

BUYER CHECKLIST · 2026

Choosing a Business Phone System

Twenty questions to put to every provider on your shortlist, the answers to listen for, and a scorecard to fill in during each call.

Every business phone system looks the same in a demo. The differences that cost you money sit in the **contract**, the **exclusions**, the **support roster** and **what callers hear when your internet drops**. Put these questions to three providers, in writing where you can, and score the answers.

■ The twenty questions

Group	Ask	Good answer
Contract	1. Minimum term and the cost of leaving early? 2. Can I remove users as easily as I add them?	A written exit formula. Users removed from the portal.
Cost	3. Total of month one, with calls, numbers and GST? 4. What in the demo costs extra?	A written estimate and an itemised list.
Hosting and support	5. Which country stores calls and recordings? 6. Who answers support, where, what hours?	A named country. A number, a location, hours.
Outages	7. What do callers hear if our internet drops? 8. How did you handle your last incident?	Automatic failover to mobiles. A real example.
Numbers	9. Can I keep every number, and who pays? 10. Does my old service stay live until the port is done?	All of them, porting included. Yes, always.
Devices	11. Are desk phones optional? Can I keep mine? 12. Apps included for every user and platform?	Optional, priced separately. Yes.
AI	13. What can it do, and can I hear it first? 14. Per agent, per call, per minute or flat?	A live call. One clear model, no contract.
Recording	15. How are callers told, where is it kept, how long?	Your notice, your retention, a known location.
Integrations	16. Does it connect to our software? Setting or project?	Named systems, switched on in the portal.
Security	17. How do staff sign in, and how is access removed? 18. What stops international call fraud?	One step removal. Barring and spend limits.
Setup and testing	19. Who sets it up, and what is the training? 20. Can I use it before I sign?	Configured with you. A clickable demo.

■ Scorecard: 0 red flag, 1 vague, 2 clear and in writing

Group	Q	Provider A	Provider B	Provider C
Contract and exit terms	1, 2			
Total cost and exclusions	3, 4			
Hosting and support	5, 6			
Reliability and outages	7, 8			
Keeping your numbers	9, 10			
Desk phones and apps	11, 12			
AI answering and cost	13, 14			
Call recording	15			
Integrations	16			
Security and toll fraud	17, 18			
Setup, training, testing	19, 20			
Total (out of 22)				

■ Red flag answers

- "You will not want to leave," instead of the exit cost.
- A per user price and no estimate of the full invoice.
- Handsets bundled into the term so it cannot end until they are paid off.
- "In the cloud" with no country named.
- Advice to cancel the old service before the port completes.
- "We never have outages."

Two answers outweigh the total

If a provider will not put the **exit terms** or the **storage location** in writing, treat it as disqualifying. Everything else can be negotiated after you sign. Those two cannot.

How Uniden Voice answers

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