



SMARTCOMPANY'S DIY GUIDE TO IMPROVING YOUR BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS



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INTRODUCTION

You're probably sick of hearing about the NBN, but the reality is, as the infrastructure is rolled out across the country, available communication services will change and you need to make a decision about your provider or you're putting your business at risk.

A strong telecommunications system is a requirement to support any business, no matter what stage of growth you're at. It facilitates open communication with both employees and consumers, without which your business likely wouldn't run.

But with so many providers talking about what you need to know, how do you know what's right for your business?

This eBook will help you master the challenges of the NBN, optimise your phone and cloud-systems, and break down what can feel like an overwhelming amount of tech knowledge.

THIS IS YOUR MUST HAVE GUIDE TO GROWING IN BUSINESS.



CHAPTER 1 WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH ALL THIS TECH TALK?

The National Broadband Network (NBN) is Australia's new wholesale broadband open-access network, developed to replace the country's existing copper network. The NBN Co, the company tasked with designing, implementing and operating the network, is guided by the Government's NBN mandate to provide all Australians with a fast, reliable internet connection.

The aim of keeping the network as wholesale-only was deliberately done to develop a level playing field for telecommunication providers.

SICK OF ALL THE ACRONYMS?

We are too, but we've done our best to keep this eBook as free of acronyms as possible. Still need a guide? We've compiled this nifty glossary to help you know what's what.

Glossary

- AUSSAT** - Australia's First National Satellite System
- FTTB** - Fibre to the Building
- FTTC** - Fibre to the Curb
- FTTN** - Fibre to the Node
- FTTP** - Fibre to the Premises
- HFC** - Hybrid Fibre Co-Axial
- ISDN** - Integrated Services Digital Network
- NBN** - National Broadband Network
- OTC** - Overseas Telecommunications
- PMG** - Post Master General
- VoIP** - Voice over Internet Protocol

NAVIGATE THE CLOUD SMARTER

We have partnered with Qantas Business Rewards to offer your business Qantas Points with ONdesk products



ONdesk Plans from
\$20
per month

Proud partner of
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REWARDS**



Make the smart call and keep your business phone systems connected with 99.999% unrivalled reliability.

We are proud to have partnered with Qantas Business Rewards and can now reward your business with 3 Qantas Points for every \$1 spent on your monthly ONdesk plans*.

PLUS, between now and December 31st we are offering bonus Qantas Points for each plan connected^.

*A business must be a Qantas Business Rewards Member to earn Qantas Points for business. A one-off join fee of \$8950 including GST normally applies, however this will be waived for Vonex Telecom customers. Membership and Qantas Points are subject to Qantas Business Rewards Terms and Conditions. Qantas Points for business are offered under the Vonex Telecom Terms and Conditions. Any claims in relation to Qantas Points under this offer must be made directly to Vonex Telecom. Qantas Points will be credited to the Members' Business Rewards account within 30 days of payment for Eligible Products. Vonex Telecom customers will earn 3 Qantas Point(s) for every 1 dollar spent on Vonex ONDesk Eligible Products.

^New customers that purchase on a 36 month contract before 31 December 2019 will earn 2,000 bonus Qantas Points when they sign up for a ONdesk Traveller Plan; 3,000 bonus Qantas Points for a ONdesk Business Plan; 4,000 bonus Qantas for a ONdesk Executive and 5,000 bonus Qantas Points for a ONdesk Premium plan. Bonus Qantas Points will be credited to the Member's Qantas Business Rewards account within 5 months of signing up to an ONdesk plan, following a minimum of 3 consecutive months of Vonex Telecom purchases. Any claims in relation to bonus Qantas Points for the above offers must be made directly to Vonex Telecom by emailing qantaspoints@vonex.com.au



AUSTRALIA'S TELECOMMUNICATIONS HISTORY

As the telecommunications industry started to boom globally after World War II came to an end, the Australian government wanted to position itself as a global leader in telecommunications tech innovation. However, the growing consensus was that Australia needed to introduce competition into the market in order to challenge the industry before it was likely it would become a global leader.

