

Decoding Jargon

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Complicated industry jargon keeping you from confidently picking a business phone solution?

We've pooled together terms and definitions from a number of industry sources into this telecom glossary for you and your employees to reference.

Jargon	Decoded
Access Rate	The transmission speed, in bits per second, of the physical access circuit between the end user and the network.
Account Codes	An account code number is a numeric code a caller must enter to make a local or long distance call. It can also be set-up to support specific customer calls for tracking.
Affiliate	As defined in the Telecommunications Act of 1996, a person or entity that (directly or indirectly) owns or controls a telecommunications company, is owned or controlled by, or is under common ownership or control with, another person or entity.
Agent	A person or entity who acts on behalf of another person or entity with the principal's authorization.
Announcement Groups	Create announcements for callers, for example, "All calls are being recorded," before transferring the call to its destination.
Anonymous Call Rejection	While activated, this feature automatically rejects all calls from callers with withheld phone numbers. You receive no notification of the call; the call is routed to a rejection message and terminated.
Automatic Callback	If you call a phone line that is busy, this feature will continuously redial that phone number (for up to 30 minutes).
Automatic Recall	This service allows you to hear the last incoming caller's phone number and the time of the call; you are then given the option to return the call.
Automatic Recall on Busy / Automatic Callback on Busy	Allows subscribers to be called back automatically when a busy subscriber to whom he attempted to return a call using Automatic Recall or Automatic Callback becomes free.

Jargon	Decoded
Bandwidth	The capacity of a telecom line to carry signals.
Barge	A supervisor who is silently monitoring a call may enter a conference bridge, joining what then becomes a full three-way conference call, where all three parties can hear each other.
Block Numbers	Admins can block unwanted inbound calls.
Broadband	A descriptive term for evolving digital technologies that provide consumers integrated access to voice, high-speed data service, video-demand services, and interactive delivery services.
Business Hours	Admins can set the forwarding rules based on business hours.
Call Catch	A user can determine where to send calls if they don't answer the phone. They can choose to send it to their business voicemail, personal voice menu (auto attendant) or forward to another destination.
Call Forward Busy	If your phone line is busy, this service forwards all calls to a local, long distance, or toll-free number you designate.
Call Forward Busy Line	Enables a user to redirect incoming calls to a phone number when the line is busy or set to Do Not Disturb.
Call Forward Don't Answer	Enables a user to redirect incoming calls to a phone number if the phone is not answered within a certain number of rings.
Call Forward No Answer	If your phone line is not answered within a specific number of rings (you choose), this service forwards all calls to a local, long distance, or toll-free number you designate.
Call Hold	Enables a user to place an existing call on hold for an extended period and then retrieve the call.
Call Log	Enables users to view their call history.
Call Park	Allows a user to answer a call and park it for another user to pick up. The keycode is set by the admin as either a line key or the call park extension.
Call Recording	Call recording enables businesses to record and store calls for later analysis.
Call Transfer	Allows you to transfer a caller to another line.
Call Waiting	A service whereby someone making a telephone call is notified of an incoming call and is able to place the first call on hold while answering the second.
Call Waiting With Caller ID	Displays the name and/or number of a second call.

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Caller ID Prepend	Prepend an inbound toll-free number with a name so that inbound toll-free, contact center, ring groups and/or domestic numbers display an identifier for the inbound call.
Calling Name Blocking	Caller ID Block: On a per-call basis, you may block your outbound Caller ID.
Calling Name Delivery	Displays the name and number of the person calling you.
Cell	Unit of data packet transmission. A geographical unit with mobile telephone system transmission channels assigned to a particular mobile (wireless) telephone service provider.
Circuit	A two-way communication path.
Coaxial Cable	A transmission line in which one conductor is a wire at the center of the cable; the other conductor surrounds the center wire with a layer of insulating material between them. Coaxial cable can transmit greater bandwidth than twisted pair (TP) wires.
Common Carrier	A telecommunications company that provides communication transmission services, such as telephone and telegraph, to the public. The local telephone service provider is an example of a common carrier.
Competitive Access Provider (CAP)	Common carriers that provide local service. These companies compete with local telephone service providers to provide access services that connect end-users to long distance companies (Interexchange Carriers).
Congestion Control	Network management effort to control traffic flow so that switches and end-stations are not overwhelmed with information because of excessive network traffic.
Contact Book	A contact book is a directory, which includes your company directory and may also include frequently called numbers and may be uploaded via CSV.
Cutover	Physical changing of lines from one system to another, usually at the time of a new system installation.
Dashboard Traffic	Enables the admin to see all call traffic for a specific date range.
Dedicated LAN	Network segment allocated to a single device. Used in LAN switched network topologies.
Dedicated Line	A communications circuit or channel provided for the exclusive use of a particular subscriber. Dedicated lines are used for computers when large amounts of data need to be moved between points. Also known as a private line.
Delay	Amount of time a call spends waiting to be processed.
Demark	The interface between customer-premises equipment and network service provider equipment.
Dial by Name Directory	This menu allows inbound callers to reach end users by the first three letters or either a first or last name.

