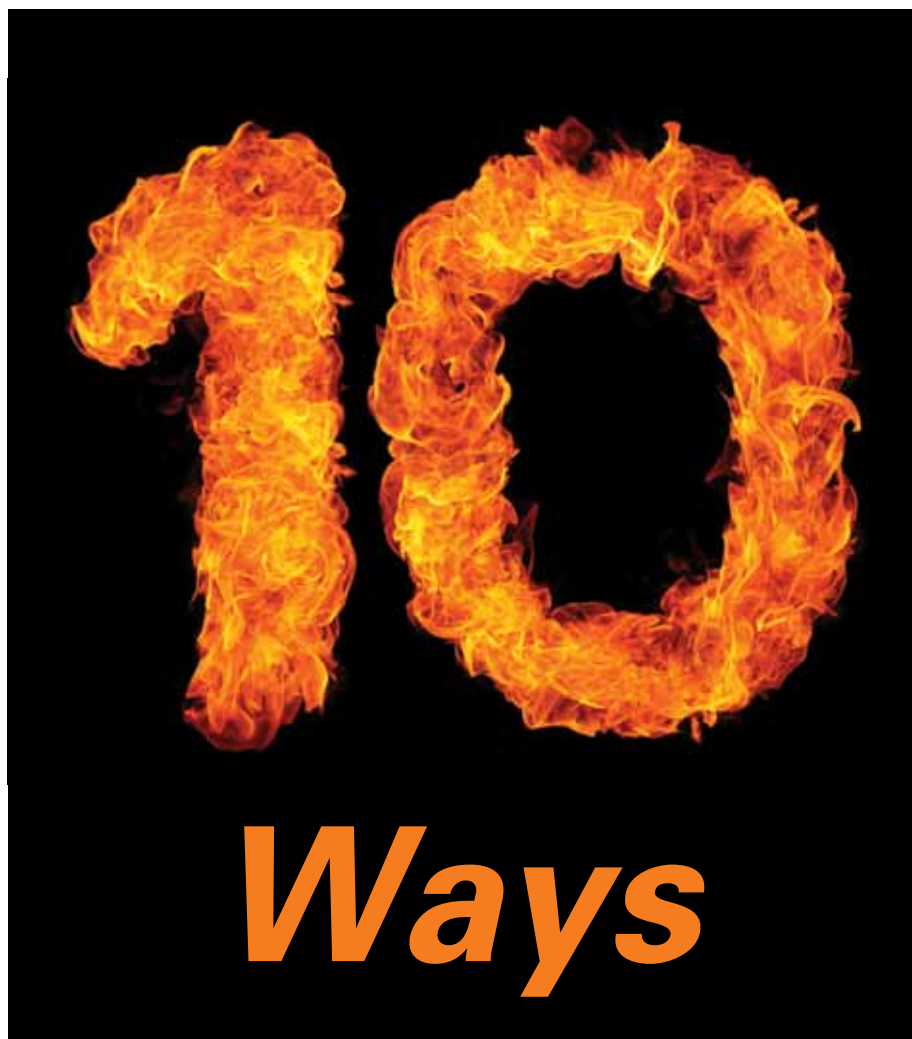


# 10 Ways Business VoIP Powers Productivity and Savings for Mobile Professionals

BY JACKIE FUNK



The world's mobile working population now numbers over 1 billion people—and that number isn't standing still. By 2013, it is expected that 1.2 billion people around the world will be mobile workers. That's a lot of workers on the move!

The United States has the highest percentage of worker mobility. In 2008, 72.2 percent of the U.S. workforce was mobile (IDC study, *Worldwide Mobile Worker Population 2009 – 2013 Forecast*). By 2013, 119.7 million Americans will be part of the work-from-anywhere crowd.

Of course, that comes as no surprise to agency owners. Mobile access—anywhere/anytime—is an imperative to success for today's small businesses. For many agency owners and employees, their mobile device has become an "office in their pocket," enhancing productivity and freeing them to take their business wherever they go—whether that's off to meet a client, working from home or even on a family vacation. When you can't stay in the office, you can take the office with you.

## Standing Apart Means Not Standing Still

Keep moving and growing—or die. That's the reality for small businesses in today's economy. As small businesses grow, they often need to extend mobile capabilities to more employees and implement more advanced applications, both of which improve productivity and maximize efficiencies. To do this, they need professional-grade communication tools—but without the Fortune 500 price tag.

The leading business VoIP providers aren't standing still in their support of mobile professionals either. According to a recent survey we conducted of our customers, over 73 percent have employees who telecommute/telework one or more days per week. They're able to do this because their business VoIP phone solution supports them with a robust portfolio of mobility features. Check out our Top 10 list of "must haves":

### 1. Find Me List

A growing number of Allstate agents are managing multiple locations, including remote home/office work locations. Did you know that you can have your calls find you—no matter which location you're working from, even if you're between locations? With a Find Me List feature, you can designate multiple numbers (or phones) and forward calls to ensure you never miss important calls. You can choose to ring several numbers simultaneously or in a user-defined sequence.