Changes in legislation introduced in the 1990s allowed the industry to slowly introduce competition, with the government-owned Telstra and privately-owned Optus commanding full market share between them. By the end of the 20th century, all competition restrictions had been removed and Telstra was partially privatised.

1850s

Australian postal service start appearing around the country to support a growing population.

1859

Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Hobart linked by telegraph cables.

1882

First public telephone exchange based in Sydney is introduced.

1905

Marconi wireless radio system is introduced in Australia.

1946

The Australian government forms the Overseas Telecommunications Commission (OTC) to manage the development of the country's telecommunications standards.

1962

Television is available in all Australian capital cities, except Darwin.

1987

Basic telephone services now available in all areas across Australia.

1993

Internet addresses become available to the Australian public. OTC renamed as Telstra (after previously merging with Telecom). Privately owned Optus enters the Australian market for national long distance and international phone calls.

2019

As the NBN Co continues rolling out the new infrastructure, more Australian homes and businesses get access to faster, more reliable internet. Telstra is now just one of many service providers.

1853

Samual McGowan introduces Morse code to Australia.

1872

First international telegraph link to Asia is established.

1901

Post Master General (PMG) appointed. The role of the PMG was to oversee communications in Australia.

1922

Public radio broadcast becomes available from Bendigo, Victoria.

1956

The first television broadcast made from Sydney.

1985

The launch of Australia's first geostationary communications satellite by AUSSAT.

1991

The Telecommunications Act is introduced, bringing with it changes in the telecommunications industry designed to enable full-scale market competition.

1997

Telstra becomes partially privatised. By 1999, 49.9% of Telstra is privately owned.

2009

NBN Co established to roll out a new telecommunications infrastructure for Australia.

Source: The Australian Bureau of Statistics, History of Communications in Australia, 2001.



We're giving you this quick history lesson so you can understand what happened next – or to be more specific, what's happening now.

Telstra has dominated the Australian telecommunications market for decades. The industry is now moving away from this monopoly and is returning to a publicly owned infrastructure. The NBN Co was established in 2009 and owned by the Commonwealth of Australia. It's a wholesale-only broadband network and provides services to retail providers.

In late-2019 Telstra will begin shutting down its legacy digital network — known to the telco industry as ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network). This is the legacy network phone lines have been connected to for decades. Although the ISDN serviced the country for years, like anything, it needed an upgrade.



As of September 30, 2019, Telstra is switching off its digital network, which means if you haven't looked at changing phone or voice services (or even providers) your business could lose its phone number.

Don't put off switching providers. If you don't make a change soon, you can lose your phone number.

How much time will you need?

You'll get a notice from your current provider giving you a 90-day warning about the disconnection, but this might not be enough time to make the switch and save your phone number. If the NBN is already available in your area, start your research today. Areas where the NBN is set up will be the first to be disconnected.

STARTER CHECKLIST

- Find out whether your business can be connected to the NBN by searching your address [here](#).**
If it's not yet available, make a note of when it will be available, but don't stop here. Use this extra time to make a considered change to your telecommunications services and providers, as they're not all equal when comparing services and costs.

- Take stock of what services you do and don't use and what new services you want.**
Need a hand figuring out what your business needs? We've got a [handy flowchart](#) for you.

- Do your research into other services and providers.**
Start by having a look online, speaking with friends, peers and others in your business network and, if you have a trusted IT company you work with, ask them for advice.

- Contact your current service provider or providers to discuss or cancel your current plan.**
If your current provider can't meet your needs within your budget, don't be afraid to walk away.





HOW MUCH DOES IT REALLY MATTER?

Big Branding brand director Josh Tulloch knows just how difficult it can be to conduct business when services go down. "Communication by phone is often what a business-to-business service needs to be able to provide," Tulloch told *SmartCompany*.

"Written communication of course needs to be there, but if we're going to talk specifically about the value of the phone it's always highly rated to be able to contact your customer directly and speak with them. They can hear the subtle inflections in your voice, they can hear a smile from a mile away. You can't always read a smile. So if we're talking specifically about the power of the phone, the phone is absolutely paramount to the way we communicate to our customers."

