

### ***Five Factors to Consider for Migrating from On-Premises PBX Hardware to Cloud-Based PBX Platforms***

June 2022

Many companies face important decisions about how to continue to support their vital phone services, many of which are powered by on-premises PBX hardware systems. At the same time, many businesses face significant costs related to their hardware-based PBX, resulting in delayed PBX upgrades or replacements. Unwilling or unable to bear the cost of unexpected capital expenditure, companies settle for aging phone systems that lack the capabilities and flexibility to support an increasingly distributed workforce and rapidly changing business needs. As a result, IT leaders and PBX system administrators worry that they are one aging hardware component away from a complete failure of their company's communications infrastructure.

However, migrating away from a hardware-based PBX system involves more than just replacing a phone system. Migration from on-premises PBX solutions can also be a decision by your organization to invest in improving both the customer and employee experience. Cloud-based PBX systems can provide a complete integrated collaboration solution that addresses challenges many companies are facing, including:

- **Distributed workforce**: The pandemic created a new reality for companies that requires complete flexibility to support remote and hybrid work with reliable communications.
- **Changes to how we work**: Employees are finding that they need to be able to communicate and collaborate in new ways with the ability to transition seamlessly between chat, calling, video meetings, and sharing instantly.
- **Business agility**: Many businesses scale more rapidly with employees, partners, and customers, which requires a new flexible infrastructure that adapts to their communication and collaboration needs.

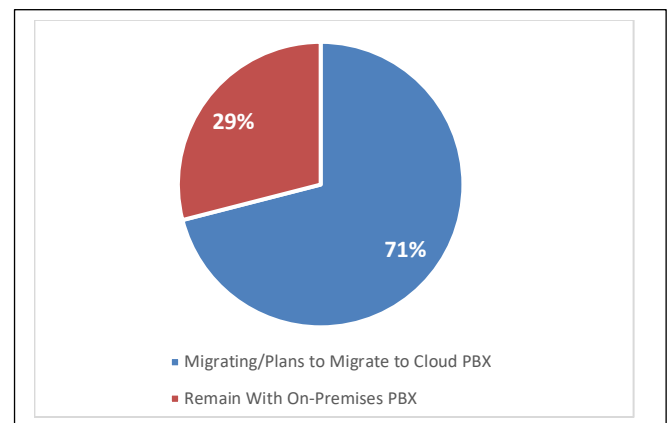
To help determine when and how moving from an on-premises-based PBX system to a cloud-based PBX is suitable for an organization, Apprize360 conducted a primary research study by interviewing IT and IT communications decision-makers from organizations that currently use on-premises PBX hardware systems, such as Avaya or Mitel. The research study collected data to answer two core questions:

1. **Migration decision factors**: For organizations with on-premises PBX systems, what considerations should they use to determine if migrating to a cloud-based PBX is suitable for their organization?
2. **Vendor selection criteria**: What factors should organizations use to select a specific cloud-based PBX vendor?

The interviews focused on the participating organizations' current and emerging calling and collaboration requirements, current challenges experienced with on-premises PBX systems, and specific factors companies use to justify a migration to a cloud-based PBX platform.

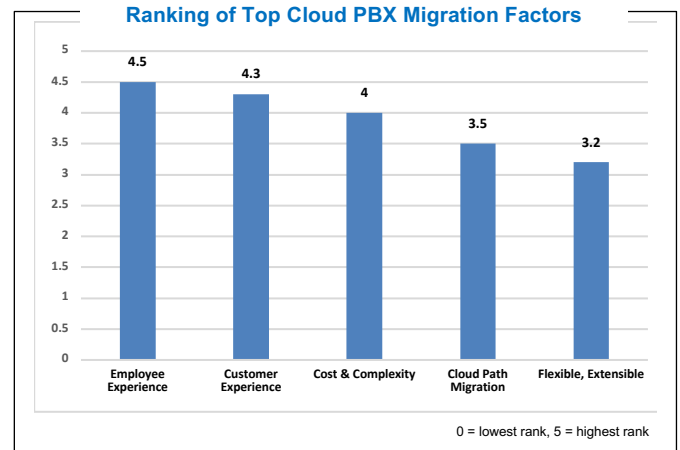
Apprize360 discovered that 71% of companies interviewed had migrated or were planning to migrate to a cloud-based PBX. Of the 29% not migrating to a cloud-based PBX, the top reasons were:

1. Low digital maturity/low collaboration experience needs.
2. No operational expense budget to support migration.
3. IT/IT Communications staff unfamiliar with cloud-based PBX systems.



