



Microsoft Phone System
& Calling Plans in Office 365
eGuide - Everything you need to know

INTRODUCTION

Have you waited long enough for Microsoft Calling Plans? It's here now! On May 1, 2018, Microsoft Calling Plans became generally available in Canada.

Back in 2015, Microsoft began to offer Cloud PBX services with PSTN Calling, which was, at the time, heralded as an ambitious step by Microsoft. They wanted to provide their users with the traditional phone calling capabilities, but without the need to manage on-premises equipment.

Since this announcement, Microsoft has significantly opened up Cloud PBX with PSTN Calling, expanding this service to over 32 countries, and allowing customers in those countries the ability to take advantage of flat-rate, per-user, per-month pricing. As of May 1, 2018, Microsoft Calling Plans became generally available in Canada.

From the questions we have received from our customers, we know many organizations in Canada have anxiously waited for Microsoft Calling Plans to become available. This eGuide is to provide you with all the information you need to understand what Microsoft Phone System and Calling Plans are, what are the benefits, and how you can get started.

PSTN CALLING - A BRIEF HISTORY

The traditional Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) system is circuit-switched telephony - a dedicated channel (circuit) between the person making and the person receiving the call - that uses copper lines. Bell (or whatever telephone company owned the infrastructure) runs cables from their central hub into your home or office. Then, your Private Branch Exchange (PBX) logs the call and routes it to the appropriate receiver.

Before the digitization of these calls, these PSTN systems manually connected those pieces of copper wire through a switchboard. The longer distance the call, the more copper wire was needed, and the more expensive the service was.

Over the years, technology advanced and phone calls became more digitized, allowing for the introduction of fibre optic cables, cellular networks, communications satellites, microwave

transmission links, and undersea telephone cables.

This traditional way of PSTN calling was set on edge after the emergence of Voice over Internet Protocols (VoIP) around 1995, which allowed people to use the Internet to make and receive phone calls at a significantly reduced cost (in some cases, completely free). When VoIP originally emerged, it was plagued with poor sound quality and connectivity issues, but with the introduction of broadband Ethernet internet, that improved, and by the early 2000's, companies were starting to realize how this technology could benefit them.

WHAT IS MICROSOFT PSTN CALLING?

Microsoft Calling Plans are now generally available in Canada, and marries the traditional PSTN Calling with VoIP technology to provide those organizations that have a traditional on-premises landline with a completely Cloud-hosted PSTN solution.

Available through Skype for Business or Microsoft Teams, Microsoft's Calling Plans in Office 365 can give people in your organization their own primary phone number, which they can use to make and receive calls through the Internet.

Simply put, by adopting Microsoft Phone System and Calling Plans, you can ditch the cumbersome on-premise structure and move to a Cloud solution that lets you make and receive calls from your PC, handset, or mobile device - often at a significant cost reduction.



WHO SHOULD BE INTERESTED IN MICROSOFT CALLING PLANS?

Do you feel that your organization is paying high monthly or yearly support contracts to maintain your on-premises phone system? Do you want to move from a CapEx to a monthly/annual OpEx billing or invoicing model? Are you a start-up or SMB with budgetary constraints, looking for a reliable solution? If you answered yes to any of these questions, Microsoft Phone System and Calling Plans might be right for you.

Aside from the scenarios above, Microsoft Phone System and Calling Plans are the perfect solutions for organizations with remote workers and frontline workers, or for other non-traditional “9 to 5” employee structures. Because your phone number travels with you wherever you go (all you need is an Internet connection), Microsoft Calling Plans are ideal for people on the go, or people who work from home.



WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT MICROSOFT CALLING PLANS?

Microsoft Phone System is included with Office 365 Enterprise E5 licenses (you just have to pay for the Calling Plan that suits your organization), and available for an extra charge with Office 365 Enterprise E1 and E3. There are 3 Calling Plans you can choose from:

Domestic Calling Plan

\$7.30 CAD/user/month

120 minutes

A small package that's best for organizations who will only occasionally be using Skype or Teams to communicate.

Domestic Calling Plan

\$14.59 CAD/user/month

3,000 minutes or the equivalent of 150 minutes/day

This standard package allows the end user to place calls with outside parties (i.e. other organizations within Canada/USA) on a regular basis.

