



The Definitive Guide To Choosing The *Right* Phone System For Your Small Business

Buyer Beware!

**Do NOT Buy A New Phone System For Your Business Before Reading
This Guide To Avoid Getting Trapped In An Impossible-To-Cancel
Contract**

For An Expensive, Frustrating Phone System You Hate

Read this guide to discover:

- ✓ The uncensored facts about the phone system industry that no phone salesperson will ever tell you, but that you should know before buying.
- ✓ How to cut through all the technical mumbo-jumbo and confusing features to know what's truly the most important attributes and features to look for.
- ✓ A hidden "gotcha" clause phone system vendors try to put in their contracts that lock you in forever and legally bind you to pay thousands of dollars in penalties to cancel – even if the phone system and service doesn't work as advertised. Do NOT sign a contract if this clause is in there!
- ✓ The proposal "shell game" of hidden costs, taxes and unanticipated monthly fees that 99% of all phone system salespeople WON'T tell you about before you buy that trick you into thinking you're getting a bargain (you're not).

Provided as an educational service by:

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Why I Wrote This Report

Personal Letter From Greg Wilkoff President, Adept Networks

Dear Colleague,

Choosing a new phone system is a critical decision you want to get right. Choose poorly, and you'll be endlessly annoyed and hamstrung with a confusing, difficult and limited system that is constantly breaking down, dropping calls and frustrating you (and your customers!) with poor sound quality and non-existent support.

Worse yet, many phone system vendors will lock you into a long-term contract that you will have to pay HUGE fines to get out of, even if the service is terrible and the phone doesn't work as advertised. Further, you're busy – and switching phone systems is no easy task. And what if the new system is as bad (or worse!) than the one you just got rid of? The devil you know keeps you stuck – after all, it's very, VERY difficult to determine if a phone system will work as advertised UNTIL you sign on the dotted line.

You can see the dilemma, which is why I wrote this report.

As an IT services company that has been selling phone systems for over 20 years to small and mid-sized companies, I've been shocked and appalled by how much the phone system industry has taken advantage of small businesses.

From grossly confusing "geek speak" to misleading advertising, hidden fees, onerous contracts and horrible service, I felt it was time someone told the plain truth about how to find an easy-to-use, fairly-priced, quality phone system that will actually work as advertised – or better!

My sincere hope is that by making this information public, we will help raise the standards within the phone system industry, and to give YOU useful information to avoid making a very expensive decision you'll deeply regret.

Dedicated to serving you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Wilkoff".

Greg Wilkoff
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About The Author



Greg Wilkoff grew up in rural Northern California and is one of eight children. Greg entered the technology industry in Los Angeles to work in his brother's telecom business. In 1997 He relocated to Seattle to work for a Seattle based telecom company. He continued gaining experience working on large PBX phone systems in hospitals in Washington and Oregon.

In 2002 Greg met his wife to be, Ann-Marie and the two were married in 2003. Relocating to Medford Oregon, Greg and Ann-Marie founded Adept Networks in 2002. From the beginning Adept Offered full IT Services, Telephone Systems and Data Cabling, Adept Networks was the first technology company in Southern Oregon to offer VoIP products to business clients.

Greg envisioned building a company from the ground up that would offer products and services to clients that would help them be more productive and profitable. In the process he wanted to provide an outstanding work environment that would benefit employees.

Greg and Ann-Marie have 5 children. They reside in Eagle Point, Oregon. Through Adept Networks, Greg and Ann-Marie have been able to regularly help local non-profits such as Magdalene Home, Hadley Hope, Redemption Ridge, Walking Tall, and others. He strives to grow his business with integrity in quality and size and to be a great husband and father.

With 28 years in enterprise technology Greg brings an expert skillset to the northwest, providing clients with state-of-the-art solutions that make Adept Networks stand out in the region as a leader in innovation and quality.

Being the best employer in the northwest and providing incredible customer service is Greg's passion.

Phone System Marketing Is Out Of Control! How To Avoid Falling For The Hype (And Making A Poor Choice)

If you're like most of our clients, you're probably looking for an honest expert who can advise you on which phone system is right for your specific situation and needs. One that is easy to use and works as advertised.

Problem is, phone system marketing is out of control online, with dozens of pure marketing sites posing as "best of" directories that are nothing more than marketing firms who are experts in search engine optimization (not phone systems) that sell leads and directory rankings to the highest bidder. They are NOT interested in providing good advice to you – they are interested in getting you to click or request a quote so they can sell your lead to multi-million and billion-dollar companies like Ooma, RingCentral, Vonage, etc.