Of the 71% of companies that had recently migrated to a cloud-based PBX or were actively considering migration, five common drivers were associated with the migration decision. In order of importance, these were:

1. Improving the employee experience: Organizations are experiencing limitations and technical challenges in creating a seamless workforce communication experience with their PBX.
2. Upgrading the customer experience: Organizations are experiencing limitations and poor caller and customer experiences because of limitations with their PBX.
3. Cost and complexity of managing and maintaining on-premises PBX hardware: Organizations encounter significant management and maintenance issues with their on-premises PBX.
4. Cloud migration path: Current PBX vendors, such as Avaya and Mitel, do not offer a clear migration path to a best-in-class cloud-based PBX.
5. Flexible, extensible solution: Organizations need a communications solution that integrates with their business applications and workflows and provides insights into communication tool utilization and performance.



## Part 1: Factors to Consider When Migrating to a Cloud-Based PBX System

If your organization is considering the opportunities or experiencing one or more of the challenges outlined above, you may want to consider evaluating a migration to a cloud-based PBX platform. Based on our primary research, you may want to incorporate the following factors into your migration plan criteria:

1. **Employee experience**: *Is your PBX meeting your workforce's modern communication and collaboration needs? Can your Avaya or Mitel PBX meet the needs of a distributed workforce that requires an integrated communication and collaboration experience?*

PBX administrators reported that the number-one reason for their organization migrating or actively planning to migrate to a cloud PBX was limitations that impacted the employee experience. An overwhelming 75% of those interviewed in this study reported that the pandemic created new communication and collaboration needs for the workforce to support “work-from-home” requirements. In March 2020, all employees of a national staffing firm were sent home to work for the next two years. According to the company’s Head of IT:

*“We had some employees who worked from home in a very rural area where cellular phone coverage was very weak. They wanted to be able to transfer their phones to a softphone on their computers, which was not an easy process to do and required an IT admin to support. The pandemic's remote work factors made us realize that our on-premises PBX hardware could not support many different calling and communication configurations. We needed something more flexible.”*



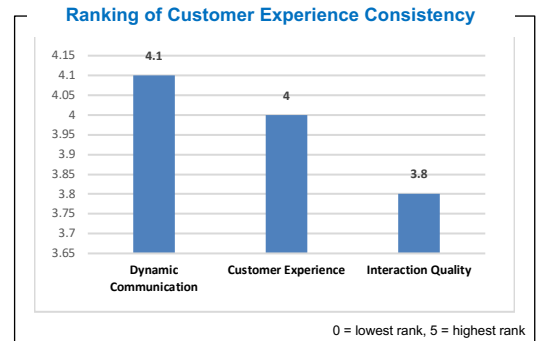
Interviews with research participants revealed four significant factors that impacted companies’ needs to migrate to a cloud-based PBX platform:

- Limited support for a distributed workforce: Limited scalable method and flexibility to support the needs of a remote workforce, such as dynamic call routing to different mobile devices and applications.
- Need for an integrated employee experience for communication and collaboration: The ability for employees to convert calls quickly and efficiently to audio and video conferencing and sharing.
- Optimization for meeting experiences: The ability of the platform to automatically optimize the quality and effectiveness of virtual meetings.
- Real-time collaboration: Flexibility to support the transition to multiple real-time communication and collaboration capabilities for audio, video, webinars, file sharing, and messaging.

2. **Customer experience:** *Does your on-premises PBX provide a scalable, dynamic communication and collaboration experience for callers and customers? Does the PBX support escalating a call to a different collaboration experience based on the customer's needs?*

Ensuring that the employee communication experience is seamless is critical to ensuring maximum productivity. In addition, making sure the customer communication experience is optimized is equally important. The decision-makers we interviewed highlighted the following three factors as core to influencing their decision to migrate to a cloud-based PBX:

- **High-quality customer interaction:** Ability to seamlessly transition from an audio call to audio conferencing, video conferencing, and sharing.
- **Maintain a consistent customer experience:** Ability to see detailed reporting on user insights, performance analytics, and operational metrics to ensure a consistent, quality customer experience.
- **Dynamic communication:** Ability for a caller or customer to reach an employee faster through receiving a notification alert more quickly and routing to an employee's preferred device.



