TAYLORED Advisor

INTEGRATING COMMUNICATIONS
FOR A MULTI-LOCATION BUSINESS

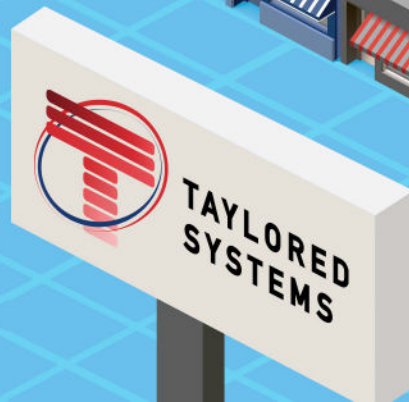TAYLORED SYSTEMS

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INTRO

THE GOOD NEWS? BUSINESS IS BOOMING! For years, you've worked hard to turn your company from industry outsider to well-known regional contender. And it's finally paid off. You have more business than you can handle through your single location. You're tired of turning away customers because you lack the staff, inventory or space. It's time to open a second location.

So what's the bad news? Establishing a new branch office or location introduces all kinds of wrinkles into your business operations. Not only do you have to do the work of scouting a location and hiring for new positions, you've also got to make sure that you don't do anything to damage the reputation you've worked so hard to establish!

Expansion like this takes a lot of finesse and adaptability. Obviously, you need to ensure that you have the capital — and that market forecasts are on your side. But you'll also have to put in the energy to reshape your culture, management and communications strategies. You'll have to adjust your thinking from the linear hierarchy of a single-site office to a connected network of independent — yet unified — branches.

Obviously, that takes a lot more effort than simply installing some new tech. But without robust collaborative tools, communication between branches can seriously suffer. The opening of a new location offers an ideal opportunity to update your networks, IT infrastructure and communications systems. In fact, opting for modern phone systems and communications tools may actually help you save money in the long term — and ensure that your team makes the transition smoothly. The distance between your two sites has never been shorter!
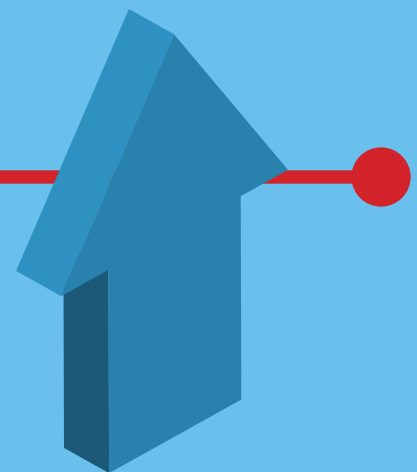
TAKE YOUR COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS EVERYWHERE YOU NEED TO GO

Modern businesses have several communications options to diminish distances between locations.

WHETHER YOU RUN A SMALL FLEET of yoga studios or a specialty printing operation, you probably don't do it all from your desk. Mobility is the key to modernizing your business communications systems — how else are you going to catch up with a branch manager while jetting to a client presentation?

But aging equipment and systems can significantly set you back. For instance, if your team is setting appointments across locations with a PBX phone system or trying to demo products to clients using an external video conferencing system, they're juggling a lot more than they need to be. Meanwhile, your bottom line — and information security — could be feeling the strain as well.

The True Costs of Aging Equipment

LOST PRODUCTIVITY

Because communication systems are not unified, your team has to waste time checking multiple voicemail systems, setting up conferences and bouncing between instant messaging applications.

LESS FLUID CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

It's not a crime to give a customer the number of a second location. But without the ability to transfer them directly, you're taking a gamble. Will they call a second time, or will they give up and buy the product from a competitor?

MONEY AND TIME MAINTAINING SERVERS

Whether you realize it or not, older on-premise phone systems could be costing you money — and causing plenty of headaches in between. On-premise phone systems mean the responsibility of maintaining and replacing servers falls squarely on your shoulders, and that can really add up!

INFORMATION SECURITY

Don't make the mistake of thinking your status as a small business exempts you from the threat of cyber attackers. The **latest research** shows that small businesses make up somewhere around half of all hacking victims. The reason? Hackers target businesses like yours specifically because the IT security equipment and protocols in place pale in comparison to those of large businesses. If you're managing servers yourself, you may not benefitting from top-tier security practices.