In fact, marketing for "business phone systems" is one of the most competitive online, with a single Google click costing anywhere from \$500 to \$1,000 – for a single *click*! Is it any wonder that your search for "business phone systems" is full of SEO optimized directories and big corporate players who can afford such outrageous marketing fees?

NONE of these sites provide useful information to make a good decision. The marketing directories who rank phone systems don't tell you how they are actually ranking their "top" providers or "best rated." They often don't provide details on how the reviews are verified for integrity (if they're checked at all) and all reviews are all anonymous. And they certainly are light on facts and transparency. Clearly this is NOT how you want to choose your next phone system, and you can bet your bottom dollar that these sites won't be around to help you if the phone system you buy turns out to be a giant disaster.

Another marketing trick many use is offering free phones and "phone lines as low as..." type offers. These are often used as marketing bait to lead you into thinking you're getting a good deal – but buyer beware! We all know you get what you pay for, so these offers are perfectly acceptable PROVIDED the phone actually performs as it should.

That's why we wrote this guide. Much of the advertising we see for a phone system is misleading and fails to tell you the **WHOLE** truth. Yes, there certainly **ARE** good money-saving deals out there and not all of them are fake – **but "cheapest price" should not be #1 on your list of criteria when making a decision on a new phone system because the money saved initially will be long forgotten and lost to countless hours of frustration later trying to make a bad system work.**

We cannot change the way phone system vendors advertise, but we can help you make your way through the "geek speak" and half truths. There **ARE** good phone system vendors out there. Lots of them. You just have to know what to look for and what questions to ask – which is what this report is about.



The Two Biggest Problems With VoIP Phones And How To Avoid Them

First of all, VoIP is an overused term that confuses a lot of people. They think it's a phone on your computer, a software application or a physical phone you plug into your PC.

Those all were the early iterations of VoIP. Today, a "VoIP" phone is more of a SERVICE than a physical phone (although physical phones still play into this). With a VoIP service, you can use any cell phone, your PC or other devices to make calls and send messages, which gives you the ability to make and receive calls from any location with a reasonable Internet connection.

But many people have a fear of moving to a VoIP for two legitimate reasons. The first is call quality and the second is "What if the Internet goes down?" So let me address both of those valid concerns and why with the RIGHT phone, this is not an issue.

Problem #1: Call Quality

It's true that in the past, VoIP phones have been notorious for garbled, choppy, low-quality sound and dropped calls. However, the technology that operates these phones has come a long way in the recent years, and Internet bandwidth (which is a key component to call quality) is faster and cheaper.

So any sound quality issues you might have on a new VoIP system is due to two problems – your bandwidth isn't sufficient, or your firewall, router and computer network (where the phone now resides) is not set up properly for the phone. That's it.

This is why it's critical for your phone vendor to assess your network before selling you a phone to make sure the phone you're buying will actually work on the network you're plugging it into.

KEY POINT: Big phone vendors like AT&T or RingCentral will NOT do this assessment before selling you a phone. They will take your money, ship you a phone in a box and leave you to set it up. When the call quality is horrible and you call them for help, they'll simply point the finger to your Internet provider, bandwidth or computer network and wish you good luck. They WON'T troubleshoot that issue for you, which is why you want to buy a phone system from a local IT company that will own 100% of the setup, problems, and call quality.

Problem #2: What If The Internet Goes Down?

Without a doubt, the internet WILL go down, but that doesn't mean your phone system has to. That's because the "brain" of the phone is not hosted in your office. It's hosted in a secure and highly-reliable server that has multiple backup systems for Internet connectivity. Therefore, when your local Internet goes down, you can have the phone automatically set up to do a number of things, such as:



- Route to a designated cell phone or other location.
- Go to an auto attendant you set up to allow the person to leave a voice mail, similar to your after hours call system.
- They can leave a voice mail, and that voice mail can be e-mailed to you.
- Switch to a mobile app using cellular service such as LTE.
- Hotspot your VoIP phone to your mobile data plan.

A good phone system vendor will set up one or more of these failover routines in advance so calls are automatically handled the way you want and instantly “fail over” without you having to do anything.

The Truth About All VoIP Phone Systems That No Salesperson Will Tell You

Here’s the biggest “secret” to the phone system industry that you won’t see any vendor advertising: MOST phone system are basically the same in features and capabilities.

Sure there are a few things some phone systems can do that others can’t, like video calls, but for the most part, it’s a highly competitive field and every feature offered by one phone system is, or will be offered by them all. So all the marketing hype about how *their* phone system is “the best” or better than the rest is just marketing propaganda that should be taken with a grain of salt.