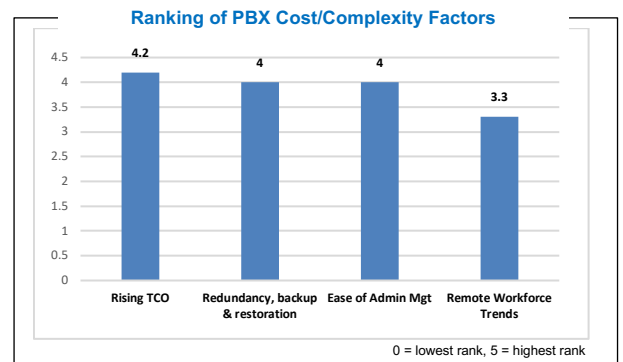
3. **Cost and complexity of on-premises PBX management and maintenance:** *Does the PBX require ongoing upgrades, maintenance, and management? How easy is it to add new users and new numbers? Is it easy to create user routing logic and transfer calls to multiple devices?*

Many IT managers told Apprize360 that managing and maintaining legacy on-premises PBX systems was challenging. For example, according to one IT director from a legal services firm:

*“The company wanted us to work from home during the pandemic, but I could not remotely connect with our Avaya PBX effectively and had to go in once or twice a week to deal with PBX changes, upgrades, and maintenance.”*

Research participants indicated that there were four factors within this category that were critical considerations for migrating to a cloud-based PBX:

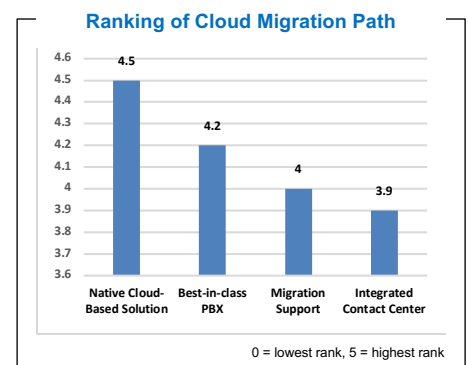
- **Rising total cost of ownership:** Cost of adding and changing phones for new numbers and employees, the rising cost and availability of T1 phone lines, and the high cost of PBX hardware upgrades and maintenance.
- **Redundancy, backup, and restoration:** Requires hardware to handle failover, storage, backup, and recovery.
- **Ease of administrative management:** Difficult for PBX admins to manage the PBX system remotely with user management and troubleshoot PBX issues.
- **Remote and digital workforce trends:** Acknowledgement that many businesses and their employees are handling more virtual meetings and calls over video conferencing applications, reducing the demand and traffic across on-premises PBX hardware.



4. **Cloud migration path:** *Does the current PBX vendor offer a robust native cloud PBX solution and a seamless migration path from their on-premises PBX to the cloud?*

Many IT decision-makers reported concern that their on-premises PBX vendors—Avaya and Mitel in this survey—failed to provide a direct and seamless migration path to a viable cloud PBX solution. For example, one IT manager for a U.S. manufacturing company told Apprize360:

*“When I asked Avaya about how we could move to a cloud-based PBX, I was told they would try and make their contact center solution—Avaya OneCloud—work for us. But we would need to add on another cloud solution called Avaya Spaces, their collaboration platform for messaging, calling, video, and sharing. They said that, at a minimum, we would need to bring in a partner for the migration and the integration between these two solutions. It seemed more difficult than the hardware we were currently dealing with.”*



According to another study interviewee, an IT specialist from a mid-sized U.S. engineering firm, Mitel's PBX vendor offered a response that was even more vague.

*"I asked about migrating from our Mitel PBX hardware to something in the cloud. Our Mitel account executive came back to me with a referral to RingCentral and a partner that could host a Mitel PBX box in a private cloud environment. However, it just did not appear to be an appropriate solution."*

Interviewees highlighted four factors that were critical considerations for migrating to their selected vendor's cloud-based PBX solution:

- **Native cloud-based PBX solution:** An identifiable, native vendor solution that was not part of a third-party partner solution or required custom setup and deployment.
- **Best-in-class PBX features:** A native, cloud-based PBX solution that supports modern, integrated communication and collaboration capabilities.
- **Migration support:** Support for migration without having to coordinate between multiple vendors.
- **Single vendor for cloud contact center and PBX:** A single platform that can be used as a cloud-based PBX and for contact center calling operations.

