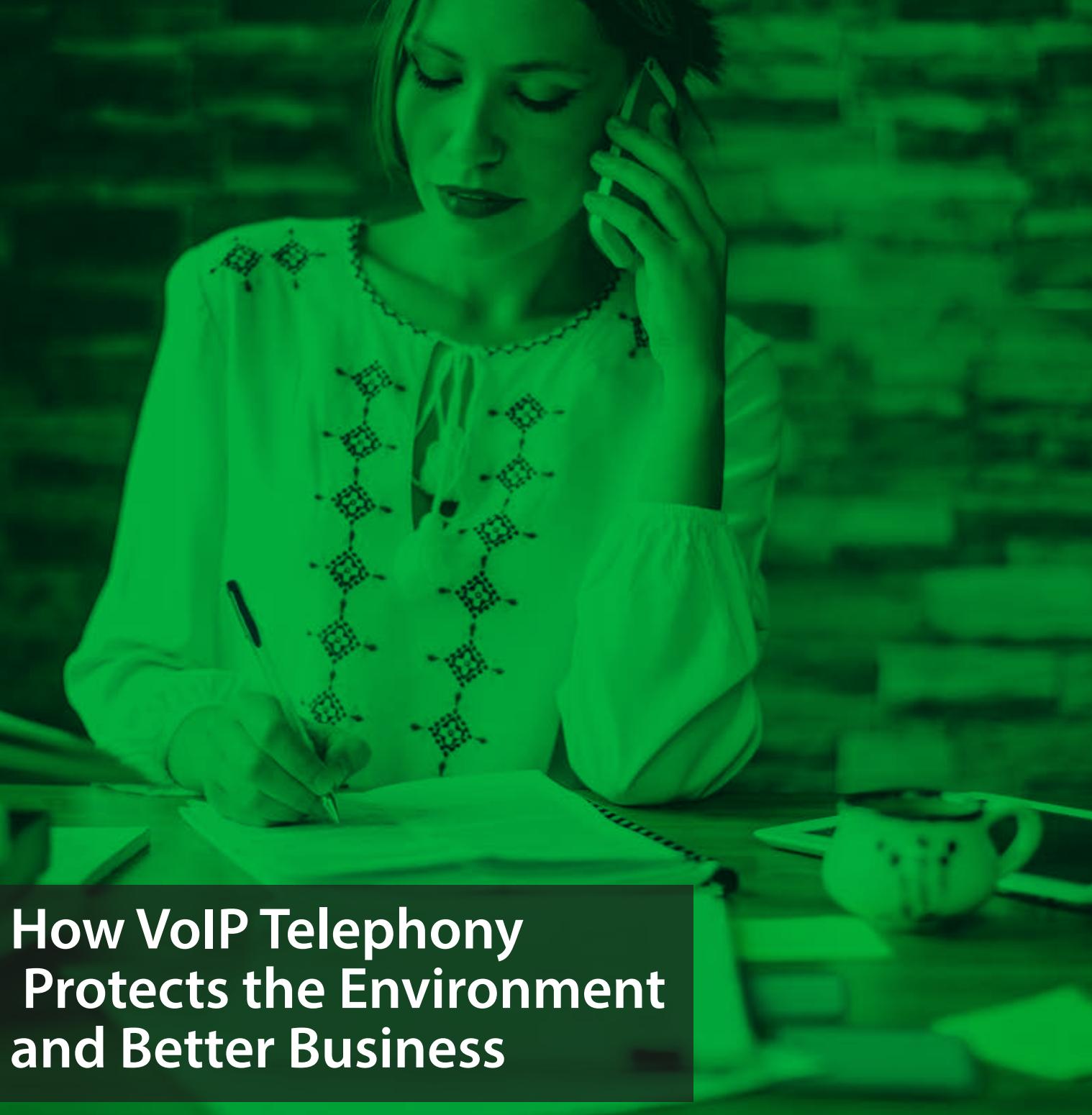


# GO VOIP AND GO GREEN



How VoIP Telephony  
Protects the Environment  
and Better Business



Go VoIP and Go Green

How VoIP Telephony Protects the Environment and Better Business  
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# Contents

Environmentalism: good for business	04
The environmental impact of POTS	06
How VoIP helps businesses go green	06
Cloud-based VoIP: the environmentally conscious choice	10
Sources	12



## Go VoIP and Go Green: How VoIP Telephony Protects the Environment and Better Business

If you're considering moving to VoIP, you probably already know about the benefits of VoIP in terms of cost, functionality, and scalability. But you may not be aware of the fact that VoIP is better for the environment. Implementing VoIP can help your business become greener—serving as competitive differentiator.

*Companies who adapted green business standards are 16% more productive than the average company.*

**- UCLA**

Traditional phone systems (POTS) are simply bad for the environment. They generate hardware that ends up in landfills, fail to accommodate a mobile, environmentally friendly workforce, and consume massive amounts of paper with faxing. VoIP allows companies to minimize their carbon footprint, reduce pollution, and cut back on paper consumption. At the same time, going green is just good business. Here's why.