So how DO you compare, and what IS the most important point of differentiation that you need to look for?

Here it is: The most important “feature” is not in the phone itself but in the after-sale SERVICE – who is setting it up, who will be there to install it, configure it and make sure it works, and who you will call when you need help.

It should not surprise you that most small business owners and office managers do not know how to properly set up a phone system and customize it for their office, nor do they want to learn. They also don’t want to become experts at their phone systems – they simply want an EASY TO USE system that consistently works.

That’s why you want to really investigate the after-sale service. When something goes wrong or when you can’t get the system to do what you want it to do, how easy is it to get fast, easy and helpful support? Further, who will be there to conduct the cut over to the new system and make sure it works?



Here are two critical questions you need to ask the vendor about support BEFORE you buy:

1. **Who will set my new phone system up and customize it for my specific needs and situation?**

Get specifics here. Some vendors simply ship you a phone and require you to set it up yourself. Sure they'll *tell* you all you have to do is "plug it in," but rarely is anything that easy. Instead of doing it for you, they'll give you the 100-page instruction manual you'll need to muddle through and a "customer support" website that will require you to search through hundreds of questions to find the answer to your specific problem, which is time consuming and frustrating. Rarely do these sites provide the answers you need quickly.

Then the day of the cut over, you're scrambling to make the system work, frantically trying to figure out how to troubleshoot it and set it up.

Worse yet - if you CAN'T get it to work and you CAN'T get it to do what you want it to do, exactly how will they help you? Do they have local techs who will come to your office and set it up? Troubleshoot it? This brings me to the next question...

2. **How do I get help if the phone system isn't working or I can't get it to do what we need it to do?**

As outlined above, we all know how exasperating it is to try and get a "customer service" person to help from a big, nameless, faceless corporation.

So we recommend you look for a reputable, local phone system reseller who will not only set up the phone system for you and customize it for your specific needs, but also be there to provide personalized support, training and help over the phone AND in-office support should the need arise.

One Final Key Point: As already discussed above in the "Problems With VoIP," you really want to work with a phone system vendor that is also an IT firm, like us. Because your phone resides on your computer network, the network must be assessed prior to installing a phone to ensure it can properly handle the added bandwidth requirements, and to ensure the firewall and router are configured properly. Only an IT firm will know how to do this properly.

By doing the assessment BEFORE you buy, you can prepare in advance and be aware of any additional costs you may incur with the phone.

Again, many phone vendors won't do this assessment (or won't do it properly) and then will sell you a phone, only to let you discover later you have to incur hundreds or thousands of dollars in costs to make it work.



Critical Questions To Ask BEFORE Signing A Contract To Avoid Hidden Fees, Onerous Contracts And Bad Sound Quality

In addition to the above questions about support covered earlier, here are additional questions you want to ask BEFORE signing on the dotted line:

1. **How many years have you been selling, installing and supporting phone systems?**
2. **How can I be certain the sound quality will be excellent with your system?**

As previously discussed, make sure the person selling you the phone actually conducts an assessment of your network and bandwidth to guarantee the phone will sound and perform perfectly. Ask them to guarantee that in advance so you don't have any unpleasant surprises of a faulty system or additional fees and ongoing bills you didn't budget for.

3. **How can I cancel and get out of the contract? What are the fees involved?**

This is a very important question to ask, especially if the phone system doesn't perform the way you want.

4. What are the startup and recurring costs?
5. Do I need special cabling?
6. Do you offer any type of money-back guarantee?
7. Can I keep my current phone number? Are there any additional costs involved to keep my number?

This is called "number porting."

8. **Does the quote include taxes? What other ongoing fees and costs are there?**

This is a VERY important question to ask because many phone system salespeople leave off the cost of taxes.

9. **What features are included? What which ones costs extra?**

10. Does your system include international calling?
11. Will it work with my current firewall, router, Internet, and network settings?

This needs to be assessed BEFORE you buy a phone system, otherwise you could be faced with additional fees



12. Does your system support faxing?
13. Do you offer a trial phone we can test in our office before making a commitment?
14. If my employees need to work from home, how does your phone system accommodate that?
How does the transition happen if we suddenly have to work remote due to a covid-type shutdown or other disaster?
15. Who does the transition to the new phone, and how long will I be down during the cut over?
16. What type of training do you offer for my employees using the phone?
17. Can you SHOW me how to change office hours, how calls are routed, how to add a new employee, set up out-of-office, etc.?