NO MOBILITY

Chances are, you don't run your empire from your desk. Older phone systems silo communications into mobile or desk phones, rather than connecting your lines.

VoIP Versus PBX

IT DOESN'T ALWAYS PAY TO INVEST in the latest tech (just ask anyone who bought a laserdisc player). But upgrading your private branch exchange (PBX) phone system to a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) system is a move that's stood the test of time. Because VoIP phone systems rely on internet gateways for connection, they save businesses on long-distance and international charges. Additionally, once you introduce a unified communications (UC) system, unique preferences for each phone can be managed through an online platform.

Ultimately, most businesses that switch find that it's ultimately saved them money and time, such as:

90%
DROP IN COSTS FOR INTERNATIONAL CALLS
(Source)

40%
DROP IN COSTS FOR LOCAL CALLS
(Source)

And when businesses chose to integrate VoIP with unified communications, the savings were even more dramatic:

SAVES WORKERS AN ESTIMATED

40 MINUTES

A DAY IN LOST PRODUCTIVITY
(Source)

What's the Big Deal with Unified Communications?

HERE'S WHERE THE REALLY POWERFUL PART of VoIP comes in. Replacing a legacy phone system with VoIP allows you to integrate a UC solution at the same time: an integrated platform to manage not just voice and telephony, but also audio, video and web conferencing, instant messaging and more.

Video conferencing and chat are nothing new, and your team probably manages just fine using external applications to handle these functions. So why adopt a whole new system for something you already have? Why fix something that isn't broken?

Adding unified communications isn't necessarily about giving your team access to a new range of functionality. It's about streamlining communications and thereby reducing duplicated efforts and improving business efficiency. For instance, with UC software installed on your office devices, your team can:

- **RECEIVE CALLS TO THEIR DESK PHONE USING A MOBILE**

- **RECEIVE TEXT VERSIONS OF VOICEMAILS IN THEIR EMAIL INBOX**

- **INITIATE WEB CONFERENCES DIRECTLY FROM CHAT**

- **TAKE CALLS ON THEIR DESKTOP COMPUTER, LAPTOP OR EVEN AT HOME**

- **CHAT TO COWORKERS OR CLIENTS FROM A MOBILE DEVICE OR SMARTPHONE**

- **HOST A WEBINAR AND ALLOW ATTENDANTS TO PING THEM WITH QUESTIONS OVER CHAT AT THE SAME TIME**

- **ANSWER CALLS IN A LATER TIME ZONE AFTER THE MAIN BRANCH HAS CLOSED**

In short, you'll be giving your team the gift of flexibility.

Some Reasons Your Team Can't Seem to Get Anything Done

LOST PRODUCTIVITY

Employees spend **over a quarter of every work day** answering emails, and they check their email about **36 times an hour**. Integrating communications allows them to address questions and direct conversations through a variety of channels, rather than discussing everything through email.

UNPRODUCTIVE MEETINGS

Employees spend between **35% and 50% of their work week** in meetings and an average of four hours a week prepping for status updates. Meanwhile, **57% of employees multitask** (read: don't pay attention) during phone meetings, while only 4% do so in video meetings. Moving phone calls to a video format can merit significant improvements in attendee concentration.

POOR VIDEO CONFERENCING SYSTEMS

Sure, your team can get more done with a brief video call than a long string of text messages. But when latency issues, jitter, or lack of bandwidth get in the way, **video quality can plummet**. And that means you're losing out on one of the most valuable ways to connect multiple office sites.

UNNECESSARY ADMINISTRATIVE WORK

Employees regularly spend significant time on tasks like transcribing client voicemails into emails or copying and pasting individual email addresses for the participants of a meeting into their video conferencing system. It may take just a few minutes each time, but it really adds up. By some estimates, managers spend an average of **two days per week** on this kind of manual

That's a whole lot of wasted potential. And just think, without an efficient, streamlined solution, all those lost hours are multiplied by every location you open and every new employee you hire.

Luckily, a lot of these problems can be addressed by proper communications management. Presence management through the Zultys UC platform (i.e., the "away from my desk" notifier) helps coworkers and team members understand why you might not be answering their texts or emails right away.

Other productivity vampires, like too-frequent meetings, may be corrected by company-wide initiatives to focus on efficiency. For instance, **Harvard Business Review** recommends that managers require agendas for all meetings their team members schedule. Additionally, the writers recommend that you request meeting notes for the ones you cannot attend — rather than holding an informal review with the host (a.k.a. attending another meeting).