# Environmentalism: good for business

Businesses are increasingly recognizing that environmentally friendly practices are good for business. **In 2012, researchers from UCLA published a study** demonstrating that on average companies who adapted green business standards are 16% more productive than the average company.

As a result, more businesses are catching on to the need to go green. **As of 2014**, 51% of U.S. businesses have publicly reported that reducing greenhouse gas emissions is an organizational goal. Many investors, consumers, and employees are prioritizing sustainability in their decisions.

There are many ways in which environmentalism helps business:

1. Going green can help companies target environmentally conscious consumers, especially millennials.

Once the question was, do consumers really care about the environment in their purchasing decisions? Now the question is how many consumers value environmentalism. The answer: a lot—and their numbers are growing.

**72% of consumers** say they will recommend a company with a social mission over one that does not have a social mission, all other factors being equal. Millennial customers are particularly likely to value environmentalism. **In 2015, a survey conducted by Nielsen** demonstrated that 72% of young consumers will actually pay more for a product if the company is environmentally and socially responsible. A year earlier, that figure was only 55%.

The bottom line is that green companies enjoy a powerful advantage when it comes to targeting consumers. Eco-friendly consumers are no longer a small niche market.



## 2. Reducing energy consumption saves costs.

High energy consumption isn't just bad for the environment. It's also a significant expense. As we will see, VoIP telephony allows organizations to reduce energy consumption in several obvious and less-obvious ways. Cost savings follow.

## 3. Green businesses can enjoy tax credits.

Provisions in the 2009 economic stimulus package offered tax incentives for businesses to implement environmentally friendly practices. Going green can save businesses money in annual taxes.

## 4. Environmentalism inspires innovation.

In business, it's easy to fall back into the same old ways of doing things—even if the old practices aren't really the best. Making a commitment to environmentalism can inspire innovation because it forces businesses and decision-makers to think creatively and try new practices.

*51% of U.S. businesses have publicly reported that reducing greenhouse gas emissions is an organizational goal.*

**- Greenbiz**

VoIP in particular can help businesses rethink how they organize their workforce and communicate internally, resulting in greater productivity and innovation.

## 5. Businesses benefit by protecting the environment in the long term.

The world faces significant environmental challenges in the coming decades. Businesses will not be shielded from the effects of environmental disaster. It only makes sense for businesses to do their part in creating a better environment for generations to come.

In 2017, the pertinent issue is no longer whether businesses can afford to go green. Rather, we must ask if businesses can afford to not go green.

# The environmental impact of POTS

Although you may not realize it, your POTS is almost certainly having a negative impact on the environment. Here's why:

As the world landlines implies, traditional phone systems require underground copper wires to function. These wires can and do leak chemicals through the soil, resulting in a cascade of environmental consequences.

-  If you're still using paper faxing, you are consuming far more paper than is necessary with today's technology. Since POTS are not integrated with email and other forms of communication, it's also likely that your employees are printing out a lot of documents because they cannot easily share files with each other. The average business consumes 3.6 tons of paper on an annual basis—the equivalent of a large garden's worth of trees.
-  Traditional phone systems require you to update hardware on a regular basis due to breakage and technological updates. Most businesses upgrade hardware every two years if not sooner. Whenever you ditch your old hardware, it ends up in a landfill, where it will take hundreds of years to fully degrade (and cause negative environmental impact in the meantime).
-  POTS consume a lot of energy and other resources. Traditional phone systems require many different parts: Switchboards, communication satellites, telephone exchanges, underwater and land-based telephone cables, etc. In contrast, VoIP telephony is simple, relying on the Internet connection you already have.

Every time you make a phone call on an old phone system, you are negatively impacting the environment in all sorts of ways.

## How VoIP helps businesses go green

VoIP, in contrast, mitigates these problems and helps businesses become environmentally friendly. From reshaping the workforce to reducing paper usage to cutting back on hardware, here are some key ways in which VoIP helps businesses become more environmentally friendly:

1. VoIP can help enable a larger remote workforce, thereby reducing carbon emissions and energy consumption from employees.

Today's workforce is becoming increasingly mobile, in no small part thanks to VoIP and other new telecommunications technologies. With VoIP, remote employees can easily access the company's phone network and directory wherever they are. A softphone installed on a computer or a VoIP application on an employee's own mobile device are two popular choices for accessing the company VoIP network remotely.



**In 2015, 37% of U.S. employees** stated that they telecommuted at least two days a month. **As the global mobile VoIP market grows at an annual rate of 28%**, the numbers of telecommuters are increasing. Research strongly suggests that remote employees are more productive on average, so this is good news for worker productivity and employee satisfaction.

The growth in remote employees is also great news for the environment. Commuter traffic is a major source of carbon emissions. **The U.S. Census Bureau reports that the average commute for the American worker is 26 minutes one way**, totaling more than 50 minutes of commute time for a single

*72% of consumers say they will recommend a company with a social mission over one that does not have a social mission.*

**- Nielsen**

time. During those long commutes, employees are consuming fossil fuels and emitting carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

So by reducing the number of trips employees must make to the office—even on a part-time basis—businesses can greatly reduce their carbon footprint. WebEx estimates that if every employee who can work from home did so just half of the time, **we'd see significant savings and a positive environmental impact**. Globally, we'd save more than \$20 million on gasoline annually, decrease greenhouse gas emissions by 54 million tons, and save 640 million barrels of oil.