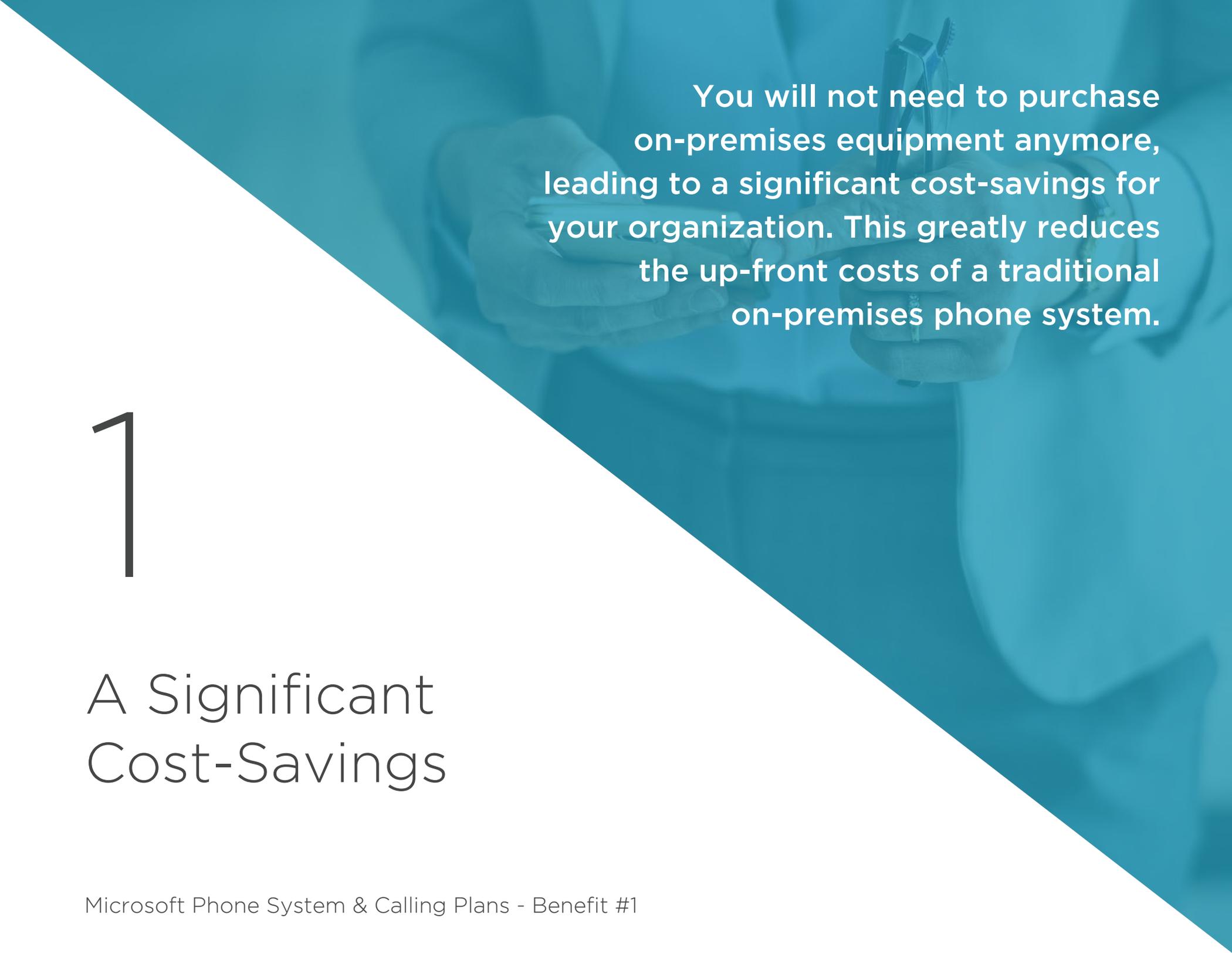
Domestic & International Calling Plan

\$29.18 CAD/user/month

3,000 minutes and/or 600 international minutes

This option is best for users that are required to call internationally on a regular basis.

The minutes are pooled for everyone at a particular SKU and geography. This is by design, and at the request of customers. For example, an organization that has 100 users with the 3,000 minutes per month plan would have a pool of 300,000 minutes per month. Given the nature of people being on vacation, absent, or simply not using their minutes, this is a great way to get the full value out of your minutes.