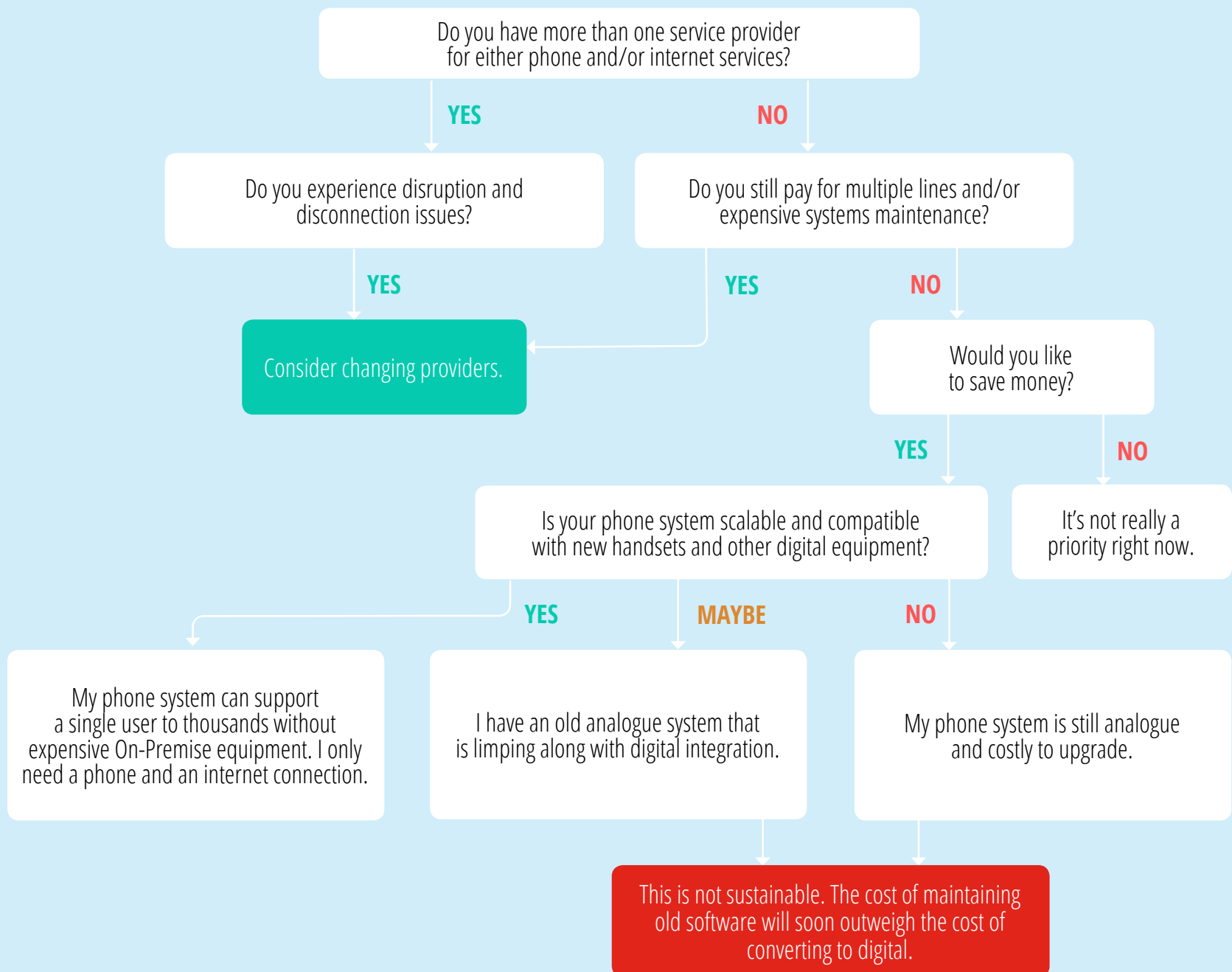
So when the phone connection drops out, business almost grinds to a stop.

"Even with two service providers, there would still be days where we would have no internet. Even between two service providers," Tulloch recalls.