And the environmental impact of telecommuting doesn't end there. When your employees work at the office, you pay for their energy consumption, upkeep of the physical infrastructure, etc. The environmental impact of these activities is greatly reduced when employees have the option to work from home, facilitated by VoIP.

*37% of U.S. employees stated that they telecommuted at least two days a month. As the global mobile VoIP market grows at an annual rate of 28%.*

**- Gallup**

2. VoIP enables businesses to cut back on expensive, environmentally harmful travel.

It's not just daily commutes that are causing a negative environmental impact. Business trips—whether in the car or air—results in carbon emissions and resource consumption.

Air travel especially accounts for a large proportion of carbon emissions for many Americans. If an individual takes five long-distance flights per year, **that alone may account for around 75% of that person's total carbon footprint**. Of course, many business executives fly far more frequently than that. A dozen trips annually (or more) is not unusual. All of those business trips are contributing to global climate change.

In combination with integrated video conferencing technology, VoIP allows businesses to conduct more meetings virtually. Virtual meetings can serve as a cost-effective replacement for conferences, meetings with clients and business partners, and other business trips that consume resources while enlarging your business' carbon footprint.

Although it's not likely that virtual meetings will replace all in-person business meetings, even reducing

business travel by 50% can have a significant positive impact. VoIP enables businesses to reduce travel and thereby become more green.

3. In contrast to POTS, VoIP systems can be implemented with a minimal investment in hardware and therefore contributes less waste.

Traditional phone systems require a lot of hardware that must be replaced on a regular basis in order to remain technologically current. That's a lot of old hardware that eventually ends up in landfills, where it will be an environmental blight for generations to come.

*The average business consumes 3.6 tons of paper on an annual basis.*

**- Wamda**

VoIP is comparatively light on hardware requirements. Although many VoIP users connect to the network with specialized IP phones, this is by no means necessary. One popular alternative to desk phones is softphone software applications on a computer. Users can use headsets to communicate, which utilize less plastic and other environmentally harmful materials than full phones. This is a popular option for contact centers.

Allowing employees to use their own mobile devices to connect to the VoIP network is even more environmentally friendly. Most VoIP providers offer mobile applications that allow users to access a corporate VoIP network from their own smartphone or tablet. Since employees almost certainly have their own devices and are using them regularly, the BYOD option (Bring Your Own Option) reduces the number of overall devices manufactured and discarded. (Note that this option is actually better than providing employees with company-purchased mobile devices, as that results in device proliferation. Many of those extra cell phones will also end up in landfills.)

Like so much else with VoIP, this is a win-win. BYOD reduces harm to the environment, saves money for organizations, and makes for happier employees. Most employees prefer to use their own devices for work purposes if possible.

VoIP also reduces other hardware components. Although there are some specialized VoIP hardware components that may be necessary (such as a VoIP router), that pales in comparison to the hardware necessary to operate a traditional phone system. Because VoIP relies on the Internet connection you already have, it allows you to reduce hardware rather than adding to it.

4. VoIP saves paper through paperless faxing and other features.

Faxing technology isn't dead yet—and the environment is suffering for it. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, **210 billion sheets of paper** are wasted by American companies who still use conventional faxing on an annual basis. VoIP offers an alternative to the waste: paperless faxing.

Paperless faxing allows users to send and receive faxes through a VoIP network. Faxes will still go to and from your designated fax number, but you won't have to deal with the annoyances (and waste) of standard faxing. It's even possible to set incoming faxes to go directly to your email. And when you need to fax something yourself, you won't print it out yourself. This reduces office expenses and environmental impact.

Other VoIP features, in combination with a robust Unified Communications (UC) system, can also help offices cut back on paper consumption. With VoIP and UC, it is possible to share screens while you're on the phone or video conferencing session with someone. This reduces printing needs.

In short, VoIP helps users reduce harmful environmental impact, from paper consumption to greenhouse gas emissions to hardware dumped in landfills.

## Cloud-based VoIP: the environmentally conscious choice

Businesses who want to implement VoIP have several options for deployment. But cloud-based VoIP is the most environmentally friendly choice, in addition to offering numerous other advantages.

*210 billion sheets of paper are wasted by American companies who still use conventional faxing*

**- Tronitech**

With cloud-based or hosted VoIP, users are responsible primarily for their own Internet connection. The VoIP provider takes care of the other necessary hardware. When businesses choose to host VoIP

hardware on premises, it tends to result in a proliferation of hardware and energy consumption. On the other hand, a hosted VoIP provider can service many companies efficiently from its data centers.

If your business is interested in going green, the choice is clear. Hosted VoIP services can enable your business to lessen its negative environmental impact while increasing profitability.

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