Your Guide for a
Seamless Telecom Upgrade

The 5 Stages of **Telecom Upgrade Project Management**

Upgrading to Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) is an intensive process that can include thousands of phone lines and take months or even years to complete. Good project management can help your organization achieve its goals when retiring a legacy phone system and upgrading to VoIP. By ensuring that you have the right internal and external resources in place before you begin, your team can complete the project in an efficient and timely manner.

Managing a telecom upgrade project is no easy feat, whether it takes place within a single office building or across an enterprise. The more organized you stay during the project, the faster the work can get done. Following the five steps of project management - initiating, planning, executing, monitoring, and closing - will ensure that everyone involved in the project is aligned and can contribute to the effort's success.
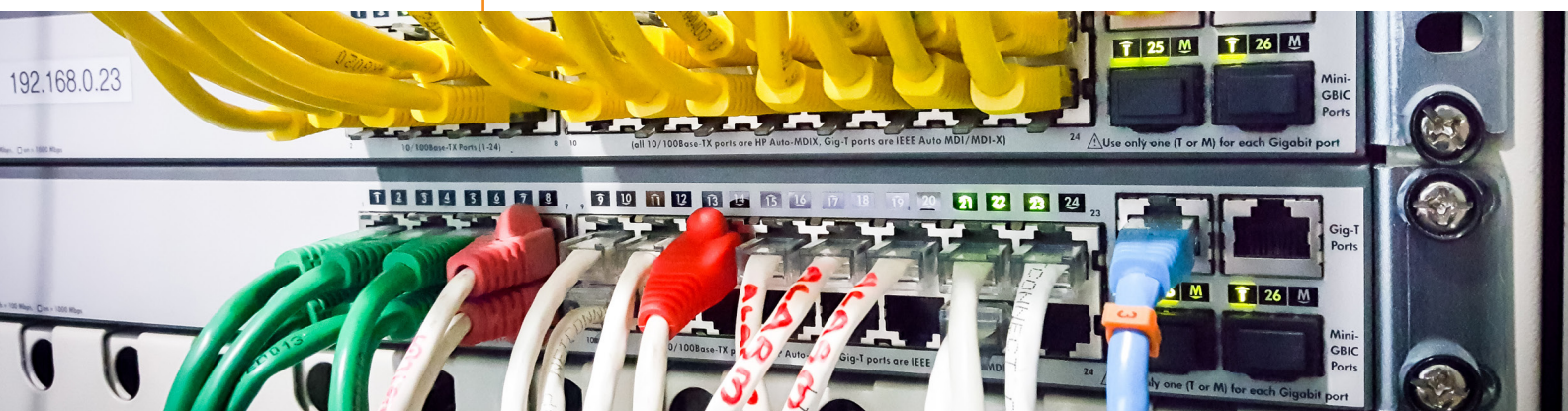
STAGE #1

INITIATING

Identify internal project managers and key stakeholders

A telecom upgrade takes time and careful consideration before, during, and after set-up is complete. As you begin your project, you'll need to take stock of the internal resources at your disposal. Assign a team within your organization to oversee the project from start to finish. Look to those in IT and/or project management functions to assist in this process.

Additionally, keep your organization's leadership team informed of the project's specifics. Ask them for input on project objectives and loop them in on any critical meetings that take place. Make sure that you receive feedback from executives on the projected timeline and migration priorities for the upgrade.

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Leverage effective meetings

A meeting is often the most effective way to determine project outcomes and keep everyone informed on the upgrade's progress. Determine the meeting's purpose, decide whom to invite, and develop a clear agenda with discussion topics and questions for stakeholders.

Meetings are most effective when they connect to the work involved in the project. Don't forget to follow up on any action items that are assigned to meeting participants, and agree to reconvene as those assignments are being fulfilled.

