

The future of phone numbers has just become fairer and more flexible

Desk phones can now be as flexible as the smartphone in your pocket – here's why

The world of telephones is moving into the most exciting time since its invention.

It's an opportunity for businesses to enhance levels of customer service and profitability, and to create more flexible businesses by making the most of revolutionary technology and changes in the law.

Together those factors will shape the way companies use the phone in the future, and have the potential to change the face of business as much as the internet and email have done.

So what changed?

The answer's in the cloud. 21st century cloud computing means the telephone on your desk no longer needs to have ties to any particular part of the country, as it did in times past.

And what about changes in the law?

There's been a shake-up in the law that effectively spells the end of the line for expensive numbers in most sectors.

What's in it for me?

Now it's unfettered by the restrictions once placed on it by old-style technology, your company or organisation has the flexibility to operate in ways that simply weren't possible in the past. And for the future, it also has the freedom to grow at whatever pace suits you.

In detail, this means things like:

- If your business moves, it can keep the phone number customers trust



- A phone number can be yours for life
- You can have a national point of contact
- You can appear to have a presence in an area by having its old-fashioned geographic number, even though you're not there
- You may even be able to cut your bills

There are benefits for every company, from a start-up to a long-established and trusted family firm. The squirrel is agile enough to come up with the right solution that has as much flexibility as your company could ever need. For ever.

number crunching

a guide through call charges valid from July 2015 (though these vary depending on your bundle agreement).

All prices are per minute.

01 & 02 From landlines, as little as 1p. Mobiles, from 3p and 40p, depending on your call bundle

03 No more than 01 and 02 numbers, and must be included in your call bundle

0500 Generally free from all landlines. Mobile charges vary between 7p and 40p, but the provider must tell you the rate before the call is connected. Will be withdrawn in 2017

07 Mobile numbers. From landlines between 6p and 32p. Often included in free call packages and bundles

070 Looks like a mobile phone number – BUT ISN'T. That second zero means that landline call costs can be from 4p to 65p, often with a 51p call set-up charge too. From a mobile, from 30p to £1.50

0800 & 0808 Free from consumer landlines AND MOBILES. Business phones may be charged

The law requires that anyone asking you to dial the numbers below tells you the call charges up front

0843, 0844, 0845, 0870 & 0871

Cost to call these numbers is in two parts. Your phone company gets the **access charge**; the organisation you're calling gets the **service charge**. Access charge varies from phone company to phone company. Can be another 7p or 8p. Service charge is normally from zero to 7p per minute (0870 up to 13p; 0871 up to 15p, or 40p from a mobile). Can no longer be used as a customer service number for existing customers.

118 One-off charge between 50p and £4, plus an additional charge of as much as £5.

09 Cost to call these numbers is in two parts. Your phone company gets the **access charge**; the organisation you're calling gets the **service charge**. Access charge varies from phone company to phone company. Service charges range from 1p to £3.60. One-off cost from 5p to £6 may apply.

Further information is available on the web at www.ukcalling.info

Need to know more? Visit askthesquirrel.com or call 03333 442033