



PRESS RELEASE

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Wireless voice solutions - which one is for you?

DECT CORDLESS PHONES STILL HOLD SWAY OVER WI-FI PHONES

It is easy to see how businesses of every industry can benefit from wireless office phones: they're great for improving customer service and productivity. Nobody wants to phone the local department store if they can never reach the hardware person. Not even the receptionist is exempt – to miss several calls while making a copy is just not good business.

But which wireless solution is the best for a particular company's voice needs? Bennie Langenhoven, general manager at Tellumat Telecoms, the telecommunications division in the Tellumat Group, says DECT cordless phones, whether analogue or IP-based, are still the obvious choice. Other technologies like Wi-Fi are receiving a lot of hype, but any decision to go with Wi-Fi phones comes with important considerations. "Wi-Fi will definitely come strongly into play as a voice solution within three to five years, but right now there are too many failed installations not to conclude that it is still an immature voice solution. The handover between base stations is far from perfect, handset battery life is still an issue, and the phones are not as rugged as a mobile phone ought to be".

He adds that a decision to go with Wi-Fi involves a conversion to a converged (Internet Protocol-based) voice and data network, which involves significant planning and cost. "One needs proper network design – in some cases a business may even have to replace a data server in order to cater for quality of service and voice prioritisation. It is not a simple or inexpensive decision."

DECT, on the other hand, is 100% reliable, and can be installed very quickly and easily, without disrupting the call handling equipment, he adds. "This is important to most modern businesses, which can live or die by their phone communications. DECT phones integrate easily with any legacy PBX. It also has 25-30% better obstacle penetration."

Langenhoven says only early adopters to whom voice communication is not mission-critical, and who can afford to take risks on the technology should consider adopting Wi-Fi. "Perhaps the best way to approach your future-proofing is to ready your network so long, but to use DECT phones until Wi-Fi's voice issues have been resolved."

Langenhoven lists a number of scenarios that can help companies decide how to implement their wireless voice solution. Buyers should ask themselves the following:

- **Do you have a legacy PBX or one based on Internet Protocol (IP)?** "If you have an IP PBX, design and implement the converged network so long, but use IP-based DECT phones," says Langenhoven.
- **Are you driven by handsets?** "Harsh working environments demand a rugged handset, and there are good rugged DECT handsets out there. Look out for other requirements, such as Icasa type approval," he says.



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- **Have you made a technology decision?** "If you want DECT or have a DECT infrastructure, pick the most appropriate solution based on the size of the location, the number of wireless users and the type of PBX. If you want to implement IP, keep in mind that DECT products can provide iP integration. If you want to use a wireless LAN for voice and data, a Wi-Fi solution is appropriate, but consider the risks associated with such a solution."
- **Have you already chosen a solution in line with your needs?** "Then your vendor should tell you which handsets, technology [Wi-Fi or DECT] and PBX go with your choice," Langenhoven says.
- **Are you in an industry with specific needs?** "Your industry may prove a deciding factor in your choice," says Langenhoven. "It is important to take its specific implications of your choice into consideration."

Bennie Langenhoven is the general manager for Tellumat Communications, the telecoms division in the Tellumat Group.