

Beware and prepare: weather the seasonal business threats

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In terms of maintaining productivity, the unpredictable British weather can be particularly challenging for many businesses.

Bad weather can test a company's infrastructure to breaking point, often wreaking havoc on corporate communications.

From broken phone lines to power cuts, a company's hardwired communication systems are uniquely vulnerable to outside events.

That's before considering the impact of heavy snow or storms on employee attendance, with the UK typically experiencing [33 snow days each year](#). The recent flooding across the UK has also given us all a reality check on our vulnerability.





Failure to prepare is to prepare to fail

During adverse weather, maintaining normal channels of communication between staff and with customers is absolutely essential for productivity and client relations, which can suffer greatly from downtime or disruption.

While your offices are being battered by storms and blizzards, customers elsewhere could be enjoying normal working conditions - and so could your competitors.

One week of particularly bad weather in 2013 was estimated to have cost the UK over **£318 million (and 51 million working hours) in lost productivity**, because business continuity plans hadn't been put in place.

This figure is sure to rise significantly for the winter of 2014 once the statistics are compiled. The **fear of losing IT or telecommunications** is the biggest concern among companies when it comes to potential threats and disruptions.



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Remote control

It is critical to have a robust phone system in place, allowing your business to maintain full productivity in the event of any unforeseen disruptions.

A solution is now available, in the form of remote or flexible working via cloud-based telephony.

Rather than relying on fixed phone lines, which can become damaged or disconnected by storms, a hosted phone system moves fixed and mobile telephony to the cloud.

With **pioneering hosted phone systems** eliminating the need for comms rooms, managed networks can keep your company operating at full efficiency, while less well-prepared competitors flounder in floodwater.

As the next generation of communications management, SIP can fully future-proof your company's telephony. **The advantages of these hosted phone system packages are numerous:**

- 1 It's cloud based, and therefore unaffected by weather conditions (no pun intended).**
- 2 Employees can access their phone services from anywhere, on any device.**
- 3 Complete flexibility and scalability.**
- 4 The simplicity of communications and software systems allows even technology-averse employees to easily navigate its dedicated web portal.**
- 5 Hosted phone systems are here long-term and can be cheaper and more reliable than legacy PBX systems.**



