

When it comes to comms, what does the sub-30 employee business really need?



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The smaller the business, the more vital each person's role is within it. To manage costs properly, every employee must be able to work with maximum efficiency and that means being able to communicate easily and efficiently. As a result, decisions regarding telecoms technology will be some of the most crucial that a small business will ever have to make. It has to be simple to manage and administrate as there may be no full time on-site IT support resource, yet that should never mean any compromise on functionality.

The changes which new IP technologies are making to the industry are probably more beneficial for small companies than for any other type of business. The ability to take and make calls from any location using an office DDI number is a godsend in an environment where key staff spend much of their time trying to be in many places at the same time. Features like voicemail and auto-attendant functionality will also make a huge difference to an SME's ability to present a professional outward-facing impression. Even their own customers might be nervous of dealing with a smaller supplier, so it is even more essential to be responsive and contactable at all times.

Time-saving and efficiency benefits are also key and this is where access to the most sophisticated applications is essential. Take call management and CTI applications as an example. For a small company, an individual staff member's productivity is even more vital. On-screen dialing from Outlook, the ability to manage and monitor individual call handling processes or to integrate all voicemail and email messaging could well be considered even more essential here than in any other market sector. Likewise, with auto-attendant or ACD functionality, a company can easily appear much larger than it really is, and this is also a factor which often appeals to the small business.

The system itself and the applications which it runs are two key decisions. But there is also the issue of connectivity and more recently a whole new set of options which the advent of SIP trunking has brought to the marketplace. Historically it was just a case of calling BT and waiting for your ISDN lines to be up and running, in their timescales, but that is all changing. SIP trunking capability enables businesses to set up new lines quickly and to then have total flexibility if a move is required further down the line.

Research shows that more than 20% of SMEs move premises in the first two years. With SIP trunking, this can be achieved simply and easily, with no concern about having to change contact numbers which they have invested their marketing budget in promoting. With SIP, these numbers can be transported regardless of where the new premises are. SIP trunking capability also gives companies the ability to temporarily increase capacity during seasonal peaks or special campaigns, as well as to put divers in place to provide a cost-effective disaster recovery strategy. All in all, the overall cost of ownership is lower, which is essential in an SME environment where every pound has to be spent to achieve maximum benefit for the business.

The needs of a small business are equally if not more demanding than those of a larger one, and the technology they select must reflect that. The systems which are designed for this section of the marketplace must give SMEs access to every element of available technology, yet also be simple to administer in-house, backed up by the skills and support of a highly-knowledgeable and well trained supplier. Telecoms systems for the sub-30 employee business have to be flexible and scalable, whilst also providing access to all of the latest IP and SIP trunking technology and to a full suite of value-added applications. Which is where the recently-launched Samsung OfficeServ 7100 really fits the bill.

Small businesses are often set up by entrepreneurial people who have come from the corporate world themselves, so offering them de-featured or 'dumbed down' solutions will never be acceptable. These entrepreneurs are used to working with the latest technology and they don't expect anything less when they become masters of their own destiny. Why should smaller businesses put up with less effective solutions when they do not have to?