### 2. Mobile Portal

Ever wish that you could change your Find Me List while you're on the go? Or that you could have access to your office phone book and one-click calling from



any smartphone? Some VoIP providers now offer mobile portals that allow you to access your admin dashboard to manage your service remotely. Key features to look for include the ability to play voicemails, return calls, view your Find Me List (to enable/disable numbers), view your company phonebook, look up extensions, initiate a call - and more - right from your mobile device!

### 3. Mobile Menu

Have you ever caught a call on the run and wanted to flip it to a co-worker who could better respond? Or maybe you need to head out of the office but your conference call is not quite done. If this sounds familiar, you'll want a solution that lets you access call management features such as transfer, call recording and voicemail—while you're on the call.

### 4. Acrobits Softphone

Interested in saving money when traveling internationally by using your iPhone, iPod or iPad? Want to use a mobile softphone to take advantage of a VoIP calling plan? It couldn't be easier. All you have to do is download the Acrobits SIP Client onto your mobile phone, configure it with your VoIP service provider account settings, and you're ready for business. You'll be connected to your

phone service so you can:

- Make calls using your company's Caller ID
- Reach coworkers with extension-to-extension dialing
- Call without using your own mobile minutes

Acrobits is currently available for download in the iTunes App Store.

### 5. Fring Softphone

Why use costly airtime minutes when traveling overseas—when you can place local and international calls over the Internet? The Fring softphone is another mobile option for road warriors. With Fring, you can extend your VoIP functionality right down to your mobile phone, allowing you to make VoIP calls to landline and regular mobile (GSM/CDMA) contacts. Download Fring at [www.fring.com/download](http://www.fring.com/download).

### 6. Voicemail to Email Integration

Tired of calling multiple voicemail boxes to retrieve messages when you're out of the office? Now you can leave all that behind. With Voicemail to Email Integration, you can send voicemails as email attachments to one or more email accounts. When a message comes in, you'll be notified (with caller name and number, if available) and receive the

voicemail as an attachment via a WAV or MP3 file format. Just click to listen to your message(s) from your laptop or mobile device.

### 7. Voicemail to Text Transcription

Ever been in a meeting and see that a voicemail has been left for you—but can't step out to listen to it? With voicemail to text transcription, you can visually “see” your voicemails when you receive them. Even if you're in a meeting (or at a piano recital), you can scan messages, determine whether follow-up is needed and respond accordingly.

### 8. Call Screening

Not sure if you want to take a call? Expecting a new client to sign on and don't want to miss his call? Call Screening announces an incoming caller's name, allowing you to decide whether to take the call and how to manage it if you don't. If you decide not to take the call, you can choose to send the call straight to voicemail or transfer the call to another extension or phone number.

### 9. Inbound Caller ID

Do you have staff supporting multiple departments—employees who provide both support and sales, for example—who need to know the reason an inbound caller is calling? Are you looking to support multiple businesses with a single phone system? If so, having an Inbound Caller ID can simplify your life. Some providers offer Inbound Caller ID plans that identify which department or phone number the caller is attempting to reach—ensuring that you greet each caller appropriately and are prepared to respond immediately. With Inbound Caller ID, you can:

- Determine the origin of the call based on the name and number of the caller.

Present the company name of your choosing and the phone number of the caller. This is helpful when employees support more than one business and want to see if the caller is trying to reach “Allstate-Frederick” or “Allstate-Hagerstown.”

Present the department name and the number of the caller, as well as show the extension name and number being called.

This lets employees see if the incoming call is trying to reach “Sales” or “Billing.”

### 10. Mobile Plans

Already have a phone system but want to give your mobile workers the functionality of a PBX? Many providers offer mobile plans that will take your agency to the next level. You'll sound professional with a personalized greeting and an auto attendant that intelligently transfers calls to your mobile device. Unify your home and office—as well as remote and mobile employees—with a single phone number (toll-free or local). And with a mobile extension, you can take advantage of a virtual PBX, available from some providers, to receive inbound calls, voicemails and faxes to your company's main number via your mobile phone.

### Are You Moving Forward—Or Running In Circles?

Mobility is more than just motion. Small businesses must offer effective mobile solutions for their employees—mobility is a way of life today. Many

workers use their mobile devices for their business and personal lives. They need the ability to distinguish between calls, control which calls they take and when, and decide how to manage them. It takes more than an ordinary phone service to do all that.

A business-class VoIP phone service can provide your agency with much more than a dial tone. You'll get business intelligence built right into the system, allowing you to conduct business anywhere, anytime—and giving your employees the flexibility they need to juggle the competing demands on their time.

### Three Reasons to Make the Move to Business VoIP

#### 1. Conduct Business Anywhere/Anytime

As a small business owner, you can't be tied to the office all the time. With Business VoIP, you have the freedom and flexibility to manage your business wherever you happen to be on a given day. You can also “use” your business phone service even when you're not in the office.

#### 2. Improve Worker Productivity

Time savings and increased productivity are key elements in small business management strategies. By tapping into a VoIP Service Provider with a full suite of mobility features, your employees get the tools they need to do their jobs efficiently and effectively. Many customers end up seeing streamlined processes that improve productivity, improve quality and drive revenue growth.

#### 3. Save Money Immediately

You can reduce your monthly phone service expenses by as much as 60 percent. Many VoIP Service Providers let you pay for services and features as you need them. **Ef**

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