

## Why You Must Have a Virtual Phone System

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6



Jonathan Osman

By *Jonathan Osman*

Eight months ago, I started investigating the idea of buying my own telephone system. With my mobile number on every sign that I owned and in every ad, I received calls at all hours of the day and night, which got old fast. The idea of simply turning off my ringer at night was not an option either since I no longer have a land-line at home.

After discovering how expensive it would be to purchase, install, and operate my own phone system, I discovered a number of virtual phone systems that are currently available; the most popular being [Google Voice](#).

For the solo agent or for personal use, Google Voice is a must-have. Google Voice is free to register (although you must be invited) and you can order a "local" number to receive voicemail and text messages. You can even dial out using either the Google Voice website or the free mobile app. Both the app and the website will mask your real phone number with your Google Voice number. I love using voicemail through Google Voice because the voice-to-text transcription allows me to read an e-mail of a voicemail even though the translations are hit or miss.

For groups or agents demanding more robust features, I would highly recommend a paid virtual phone system through a service like [RingCentral](#), [Grasshopper](#) (formerly Got Vmail), or [Phonebooth](#). All have the capabilities to provide you with a local number, a toll free number, e-fax, company directory, VoIP, and more. When a client dials in, a recording directs them to the department or extensions which are available.

The best part about a virtual phone system is that the extension can be anything from a voicemail box to a seamless transfer to any other phone, including a cell. With multiple extensions available, you can assign one to each member of your team along with your preferred vendor partners...even your broker. In addition, users can dial out through the virtual phone system by using a smart phone app, VoIP through the computer, or dialing through the system.

The virtual phone system that I signed up for allowed me to create a call queue, much like you would find in any call center. Whenever a client calls our phone number and presses 4, they are entered into a queue that rings my buyer agents for a quick response. I can choose how and in what order the calls are delivered along with seeing if anyone rejected a call or failed to pick up. For example, I can choose to have my buyer agents ring

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simultaneously or in succession while the caller listens to on-hold music or pre-recorded information.

With most systems charging less than \$60 a month and additional equipment not necessary, it makes sense for every agent to explore the potential of having their own virtual phone system.

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### CHRIS MOODY

Thanks for mentioning Phonebooth!

With Free Phonebooth and Phonebooth OnDemand (\$20 per user per month for unlimited use), we think that small businesses will be able to save tons of money on their phone systems.



If you have any questions or would like to try Phonebooth out, let me know!

Best,  
Chris Moody  
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### NEAL GILBERT

Hosted VoIP is the technology that you are describing. You are right on when you describe what the system can do for you as opposed to focusing solely on costs.

Hosted VoIP will allow you to create a professional telecommunications system for your agents where ever they are. You can have a receptionist, that works from home, answer incoming calls to your primary company number and transfer those calls to your agents where ever they are including cell phones. You can add an Auto-Attendant to handle after hours and overflow calls the same way a live receptionist does.

You can set up special phone numbers for events or big producers that will ring only on certain agents phones essentially allowing you to create a mini real estate company inside your main company.

There is a lot that you can do with a Hosted VoIP phone system.

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