Jargon	Decoded
Direct Current (DC)	The uni-directional flow or movement of electric charge carriers (which are usually electrons) through a conducting material such as a metal wire.
Disaster Recovery	The pre-defined use of alternative network circuits to re-establish communications channels if primary channels are disconnected or malfunctioning.
Do Not Disturb	Phone feature that when enabled, the phone will not ring.
Dual Homing	Where a device is connected to the network via two independent access points (points of attachment). One access point is the primary connection; the other is a standby connection that is activated if the primary connection fails.
End Office (EO)	A central office to which a telephone end user is connected; the final central office before the end user's telephone.
End User	Any customer of a telecommunications service that is not a carrier
Enterprise Network	A geographically dispersed network under the auspices of one organization.
Exchange Access	As defined in the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the offering of access to telephone exchange services or facilities for the origination or termination of telephone toll service.
Extended Area Service (EAS)	Refers to a larger than usual local telephone calling area, under specialized payment plans.
Extension Maps	Allows admins to organize users and features by extension type and easily add new users to a specific group or menu in an organized manner.
Exterior Gateway Protocol (EGP)	The TCP/IP-based service by which gateways exchange information about which systems they can reach. Generally, an exterior gateway protocol is any internetworking protocol for passing routing information between autonomous systems.
Facilities	Cables, poles, conduit, microwave, or carrier equipment, central office distributing frames, central office switching equipment, computers (both hardware and software), business machines, etc., used by a service provider to provide telecommunications services.
Facilities Management	Refers to the agreement between a wholesale customer and a telecommunications service provider to have the provider manage private company facilities for the customer.
Federal Communications Commission (FCC)	A federal government agency authorized by the Communications Act of 1934 to regulate interstate and international telecommunications originating in the United States.
Fiber Optics	Communications technology that uses thin filaments of glass or other transparent materials. Fiber optic technology offers extremely high transmission speeds, allowing for data-intensive services such as video on demand.

Jargon	Decoded
Find Me Follow Me	Allows the user to choose how to hand off calls based on their busy, available and away status.
Footprint	The area in which a specific transmission can be received. Some footprints, such as those of satellite or cell systems, cover as much as one-third of the earth.
Forecast	A projection of requirements used for planning facilities.
Forwarding Whisper	Audio that plays in the ear of the person picking up the phone, letting the caller know where the call is coming from. Example: direct call versus a call to a sales queue.
Gateway	The entrance and exit to a communications network or system; a device or set of functions that facilitate electronic access by users to remote services or systems and vice versa. In data networks, gateways are typically a network node that connects otherwise incompatible networks. Gateways are commonly used to connect computers on one network, say a token-ring network, with those on a long-distance network. A gateway may be used to interface between two incompatible electronic mail systems or for transferring files from one system to another.
Hot Desking or Hoteling	This feature allows a user to log in and temporarily use a phone. Ideal for call centers where multiple users share a workstation or a visitor's office for traveling employees.
Institute Of Electrical And Electronic Engineers	Professional organization that defines network standards.
Intercom	Enables a user to page a specific person in the office through their speakerphone; it then opens the intercom for a two-way conversation.
Intercom Dialing	Ability to page another phone and have a 2-way conversation
Interconnection	As described in the Telecommunications Act of 1996 Interconnection refers to the connection of separate pieces of equipment or transmission facilities within, between or among networks.
Interconnection Facility	The physical connection of equipment, transmission facilities, etc., within, between and among networks, for transmission and routing of exchange service and exchange access.
Interference	Unwanted electrical signals or noise causing degradation of reception on a communications circuit.
International Direct Distance Dialing	Automatic international long distance dialing capability.
Internet Service Provider	A vendor that provides direct access to the Internet, and services such as email. The user accesses the ISP by dialing up through a personal computer and modem, or through a dedicated line. Also known as an Internet Access Provider (IAP).

