP telephone systems such as:

â€¢ If there is considerable traffic of calls in the small business environment, it can cause an overload effect on the internal data network and broadband Internet connection.

â€¢ Using VoIP systems in a large scale business will need more Internet bandwidth, faster connections within your data network, and setting priorities to various types of Internet traffic such as VoIP calls, Emails etc.

â€¢ If only Voip systems are used and other commercial phone services are eliminated, you have to depend upon your Internet service provider (ISP) as against reliable phone services.

Small business VoIP systems usually have some basic common features at almost negligible costs. These facilities may be also there in the PABX phone systems. These are; extension dialing, an auto attendant to answer the phone and route calls to VoIP extensions, voice-mail boxes and audio conferencing. These features are found in most small business VoIP packages and can even be handled by open-source IP PBXs.

One must be careful though when installing VoIP systems and due attention should be given to the type of internet connection that can be available to set up a small business VoIP. Although technically it is possible to use a dial-up connection for VoIP calling, this connection speed (56 kbps) is too slow for business use. Small business VoIP will need a broadband Internet connection with speeds of at least 256 Kbps, more speeds are available and better.

Hardware and software requirements for VoIP systems:

Although nothing more than computers with internet connections are required to implement VoIP systems in a small office with free software such as Skype or Asterix. If additional features like

voicemail and audio conferences of more than 10 people is required then dedicated and paid-for business services could be required with an enterprise-grade IP PBX for Linux. Hardware requirements can include headsets, IP-enabled phones, and a physical IP PBX box.

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