No place like home

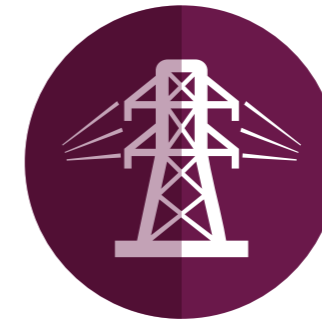
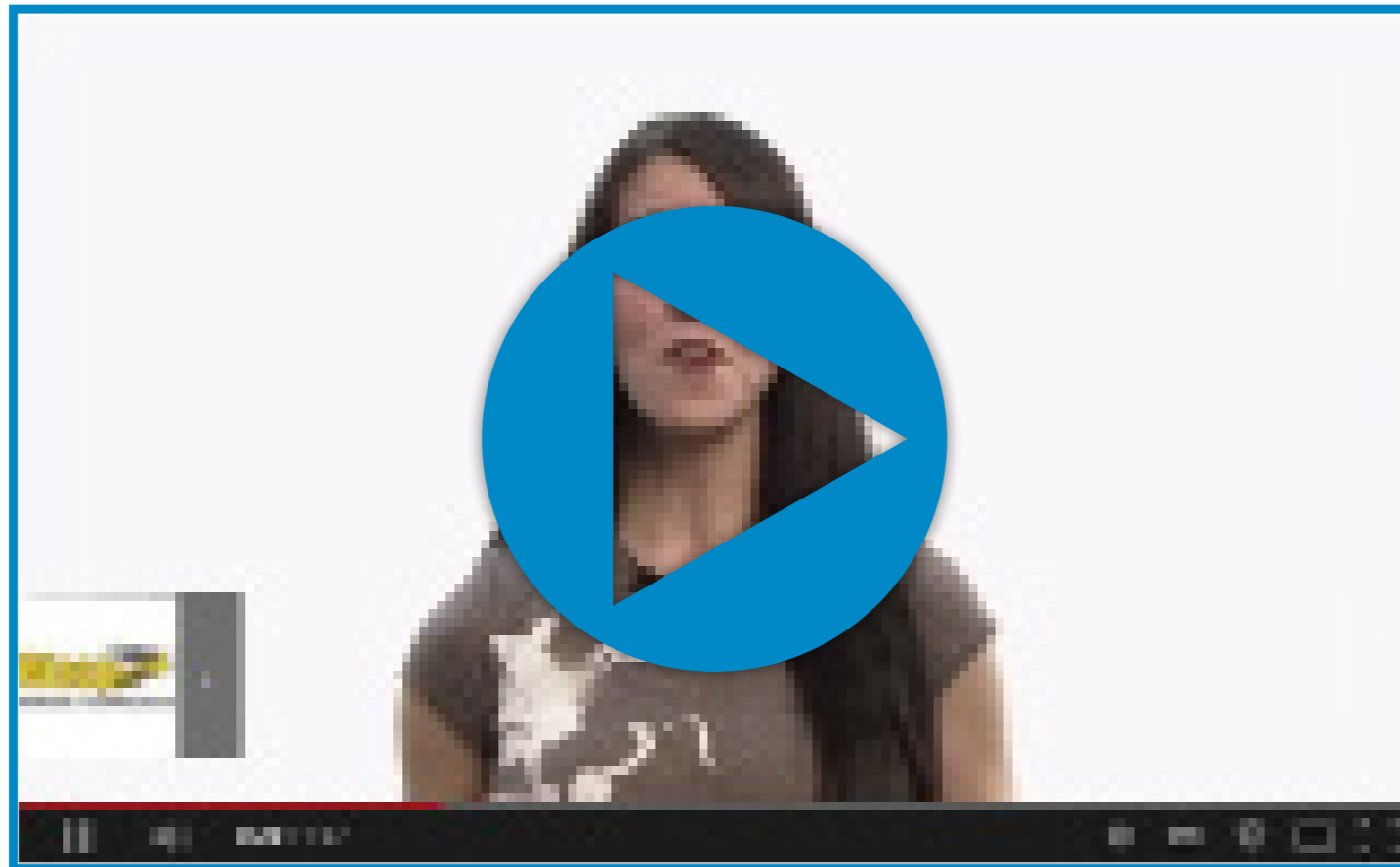
Letting staff work from home brings many advantages, but it's always better to plan for this eventuality in advance, [as this video explains](#). With the right infrastructure, your staff can be just as productive as they would be in the office and, more importantly, customers won't even notice the difference:

**Watch
video now**

1 Clients won't know that an employee is based at home, because their work phone number will appear the same, whether they're calling from Hertfordshire or the Highlands of Scotland.

2 Home-working frees up time for more productive activities that would otherwise have been spent commuting.

3 Administrators can configure and manage the system in real-time from wherever they happen to be working (or stranded), in response to changing demands.

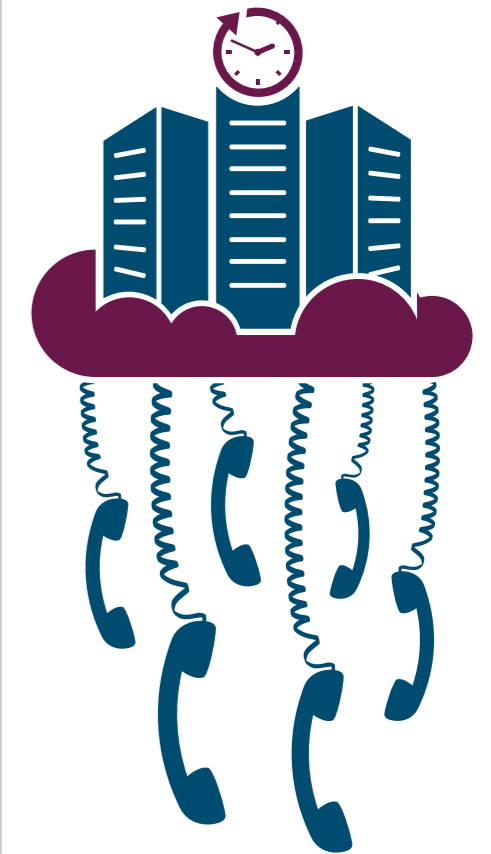


Continuity announcements

One sure-fire way to maximise business continuity is to appoint a unified communications specialist that can handle all aspects of your business phone systems.

A hosted phone system package minimises downtime because any problem will be resolved by one company, avoiding the nightmare scenario where line and network providers blame each other for a fault, rather than facilitating repairs.

The best unified communications providers will deliver flexible and responsive personal service around the clock, helping employees to familiarise themselves with the web portal interface of a hosted phone system.



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