

Aptela FAQ

General

Who is Aptela?

Aptela is a leading provider of business-class phone service, answering the communication and collaboration needs of small businesses and mobile workers nationwide who seek a robust and easy-to-use solution. Aptela's v5.0 platform is extensible by design and easily integrated into the workflow of today's entrepreneurs and increasingly mobile workforce. Unlike traditional telephony that is tied to a physical location, Aptela's service is delivered from the cloud and its features can be accessed—anywhere, anytime—through the Internet, traditional wire-line or mobile networks.

What makes Aptela different from other VoIP providers?

We understand small businesses. We recognize that your phone system should be a value-added resource, not a constraint. Modern companies demand flexible solutions to accommodate owners and employees who are on the go and always on.

1. Experience – As a pioneer in the market, Aptela's technology has emerged over the past 10 years from an IVR and mobile solution to today's powerful hosted phone service.
2. Overall customer experience – From the web portal to system audios to our onboarding process, Aptela is dedicated to simplifying communications.
3. Customization – As you compare major features, we may look like our competitors. However none can match our configuration options which allow you to customize the solution to meet your needs – you don't have to change your business to work with the phone system.
4. Extensibility – With the v5.0 platform, our customers can integrate our service into their communication and collaboration behaviors. Check out the Aptela AnywhereSM Applications to see what's new.

At Aptela, we take you beyond mere phone calling. We give you tools that allow you to manage and take control of your communications—and let you manage those tools through an easy, web-based interface. And when you need support, just contact our US-based, in-house client support center.

Does Aptela replace my phone system?

Yes. Aptela can completely replace your current phone system and service provider. Aptela can work with most open-source SIP phones removing the need to purchase new hardware.

However some small businesses rely solely on mobile phones or landlines. In that scenario, Aptela can be used as an add-on service that will manage inbound calls. You can forward more than one phone number to the same phone. Aptela also presents callers with a professional greeting, routes calls, provides the web interface for call history and management, and more.

How do I know if Aptela is a good fit for my business?

If you're a small business or mobile worker, Aptela is a great fit for you! With an easy to use interface, Aptela delivers a solution that can be configured to meet the needs of a wide range of small businesses – the solo entrepreneur, mobile workers or established companies with distributed offices. And we help small businesses of all sizes establish a professional image and obtain powerful communications capabilities at an affordable price.

How does Aptela compare with residential VoIP service?

Most residential VoIP services are designed to minimize bandwidth requirements and cost—usually at the expense of voice quality and reliability. This is fine for home use and even, in some cases, for home-based businesses. But most small businesses need the voice quality and professional features provided by Aptela.

Aptela also provides the professional support and service that a business needs. We even feature on-staff professional recording talent to customize your auto attendant for your business!

What kind of quality can I expect using VoIP?

Not to brag, but you can expect superb sound quality—and excellent reliability. Usually better than old-fashioned phone service, in fact! Our certified and tested hardware comes with the latest High-Definition (HD) voice technology for unparalleled clarity.

Aptela v5.0 – What's New

What was your motivation behind the new platform?

We rebuilt our solution from the ground up for even greater stability and scalability than the preceding platform. We wanted to reduce complexity so that we can speed innovation and more easily integrate with other systems and applications. The framework includes a robust set of APIs that we used to build our own web interface. They simplify integrating with other platforms and applications. Last, but not least, we wanted to simplify the overall experience for our end users.

Architected for Stability and Scalability – Our platform demonstrates the power of cloud-computing with horizontal scaling, robust fault-tolerance and a remarkably high degree of concurrency. Owning our own platform means no licensing fees and we are fully autonomous when it comes to innovation!

Architected for Extensibility – Our web application demonstrates the power of our robust APIs. Our mission is to unify communications for our customers by integrating calling into their existing business processes. At launch, we will be announcing Aptela AnywhereSM Apps, a suite of plug-ins, applications and extensions, including an iGoogle gadget, a mobile portal, browser plug-ins and more.

Architected for Flexibility and Vendor Interoperability - Our Platform is interoperable with any carrier or open source SIP handset. We have the flexibility to work with the best partners and integrate with the hardware and softphones that best suit our customer's needs.

Streamlined Onboarding - In addition to a completely new platform, the company has made significant investments in the customer onboarding process while reducing the investment by customers – removing our activation fees. We present online quotes and purchasing which, combined with its quick start activation process, means customers can order service and start making and receiving calls on the very same day.

Simplified User Experience – From the friendly web portal to the streamlined system audios, the Aptela experience is easier to use and more elegant than other phone systems.