Many teams have also gotten onboard with coworking via video chat. This solution can certainly be handled by your UC client, especially since employees will have the ability to hold side conversations via chat or check their voicemail for urgent messages using their laptop.

And perhaps most importantly, unified communications gives your employees the chance to communicate fluidly and seamlessly, even when team members are across the country or across the globe. A solution like this ensures that all team members are using the same tools and can be reached through a multitude of channels, depending on what makes the best sense at that given time. No more copying and pasting email addresses or teaching team members how to use yet another web conferencing system!
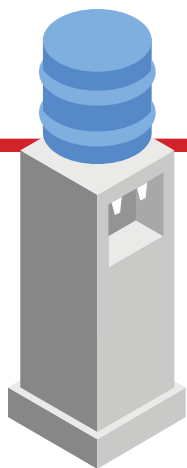
HOSTED VOICE: TAKE YOUR VOIP SYSTEM TO THE NEXT LEVEL

*Hosted voice converts on-premise VoIP systems to a modern cloud network.*

IF YOU'VE ALREADY UPDATED TO VOIP, you're no stranger to the benefits. But building a second location is a great time to begin thinking about updating all your equipment — not just your phones, but the connections and devices that power those systems, as well. Since VoIP works over an IP connection (one of the things that eliminates long-distance charges), it must be powered with a seperate server.

In the past, businesses were forced to host VoIP servers on-site, which could mean a costly equipment investment. Every new location meant a new server, installation and warranty package, plus the cost to monitor and maintain server performance and data security. In addition to server costs, between phones and software, each user station requires a **$400 to $1,000 investment** —a cost that increased exponentially when you open a new site.

And then there was the cost to maintain and upgrade equipment. Upgrades, maintenance, and server replacements all made the on-premise model pretty unsustainable for growing businesses.

Hosted Voice Is a Cloud-Based Solution for Your Communications Systems

THERE ARE FEW CERTAINTIES in the computing world, but one thing that seems likely to stick around for a while is cloud-based technologies. If you're anything like most offices, your team probably already uses the cloud to fulfill a huge range of functions, from storing documents to accessing the business bank statements. In fact, cloud-based applications and sites are so convenient, surveys show that businesses currently run about **79% of their workloads** in the cloud.
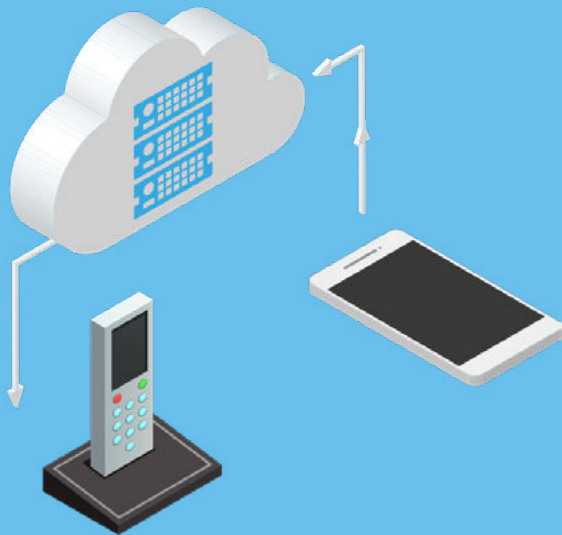
So what exactly does that have to do with your business phones? Hosted voice allows you to leverage all the benefits of cloud-hosted servers to manage your VoIP systems. Hosted voice systems are housed in a data center, just like a cloud server. That means that instead of maintaining a costly physical server (and staying up to date on the latest security practices), your team can enjoy all of the advantages of professional, large-scale data hosting and still get the latest-and-greatest phone systems and unified communications platforms.

Quick and Dirty Guide to Hosted Voice Benefits

VIRTUALIZATION MAKES IT EASY TO INITIATE A NEW SERVER FOR A SECOND LOCATION.

YOU'RE TYPICALLY NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR EQUIPMENT COSTS BEYOND PHYSICAL PHONES AND A NETWORK POE SWITCH.

IT'S EASY TO ADD BANDWIDTH OR MAKE OTHER CHANGES THAT CAN AFFECT THE QUALITY OF YOUR PHONE AND VIDEO SERVICE.

