

Buyer's Guide

This buyer's guide gives advice on how to identify the best telecommunications solution and supplier for your business.

Supplier Experience

While you don't need to choose the biggest company, (in fact quite often, smaller companies offer competitive rates and excellent customer service) make sure your provider is established and has a proven track record. You should ask for customer testimonials, research them online and even ask to talk to existing clients. It is also important to check if the company is credit worthy.

Contract Length

Beware of lengthy contract terms. The price of business telecoms is constantly changing and generally in a downward direction. For business telephone line rental and mobile solutions in particular, try to avoid contracts in excess of 24 months. Any longer than this and you could be stuck in a contract with uncompetitive pricing as well as a potentially out of date phone system or telecoms solution.

Billing Increments & Pricing

- Check that you are being billed by the second (rather than minute) and that there is not a connection charge.
- Check which destinations you are most likely to call and ensure you have the best tariff for these locations.
- Check cancellation terms to make sure they are fair and you understand what charges there may be.

Type of company

There are generally two types of telecoms suppliers, resellers and wholesalers.

Reseller – Usually acts like a middle man, so has no control over billing or fault reporting.

Wholesaler – Controls their own billing and has a direct link to Openreach for fault reporting, which gives a distinct advantage over the reseller.

Account management

To ensure a good level of service, the company you contact for report faults, billing issues, moves and to discuss any additional services you require must be the one you signed a contract with, and not a third party. Ideally you will also have a named account manager or a central point of contact and a support line number answered by a person.

Telephone System Maintenance

Try to choose a company that can support and maintain your telephone system as well as provide lines and calls. Having a complete solution and one point of contact for all queries avoids the issue of finger pointing and one company claiming another for any faults you may experience.

Questions to ask prospective business telecoms providers.

How long has the company been in business?

Has it always traded under the same name (if not, what was the reason they changed names) What is their primary business?

Who will be installing my telephone system, business phones, lines etc? How long will this take?

How are queries and issues dealt with after signing a contract? Is there a dedicated account manager? What is the process to report a fault?

Does the company have other customers similar to me? Do they understand my industry how I use my communications solutions?

What does this company need from me? This should be a straight forward process and once you have agreed terms etc, the transition should be seamless.

How regularly will the company review my tariff and services?

Summary

Be clear about your requirements – Even if you don't know what solution is best for you, explain your business, how you use telecommunications and the importance you place on it for business continuity. Any reputable telecoms company can advise you of what services are available to you and give you all the information you need to make an informed decision.

Think before you purchase – It is important to get your telephony solution right from the beginning for it to continue to work for your business and support future expansion plans or strategy changes.

Contact us - Feel free to contact us. We will give you clear, fair advice as this is how we like to be dealt with when choosing a service provider for our business.

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