What new features are available with Aptela v5.0?

Hot new features include:

- **Support for Multi-Entity Businesses** – Manage multiple Auto Attendants within a single account. Ideal for running multiple businesses or brands with a shared staff.
 - **Advanced Auto Attendants** – Aptela Auto Attendants offer a customizable schedule and unlimited menus providing complete control over their experience. It allows for different greetings and options based time of day, day of week and/or company holidays.
 - **Aptela Anywhere AnywhereSM Apps** – A suite of plug-ins, applications and extensions that allow customers to unify their communications by integrating calling into their existing business processes. Aptela AnywhereSM Apps include an iGoogle gadget, the m.aptela.com mobile portal, mobile integration for the iPhone, Blackberry and Android, browser plug-ins and more. Details on Aptela AnywhereSM Apps can be found at www.aptela.com/aptela-anywhere.
 - **User Dashboard** – Improved, friendly interface that offers access to important features with one click.
 - **User Line Presence** – View real-time presence for all employees to see who is on/off the phone and available to take or make calls. Available from the User Dashboard, one click will initiate calls to available colleagues.
 - **Enhanced Conferencing** – Easy to create conference bridges. Allows customers to create reusable conference bridges mapped to an extension or phone number. Conferencing is a standard service included with each account, paying only for what they use.
 - **Blacklisting** – Offers the ability to blacklist unwanted callers.
 - **Administrator Portal** – Easily manage accounts through a new, friendly Administrator Portal. Anytime, anywhere companies can add/edit users, edit the Auto Attendant, manage features and more.
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Features

Can I forward calls to my mobile phone?

Yes. Aptela offers Find Me/ Follow Me which forwards calls to your mobile, or any other phone number that is important to you. You will never miss a call again.

Aptela also provides advanced mobility controls, through our unique Anywhere Menu, to allow you to -- transfer calls to a phone number or extension, start or stop call recording and send a call to voicemail.

Can I have my greetings professionally recorded?

Yes. Aptela offers professional voice talent to create customized, professional recordings for a modest fee. Looking to save money? Aptela also provides the ability to record your own audios quickly with any phone or use our text-to-speech options for a fast alternative.

Can I really take advantage of Aptela's features if I'm on the road all the time?

Yes! For true road warriors, we recommend the use of a Softphone—a software application that you can download and use right from your laptop. With a Softphone and a headset, you can make calls from anywhere in the world and take full advantage of Aptela features. If you use a PDA or mobile phone as your primary device, Aptela's AnywhereSM Menu is right at your fingertips.

Do I really need all of Aptela's features?

Not usually. Aptela lets you customize your service to fit your business. We can recommend the best plans and features for your needs. And it's quick and easy to upgrade when you need to.

Do you support 911 services?

Yes. We support 911 through the Enhanced e911 service. We register your phone number so any call made from that number is routed to the appropriate 911 center. Aptela supports multiple locations, so you can assign users to different locations and calls will be routed properly. Details on Aptela's e911 policy can be found at <http://www.aptela.com/misc/911-dialing>.

Does Aptela support extension dialing?

Yes. You can use up to 4-digit extensions. All on-net extension-to-extension calls are free with Aptela.

How do I check my voicemail messages?

You have several options:

- Check your messages directly from your phone.
- Dial into your voicemail.
- Utilize our voicemail to email feature, which delivers a copy of your voicemail message to your email via a .wav or mp3 file attachment. You can then listen to your messages from your desktop, laptop or smartphone without the need to dial in to your Aptela voicemail.
- Add on our TalkScribe voice-to-text transcription service, offered through our partner, Line1 Communications. With TalkScribe, your emails will be transcribed to text and delivered to you via an email, ensuring you can review and respond to messages on the fly.

How can I learn more about Aptela features?

To learn more about Aptela's features, visit <http://www.aptela.com/learn-more/features>

Phones and Equipment

Can I use my own VoIP equipment with Aptela's service?

Aptela supports most open source SIP phones. However, we recommend using Aptela's certified equipment to ensure ease of use and call quality. Our handsets are fully configured and ready to use the moment you receive them. We also offer cost-effective, easy-to-deploy converged networking routers. An Aptela representative can tell you whether or not you need additional hardware. To review our hardware portfolio, visit <http://www.aptela.com/learn-more/phones-equipment>.

Do you offer equipment leasing?

Yes. We refer prospects with leasing needs to preferred leasing vendors to make it easier for customers to realize the benefits of hosted VoIP.