BECAUSE YOUR SERVER IS HOSTED AT A DATA CENTER, YOU'LL HAVE ACCESS TO TOP-TIER ROUTERS, WHICH CAN IMPACT SYSTEM SPEED.

DATA CENTERS ALSO TAKE PRECAUTIONS TO BUILD PROPER FIREWALLS AND INCLUDE THE LATEST SECURITY PROTOCOLS.

Are Hosted Phone Systems Worth the Price?

WE DON'T HAVE TO TELL YOU TWICE, that money talks — and when it does, it speaks loud and clear. For some small businesses, the thought of taking on yet another recurring payment just doesn't make financial sense, especially for something that's always been a one-time-only kind of arrangement. But remember: When you add maintenance packages, warranties and the cost to replace aging equipment or add new sites, the monthly cost of conventional phone systems can sometimes amortize to a comparable monthly rate.

You might also prefer traditional on-premise phone systems if you want complete control over the hardware you use, or if you'd like better insight into equipment vitals and reporting. In this case, it's best to keep someone on staff with some server experience — in fact, you may even want to hire an in-house IT team to handle equipment monitoring.

There are certainly cases where an on-premise VoIP system makes the best sense. Your IT provider should be able to run the numbers on each kind of system, rather than steering you toward one product or another. Get in touch with one of our representatives at Taylored today if you'd like to see how a new communications system fits into your business plan.
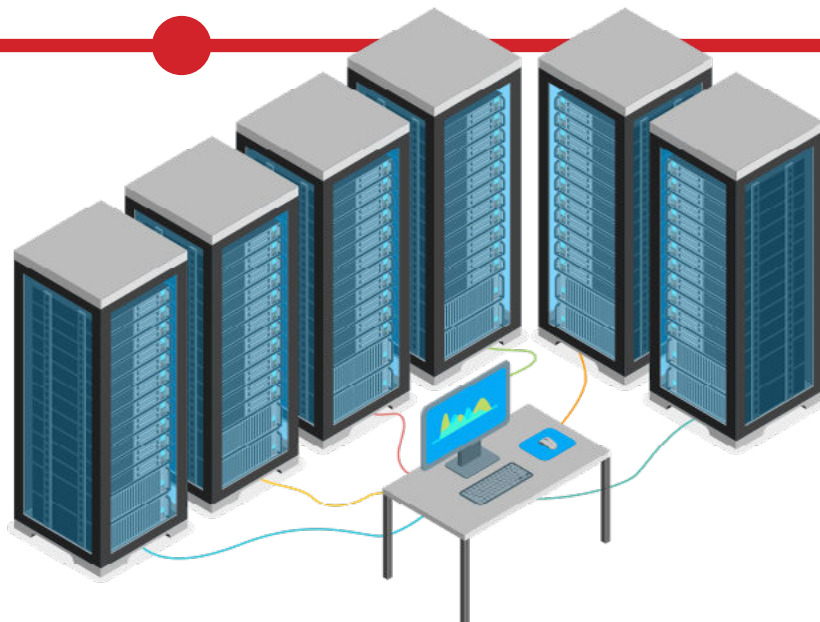
YOUR COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS ARE ONLY AS STRONG AS YOUR NETWORK:
WHAT YOU NEED FOR REMOTE COMMUNICATION

Busy phone and communication networks need quality infrastructure for high performance.

AS YOUR COMPANY GROWS, it's important to reassess your tools and equipment to see if they're still serving your needs. Many businesses that engage us to wire a second location find themselves in this boat: their routers and switches are old and outdated, they need new access points to handle the expected increase in web traffic, or perhaps their firewall and other security protections could use some adjustments.

Top 5 IT Upgrades for Growing Businesses

| MORE BANDWIDTH | BACKUP INTERNET ACCESS IN CASE THE PRIMARY NETWORK GOES DOWN | A BETTER FIREWALL AND ROUTER |

| CATEGORY 6 (OR BETTER) CABLING | UPGRADED WIRELESS ACCESS POINTS |

These upgrades are especially necessary if you're moving to VoIP from a PBX phone system or integrating unified communications for the first time. For many businesses, some spaces — like breakrooms — may contain the appropriate wiring to make VoIP possible there. We often recommend new category 6 cabling in these rooms. Additionally, for optimal video conferencing, it may be necessary to add bandwidth, increase wireless access points or install a better router in order to avoid frustrating interruptions during web-hosted meetings.

