

Evaluating Hotel Phone Systems for Hospitality Operations

By ClearlyIP | Published January 24, 2025 | 40 min read



Top 5 Hospitality Phone System Providers in the US (2025)

Hospitality organizations rely on robust phone systems to deliver seamless guest service and operational efficiency. In hotels, the telephone system integrates with [property management systems \(PMS\)](#), handles guest requests (wake-up calls, room service hotlines, etc.), and supports staff communications across front desk, housekeeping, and security. This report evaluates five leading hotel phone system providers in the United States, focusing on their features, technical infrastructure, integration capabilities, and suitability for hospitality. We begin with a detailed examination of ClearlyIP – a newer entrant specializing in hospitality communications – followed by overviews of four established competitors (Mitel, NEC, Cisco, and Avaya). A comparison table and a discussion of emerging trends (cloud migration, mobile integration, AI-driven guest engagement) are included to provide context for IT managers and hotel executives making procurement decisions.

ClearlyIP: Specialized Hospitality Phone Solutions

ClearlyIP has carved a niche in hospitality communications with its **ComXchange** platform – a phone system purpose-built for hotels and resorts. ComXchange offers a full suite of hotel-centric features and tight integration with hospitality software. Developed specifically for the lodging industry, it “integrates with all major PMS systems and checks every box, from emergency notifications to wake-up calls to call accounting” [clearlyip.com](#). In other words, the system natively supports critical guest services (like automated wake-up calls, voicemail for guests, do-not-disturb, room status updates, and call billing), which are essential for hotel operations. ClearlyIP provides dedicated support and a nationwide network of trained resellers, ensuring that hospitality customers receive personalized service and industry-specific expertise [clearlyip.com](#).

ComXchange on-premise deployment architecture: the system integrates on-site with hotel Property Management Systems, supports IP phones for administrative/front-desk use and analog guestroom phones via high-density FXS gateways, and connects to SIP trunks or traditional lines for external calling.

Technical Infrastructure & Differentiators: A key differentiator of ClearlyIP’s solution is its flexibility in deployment. ComXchange can be deployed [on-premises](#), in the [cloud](#) (hosted by ClearlyIP), or as a hybrid solution [clearlyip.comclearlyip.com](#). On-premise installations give hotels local control and resilience (important for properties with unreliable internet), while the hosted option shifts hardware and maintenance to ClearlyIP’s cloud data centers [clearlyip.com](#). A hybrid approach combines on-site control for critical functions (like PMS connectivity and analog phone support) with cloud-based external calling – providing the best of both worlds for reliability and scalability [clearlyip.com](#). ComXchange’s architecture is **hardware-agnostic** and built on open standards, meaning it works with ClearlyIP’s own **CIP series IP phones** as well as other major brands of SIP phones and existing analog room phones [clearlyip.com](#). ClearlyIP offers high-density analog gateway appliances (24, 48, 72, or 96 ports) that allow hotels to

continue using legacy analog room handsets while the backend runs on [VoIP clearlyip.com](#). This preserves past investments and minimizes disruption during upgrades. The platform supports [SIP trunking](#) for cost-effective calling, but also interfaces with traditional T1/PRI or POTS lines for redundancy or compliance, reflecting a design mindful of real-world hotel needs [clearlyip.com](#).

Integration with PMS and Hotel Software: ClearlyIP's hospitality solution was designed to seamlessly integrate with hotel management systems. ComXchange uses secure methods (serial or IP interfaces) to connect with **all major PMS** (Property Management Systems), supporting industry-standard protocols like Oracle's **Opera OXI/FIAS**, Hilton's OnQ, Marriott's FSPMS, Agilysys, Springer-Miller, LightSpeed, and many others [clearlyip.comclearlyip.com](#). This enables automatic updates when guests check in or out – for example, updating guest name on the room phone display, activating voicemail, setting calling restrictions, and triggering wake-up call scheduling based on reservation data. ComXchange's tight PMS integration allows hotels to streamline workflows such as guest room status (e.g. housekeeping room-clean status) and minibar charges posting to bills, through its interface or through middleware if needed [clearlyip.comclearlyip.com](#). Beyond PMS, ClearlyIP also integrates with other hospitality tech: notably, it can tie into **in-room voice assistants** (like the *Angie* AI concierge devices) to let guests request services via voice command [clearlyip.com](#). The system's reporting and analytics module (*ComXchange Q-MetriX*) provides insights on call patterns and staff responsiveness, helping managers optimize service levels [clearlyip.com](#). ClearlyIP emphasizes compliance with emergency calling regulations in hospitality ([Kari's Law](#) for direct 911 dialing and [RAY BAUM'S Act](#) for dispatchable location information); ComXchange is built to meet these requirements, ensuring that emergency calls from any guest room include proper location info and that staff are notified immediately of 911 calls [clearlyip.comclearlyip.com](#).