Do you provide virtual faxing services?

Yes. You can send and receive virtual faxes free with your Aptela service. Faxes are received in PDF format and can be automatically forwarded to your email. You can also log into the Aptela web portal to retrieve, send, forward and resend faxes.

Do you support physical fax machines?

Yes—with the use of an ATA (analog telephone adapter). The only ATA certified for use with Aptela is the Linksys SPA 2102, which we sell and support via auto-configuration. We configure the ATA for T.38 support to provide reliable fax transmission.

What is the difference between traditional and VoIP phones?

Traditional phones...

- Use circuit switching network
- Are the traditional phones found in stores
- Send and receive calls over standard phone lines
- Offer simple features for basic needs
- Do not usually have specific buttons for call functions

VoIP phones...

- Transmit voice conversations over a data network using IP protocol
- Use a single network that is not phone-specific to transmit voice and data
- Are portable and can be used locally or remotely

- Retain custom settings
 - Offer advanced features
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Getting Started

Can I keep my existing phone number(s)?

Yes! Thanks to Local Number Portability, you can keep your existing phone numbers or range of numbers. When you purchase Aptela's Business VoIP, please indicate that you wish to keep your numbers. It can take 2 to 6 weeks for your numbers to be released by your current phone company and transferred to Aptela.

Do you have departments, rollover numbers or ring groups?

Yes. There is no limit to the number of inbound calls your account can support. With departments, calls can be forwarded to a group of users. We can ring department members all at once, one at a time and retry via a loop. If no one picks up, we can rollover to another department, to voicemail or an outside number. Aptela can incorporate both desktops SIP phones and mobile phones into departments to provide maximum flexibility for managing inbound calls.

How do I get started with Aptela's service?

It's easy to get started! Just contact an Aptela Specialist for a consultation or demo. They will help you:

- Review your current needs and determine if your network is VoIP ready
- Recommend ways to customize our service to match your business operations
- Identify cost savings and productivity-increasing feature

How many phone calls can Aptela support?

There is no system limit on the number of inbound or outbound calls your account can receive. Your inbound callers will never get a busy signal. However, the number of calls a single user can be on at any one time depends on the phone. If the call can't be answered, it is forwarded to a destination you choose (another phone number, extension, department or voicemail). Actual minutes of use included with the service will vary by type of call and calling plan.

How much Internet bandwidth do I need?

The answer depends on how many users you have, how many simultaneous calls are made per location and your level of Internet usage. A company with ten users who are always on the phone will need more bandwidth than a company with ten users who are only sporadically on the phone. An Aptela VoIP specialist can help you determine what type of Internet connection you will need to best support your Aptela service.

How much technical skill is required?

None. Anyone with basic PC skills can set up Aptela service. We designed our service so that customers don't need expensive consultants or technical staff in order to activate and use the service.

What do I need to use Aptela's service?

You need just two things:

1. Broadband Connection—A broadband (high speed internet) connection is required. This can be through a cable modem, a high speed service such as DSL or a local area network. You manage your account settings through your web browser.

2. Phone (SIP Phone, Softphone, Mobile Phone or Traditional Phone)—SIP phones plug directly into your broadband connection and operate like a traditional phone. Aptela sells a range of business-grade handsets that are certified and pre-configured—so you can take advantage of our "plug and play" solution.

If you use your computer, you will need a Softphone, software for making telephone calls over the Internet, and a headset with a microphone.

What software do I need to install?

None! Aptela "hosts" the application —all you need is internet access and a computer with an internet browser. Log into Aptela to manage your account with the Administrator Portal or manage your own calls with the User Dashboard.

What support services are available?

Many of our customers choose Aptela because they don't have the resources in-house to manage a sophisticated phone system. We designed the Administrator Portal so that you can easily add and edit extensions, manage features and edit your Auto Attendant. If you do need help, our technical support staff is available from 8 am to 8 pm Eastern Standard/Daylight Time Monday through Friday. In addition, we offer a Knowledge Base with answers to common questions.

What type of payment options will I have?

We offer automatic payment options through credit card or a checking/savings account.

Will I have to sign a contract?

No. Unlike many providers, Aptela does not require a long-term contract. We bill on a month-by-month basis, which provides our customers with the flexibility to make changes to their service whenever they need to.

Will my existing phone service be interrupted during Aptela installation?

No. Aptela uses your existing broadband service, so installation does not affect your current phone service. If you are ordering a completely new number, there will be no impact on your current service. If you are keeping your old number, we will work with you to minimize any impact during the number porting process.