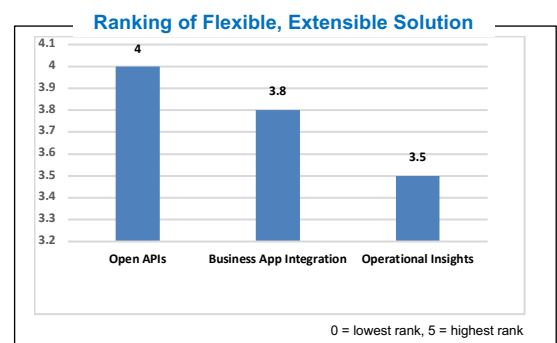
**5. Support for a flexible, extensible solution:** *Can the vendor support the emerging communication requirements of the organization and unknown future needs? Is the solution extensible to support broad integration with multiple communication and business applications?*

Interviewed decision-makers reported that any solution they would migrate to required the flexibility and extensibility to accommodate future communication needs. For example, according to a network engineer from a financial services company:

*"Communication and collaboration are a significant portion of our digital transformation strategy. We wanted to improve the productivity of our communication platform and improve the experience for all those who interact with it."*

Interviewees highlighted these critical factors for migration to a complete solution that contributed to ensuring a flexible and extensible solution:

- **Business app integration:** Supporting pre-built workflow integration between their communication platform and 3<sup>rd</sup> party business apps, MS 365, Google Workspaces, box, etc.
- **Open APIs and SDKs:** Open platform with APIs, SDKs, and widgets for bi-directional integration with any applications that may be in use and required by individual businesses.
- **Insights into operational performance:** Out-of-the-box dashboards and reports with operational insights, such as the number of calls, meetings, and traffic, can report on calling and meeting performance.



## Part 2: Cloud-Based PBX System Vendor Consideration

The second part of the study focused on the cloud-based PBX vendors that the organizations selected or considered. Apprize360 inquired about organizations' plans to migrate from on-premises PBX systems, such as Avaya and Mitel, to a cloud-based solution, such as Webex Calling. For organizations indicating their planned migration to Webex Calling, Apprize360 asked interviewees to rank Webex Calling versus the incumbent vendor's cloud-based PBX (including Avaya or Mitel). Ratings were conducted using a five-point scale indicating the strength that respondents assigned to each solution. Finally, Apprize360 analyzed all the interviews, ratings, and rankings and aligned those findings with the five original cloud PBX migration factors.

1. **Employee experience:** Based on the interviews with decision-makers, Webex has been able to better create and maintain an integrated communication and collaboration experience for the workforce. Specific findings that drove Webex’s leadership ranking in this category include:

- Completely integrated communications experience: Interviewees reported that the Webex suite enabled a more seamless messaging and collaboration experience. Interviewees highlighted the ability to chat to others 1:1 or 1:many, share content, ideas, and files via direct and team messages, and instantly elevate a call to an interactive meeting.
- “Always on” collaboration: The Webex app supports continuous collaboration before and after meetings, chat messaging, two-way whiteboarding, file sharing, and personalized communication workspaces.
- Multi-line support: The ability to set up multiple lines to easily manage personal calls and those in a shared workgroup helps employees and managers simplify call tracking and expenditures.
- Remote work optimization: Webex supports features such as background noise removal, low-light performance, and superior video quality.

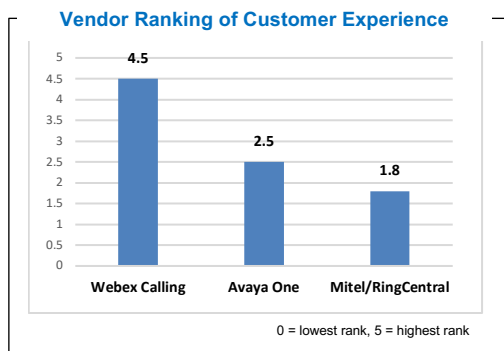


2. **Customer experience:** Webex scored the highest in ensuring seamless caller and customer experience. Interviewees defined a “seamless caller experience” as providing high-performing audio and video quality and the ability to collaborate and support customers across the communication channel of their choosing or one that best meets their needs. Functionality from current PBX vendor solutions was reported as “very basic,” including one user of Avaya PBX that was trialing the Avaya OneCloud solution. A PBX administrator of a large multi-national financial services company told Apprize360:

