

Should your company move to the cloud?

 By [Rob Lith](#)

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"Cloud-based communications has clear benefits, but whether those benefits will accrue to your organisation depends on a number of factors. If your enterprise answers to any of the questions in the checklist below, you may be in the market for a hosted PBX."

Are you likely to expand?

Entities with significant potential for branch-like expansion - such as a medium-to-large-footprint bank, a retail chain or a service station franchise - can derive the most value from cloud telephony. Every time a new branch of franchisee comes on-line, the expense of an on-site PBX has real potential to sink the business case. With cloud, the franchisor or corporate head office can offer hosted telephony into the bargain, significantly lowering the entry barrier for local businesses. In addition, this model of telephony is much easier to roll out and manage for uptime, and the "on-net" savings possible with cloud further lift the business case.*

Are your employees mobile?

Is a significant portion of your workforce mobile, either by virtue of being constantly on the road or remotely stationed? A cloud communications configuration can provide satellite working units with full enterprise collaboration and unified communications at low cost. Even user administration tasks can easily be done via Web portal, from any operating platform (device).

Do you need flexible communications capacity?

Cloud computing operates on a "virtualised" design principle, where physical separations between resources like disk drives or servers are irrelevant - all the computing power represented by these resources are pooled together in an amorphous "cloud" of divisible capacity. In such a scenario, you're not bound by the limitations or excess capacity of discrete servers; you can simply procure just enough virtual capacity for your use in any given month (or shorter time increments). This makes sense for campaign call centres or varying seasonal demands on your business communications.

Is your power supply unpredictable?

Cloud data centres are amply provided with protection against power surges and cuts. The alternative is unappealing - a high-end UPS (uninterruptible power supply) that only keeps you going for so long, or costly on-site power generation.

Does your business rely on collaboration?

You may want to employ cloud techniques to give access to at least some applications, such as hosted enterprise resource planning (ERP) for managing suppliers, or hosted collaboration applications for shared workflow. It is also highly advisable to have hosted communications to bring partners cheaply "on-net" if there is a business relationship requiring constant communication. This applies, for instance, to retailers getting purchasing authorisation from a customer's credit card institution.

Do you need to standardise?

Cloud also makes sense where you want group businesses to standardise on certain applications, such as financial and ERP.

These scenarios are by no means exhaustive, and new usage cases are constantly emerging. Chances are that you will discover a few of your own if you see benefit in having access to shared or centralised ICT infrastructure with best-in-class business continuity assurance.

**On-net savings can accrue between branches, to head office, and even to business partners if the installation provides for it.*

About Connection Telecom

Connection Telecom was founded in 2004 as a pioneering independent provider of proven carrier-grade IP PBX solutions to Southern African businesses. Since then, it has built on its telecommunication experience and grown its communications portfolio to include on-demand call centres, rapidly implemented and flexibly provisioned at low cost to offer speed to market to its customers, and introduced analytics to track call patterns and costs. Connection Telecom provides an end-to-end communications service that straddles voice termination, routing, hosting and management, and the company has had much success in creating zero-rated call communities. Its solutions operate in physical as well as virtual settings, hosted on- or off-site in the client's environment or its own fully-redundant data centre. The Telviva family of enterprise PBXs and other products are aimed at enterprise customers and smaller businesses, and are suited to vertical industry applications. Feature-rich, managed and open (extensible), these solutions allow freedom of choice in handsets and add-ons, and a low total cost of ownership. The company has offices in Cape Town and Johannesburg with on-site support in 28 locations. Its major clients include Engen Petroleum, FNB, Lewis, RMB Asset Management, UCS, Old Mutual Finance and Vox Telecom.

For more information go to connection-telecom.com.

ABOUT ROB LITH

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