"Given that our business, all our software and all our CRM, our accounting, our packages – everything is internet reliant, so when we don't have internet, everything shuts down. All the entertainment in the shop, all the videos that run across the screen in the shop, all shut down. Everything's gone."

IS IT TIME TO SWITCH PROVIDERS?

ARE YOU GETTING WHAT YOU PAY FOR?





CHAPTER 2

MAKING A COST EFFECTIVE SWITCH

Wouldn't it just be easier if there was a one size fits all approach to telecommunications? Need a phone? Here's a handheld device. Need the internet? Here's a connection.

The problem is, without proper competition in the market challenging providers to improve their services, Australia's telecommunications industry started to lag behind other leaders, because of the old monopoly.

Now, business owners implementing or replacing telecommunications technology have two primary concerns to address. The first is making a seamless transition between providers with little to no disruption to their business. The second is keeping it within budget.



GETTING CONNECTED, AND STAYING CONNECTED

Do you currently have a backup service or service provider that will kick in if your primary connection drops out? What happens if they both go out at the same time?

For business owners making the decision to change providers, the additional challenge of keeping all tech running as smoothly as possible to avoid any further disruption is yet another level of stress.

Oscar Oscar Salons financial controller Dion Matthews was incredibly mindful of how the phone and internet set up for each of the company's 14 salons would cost the business, especially when the business was considering changing providers.

Each salon needed to stay in contact with each client in order to properly deliver their services.

"Everything from booking the appointment, confirming the appointment, consultation, through to actually providing the service, we're very particular, keeping track of all the details, and also the really big one, making sure we've got feedback after the service, find out what we're doing right, what we're doing wrong, and I guess what we could do better."



MINIMISE THE CHANCE FOR DISRUPTION BY MAKING SURE YOU:

- Use a system with a failover.
- Avoid switching off your current services until the new ones are up and running.
- Switch over systems after hours, when a time customer enquiries are low.
- Tell your consumers if a disruption may occur and what to do if they run into an error.
- Start making the plan to switch now – if you wait much longer, you risk losing your phone number.





MAKING A CALL ABOUT HARD COSTS



WHEN COUNTING YOUR PENNIES, KEEP IN MIND:

- The contract term and any exit fees.
- Additional fees for exceeding any limits in your contract.
- Availability of the service provider to resolve any issues compared to the cost of finding external IT help.
- The value in paying more for different or additional services.
- Time wasted when on hold to a call centre.

While implementing a proper telecommunications system can help keep money coming into the business, you've always got to examine the hard cost of your infrastructure and your services.

Tulloch, from Big Branding, recommends factoring in the cost of servicing and upgrading the system when considering a change.

"You should go and talk to people who service the [system] to find out what the real costs of owning it, rather than the salesman at the front," he recommends, likening choosing the right service provider to choosing a car to buy.

But money isn't the only factor. Given how integral communications is to almost every business, you might want to consider how the cost could affect the final product.

"We did save a little bit," said Matthews, speaking about the decision for Oscar Oscar Salons to switch service providers. "It definitely wasn't a major factor. In fact, we would have been willing to pay more if it meant that we had a more reliable system." Fortunately, the switch they made saved them money and time.





CHAPTER 3

WHAT OPTIONS WORK BEST FOR YOU AND YOUR BUSINESS?

So now it's time to sit down and work out which services you need for your business.