*“Trialing the Avaya OneCloud solution, basic things were missing. For example, we could not convert a regular call into a conference call. We needed at least the basics, which is why we are considering Webex.”*

Other capabilities interviewees highlighted as the reason for selecting Webex included:

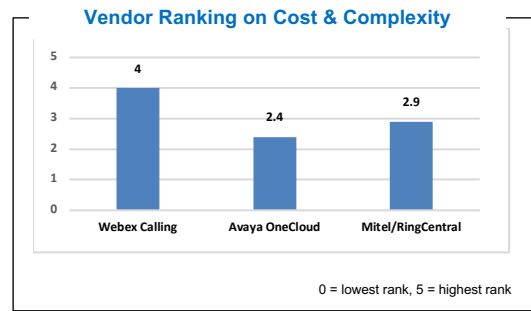
- Customer experience management: Ability to use the Webex Control Hub to manage the customer experience through detailed analytics and the ability to troubleshoot performance issues. Users highlighted the Webex Control Hub real-time analytics for meetings, messaging, devices, and calling, with key performance indicators such as audio and video quality and a total number of events, calls, messaging, and video sessions. Analytics allowed admins to quickly gain meaningful insights, such as average daily active users, the total number of active workspaces, and total daily meetings, to better plan for the future
- Fully featured cloud PBX: Interviewees wanted to ensure they selected a cloud PBX with all the necessary features they could grow into. *“Another disadvantage we discovered during our Avaya OneCloud trial was that it lacked options to share files with the customer, which sometimes is very necessary to fulfill some tasks,”* the PBX administrator of a large multi-national financial services company told Apprize360. Webex has advanced capabilities, including call pickup, call pull, and call transfer, just to name a few.
- High-performance platform: According to the IT director of a law firm trialing Avaya OneCloud, *“Performance and quality of calls became an issue during our trial. Frequently, users would get disconnected whenever we tried to make a call transfer. But the more frequent issue was the slow performance of the application. It processed calls very slowly, and the audio quality was scratchy.”*



3. **Cost and complexity:** Research participants noted that costs and management complexity were significant factors in their desire to migrate from on-premises PBX to a cloud-based PBX. Participants were consistent in their response that they did not want multiple platforms and management interfaces. Webex was also noted for built-in, solid Microsoft integration. In addition, Webex led interview rankings

when integrations were required with conferencing hardware, meeting room equipment, and office telephony devices. Other advantages research participants pointed out with Webex included:

- **Single hub for user and admin management:** Webex Console Hub is a single dashboard that manages the entire Webex experience for users, guests, and customers. Customers report that Console Hub reduces the complexity of user and experience management.
- **Single native solution:** Webex is a single solution that allows for a complete integrated experience without needing to “stitch together” multiple products.
- **Redundancy, backup, and restoration:** Webex is a true SaaS-based solution with worldwide support for redundancy, storage, backup and restoration, and compliance.

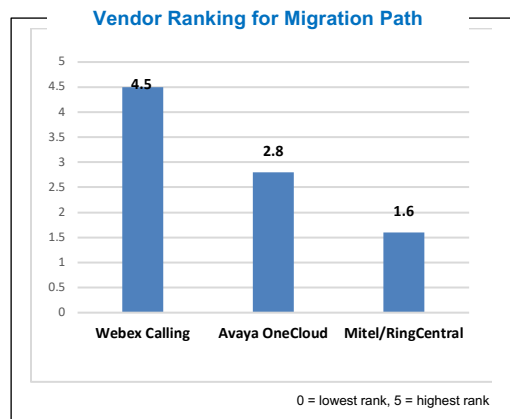


4. **Cloud migration path:** Research participants reported that their organizations require a clear migration path with minimal related cost, complexity, added services costs, and a clear understanding of the solution providers involved. Specific Webex advantages that were reported include:

- **Single, native solution:** Webex provides an extensive help center with robust access to support documentation and real-time support via live chat, phone, and email. Webex can also provide rapid on-site support with its extensive network of local partners. One Mitel customer, an ICT manager from a large non-profit organization, noted:

