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Why your phone solution needs AI

Dial in on four crucial capabilities of AI-powered phones — and how they're transforming business communications.

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Table of contents

03 Introduction

04 A look at modern, cloud-based phone systems

05 How AI is changing business phone communications

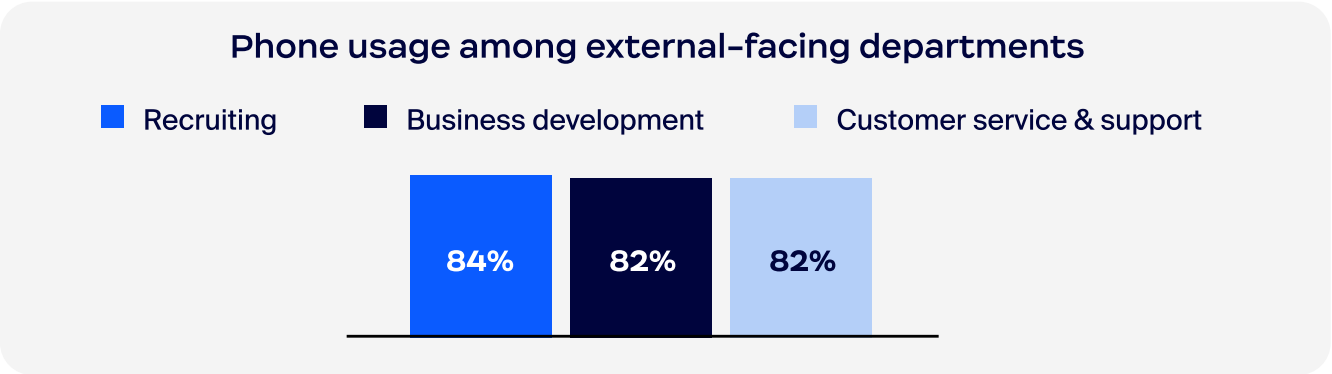
07 How well does your current phone system actually serve you?

08 Get AI insights on your phone communications

Introduction

In an era of video meetings, instant messaging, and emails, phones are still a primary choice for many. A **2024 survey on collaboration** conducted by Morning Consult on behalf of Zoom found that phone is among the most popular collaboration methods overall (75% of employees use it to stay connected) second only to chat/instant messaging (79%).

When you want to communicate a message quickly and clearly, it's hard to beat a phone call versus hopping on a video conference or sending a text message. This is especially true when connecting with people outside your organization. It's no surprise that the same survey revealed phone usage is highest among external-facing departments like recruiting (84%), sales and business development (82%), and customer service and support (82%).



But with so many other methods of communication at our fingertips, your phone system shouldn't exist in a silo. And yet, that's how many organizations, especially global companies, continue to operate: with separate phone contracts and different carriers for every region, costly on-premises infrastructure, and crucially, a lack of the latest AI features.

In this ebook, you'll learn about how AI is changing business calling as we know it — and how consolidating your phone system on the same platform as your communication and collaboration tools can contribute to greater productivity and a more effective workday.

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A look at modern, cloud-based phone systems

Before we dive into AI innovations, let's take a quick look at how modern phone systems have evolved from hard-wired cables to the cloud. It's possible that your existing system is cloud-based, but in case it's not, here's an overview.

A phone system based on a cloud phone service makes calls over the internet and has become an increasingly popular choice due to its flexibility and cost savings. Cloud phone services require virtually no infrastructure other than an existing internet connection. You can use any compatible device, such as a smartphone or computer, to make calls, or use a cloud phone number on a traditional desktop office phone if you prefer. Additionally, cloud phone systems generally offer you an admin portal to make it easy to add new lines and get an overview of operations.

There are many benefits of cloud phone systems that make sense for IT leaders to take advantage of. They're exceedingly reliable, with options like Zoom Phone offering 99.999% uptime. Some providers even integrate their phone services into third-party systems, providing an important bridge to commonly used services. Choosing a phone service that is easy to set up and simple to manage helps save time and frustration, makes it easier to add new users, and can easily scale with you as your business grows. If you're considering a move to the cloud, look for a phone system that is simple to provision or one that offers additional support and setup packages.

Finally, a truly modern cloud phone system uses AI features to save you time and provide helpful insights — as we'll cover in the next section.

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How AI is changing business phone communications

Phone calling features used to be fairly straightforward. You could place calls and receive them, set up voicemail services, transfer a call, or connect a third phone line to a conference call. Many business phone systems have more complex capabilities, like call recording or the ability to set up call queues and auto-attendants.

AI changes the game with the ability to **transcribe**, **summarize,** and **analyze** information. These skills come to life through features that actually save you time in your workday. Not only can you get more done, but AI also helps you prioritize what matters most by identifying tasks and important voicemails so you can focus on high-impact work. Here are just a few of the capabilities that a phone system with AI can bring to your day.

Transcribe conversations: AI can transcribe speech into text, which becomes the basis for a variety of helpful outputs. For example, if an employee is in a meeting and misses an important call, a voicemail transcription would allow them to read the message on their screen as opposed to excusing themselves to listen to the message. Call transcripts can also be used to provide call summaries or identify action items, as detailed below.

Summarize calls and texts: Just like AI note-takers have revolutionized meeting follow-up with succinct, organized recaps, AI can also be used to summarize phone conversations and provide real-time insights as well as post-call summaries. These summarization capabilities can even extend to long text message threads, saving you time from having to read through every message.

