

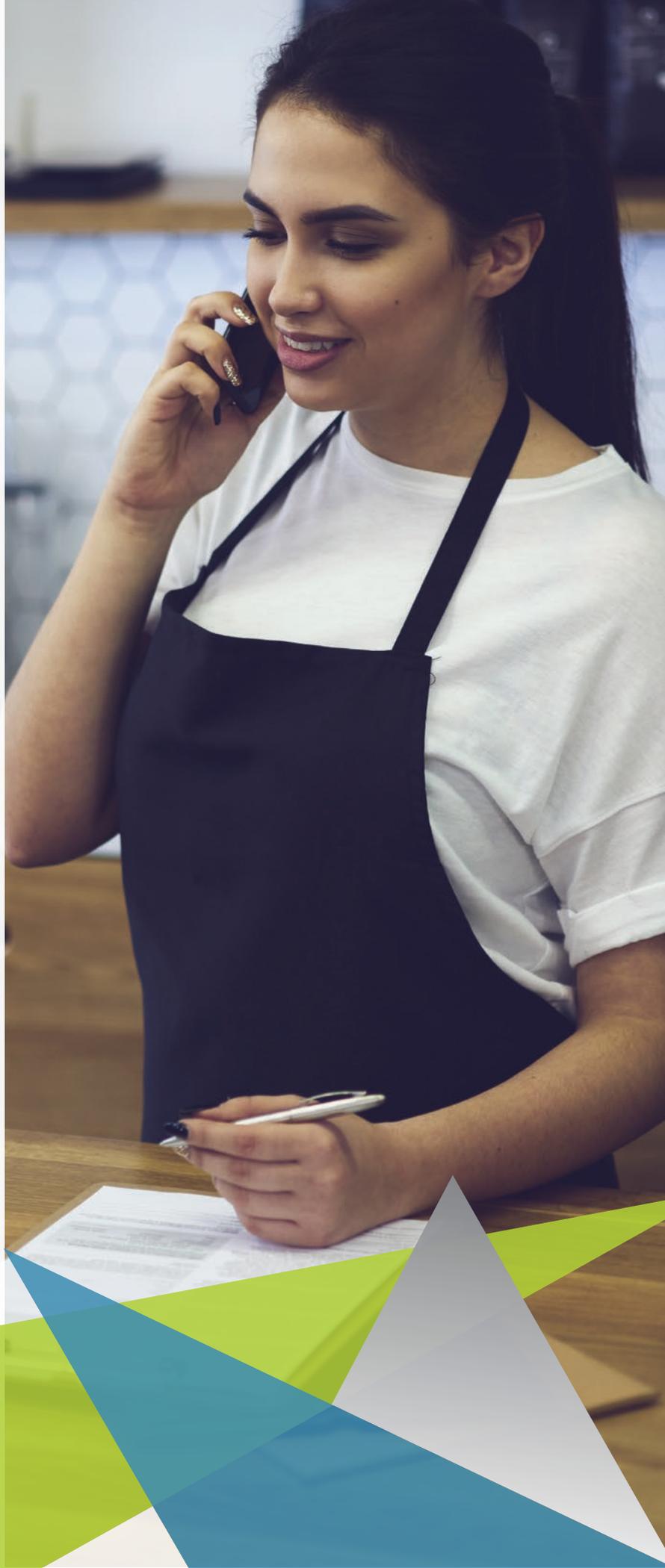


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N E T W O R K S

## Why A **Hosted Phone System** Makes Sense For **You** and **Your Franchisees**

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Maintain Brand  
Consistency and  
Ease Operational  
Burdens While  
Reducing Costs.



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# Why A Hosted Phone System Makes Sense For You and Your Franchisees



The franchise model continues to be a dominant force in the US Economy. A recent forecast by the Franchise Business Economic Outlook for 2017 anticipates continued growth in the sector, today totaling nearly 750,000 establishments with 7.8 Million employees, which generate \$710 Billion in revenue. Offering a hosted phone solution as part of your franchise plan can generate big benefits and additional revenue for both you and your franchisees.

As a franchisor, you are constantly on the hunt for new ways to give your franchisees every advantage in this highly competitive space. The phone system is an often-overlooked component of the operational plan of many franchisors.

## Your Role As A Franchisor

Your franchisees are counting on you to help them succeed, and you do this in lots of different ways. By offering them a hosted phone system that is customized for their business is one more way you can help them. By making a hosted phone system available to your franchisees, you can offload from them selection, configuration and maintenance of a that system. A quality hosting provider will make sure that you are not burdened by any operational issues associated with the system.

Using a hosted PBX system is one more way that you can help your franchisees maintain their focus on service and the core values of their franchise, while you help to control costs, maintain brand consistency, and provide insights that can help them generate more revenue.



## ○ Benefits of a Hosted Phone System

### Maintaining Brand Consistency

Providing consistent branding, messaging, and marketing support are keys to a successful franchise. These can all be supported with a hosted phone system.

Depending on the type of business that you are franchising, the goal may be to have every phone call answered by an employee. For others, it is acceptable to use an Automated Attendant to answer calls, route calls to a specific person or department, or enable self-service for certain customers. These can all be easily addressed with a hosted phone system.