STAGE #2

PLANNING

Develop your project objectives

When you have the right team members on board for your project, you can begin to ask the right questions and create clear, comprehensive project goals and objectives. Questions to ask might include:

- Why is the project important?

- What problems will this upgrade solve?

- How will we measure success?

- Which deliverables do we expect upon the project's completion?

From there, your team can determine the goals and expected outcomes and develop benchmark measurements for the project's success. Most often, a telecom upgrade will take place in phases where groups of phone numbers are transitioned to the new system. Take the time to determine the project's ideal timeline, including key milestone dates to measure progress.

Present your project plan

Communicate those goals to both leadership and key stakeholders for early buy-in and support throughout the process. Then ensure you also communicate key updates, timing, and implications to the organization at large so that everyone understands the business improvements they can expect from the project. An organization's leaders often want to know the return on investment they will receive from a major technology upgrade, so don't be afraid to talk numbers.

STAGE
#3

EXECUTING

Collaborate with your deployment partner

Look into external resources, such as a dedicated VoIP deployment partner, to help you plan, execute, monitor, and complete your upgrade. A deployment partner can help your team oversee the project and is an essential asset during your telecom upgrade. Choose the right partner for your organization to shorten the project's timeline, reduce costs, and achieve your organization's goals.

An ideal deployment partner will assign a dedicated project manager to your team to give you ongoing support and a single point of contact. Make sure to share your project goals with this individual so that your organization and theirs are aligned around a common objective. A deployment partner can also participate in detailed project meetings with your team to clarify your needs and expectations.

Keep information and solutions organized

Every project is different. Businesses, universities, hospitals, and other organizations may have multiple buildings and require migrations for tens of thousands of phone lines. A large-scale migration includes several crucial steps, including unboxing, assembling, organizing, and labeling phones as well as patching cables in a facility. You'll need dedicated resources to help you manage the equipment, port numbers over, and handle other details as part of the upgrade. Many organizations do not have the resources available to dedicate to the project and also keep up with everyday work load. The right deployment partner can help you add team members as needed to ensure a successful project.

Project managers should have a clear understanding of an organization's infrastructure to ensure that everyone sees minimal interruption during the upgrade. Gather details such as the cable maps, office directories, and legacy PBX information, if available, so that you have data ready to share with business partners assisting with the upgrade.

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STAGE #4

MONITORING

Track your project status

All projects require some form of tracking to ensure that they are progressing as they should. However, it's easy to lose spreadsheets and other important documents in email threads. Therefore, the data should be easy to find and access anytime, anywhere.

Make sure that everyone involved knows where to go to receive updates and key information. An easy-to-access, web-based project management tool can provide real-time status reports and updates. A deployment partner can offer such solutions to help keep the entire project team organized and on the same page.

Perform progress and risk assessment

No project will ever be completed without a few surprises along the way. Are there any missed milestones? Have any key stakeholders left the organization? Is the service provider causing any delays in the project? These are questions to ask as you work through any setbacks that come up. Have a mitigation plan in place to help keep the project on track.

STAGE #5

CLOSING

Provide training and support

VoIP is a user-friendly alternative to traditional phone systems, but employees will still need information on the new system's features and benefits. Your organization will need training solutions that can reach multiple departments within a set timeframe. A deployment partner can develop comprehensive documentation and deliver customized training for all user levels within your organization to ensure the transition is a smooth process.

Measure the project's success

You've finished your VoIP upgrade. Now it's time to show your organization's leaders the true impact of the project. Review call data, perform A/B tests, and send out surveys across the organization to gather information. Your deployment partner can assist in a thorough evaluation. With this analysis, you can see adoption across the organization and determine future needs.

With more than 40 years of experience in the telecommunications industry and an accomplished history of helping small, medium, and large complex organizations get organized with their VoIP system, Convergent helps you upgrade your telecom system in less time, on budget, and with a fraction of the stress.

Learn how Convergent can save you time and money on your upcoming telecom install.
Contact us today.

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