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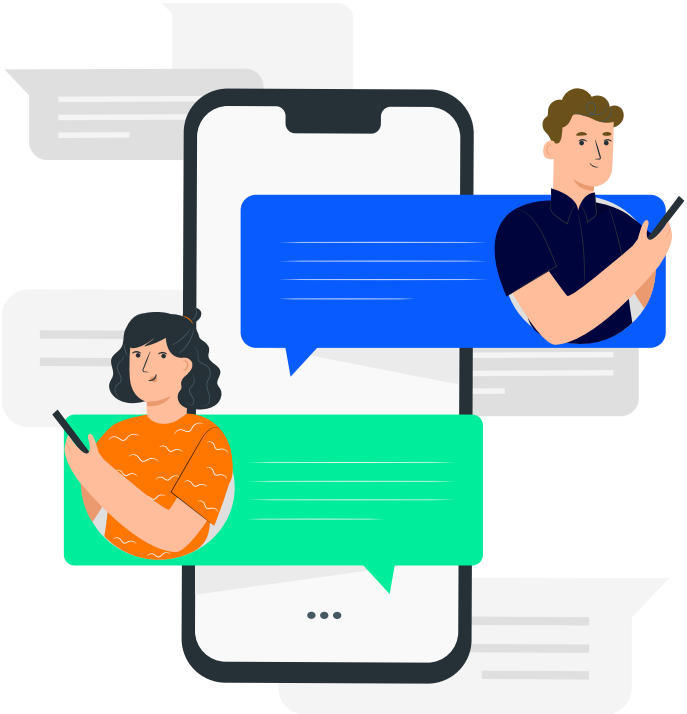
Identify to-dos: AI can take summarization a step further and actually identify action items or next steps from the context of the conversation. It recognizes when someone is being asked to do something and provides that information as a task or to-do. This ability to extract tasks from a conversation can be applied to phone calls or voicemails.

Prioritize messages: Agentic AI has the ability to analyze and reason, meaning it can review your voicemail transcripts, determine which messages are most important to you based on your predefined topics, and prioritize the ones you should listen to first.



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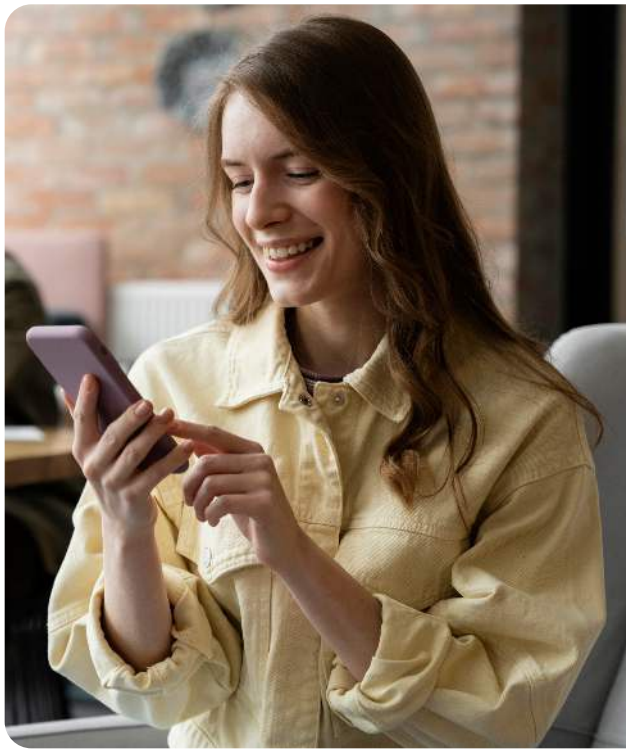
How well does your current phone system actually serve you?

While the AI capabilities discussed in the previous section are helpful on their own, they can have a greater impact if they're incorporated into larger workflows.

Consider, for example, the ability to receive a post-call summary of a phone conversation with a client. By itself, the summary is a useful way for an employee to have a written record of what was discussed. **But what if the employee could use AI to generate a project brief from that summary, identify their next steps, and automatically have those action items added to their task tracker?** Better yet, what if all that could be completed on one platform?

That's the power of consolidation. If your current phone system isn't integrated with the rest of your communication and collaboration tools, you may want to evaluate whether it can continue to meet your needs in a world where distributed teams and flexible work are the norm, and where AI plays an integral role. Here are a few questions to ask yourself:

- If your phone system has AI-powered capabilities, do these features actually deliver value by saving employees time and improving their workflows, or are they simply "AI for AI's sake"?
- Besides your phone system, what other tools, applications, or platforms are employees using? How easily do they integrate with one another?
- Does your current phone system make it easy for distributed teams to collaborate?
- How flexible are your communication channels? For example, can your employees easily move from a phone call to a video meeting to clarify something visually?
- Is it just as easy to use your phone service on your computer at your desk as it is on your mobile device?



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Get AI insights on your phone communications

When you embrace a modern phone system with AI, you can elevate your employee and customer experiences while focusing on what matters most. By consolidating your communications onto an all-in-one collaboration platform with AI capabilities, you can give your teams the tools to be more productive and collaborate more efficiently.

Learn how Zoom Phone with AI Companion can unlock insights for your team. Employees can incorporate AI capabilities into their day-to-day workflows to get more done, do their best work, and strengthen relationships with colleagues and customers.

Discover the benefits of Zoom Phone with AI Companion

Access the ebook

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