### Live Answer

For those businesses where calls MUST be answered by an employee during business hours, a hosted system can be programmed to FIND an available employee to answer every call. For example, if the person, or people, who are assigned the task of answering calls are unavailable for any reason, a call can be automatically rerouted to a “backup” person (or group of people) to answer the call. If there is no one in the office who is available to take the call, it can be seamlessly rerouted to the mobile device of someone who is not in the office, or even to a secondary location. The secondary location can be another franchise location who has agreed to back-up the first, or even to a call center that you maintain to back-up the phone answering operation of all of your franchisees.

This all happens without any significant delay to the caller. Every call is tracked so that it is properly assigned back to the original location for which the call was intended.

### Automated Attendant

When a phone call cannot be answered by a live body, the system that answers that call (called an Automated Attendant) can be the difference between keeping that customer and having them call the next provider on their list. Through the use of a hosted phone system, your franchisees can all get access to the same automated attendant. This enables you to maintain uniformity in service and support without any burden on the franchisee.



## Provide the recorded voice

You can select the voice over artist who you feel best represents your brand. Because the expense of hiring a professional to record your prompts is spread across all of your franchisees, you can afford to record them properly in a high-quality studio.

## Well-designed prompts and menu structure

We have all experienced poorly designed Automated Attendant systems that are confusing and frustrating to use. Many potential customers simply hang-up when they encounter a system like this, or just press 0 until they connect to a live person, or the system disconnects them.

There is a real science to designing an effective Automated Attendant System. A quality hosted phone system provider will have the staff to do this job right. They will deliver a system that is easy to navigate and actually enhanced the overall customer experience for those who contact your business through the automated attendant.



## Control Costs

### Negotiate rates for calls

Depending on location, the cost of inbound phone service can vary significantly. By aggregating all of your franchisees' minutes into a single contract, you can negotiate a great rate for everyone. Some studies have shown that moving to a hosted phone system can save the average business as much as 50% on their monthly phone bills. This number may grow even larger when you negotiate a bulk contract for all of your franchisees.

### Enable franchisees to use local numbers, vanity numbers, or nationally recognized toll-free numbers

This point could also fall into the "Maintaining Brand Consistently" section of this article. However, the limiting factor on having customized phone numbers is often the cost. With the increased buying power of all of your franchisees, you may be able to secure these kinds of numbers at a nominal cost.

### Reduce excessive phone use by employees

A quality hosted phone system should give you easy access to call records at any time you want. If any employee is using their phone excessively for non-business related calls, it will be easy to discover such abuse.

### Increase employee flexibility

A hosted phone system allows greater flexibility for employees because it allows for an environment where the desktop phone is no longer fixed. Employees can share work stations or move from one station to another with great ease, a process called hotdesking. This is a major advantage for companies who need to make quick and frequent staffing changes.



## Reporting and Marketing Analytics

Access to call records offers many more benefits than just identifying employee abuse. If the phone is the main gateway for customers to reach your franchisees, then the more they know about calling patterns the more they can do to effectively manage these calls and maximize profits.

### Identify Peak hours to focus on inbound calls

Busy hour analysis has been a key metric for large call centers for many years. Very sophisticated systems were developed to analyze inbound call traffic to predict exactly how many customer service agents should be available to handle traffic during peak hours. The same type of analysis can be done by any business using a hosted phone system.

This kind of information can be used to shift extra employees to “phone duty” during busy times or determine if an “overflow” location should be used. Over longer periods of time, this data can be used to help make staffing decisions for seasonal businesses.

### Missed Calls

With a conventional phone system, you have no knowledge about the calls that your staff or system fail to answer. The same is true for callers that hang up while on hold, or for some other reason. In contrast, most hosting partners will be able to tell you about every call that they can't route to your office for any reason.

All of this information can be used to determine if opportunities are being lost. This will allow you to assess if you need more employees, more phone lines per employee, or more capacity in the entire system.



## Other Benefits

The benefits listed above can be realized by nearly any franchisor who makes a hosted solution available to their franchisees. There are some additional specialized benefits that not every franchisor will be able to benefit from.

### No Cost Inter-Location Communications

For certain types of businesses, this can be very helpful. Inter-Location calls get the same level of tracking and control as any other call through the system.

### Notifications

Certain systems can push notification to employees or locations. This may be as simple as a recording that is then “robo-called” to all employees or locations. Depending on the types of phones that are in use at a particular location, you may also be able to display a message on the screen of a desktop phone or send a text message to a mobile device.

### Revenue generation by becoming “the phone company” to your franchisees

Depending on your franchise agreement, you operate as the phone company to your franchisees. Your hosted provider establishes you as their agent or reseller. They send you a single invoice for all services provided to you and all your franchisees. You can then pass those charges through to your franchisees with some margin added.

## Conclusions

The use of a hosted phone system can be beneficial to any franchise. Hosted phone systems can reduce costs, improve productivity, and enhance customer service. When implemented by a franchisor on behalf of their franchisees, there are added benefits such as providing brand consistency and advanced reporting and metrics that can help the franchisee stay focused on the efficient operation of their unit and run their operation more profitably. In some cases, a hosted phone system can even be used to create a new profit center for the franchisor.



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