MULTI-SITE · FRANCHISE · 2026

Multi-Site and Franchise Phone Systems in 2026

Multi-site telephony is rarely designed. It accumulates: each location opens, someone local sorts out a phone service, and five years later the organisation is paying eleven bills, running four different platforms, cannot tell you how.

The multi-site problem is not that the technology is hard, it is that the estate was never designed. Independently procured per-site systems produce duplicated cost, inconsistent caller experience, numbers registered to the wrong entities, and no network-level reporting. **One platform with site-scoped configuration fixes four things at once:** each location keeps its own local number and identity, calls can overflow between sites by time of day or queue depth, staff can be moved between sites without moving equipment, and you get per-site and consolidated reporting from the same source. **Design it around five decisions:** the inbound number strategy, the overflow rules, what a caller hears at each site, who administers what, and how emergency call addresses are maintained per location.

The short version

Stage	What happens	What it leaves behind
Site one	A phone system is chosen properly, with some thought.	A sensible baseline nobody writes down.
Site two	Opens under time pressure. Somebody local arranges a service because the fit-out is next week.	A second provider, a second bill, a second admin login nobody at head office has.
Sites three to six	Each repeats site two, with whatever was quickest locally.	Different handsets, different voicemail conventions, different greetings, four different definitions of "missed call".
An acquisition	A site arrives with its own system, its own numbers and a contract with eighteen months to run.	A platform nobody chose, numbers possibly registered to the former owner, and an exit date nobody has diarised.
A franchisee change	A site changes hands. The new operator sets up their own service.	A live advertised number still registered to the previous operator, the single most common serious problem in franchise estates.
Head office notices	Usually when a customer complains about being unable to reach a branch, or when someone tries to build a network report.	The realisation that there is no single source of truth, and no single place to change anything.

Also worth knowing

Element	How it works across sites
Sites as objects	Each location exists in the platform with its own numbers, users, devices, hours, greetings, queues and holidays. Change one without touching the others.
One dial plan	Extension ranges per site, and any extension can ring any other extension anywhere at no cost. A four-digit dial between Perth and Brisbane is an internal call.
Local identity, central capability	Each site presents its own local number outbound and answers its own local number inbound, while sharing queues, routing, recording and reporting with the whole network.
Delegated administration	A site manager can change their own hours, greetings and staff. They cannot change another site, and cannot change what the network has fixed.
Portable users	A person who covers three locations is one user with one identity. They log in wherever they are; calls follow them. No second handset, no second licence.
One set of reports	Per site, per region, and consolidated, from a single source with a single definition of every metric.

A quick way to size the second cost

For each site, take last month's inbound calls that rang out, went to voicemail with no message, or were abandoned in a queue. Add them up across the estate. Multiply by whatever proportion you believe were genuine enquiries, and then by your average transaction value. Most organisations doing this for the first time find the answer is larger than the entire annual telephony spend, which reframes the project from cost reduction to revenue recovery. Our note on the metrics that matter sets out how to count these consistently.

Questions the full guide answers

- [ ] Can one phone system run across multiple business locations?
- [ ] What does it actually cost a multi-site business to have separate phone systems?
- [ ] How do calls overflow between locations?
- [ ] What should a franchisor standardise and what should be left to franchisees?
- [ ] What happens to a franchise location's phone number when the site changes hands?
- [ ] How do you migrate several sites to a new phone system without a big cutover?
- [ ] How do emergency calls work when one phone system covers many locations?

This is the summary. The guide has the detail.

Every point above is worked through in full on our site, with the Australian context, the numbers and the exceptions. If you would rather talk it through, call **1300 881 662** or visit **unidenvoice.com/get-started**.