

IP Requirements

Two documents are available that addresses questions about implementing VoIP. One is a white paper that discusses the requirements and recommendations for a successful implementation of voice on the network. This is information that you will find helpful for understanding and avoiding the potential pitfalls of VoIP.

The other is a “questionnaire” intended for you, the dealer, to use to create a document on your company letterhead that you can use to review and discuss the VoIP implementation with your customer. You may use the entire document or extract those parts that you feel are applicable to the situation.

Gone are the days when you could just connect your telephone equipment to the telephone company lines and forget about it. The VoIP network is a shared network. Instead of a network dedicated to voice, we have a network with multiple applications competing with voice for network resources. This is complicated by a network that is divided into segments, local and WAN, with multiple carriers to deal with and a variety of equipment from different manufacturers.

In this environment it is a good idea to assign responsibility for the different parts of your network. It is important that these responsibilities be assigned prior to implementing VoIP so that should problems arise, it will be clear who is responsible for solving them.

The “questionnaire” has 3 functions: (1) make the customer aware of the requirements for VoIP voice quality, (2) gather information about the network to determine if it meets these requirements and (3) assign responsibility for parts of the network. Clearly, this is an attempt to avoid disputes about VoIP problems.

The primary purpose of the “questionnaire” is to make you and your customer aware of the requirements and recommendations for providing “quality voice” signals when implementing VoIP. By signing the questionnaire the customer acknowledges that they have been made aware of the requirements.

Each requirement is stated and followed by questions about the customer’s network. If the current network does not meet the requirement, the network should be upgraded to assure quality voice. The customer may object claiming that they are only adding one or two VoIP telephones and that should not impact the voice quality. If that happens, make the customer aware that they must take responsibility for that part of the network and have them initial the questionnaire.

If the current network meets the requirements, it is still a good idea to assign responsibility for maintaining compliance with the requirements. Networks are constantly changing, more users, more equipment, more applications, and need to be monitored. Your company may want to assume some of these responsibilities (for a fee).

In some cases, the customer may not know the answer to some of the questions. This is particularly true for the transmission requirements. You can offer to perform tests on the network or hire someone to do network testing.

Use of a public network for the WAN connections (transport) has potential for being problematic (especially if the Internet is used). Since you have no control of the public network, you may want the customer to assume responsibility for this part of the network.

Even if you have done all these things, there may still be disputes about the cause of a problem. At this point you must be prepared to illustrate or demonstrate that your area of responsibility does not cause the problem. This may require conducting tests or bypassing parts of the network to demonstrate the cause of a problem.

We believe that using the information provided will result in VoIP installations that meet customer expectations and your organization's need for smooth and cost effective installations.

Sincerely,

NEC Unified Solutions, Inc.
Ultra Business Sales Division