FIRST, LET'S TALK ABOUT THE CLOUD

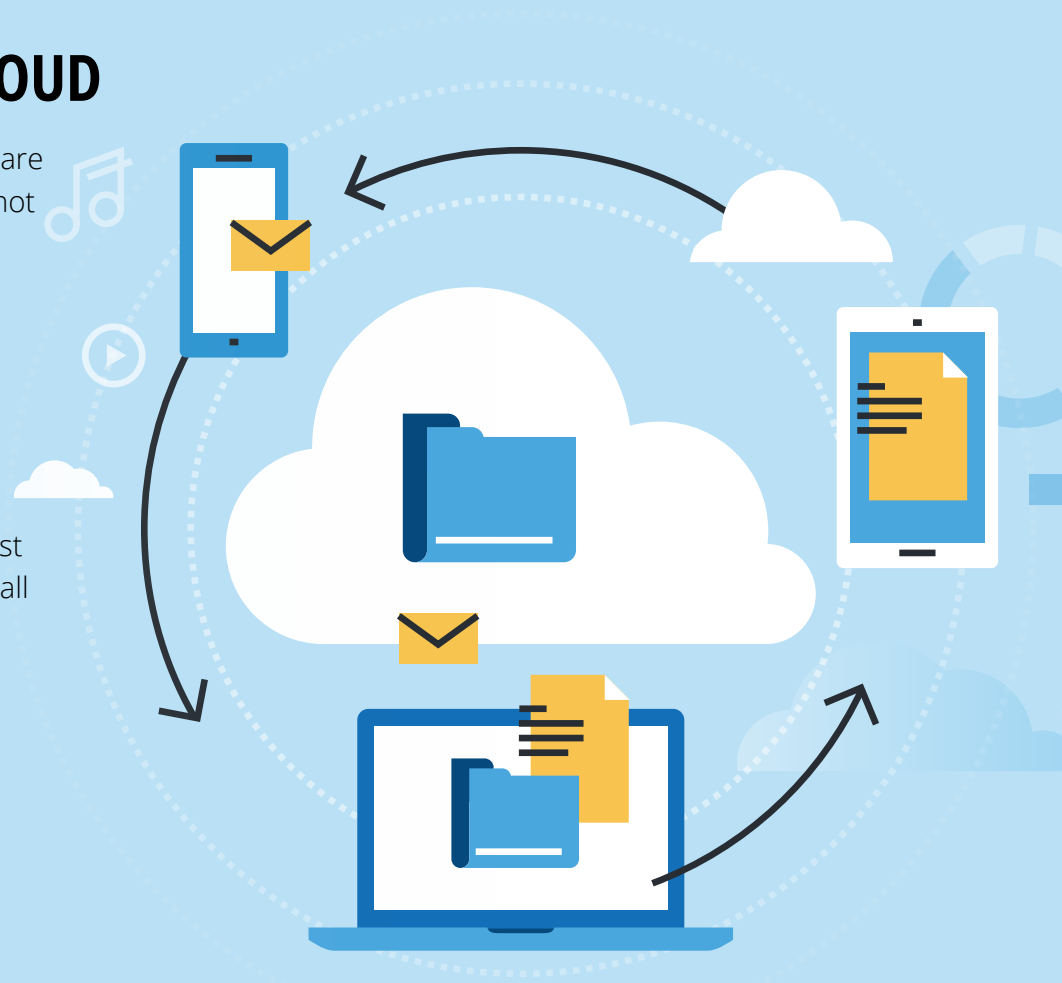
You're probably also sick of hearing about 'the cloud' as you are about the NBN. But just like the NBN, the reality is, if you're not in the cloud, you're wasting time and resources.

When it comes to your telephony services, cloud based technology allows you to increase the number of phones as your business grows, often without increasing your costs too much.

VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) technology allows you to make and receive audio and audio/visual phone calls with just an internet connection. This means you can actually take a call from anywhere in the world, so long as you have an internet connection, without needing a new number, or even letting the person on the other end of the line (or is it the other side of the cloud?) know you're not in your office.

For businesses where travel is essential, being able to reach your customers and employees no matter where you're located is crucial. You're no longer limited by your physical location.

Not to mention, if your other systems operate in the cloud (file management, applications, etc), you can run your business from almost any location in the world. It's not just about making a phone call. The cloud opens up any number of possibilities for your business.



Reasons to move your business to the cloud

Accessible 24/7, no matter the location.
Secure. Cost effective. Scalable.

WHAT ELSE IS THERE?

So we've spoken about the NBN at length, but that's not your only option. If your business requires what you might consider a premium level connection, consider what a **high speed fibre** connection could do for your business. Avoid disruption to your business, by staying connected with reliable, flexible connectivity.

The fibre connection allows for a 1:1 bandwidth ratio and allows you access up to 1000Mbps, or ten times as fast as the NBN. Better yet, with the right provider this can be split between services across your network or allocated to a single service.