A Network Assessment: Your Gateway to a Better Communications Infrastructure

FOR THOSE CLIENTS READY to take the big plunge and adopt a new communications system for a second location, we often recommend a network assessment. During the assessment, a technician inspects the existing routers, switches, firewall and access points. From there, we can discuss the requirements for new building sites and see how a network upgrade could improve your level of service and streamline communications. We'll look at how new products stand to add to your team's efficiency and grow your business — for today, and with every successive location you add in the future.

We take relationships seriously at Taylored, so we want to review your business's unique challenges and special needs before we make device recommendations and start the design process. In other words, we don't view communications as a one-size-fits-all solution. We'll take into consideration your size and budget to help you decide which devices and designs work best for your individual situation. And we work directly with three different providers to offer products for a multitude of business network needs.

Looking to Improve Your Network? Here's What We Recommend

MEDIUM-TO-ENTERPRISE CUSTOMERS:
CISCO PRODUCTS

Cisco, the gold standard in network infrastructure, has been an industry juggernaut for years. Cisco offers a robust family of firewalls, routers and switches for growing businesses that project steady expansion over the next few years.

SMALL-TO-MEDIUM BUSINESSES
UBIQUITI

Ubiquiti's routers and wireless networks offer smooth performance so your team won't miss a beat. Its products are appropriate for established or more modest offices and teams.

SMALL-TO-MEDIUM BUSINESSES
PEPLINK

With companies like Google, Apple and Intel on their client roster, it's safe to say that Peplink offers some of the highest-quality networking equipment available. It's also easy to install and manage for busy SMBs.

WE'VE GOT THIS! HOW TAYLORED'S APPROACH MAKES LOCATION PLANNING EASIER

We do everything besides drawing up your business plan.

THERE'S NO REPLACEMENT for high-quality service. If you've been burned by IT providers before, you know that no amount of technological know-how or smooth sales jargon can ever take the place of an honest-to-goodness partnership.

At Taylored, we believe in quality over quantity. Instead of amassing the highest number of clients possible, we like to build long-term relationships with our customers. It's the same strategy we use with our employees, too. Our teams have all worked together for several years, fostering a smooth interaction that will serve your company well when it needs to make a change fast.

What Makes Taylored Different

- WE INVEST IN EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING TO ENSURE THAT TEAMS HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE TO MAKE INSTALLS AND RESOLVE ISSUES AS EFFICIENTLY AS POSSIBLE.

- UNLIKE SOME IT COMPANIES, OUR TEAMS WORK TOGETHER ON A CONSISTENT BASIS. THERE'S NO ADAPTING FOR DIFFERENT COMMUNICATION AND LEADERSHIP STYLES.

- WE WORK DIRECTLY WITH MANUFACTURERS TO PROVIDE PRODUCTS, SUPPORT AND PROGRAMMING. WE WON'T PUSH YOU OFF TO A PRODUCT PROVIDER FOR DEVICE SUPPORT.

- BECAUSE WE'RE INTIMATELY FAMILIAR WITH OUR CUSTOMERS' SYSTEMS AND NETWORKS, WE HAVE THE ABILITY TO MAKE CHANGES ALMOST INSTANTLY.

We've Got This! How Taylored's Approach Makes Location Planning Easier

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Taylored is No Fair-Weather Friend

WE RECOGNIZE that a business' technological needs can change quickly — sometimes even in the blink of an eye. And you need to be able to adapt services instantaneously in order to protect your business and keep customers cared for, even under extreme circumstances.