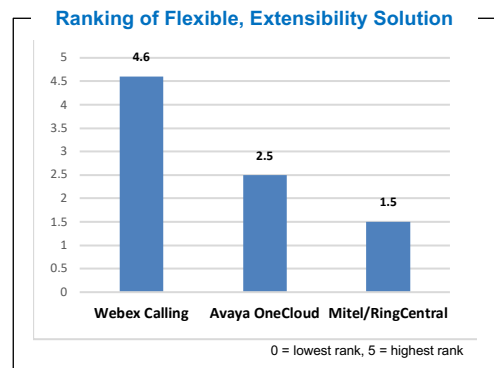
*“When we inquired about moving from our Mitel PBX to a cloud-based solution, our account executive brought in a sales rep from RingCentral. However, we were not clear on who owned what and which company would be the central point of contact. We really wanted to be able to move to a single, native platform.”*

- **Native customer support and success:** Webex offers native customer success and technical support through precise documentation plus live one-on-one support and voice and chatbots as the first line of defense, offering customers round-the-clock access and support. AI-powered virtual agents manage routine questions and problems quickly, leaving only the more complex issues for live agents to resolve.
- **Seamless move to Webex Calling:** Webex offers clear documentation and customer support to move from an on-premises PBX solution to Webex Calling. Webex also provides unique features to support the migration, including a Bulk Administration Tool (BAT) to export users from a third-party PBX into Webex.



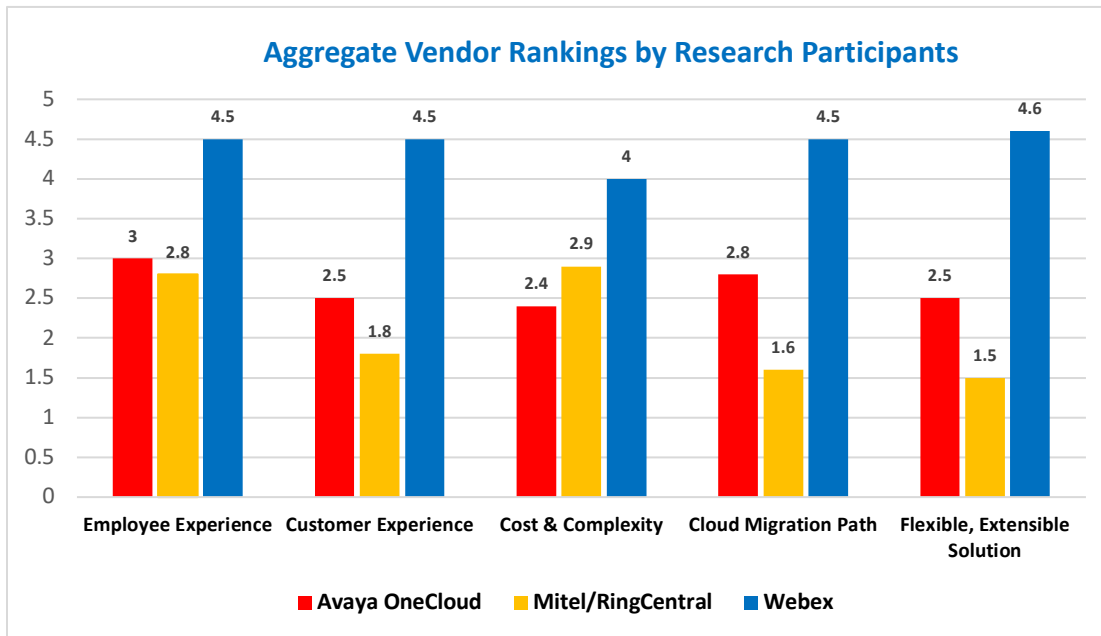
5. **Flexible, extensible solution:** Webex was noted as the top solution with the most platform flexibility and extensibility to support future communication needs. Webex users that had migrated from on-premises PBX systems reported that three capabilities that contributed to Webex’s ranking as a leader in this decision criteria:

- **Business app integration:** Webex supports multiple embedded applications, such as MS 365, Google Workspaces and more specialized user engagement applications such as Slido. There are dozens of other pre-built integrations for business applications that support a broad range of both productivity and user experience needs.
- **Open APIs and SDKs:** Webex supports an open platform with APIs, SDKs, and widgets for bi-directional integration with custom or more specialized applications to meet specific customer requirements
- **Insights into operational performance:** Webex offers deep insights into platform operations, performance insights, support for troubleshooting, and behavioral insights into meeting utilization. Webex users highlighted the Webex Control Hub as especially effective in helping organizations better understand internal communication trends and needs that otherwise may be overlooked.