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IP Address	Internet Protocol address; a 32-bit address assigned to hosts using TCP/IP. The address is written as four octets separated with periods (dotted decimal format) that are made up of a network section, an optional subnet section and a host section. Also known as an Internet Address.
IP Port	A service element in the Internet Protocol Virtual Private Network (IP-VPN) tariff: a physical port on a router.
Kilobit (K)	A measure, representing 1,000 bits, generally used to express the speed per second of telecommunications services and equipment. A bit is the smallest unit used to convey digital information.
Landline	A telephone circuit that travels over land-based circuits (as opposed to wireless).
Leakage	The resistance between the conductors of an insulated metallic pair or the resistance between each conductor of an insulated metallic pair and ground.
Local Area Network (LAN)	within a building or campus, and to link together computers and peripherals under a standard protocol. The network provides high-bandwidth communications over coaxial cable, twisted-pair, fiber, or microwave media. LANs are usually owned by the user.
Local Bridge	A bridge that directly interconnects networks in the same geographic area.
Local Service Area	The geographic calling area in which a local end user does not incur toll charges.
Local Service Provider (LSP)	The company that provides an end user with the ability to place and receive local telephone calls. The same company may serve as a conduit for the end user to place and receive long distance calls.
Maintenance Limit	The maximum margin, value, or deviation associated with standard in-service performance.
Manager Notifications	Managers get updates by text or email when agents miss a call or log out. Customers can set up call routing based on time of day, weekends and holidays.
Megabits (MB)	A measure, representing 1,000,000 bits, generally used to express the speed per second of telecommunications services and equipment. See Kilobit A bit is the smallest unit used to express digital information.
Megabits Per Second (MBPS)	A measurement of data transmission. One megabit per second equals one million bits per second.
Megabytes	A measure, representing 1,000,000 bytes generally used to express the storage capacity of digital A components. A byte represents a single character or group of eight bits.
Message Waiting Indication	Provides an audible indication (stutter dial-tone) to the subscriber when voicemail messages waiting at an external voicemail service.
Microwave Band	The band of frequencies, 1,000 megahertz or greater, that uses very short waves. These bands are used primarily for point-to-point communications.

Jargon	Decoded
Mobile iPhone and Android App	The mobile app allows users to make and receive calls from their mobile device as if they are calling from their desk phone. Call recording, text, SMS and more are enabled on the device according to the user's configuration.
Monitor/Listen	A supervisor can silently monitor a two-party call made by or answered by an agent on a conversation with an external party. No audible sound would alert the agent or the customer that the conversation is being monitored.
Multiple Devices Per Extension	One person can have multiple phones associated with the same extension.
Music on Hold	This music is played anytime a caller is placed on hold. Admins can upload different music for different groups, Contact Center, etc. or the same music/message can be used across the entire company.
Music-On-Hold	Offers Business Users an option to play customized media, such as music, announcements or advertising, while their customers are on hold.
NetPOP	A location where a network function is implemented as either a physical network function (PNF) or a virtual network function (VNF).
Network	Any connection between two or more computers that enables them to communicate. Networks may include transmission devices, servers, cables, routers and satellites. The phone network is the total infrastructure for transmitting phone messages.
Network Element	As defined in the Telecommunications Act of 1996, a facility or equipment used in provisioning a telecommunications service. The term may include the features, functions and capabilities of that facility or equipment.
Network Equipment Building Systems	A set of safety- and performance-related standards for telecommunications equipment installed in central offices
Number Administration	The function of distributing telephone numbers to telecommunications carriers.
Number Portability	A term used to describe the capability of individuals, businesses and organizations to retain their existing telephone number(s) -- and the same quality of service -- when switching to a new local service provider.
Packet Switched	A form of data transmission in which data is broken into small packets that are transmitted independently and reassembled at the destination.
Paging	The account admin can create a paging group and assign it to an extension. The page will announce over the speakerphones within the group. This is a one-way announcement, whereas intercom is two-way.
Paging Groups	Enables the configuration of multiple groups of devices (handsets, overhead paging systems) to be paged. Each page group would have a different extension.

Jargon	Decoded
Paging System	A one-way mobile radio service where a user carries a small, lightweight miniature radio receiver capable of responding to coded signals. These devices, called “pagers,” emit an audible signal, vibrate or do both when activated by an incoming message.
Plain Old Telephone Service (Pots)	The basic single line switched access service offered by local exchange carriers to residential and business end users, using loop-start signaling.
Port	The physical or electrical interface through which a device gains access to a network or computer. Network access point for data entry or exit.
Prescribed Interexchange Charge (PICC)	The charge the local exchange company assesses the long distance company when a consumer picks it as his or her long distance carrier.
Priority Call	Allows you to program up to ten numbers from which incoming calls to those numbers will ring with the same distinctive tone. Calls to numbers not on the screening list will ring normally.
Private Branch Exchange (PBX)	A private telephone switching system commonly located on the end user premises with an attendant console. The PBX is connected to a common group of lines from one or more central offices to provide service to a number of individual phones
Private Line	A communications service between specific locations that involve dedicated circuits, private switching arrangements, and/or predefined transmission paths, whether virtual or physical.
Resale Carrier	A carrier that does not own transmission facilities, but obtains communications services from another carrier for resale to the public for profit. Also known as a Reseller.
Ringtones	The admin can set up different ringtones for internal or external calls along with specific contact centers (i.e., billing or technical support) and groups.
Router	An intelligent device near the edge of the network that forms data packets and selects the most expedient route for data to travel.
SD-Wan	Simplifies the management of a wide area network (WAN) by decoupling the networking hardware from its control mechanism and using commercially available Internet.
Selective Call Acceptance	Accepts calls from specified numbers when Do Not Disturb is enabled.
Server	A networked computer that stores information and makes it available upon request to client programs that may be located on other computers. “Client-server” computing is the basis of virtually all local area networks and the World Wide Web.
Service Plan	The rate plan you select when choosing a wireless phone service. A service plan typically consists of a monthly base rate for access to the system and a fixed amount of minutes per month.