A person is holding a mobile phone, with a blue overlay covering the right side of the image. The text is overlaid on the blue area.

You will not need to purchase on-premises equipment anymore, leading to a significant cost-savings for your organization. This greatly reduces the up-front costs of a traditional on-premises phone system.

1

A Significant Cost-Savings

2

Lower Maintenance Requirements

By adopting Microsoft Phone System and Calling Plans, you can remove the need for yearly support contracts with organizations like Bell, Rogers, or TELUS.

In other words, you no longer need to maintain your own phone system. Because it's Cloud-based, it's backed by Microsoft's 99.9% Service Level Agreement, which guarantees 99.9% uptime.

Your number travels with you wherever you go. You'll have a single number for users to get a hold of you, whether it rings to PC, handset or mobile device.

3

Take Your Number With You



Microsoft Phone System and Calling Plans eliminate the need to purchase traditional handsets, however, if you prefer the feel of a traditional handset, you can still use one.

4

No Need for a
Traditional Handset

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1: If we implement Microsoft Phone System and Calling Plans in our organization, do we still need landline service from our current telecom company?

A1: No, you don't need to use your landline from your current service provider. Microsoft Calling Plans can replace your current landline service, often at a significantly reduced rate.

Q2: I'm an established business, so keeping my current phone number is important to me. Is this possible with Microsoft Calling Plans?

A2: Yes! with Microsoft Calling Plans, you can easily transfer your phone numbers from your current service provider to your new Microsoft Phone System. Once you've done so, Microsoft will become your service provider and will bill you for those phone numbers.

Q3: Our organization's in Canada, but we are frequently calling our customers in the United States. Do we need to sign up for the international plan?

A3: No! A useful feature that Microsoft is offering is that any calls made between a Canadian and a US user (in both directions) is considered a domestic call. This option helps you further control costs for your organization.

Q4: What do I need to access Calling Plans?

A4: Calling Plans work with both Microsoft Teams and Skype for Business. Transitioning between the two systems is also relatively easy, so if you start off using Skype for Business and need to switch to Teams, you can.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q5: How much can I expect to spend on Microsoft Calling Plans?

A5: This is entirely dependent on the core license you choose (Enterprise E1, E3, or E5). Enterprise E5 has the Microsoft Phone System (formerly known as Cloud PBX) and Audio Conferencing currently built into the \$44.20 CAD/user/month price tag, so all you need to do is add the Calling Plan of your choice. With Enterprise E1 or E3, however, you'll need to add Microsoft Phone System to your core license for \$9.70 CAD/user/month, and decide if you want or need to add Audio Conferencing, too (which is an additional \$4.86 CAD/user/month), before you determine which Calling Plan suits your needs.

Check out this chart below for a more detailed look at how much you can expect to spend on Microsoft Calling Plans (these prices are in CAD):

Component	Enterprise E1	Enterprise E3	Enterprise E5
Core License (Required)	\$9.70	\$25.30	\$44.20
Microsoft Phone System (Required)	\$9.70	\$9.70	Included
Audio Conferencing (Optional)	\$4.86	\$4.86	Included
Calling Plans	\$7.30 - \$29.18	\$7.30 - \$29.18	\$7.30 - \$29.18
Per User, Per Month	\$31.56	\$47.16	\$51.50

WANT TO GET STARTED?

Microsoft Calling Plans Discovery Workshop

Are you paying a significant amount of money for your phone system? Looking for ways to reduce costs and lower maintenance requirements? If so, consider replacing your current phone system with Microsoft Phone System and Calling Plans. If you want a Cloud-based solution that allows flexibility, cost-savings, and convenience, a critical first step is to participate in our one-day Discovery Workshop.



[Learn More](#)

Microsoft Calling Plans Pilot Program

By adopting Microsoft Phone System and Calling Plans, you can switch to Voice-Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) that allows you to make calls over the Internet (instead of a regular phone line), reducing costs and maintenance requirements and introducing work-from-home or remote office capabilities into your organization. After you've gone through our one-day Discovery Workshop, the next step in your VoIP journey of switching to Microsoft Phone System is to participate in our Pilot Program.



[Learn More](#)



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