Get the vendor to SHOW you how to do these things, or inquire if they will do them for you. They'll all SAY it's easy, but let them show you on a demo phone. That way you can see how just "easy" it is (or not!).

18. Can you provide me references from other recent clients you installed this phone system for?
19. Do I have to record my own voice mail and auto attendant messages, or will you do that for me? Help me find voice talent? Music on hold?
20. How does your system handle emergency 9-1-1 calls? This is especially important if there are multiple addresses involved.

Some Important Features To Look For

As I said earlier, almost all phone systems are the same. However, here are a few features you want to make sure are included or at least available:

Voice Mails E-mailed To You

This is a feature many of our clients don't ask for (initially) but later tell us is one of their favorites.

Text Communications To Clients

This is particularly important if your business ships products and services OR relies on client/patient appointments. We live in a mobile dependent society and many



customers, clients and patients prefer to receive text communications over phone calls.

Call Routing When The Internet Goes Down

Another key feature to have is instantaneous, automatic fail over for phone calls if and when the Internet goes down. You never want to miss an important call.

Soft Phone App Available

When you're calling customers from your personal phone, having a softphone app turns your cell phone into your office phone. Calls look like they are coming from your business. Your employees' personal numbers stay personal.

The Next Step: A Free Phone And Communication Assessment

Are you ready to make a move to a new phone system? Curious if you could save money on your phone and Internet bills? Do you HATE your current VoIP system and want to find a replacement – but are stuck in a contract you don't know how to get out of without paying huge fines and early cancellation fees?

Then we'd like to offer you a free phone and communication Assessment to answer these questions:

- **Is your current network environment (bandwidth, firewall, router, etc.) able to handle a VoIP system?** We have a diagnostic tool we can run on your computer network to ensure a VoIP phone would work. We'll reveal any additional costs you might have to incur in advance so you're not unpleasantly surprised AFTER you buy.
- **Is it possible for you to get out of a long-term contract with a phone system that you HATE?** We'll review your contract and tell you if and what can be done. Sometimes there are loopholes that give you an out. In some cases, we can negotiate on your behalf to get you out or significantly reduce the fees. In some cases, the NEW system will save you enough money to more than cover the initial payment of early cancellation. We'll go over all of this for you when we meet.
- **Can you save money on your phone and Internet bill?** It's very common for us to save our clients between 15% and 25% without sacrificing quality. As we said earlier, this is a highly competitive industry and vendors DO have unadvertised discounts and incentives you can take advantage of if you know where to look (and we do!).



- **Are you losing sales and opportunities because clients and prospects can't get to someone when they call your office?** Are prospects hanging up because they aren't getting to anyone live? How exactly ARE calls being handled in your office? Are clients calling your sales rep's personal cell phone, and is that acceptable to you?

At the end of this assessment, you'll have all the answers you want as to whether or not it makes good business sense to upgrade your phone.

We hope you become a client, but if not, that's okay too! You have my personal guarantee that absolutely NO high-pressure sales tactics will not be used at any point during our engagement. We simply want this to be a delightful, informative and positive experience for you.

How To Request Your Free Phone Assessment

There are 3 ways to communicate with us and schedule this free assessment. They are:

Go online to: www.adeptnetworks.com/discovery-call/

Or call us direct at 541-500-3335

Or e-mail me direct at info@adeptnetworks.com

Looking forward to serving you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Wilkoff".

Greg Wilkoff
Adept Networks

www.adeptnetworks.com

P.S. Even if you don't have an immediate need for a new phone system, having this Assessment done is an easy, no-cost way to have "fresh eyes" looking at what you're spending on your phone and Internet, as well as to pinpoint problems with your bandwidth, firewall and router that could be causing phone problems, poor sound quality and dropped calls.

In the 20 years we've been supporting IT and phone systems for small businesses, we've never been able to find a "perfect" setup with zero problems or ways that I can improve your situation. At the very least, the peace of mind you'll gain from having a credible 3rd party reviewing your systems is worth the little bit of time it takes, and this is truly an easy, non-invasive process.



Why Choose Us?

1. We GUARANTEE no hidden fees.
When you buy a phone system from us, we guarantee the fees we quote you are complete with all taxes and fees. (Taxes are subject to change)
2. We can provide you with a demo system that you can work with to make sure it is the right fit for your organization.
3. Full, ongoing support is included with every subscription-based phone system. Have confidence that we will be there for you. We don't just ship you phones and wish you well on getting them working.
4. We are local. We're network experts. This ensures a successful setup and cutover for our clients.
5. We can support your remote workers with great unified communication services.