

SIP Phone Recommendations

User Guide



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Overview

With today's popularity of SIP and VoIP in general comes a wide variety of phone selections available on the market. As 8x8 leverages SIP delivery of calls for agent interactions, using SIP hardware phones or software clients may be a viable option for your organization. If the cost savings that SIP call delivery presents are an attractive opportunity to explore, some operational considerations should go into your phone selection criteria. The following list (as of the time of this bulletin) covers the phones actively supported by 8x8 Virtual Contact Center, and the strengths and caveats associated with each.

Counterpath eyeBeam softphone

By far the easiest to deploy, Counterpath's softphone is a simple installation that leverages your primary Windows or Mac computer for phone calls. Combine with a high-quality GN/Netcom or Plantronics headset for the best possible experience.

Ideal for organizations that want to avoid purchasing telephone hardware, or those with little or no IT staff, Counterpath eyeBeam is the most widely-deployed and popular choice amongst Virtual Contact Center's customer base.

Linksys/Cisco SPA94x

If you're looking for a classic hardware phone and your installation base is less than 10 phones, you may wish to consider this option. The Linksys/Cisco SPA94x is a stand-alone hardware phone, requiring only an internet connection and a DHCP server to work; no TFTP is required, and configuration is done via a web interface after the phone is connected to the network. The audio quality is average when using the G711.ulaw codec, and configuration is a one-time event that most non-technical users can follow.

Cisco 7940/7960 IP Phone

This phone is great for mass deployments, but not the best choice for small business. The Cisco 7940/7960 has been the cornerstone of open-standard SIP phones for years. Although the phone is no longer sold by Cisco, there is a seemingly limitless supply available in the secondary market. Configuration can be achieved through one of two methods: via a cumbersome series of menus on the phone's display, or using a TFTP server. This is the best phone available for large deployment sizes in companies that have full-time IT/Network staff.

While configuration is not intended for newcomers, seasoned Unix administrators will find that deploying 100 phones is just as simple as deploying 5 phones once the backend TFTP configuration has been built. This phone comes highly recommended by 8x8 and the SIP community at large. One key advantage of this phone is support for PoE (Power over Ethernet) when using older Cisco PoE switches.

Avaya 4610SW IP/4621SW IP Phone

The Avaya 46xx IP phone is possibly the best phones for voice quality and reliability. It is configurable only via TFTP, thus mandating that IT/Network staff perform the initial configuration. The Avaya 46xx IP phone offers IP extension mobility, superb audio quality, and a very simple hardware design in a small package (4610SW IP).

This phone is slightly easier to set up than a Cisco 7940/7960 for an IT professional in small to mid-size deployments. If you're looking at a large-scale installation site, you may still wish to consider the Cisco 7940/7960.