HANDSETS

Just because your phone calls take place over the internet, doesn't mean you don't require a physical handset to speak through (wouldn't that be something!). Consider how your service provider factors in the cost of equipment. Don't forget to ask about the types of features you can access.

If you work out of a single location, or even if you have multiple offices but your staff are predominantly at their desk, handsets will likely be a requirement for your business.

Even better than simply having a desk phone, technology advancements allow you to make and receive calls from your mobile device with your landline number. All you need is the right app for you to send and receive calls from your mobile phone, wherever you are.

The soft phone technology also works on your computer, laptop or tablet device, without you needing a new phone number. It's an easy way to create some flexibility for your business.



STILL NOT SURE WHAT SORT OF PHONE SYSTEM YOU NEED?

WHAT FEATURES SHOULD YOU EXPECT FROM A CLOUD PHONE SYSTEM?

Do you receive voicemail to email?

Does your mobile phone ring simultaneously with Your desk phone?

Can you use all the features of your desk phone on your mobile phone?

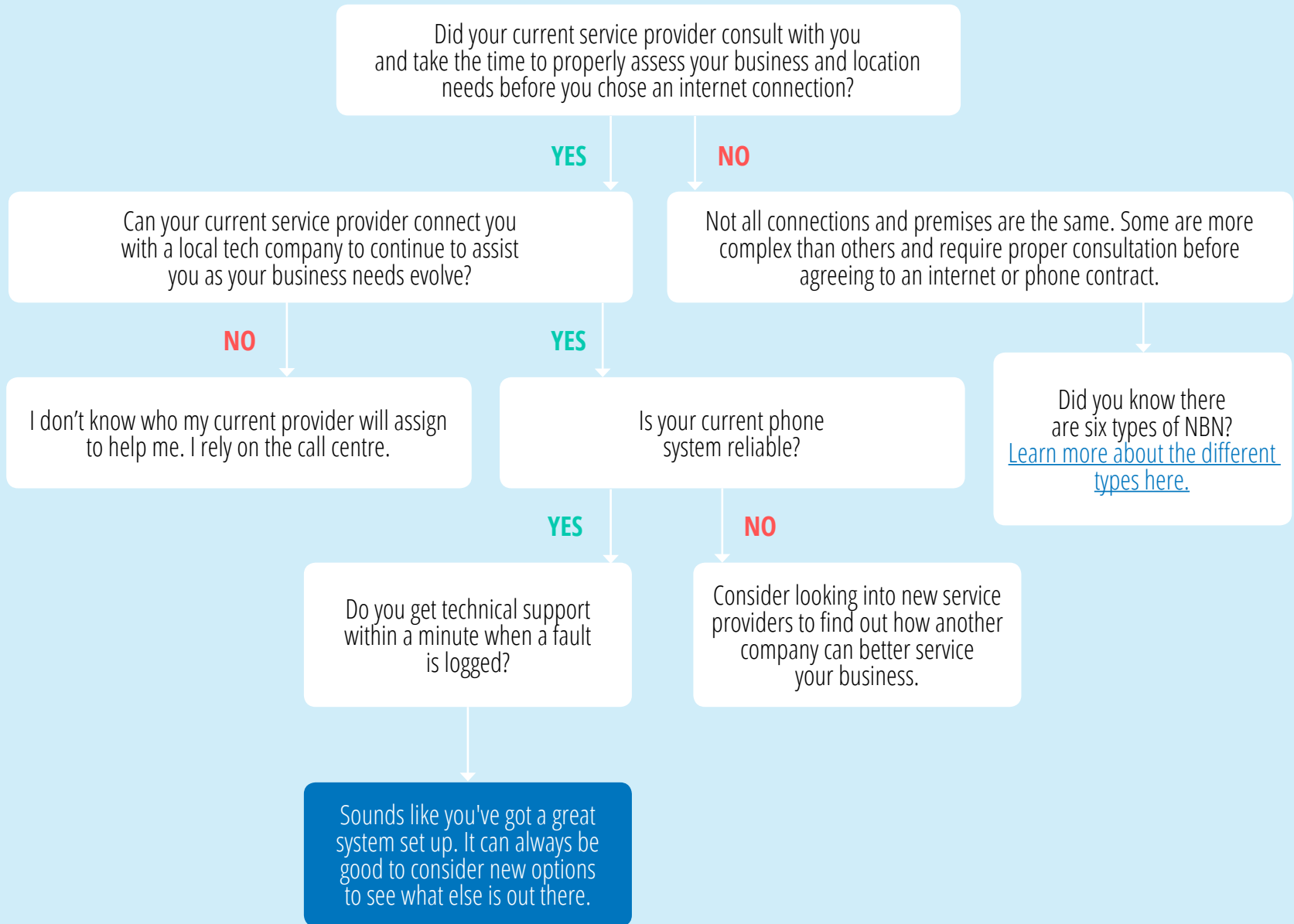
Can you teleconference at a fraction of the cost on your current system?