Jargon	Decoded
Service Provider	A telecommunications provider that owns circuit switching equipment.
SMS	Allows users to send and receive text messages through their email.
Spectrum	The range of electromagnetic radio frequencies used in the transmission of voice, data and television.
Speed Calling	Allows subscribers to dial a one or two-digit code which is interpreted as if they dialed the phone number to which the short code maps.
Telecommunications	As defined in the Telecommunications Act of 1996, transmission between or among points specified by the user, of information of the user's choosing, without change in the form or content of the information as sent and received. Any transmission, emission, or reception of signs, signals, writings, images, and sounds or intelligence by wire, radio, optical, or other electromagnetic systems.
Telecommunications Act Of 1996	Public Law 104-104, enacted February 8, 1996, provided comprehensive reform of the 1934 Communications Act. The Act was designed to foster competition among local telephone, long distance telephone, cable and other communications companies.
Telecommunications Resellers Association (TRA)	An organization representing the interests of more than 200 companies involved in the resale of telecommunications services.
Telecommunications Service	As defined in the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the offering of telecommunications for a fee directly to the public, or to such classes of users as to be effectively available directly to the public, regardless of the facilities used to transmit the telecommunications services.
Telephony	The word used to describe the science of transmitting voice over a telecommunications network.
Three-Way Calling	During an existing call, this service allows you to call a third party, and add the third party to the call, creating a three-way conversation.
Time of Day Routing	Customers can set up call routing based on time of day, weekends and holidays.
Traffic	Messages sent and received over a communications channel.
Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP)	A widely used network protocol that supports communication across interconnected networks; and between computers with diverse hardware architectures and various operating systems.
Transmission Repeater	Loop enhancement equipment that amplifies and equalizes voice grade signals.
Trouble Administration	The process of reporting and tracking problems (troubles) on telephone numbers or circuits.
Trouble Ticket	A record used for reporting and managing the resolution of network or circuit outages.

Jargon	Decoded
Trunk	A communications path connecting two switching systems in a network used to establish an end-to-end connection.
Universal Service	The financial mechanism which helps compensate telephone companies or other communications entities for providing access to telecommunications services at reasonable and affordable rates throughout the country, including rural, insular and high costs areas, and to public institutions. Companies, not consumers, are required by law to contribute to this fund. The law does not prohibit companies from passing this charge on to customers.
Value Added Network (Van)	A communication network that provides features beyond basic transmission of information. For example, a data network that provides protocol translation or a voice network with enhanced call routing or distribution features.
Virtual Fax	Enables users to send and receive faxes from their email.
Virtual Private Network	Virtual private networks are secured private network connections, built on top of publicly-accessible infrastructure, such as the Internet or the public telephone network.
VM Greetings	Supports customized greetings for internal callers, external callers, out-of-hours, and extended absence.
Voice Frequency	An audio frequency in the range necessary for transmission of speech.
Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP)	An industry transmission standard which supports voice communications over packet networks, such as the Internet.
Voice Recognition	Machine recognition of a specific human voice.
Whisper	A supervisor silently monitoring a call between an agent and a customer can privately speak to the agent, without the customer hearing the discussion. This is one-directional audio from supervisor to agent. The customer will not hear the whisper. Both supervisor and agent can hear the customer.
Wide Area Network (Wan)	A network that links multiple locations together. A WAN encompasses a much larger geographic area than that of a Local Area Network (LAN).
Wireless	Refers to mobile or cellular telecommunications, for which part of the communications pathway includes transmission through radio links to land-based networks. Wireless communications products and services include cellular phones and pagers.
Wireless Service Provider	Wireless Service Provider Provider of telecommunications services such as cellular telephone, pages or personal communications devices.

Sources: Access One, B-Hive, FCC, TechTarget and Verizon