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Get The Scale, Flexibility, & Features You Need With a VoIP PBX Hosted In The Cloud

What is a Cloud PBX?

PBX (Private Branch Exchange) is a telephone exchange that serves a particular business or office building, as opposed to one that a common carrier or telephone company operates for many businesses or for the general public. PBXs make connections among the internal telephones of a business or other private organization and connect them to the public switched telephone network (PSTN). Traditional hard wired PBX system have evolved into the technology that makes advanced solutions, like ShoreTel Sky's [cloud-based phone system](#) possible.

PBX phone systems perform four main call processing duties:

1. Establishing connections between the telephone sets of two users
2. Maintaining the connections as long as needed
3. Disconnecting the connections when the users hang up
4. Providing information for accounting purposes

Cloud PBX systems, also known as a [VoIP PBX](#), IP-PBX, hosted PBX, virtual PBX or IPBX, use Internet Protocol to carry calls. Most modern PBXs support VoIP, which simply means Voice Over Internet Protocol. A Cloud PBX system consists of one or more VoIP enabled handsets of softphones, and an IP PBX. The phones, register with the IP PBX server, and when they make a call the IP PBX establishes the connection.

[VoIP phones](#) can be simple *software-based softphones* or purpose-built hardware devices that appear much like an ordinary telephone or a cordless phone.

Cloud PBX systems can be located on the customer's premise, hosted by a VoIP service provider, or can form the backbone for a [phone system](#) like the one provided by ShoreTel Sky.

Why Do Companies Choose a Cloud PBX?

[Cloud based technologies](#) have become a ubiquitous part of modern life. Many of us do our shopping and banking in the cloud, we do our taxes in the cloud and use cloud technologies, like social media networks, to keep in touch with our friends and colleagues. These tools are popular because they are easy to use, accessible from everywhere and available at very low (or sometimes no) cost. These are very similar to the reasons that more and more companies are choosing a cloud PBX.

- **Cloud PBX systems require little to no in-house IT support.** Choosing a cloud-based PBX solution is a great way to free up IT resources to work on projects that are more strategic to the business. It is also a good choice for small businesses with few technical resources. The best solutions provide [expert installation assistance](#), project management and end user support.
- **Hosted PBX solutions eliminate multiple vendor confusion.** With a traditional PBX, companies may have a PBX vendor, a telecommunications carrier and a local service provider, each with a different invoice, different point of contact and fingers to point at each other. With a cloud-based PBX, companies have only one vendor to manage and one point of responsibility.

- **A Cloud PBX is accessible from anywhere.** This is important for two reasons. First, having a phone system that is not tied to a physical location makes unifying [multiple offices](#) and [remote workers](#) easy. Everyone is accessing the same system from wherever they happen to be. This means that you can transfer calls, dial with 4 digits and engage in ad hoc conferencing with people in the next state as easily as with people in the next cubicle. The second reason that accessibility from anywhere is important is for disaster planning and recovery. If your office location becomes inaccessible due to a natural or manmade disaster, having a cloud PBX means that calls can be re-routed to other locations, mobile or home phones. It also means that you can make changes to [auto-attendants](#) or other announcements to let your callers know what is happening, without ever going into the office.
- **Cloud-based PBX solutions are easily scalable.** A main advantage of a hosted PBX solution is that it can grow along with your company. This means that you pay for only what you need now and easily add capacity when needed. Often the features are scalable too. ShoreTel offers several [standard phone features](#) and add-on services to our cloud PBX that companies can order when they sign up, or add later as the need for each becomes apparent.
- **Enterprise-class features are available in Cloud PBX solutions without the price.** Although most business will want to stay away from very low cost basic VoIP, even [premium cloud PBX](#) solutions, like ShoreTel Sky, provide features that were once available only to very large enterprises, to all customers at a reasonable price. This is possible because the development resources needed to create a quality system are shared across all customers bringing down the price-per-feature for everyone.

These are just some of the reasons that [companies benefit](#) from cloud PBX solutions. We are happy to help you learn more about our [hosted PBX offering](#) and discuss the specific ways it might be a good fit for your business.