If you want any of these features from a phone, make sure any service provider you consider can offer them. Don't just settle for one or two features if you know there are other options available.



LET'S TALK TECH SUPPORT

WHAT TYPE OF TECH SUPPORT DOES YOUR BUSINESS NEED?



Make the smart call and keep your business connected with 99.999% unrivalled reliability.

“When we moved to Vonex, of course, there were savings but it has been the features of ONdesk that I wasn't even aware of at the time that have changed the way we can connect with customers... that is what has impressed me the most.

For example, we set up numbers for Speciality Balloons in each capital city of Australia; this has afforded us a local identity and presence to drive sales across the country.”

- Ty Bramley, Speciality Balloon Printers Australia & NZ

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always on

1800 828 669
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NOW IT'S TIME TO MAKE A CHOICE

Changing service providers for your business is not a decision you should take lightly, but it's a decision you have to consider. We've given you the tools to go away and carefully analyse how your systems are currently set up and whether they're really working for you.

Once Big Branding's Josh Tulloch felt he had done the research and spoken to the right IT people (people he trusted), he felt comfortable making a decision about the company's telecommunication needs.

So far he's been happy with the new provider, going so far as to take down the backup Wi-Fi tower on the roof, meaning the business only has one service provider.

With so much change happening in the industry, you don't want to get left behind when systems finally change. Take the time to review your business, talk to the people you trust and those who will be servicing the product, and make sure you swap your services or your service provider in time.



VONEX

always on

Vonex is an ASX listed, multi-award-winning telecommunications company keeping thousands of Australian businesses connected.

From setting up and managing your bespoke cloud-based phone systems to supporting your switch to the NBN or internet fibre network quickly, reliably and with the best price, we make sure you have the best support to keep you connected, communicating and always on in business and life.

We've proudly gone from our humble beginnings as a shed start-up in WA to one of the fastest growing telecommunications companies in Australia in a decade with teams in Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney and with channel partners across Australia we have a local presence to keep your business connected. From Mildura to Melbourne, Fremantle to the Far North, Dubbo to Darlinghurst and beyond, our local partners have extensive expertise in a combination of IT, communications and telephony.

This network of highly skilled professionals creates a unique ability for Vonex to deliver a valuable, personable service to businesses of any size.

We support this team with our own highly skilled technical support and sales team and with less than a minute call wait time to have their calls answered, we boast one of the most reliable networks in Australia.

Reliability coupled with our innovative technology is why industry professionals choose to partner with us.

For 10 years, we've helped Australian businesses get smarter with how they communicate and connect with their community, with our:

- Industry-leading ONdesk software, a cloud-based program for businesses to manage all their mobile and landline calls for game changing efficiencies, scalability and customer experiences, no matter how small or large their business is.
- Reliable internet NBN and fibre packages which we help you manage with local advice.
- Affordable mobile packages with data and reliability to keep you always on.

At Vonex we are continually looking for ways to add more value for our clients and we are proud to have partnered with Qantas Business Rewards to help Australian businesses navigate the cloud smarter. So now in addition to providing one of the most reliable phone systems in Australia our customers earn Qantas Points with all ONdesk products.

Learn more by visiting qbr.vonex.com.au

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