## Conclusion

Webex addresses all five cloud PBX migration criteria and delivers a complete, high-performance, integrated communication and collaboration platform for organizations ready to migrate from an Avaya or Mitel IP PBX on-premises platform. As you can see from the graph below, the decision-makers interviewed consistently ranked Webex as the leader across all five criteria.





The graph above shows composite vendor scores based on the research participants' detailed evaluation and ranking. The rankings use a five-point scale, with five as the highest ranking.




























Appendix A displays how the interviewed decision-makers ranked all vendors based on specific features and capabilities.

## Appendix A

Apprize360 interviewed buyers and decision-makers of enterprise collaboration platforms to better assess specific feature and functionality rankings to understand buying criteria, vendor perceptions, and specific evaluation of vendor capabilities. The following table contains a comparative assessment of vendor-specific capabilities based on interviews with buyers and decision-makers. Each interviewee was asked to rank and rate vendor features based on their experience with each platform. Interviews took place from March 15, 2022, through April 15, 2022.

### LEGEND

 Fully Present	 Moderate Functionality (~75%)	 Partial Functionality (~50%)	 Minor Functionality (~25%)	 Feature Absent (0%)
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Categories of Assessment	Cisco Webex	Avaya	Mitel
	Webex Calling	PBX	PBX
<b>Seamless Workforce Experience</b>			
<b>Complete Workforce Experience</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrated solution for video meetings, calling, messaging, &amp; collaboration</li> <li>Remote work optimization</li> </ul>			
<b>Integrated collaboration</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chat messaging, two-way whiteboarding, file sharing, &amp; personalized workspaces</li> <li>Accommodates one-on-one, small group, &amp; large audience meetings</li> </ul>			
<b>Native Audio Calling</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Native audio calling through VOIP and PTSN</li> </ul>			
<b>High-Quality Customer Experience</b>			
<b>Quality of Service</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proven high performance and quality for audio and video collaborations</li> <li>Dynamic communication to reach customer service resources faster &amp; more accurately</li> </ul>			
<b>Customer Experience Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Optimized guest experience through detailed insights on performance, user behavior, &amp; quality of service</li> <li>Support for real-time troubleshooting &amp; key performance indicators</li> </ul>			
<b>Fully Featured PBX Platform in the Cloud</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete, powerful Cloud-Based PBX with enterprise features &amp; options</li> </ul>			
<b>Cost &amp; Complexity</b>			
<b>Single Cloud PBX Platform</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Single platform to manage the experience for users, guests, &amp; customers</li> </ul>			
<b>Cloud-Based Architecture</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scalable cloud architecture with supported data residency business and regulatory requirements</li> </ul>			
<b>Integrated Enterprise Backup, Storage, &amp; Recovery</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SaaS-based solution with worldwide support for redundancy, storage, backup &amp; restoration, and compliance.</li> </ul>			

Categories of Assessment	Cisco Webex	Avaya	Mitel
	Webex Calling	PBX	PBX
<b>Seamless Migration Path</b>			
<b>Native Cloud PBX Solution</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cloud-Based PBX that is owned &amp; managed by the vendor (not a partner solution)</li> </ul>			
<b>Migration Support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documentation and Support services to ensure successful migration from an on-premises PBX to a cloud-based PBX solution</li> <li>Bulk migration tool to export users from a 3<sup>rd</sup> party PBX.</li> </ul>			
<b>Flexible, Extensible Experience</b>			
<b>Bi-directional Software and Application Integrations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integration with office productivity platforms, such as Google Workspace and Office 365, as well as with popular SaaS platforms</li> <li>Open APIs and SDKs</li> </ul>			
<b>Enterprise Security</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DLP policies for employees and guests</li> <li>Federated identity management with configurable guest security</li> </ul>			
<b>Insights, Analytics, and Reporting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insights into operational, performance, and user metrics</li> <li>Analysis of daily and time-based performance KPIs (daily active users, meetings, performance/quality KPIs)</li> </ul>			

**Note:** This assessment was based on interviews with current customers of each solution and was not a statistically significant quantitative study. The opinions, vendor rankings, and reported solution strengths and weaknesses can change without notice based upon newly released vendor features, improved functionality, and additional customer perceptions. This report was commissioned by Webex. Decisions on selecting any software platform should incorporate your own research and your company's specific needs into the evaluation and vendor selection criteria.