



Your mobile communications checklist

Key questions to make it easier to choose the right provider



Whether you are looking for a mobile communications provider, or looking to change the one you have, these **key questions to ask** – of them and/or yourself – can help you to make a better informed decision.

Questions to ask a prospective provider



Where are you?

Professionalism and continuity are important, so ask about staff skills, training and turnover. However, if you also like to share the craic when you share a problem, it's worth checking exactly where the customer care operation is based. Not all providers base theirs in Ireland. If sometimes you prefer a webchat to a real chat, are there self-care options available? Will you have a dedicated Account Manager when you need extra support?



What's included in your plan?

The basic tariff may look inexpensive, but do you have to pay extra for roaming, exceeding your data allowance, or disconnection/reconnection of mobiles? These additional costs can soon mount up. A more expensive but more comprehensive plan (e.g. with an unlimited data allowance) can actually save you money.



How good is your network coverage?

Your new provider's coverage should match or improve what you currently have. Always ask for the very latest information since networks are continually being upgraded and coverage improved.



Do you offer mobile broadband?

If you have remote workers in rural areas with no fixed-line fibre broadband, mobile broadband can free them from the tyranny of tethering, eliminate the dongle, and enable them to work with all the broadband benefits you would expect.



How long is the porting and deployment process?

Porting should take no more than one or two hours for one or two numbers, but more will take longer: perhaps up to a week. Ask about flexibility for batch porting rather than all at once, and whether there's on-site support for set-up, transferring contacts, setting-up your email and so on. Some providers will even send new SIMs or handsets to home addresses for greater convenience and a more seamless switchover.



How good are your bills?

Not how large or small, but how easy to understand? Are they available online? Are all accounts incorporated on one bill? Is there an online portal providing a complete breakdown and analysis of usage and costs?



What rewards do you offer?

Ask about rewards, deals and promotions when you're considering switching. Rewards shouldn't be your reason to switch; take everything else into consideration first, to be sure you've ticked all the boxes. Then a reward is just that: a reward. Though it can be a staff benefit too, if that's what you want.



Can I talk to your customers?

The best source of unbiased opinion is a current customer. If a provider isn't happy to share customer contact details, perhaps their customers aren't happy either.

Questions to ask yourself



Am I really ready to change provider?

If you are still in-contract, you may have to pay a fee for early termination. This may influence your decision, as switching provider later or when out-of-contract may lead to reduced, or no, termination fees. If you're still in contract, are you ready to pay to switch or would you rather wait?



Is price my only concern?

If the bottom line is your top priority, then clearly price will be the determining factor. However, if you are considering value rather than price, be sure to compare coverage and what is included in the plans (for example, unlimited data, or US and Canada roaming). A lower-priced plan may look attractive, but if the provider's network has less coverage it will be of less use to your business. If the lower price is in conjunction with lower data limits you could find yourself facing frequent "bill shock".



Am I frequently shocked by my monthly bill?

You could be paying for unexpected usage such as exceeding your data limit or international roaming. Plans with unlimited data roaming allowances and/ or the flexibility to choose add-ons for specific uses and periods (such as international business trips) will help you to avoid bill shock.



Where does my business do business?

If your business makes a lot of international calls or frequently sends staff on business trips abroad, call costs and data roaming charges could be adding a substantial amount to your monthly bill - unless they're included in your plan.



How important is the handset?

If your business has a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy, users may already have the latest handset. A new provider's contract could force them to give it up for something less up-to-date. Choose a provider offering a SIM-only contract for freedom to source phones elsewhere.



Is there important/ confidential information on our phones?

How big a problem would it be if an employee lost their phone or had it stolen? If you're concerned about loss of confidential data or business interruption, choose a provider offering Mobile Device Management and fast phone replacement.



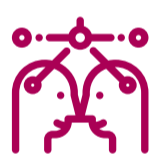
How much support do I want?

You have enough to think about without micromanaging every last aspect of your communications solution. Ask your potential provider about their managed services, such as WAN, LAN, Wi-Fi and Firewall.



How future-ready is my business?

Today's connectivity and communication is not only between people, but also between people and machines, or machines and machines. Or between anything with a sensor and anything with a SIM. Look for a provider who includes Internet of Things on the list of things they do to ensure your provider can meet your needs into the future.



Am I being subjective or objective?

Don't be swayed by misperceptions or base your decision on out-of-date information. Providers can and do change and improve (or get worse). Use only the latest facts and figures to inform your choice.



Do I want a provider or a partner too?

A provider taking a partnership approach won't see you as simply a cash cow. They will work with you to give you the best deal and service: regularly reviewing your usage and plans, for example, to help you save money. They'll also be ready, willing and able to scale their services as your business grows. Which with the right provider, it will.



How joined-up is my business?

Are your colleagues able to communicate seamlessly, at any time, from anywhere, on any device? If not, then your way of doing business is disjointed and more connected competitors may be able to pull it apart. Look for a provider offering Unified Communications solutions.



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