Seven critical considerations when planning your Centrex migration.

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The upgrade to cloud-based unified communications (UC) from Centrex can bring your company compelling productivity benefits.

However, realizing the full potential of these benefits depends on a successful migration. With legacy phone systems such as Centrex, migrations require careful planning — especially relative to the Local Area Network (LAN), user expectations and security.

Consider the following seven factors as you plan your legacy phone service migration:

1. LAN engineering

Replacing Centrex enables your company to consolidate local networks by using a single, physical infrastructure to carry both voice and data traffic. One area often overlooked is the effect of voice traffic on a LAN — especially one designed for non-real-time data traffic.

Special considerations include:

- Service "tiers" that prioritize voice traffic.
- Redundancy and resilience through high-availability network design.
- Network addressing to support additional (and new) devices.

2. LAN equipment

Engineering for the demands of Voice over IP (VoIP) traffic means thinking beyond just bandwidth and throughput.

Special considerations include:

- LAN capacity sufficient to enable VoIP.
- Replacement of hubs with switches so VoIP only runs on "fully switched" LANs.
- Or power over ethernet, if a "like-for-like" replacement of phones is preferred over those with both LAN and power connectors.

3. End-user requirements management

The success of a legacy phone service migration comes down to the success of effective end-user communications with a minimum amount of disruption to productivity and businesses. Many migration services tout all of the advantages of "new ways of working" without plans to account or key existing Centrex features and their support on the new infrastructure.

A few ways to approach user requirements include:

- Centrex feature mapping, noting changes to features/functions between new and old systems.
- Effectively communicating changes to users.
- Device form factor planning when moving from legacy phone service handsets to more fully featured, and differently functioning, VoIP phones.

4. End-user training and adoption

A major challenge for any application upgrade it end-user adoption. Driving use of new and enhanced voice applications is especially challenging.

Consider the following ways to mitigate issues with user adoption:

- A thorough implementation plan that includes communications, training and adoption resources (for example, videos, job aids, and webinars).
- A "super user" team can help influence adoption, work through use cases and serve as subject matter experts when usability and feature/function issues arise.
- A "help desk" implementation, either within your IT organization, through your service provider, or a combination of both can quickly give users the answers they need during the early-adoption phase.

5. Administration

Many Centrex users and administrators rely on their service provider to manage their service. The implementation of UC, however, offers new flexibility for administrators, allowing for self-service, off-hour access, and real-time configuration from virtually anywhere.

There are several ways to prepare for new administrative options:

- Identify business process owners to determine who should receive admin access and at what level.
- Determine who will manage changes such as office moves, staff additions and subtractions —

your service provider, IT department, and line-of-business administrators are all options.

6. Tools and templates

IT leaders rely on a comprehensive set of tools and templates to streamline legacy phone service migration. These may include IT-developed internal tools as well as those of your service provider.

Tools and templates serve several roles:

- Organize key migration information and data.
- Guide migrations toward best practices.
- Automate and speed repetitive tasks.
- Reduce the likelihood of data entry errors.

7. Security and fraud

As a legacy technology, Centrex operates in a virtual "walled garden" that's highly resistant to hacks and spoofing.

Replacing Centrex with UC requires several key considerations with regard to security and fraud prevention, including:

- Taking technical measures to implement the proper configuration, access rules, and intelligent firewalls.
- Authentication and monitoring.
- A thorough review by security professionals.
- A close partnership with your service provider, who should have the ability to provide an array of security products suited to your specific needs.

Legacy phone system replacement or any major system migration involves adequate planning and coordination. With UC applications becoming prevalent, the case for migration only gets stronger.

Your partner, Verizon, has the right cloud communications solution for you, as well as advanced migration services that can minimize disruption to your employees and customers.

Find out how you can rely on the Verizon team to work with you and provide a smooth migration path from Centrex to unified communications in the cloud today.

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