Managed Business Communications Services- The real "Killer APP" for the Small Business.

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Managed Business Communications Service, or MBCS, is a new paradigm born out of several concepts that have gained traction over the past several years. One is the "SAAS" or "software as a service" movement, which has become very successful with Small Businesses through companies such as NetSuite and Salesforce.com. The second is the "Hosted IP Centrex" movement that literally hundreds of companies supply to the market today.

MBCS is a fully managed, business class, full featured telephone service. With MBCS, the telephony and communications applications are running in the provider's central "core" equipment as well as on special purpose built equipment at the customer premise. The entire system- from the service provider's equipment to the telephone handset, is managed and monitored 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. The benefits to the Small Business are significant- they hand off complete responsibility for their communications system to <u>one</u> service provider, who is ultimately responsible for managing the complete customer Quality of Experience- telephone service, network, broadband connection, and equipment. One stop shopping and accountability for all of a businesses communications needs!

Keep in mind, the key, critical difference between Hosted IP Centrex and MBCS is that the MBCS Service Provider does indeed manage the complete experience. Generally speaking, the Hosted IP Centrex provider does not provide end to end management of the service, network, broadband connection, equipment, Quality of Service, and total customer Quality of Experience.

Industry pundits, experts, and observers, are always looking to identify the next "Killer App", upon which companies will make a fortune. There is no one area of communications that can fill those shoes, though many have been identified over the years. The integration of the various communications technologies and features in a way that helps the Small Business remain competitive, grow their business, and increase efficiencies, will be become the real "Killer App" for the Small Business Market.

The 10 requirements for a Small Business Communications System are:

1. Business Communications Features

- **PBX, Key System, and Hybrid System Configurations**
- **Auto Attendant**

- **Voice Mail**
- **Shared/Bridged Line Appearances**
- **Intercom- Hands Free and Handset**
- **Music On-Hold**
- **Paging**
- **Unified Messaging-Voicemail/ Faxmail/ Email Messaging**
- **IVR**
- **Presence Indication**
- **Conferencing**
- **Message Notification**

2. Centralized Communications Management
- **Activation-** Equipment and Service is Remotely Activated and Configured
- **MAC-** Moves, Adds and Changes are remotely administered
- **Monitoring-** Centralized 24X7X365 Equipment, Network, Service, and Quality Monitoring
- **Support**- 24X7X365 Service and Support Desk- Staffed with U.S. Engineers
- **Backup-** Offsite Configuration and Message Backup for Disaster Recovery

3. Single Communications Provider
- **One Provider** supplies all of your Telecom Needs for Equipment, Phone Service, Broadband Connection(s), Installation, Training, Monitoring, and Support.
- One Point of Contact for All Issues
- No Finger Pointing Between Suppliers Should Issues Arise
- No Hidden Taxes, Surcharges, Tariffs and Fees
- No More Negotiating Rates with the Telco
- No More Analyzing/Reconciling Paper Telephone Bills and Call Detail Records

4. Carrier Grade Service
- **High Reliability**- Redundant phone carriers and data centers
- Resiliency- Power Backup and Multi-Pathing
- Fully Managed Private Network
- 24X7X365 System Health Monitoring through our Network Operations Center (NOC)
- Service level Agreement (SLA) - 99.9% Uptime Guaranteed

5. Voice and Service Quality
- Dedicated, _**Voice Only**_ Broadband Connection
- Fully Managed Private Network End to End
- 24X7X365 Voice and Call Quality Monitoring- End to End
- 24X7X365 Service Desk- Staffed with In-Country Engineers
- Integrated Security
- 99.9% uptime Voice and Service Quality Guarantee
- Service and Quality Alarming and Response
- Centralized Continuous Active and Passive Quality Testing

6. Service Backup/ Disaster Recovery

- Optional Power Backup
- Broadband Failover Using Optional Redundant Carrier Connections
- Multi-Pathing- Calls auto re-route to Failover Paths
- Analog Line Backup
- Centralized Offsite Backup of complete system configuration, prompts and messages
- Configuration can be "pushed" to new site instantly

7. Scalability and Technology Advances
- Pay As You Go- Pay for features as you need them
- Pay As You Grow- Pay for additional seats as your company grows
- Technological Upgrades and Feature Enhancements are Included
- Maintenance is Included
- Equipment Warranty and Repair is Included

8. Cost Control
- **Fixed Monthly Operating Cost** Includes all Equipment, Phone Service,
- Broadband Connection(s), Installation, Training, Monitoring, and Support.
- **Capital Equipment Costs** are Eliminated
- **Maintenance and Warranty** is Included
- **Technology and Feature Enhancements** are Included- **Eliminates Obsolescence**
- **Pay As You Go**- Pay for features as you need them
- **Pay As You Grow**- Pay for additional seats as your company grows
- **Periodic Upgrades** are Included
- **MAC Costs**(Moves, Adds and Changes) are minimized
- **Unlimited Local and Domestic Long Distance** Calling is included
- Competitive International Rates
- Eliminate the Need for a Dedicated Telecom Manager

9. Mobility
- Home Office Tele-workers support
- Mobile worker support
- Single Directory and Dialing Plan
- Presence Indication
- Find Me/ Follow Me

10. Office Systems Integrations
- Full Outlook/Email Integration
- Voice mail to E-Mail
- Fax to E-Mail
- Data Network Integration
- CRM Integration

While these 10 requirements also apply to medium and large businesses, they are much more important to the Small Business because they generally do not have technical staff to dedicate to telephone system maintenance, nor do they have the capital equipment budget or experience necessary to install and maintain the latest communications technology.

The current communications market has become overwhelming to the consumer. What was once a simple concept- the quality transport of voice- is now being driven by extensive feature lists rather than the customer needs or business issues that can be solved by the use and application of the latest technologies.

The Small Business has certain specific communications feature needs in order to support growth, success, and customer satisfaction. It requires a business communications system with a strong set of features that apply to their specific business needs.

The strategy of "piling on" features has been tried by every Key System and PBX manufacturer for the past 30 years. It took a long time for manufacturers and telecom resellers to figure out that customers only use a handful of features. Part of that was because it was too tedious to remember the method of accessing the various features on a daily basis(special keys, "star" codes, etc.)

The advantage to an IP based communications solution is the ability to cost effectively provide features and capabilities that are critical to the success of the Small Business- intuitively and without the constraints of physical boundary.

Tom Cerabona, President and CEO of Kinetech Voice Technologies, a VOIP technology consultancy, works with Small Business and Service Provider clients on the architecture and selection of Voice Over IP Equipment and Services. He is an engineer and leader with more than 25 years experience in the Development and Deployment of VOIP and Telephony products. He has led the architecture and deployment of a Hosted IP Centrex System and Managed Customer Network for the Business market, launched some of the first VOIP Gateway Systems used for International Pre-Paid and Credit Card Calling, led a large installation of IVR systems for AT&T Call Centers, and pioneered the widespread deployment of voice processing products to the small business market.
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