One of the most extreme examples of this came in 2017, when we helped clients wade through the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey. With hosted voice, we were able to reroute calls directed to Houston branches to other locations, preventing customer confusion and keeping operations proceeding as usual. The big lesson from those events? You never know what the future has in store for your business. Your second location — and your network — could wind up being the only thing that keeps it business as usual.
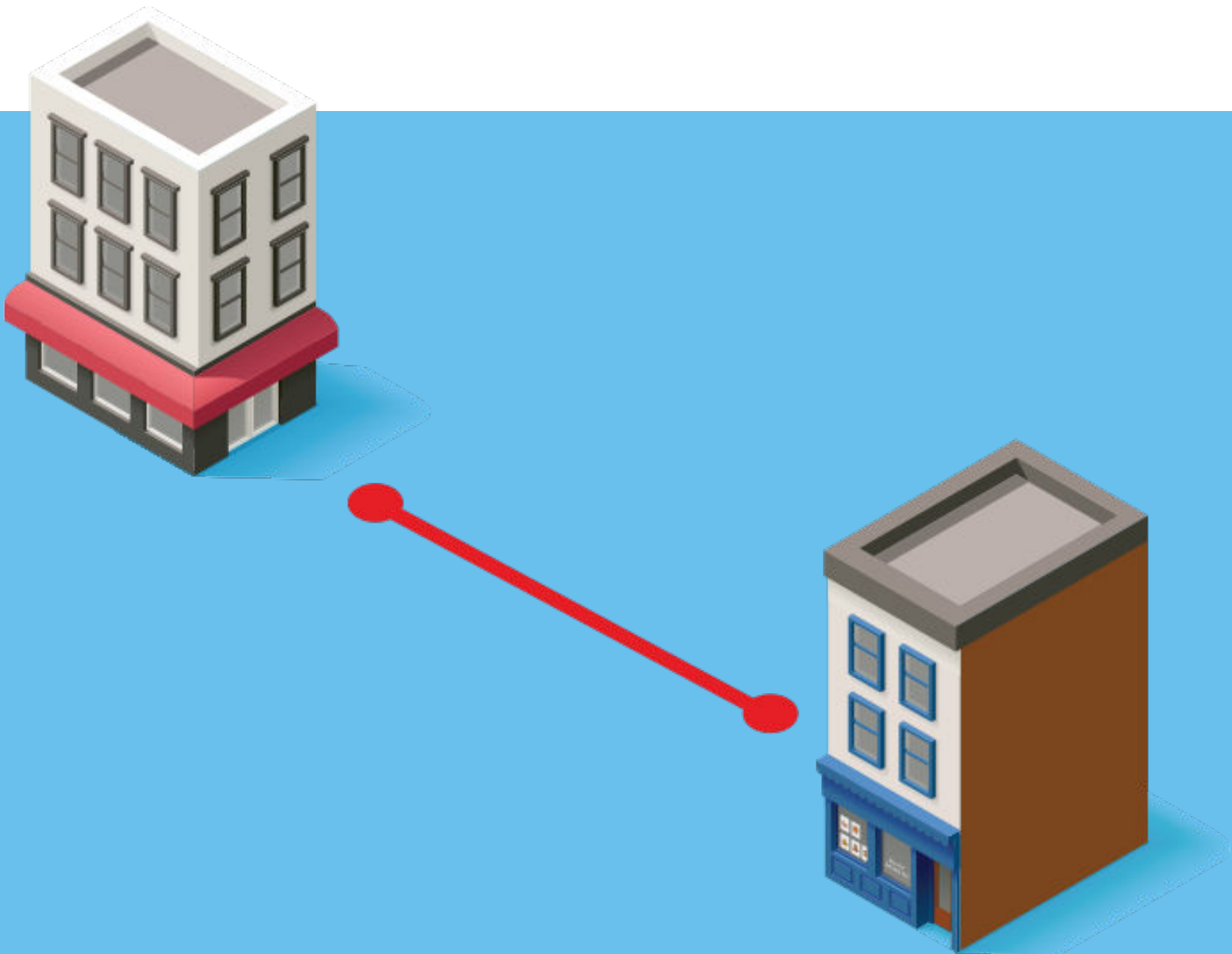
TAYLORED SYSTEMS: WHERE TECHNOLOGY POWERS BUSINESS

TAYLORED SYSTEMS is an all-in-one Indiana-based technology and IT-services company headquartered in Noblesville. We have a reputation for combining leading-edge technology with unparalleled customer support and have the honor of calling companies like NEC, Zultys, Cisco and Peplink our strategic partners.

Taylored Systems utilizes our manufacturers to ensure the highest-quality installation. By providing customized solutions and building long-term relationships, we've grown to currently serve more than 2,500 customers throughout Indiana and the Midwest.

A reliable and cost-effective communication system is critical to the success of business. That's why Taylored Systems is structured to provide a vast array of products and services custom-designed to meet the specific requirements of each client. At Taylored Systems, we're dedicated to delivering custom communication solutions that ensure maximum system performance and total customer satisfaction for years to come.

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