Guest Service Features and User Experience: ComXchange was built to enhance the guest experience. It includes a suite of **guest service applications** accessible to staff via phone or web console – for example, a Front Desk console app to check guest details and set wake-up calls, and a Guest Wakeup Scheduler app that allows staff to schedule or verify wake-up calls directly from a desk phone [clearlyip.comclearlyip.com](#). When a guest calls the front desk, the system can automatically screen-pop the guest's name and room info for personalized service [clearlyip.com](#). The platform supports voice mailboxes for each room with easy reset on check-out, and can send voice messages or notifications to all guest rooms (useful for group wake-up calls or emergency announcements). For hotel staff, extension-to-extension dialing and group paging make internal coordination faster, and mobile softphone support means employees can use a smartphone app as their extension (useful for managers on the move or maintenance staff) [clearlyip.com](#). ClearlyIP's solution also supports modern unified communication features (instant messaging, fax-to-email, etc.), though its standout focus is on hospitality-specific functions. The **feature-rich** nature of ComXchange is repeatedly noted by users – it “checks every box” needed in a hotel phone system while remaining an **incredible value** alternative to legacy PBXs [clearlyip.com](#).

Support and Scalability: ClearlyIP backs its hospitality offerings with robust support options, often delivered via certified resellers/partners who specialize in hotel installations [clearlyip.com](#). This ensures hotels have access to 24/7 support and technicians familiar with the urgency of hospitality environments. The system is designed to scale from small boutique hotels up to large resorts. In a recent case study, a ClearlyIP partner deployed ComXchange in *hundreds of hotel properties*, and the results were “transformative... improved guest satisfaction and feature-rich communication options with a scalable infrastructure that can adapt to seasonal demand fluctuations” [clearlyip.com](#). The ability to easily add or remove lines and phones (especially in the cloud/hosted mode) means hotels can flexibly scale for busy seasons or expansion [clearlyip.com](#). **Reliability** is addressed through features like geographic redundancy in hosted deployments (multiple data centers ensure no single point of failure) [clearlyip.com](#) and high-availability options on-premise. In sum, ClearlyIP's ComXchange offers a modern, hospitality-focused phone system with strong integrations and flexibility, making it an attractive choice for hotels seeking to upgrade their communications without losing industry-specific functionality.

Mitel: A Mainstay in Hotel Communications

Mitel is often regarded as the gold standard in hospitality telephony, with decades of experience and a huge install base in hotels worldwide. In fact, Mitel has been “a mainstay for over 30 years” in the hotel industry and is *widely accepted by every chain*, offering solutions suitable for properties of all sizes [csmsouth.com](#). Mitel's portfolio (including the **MiVoice Business** PBX and related applications) comes with a comprehensive hospitality feature set and integration capabilities that have made it a preferred choice for many branded hotels. Mitel's systems are highly **scalable**, serving everything from small motels to mega-resorts – one reason a recent industry review named Mitel “best for scalability in various hotel sizes,” noting its flexible structure and broad feature set can cater to any hospitality establishment [thehotelgm.comthehotelgm.com](#).

Features and Integration: Mitel's hospitality solutions include traditional PBX functionality (call handling, voicemail, auto-attendant) combined with advanced unified communications and even contact center features. A standout is the **Mitel MiVoice** platform, a unified communications system that not only provides voice service but can integrate with a variety of hotel Property Management Systems out-of-the-box [thehotelgm.com](#). Mitel supports common PMS protocols (such as Micros-Fidelio/Opera FIAS interface, Hilton's proprietary protocol, etc.), enabling **automated guest services**: e.g. when a guest checks in, the PMS notifies the phone system to activate the room phone, set the guest name on the extension, and enable voicemail; upon check-out, phones can be automatically locked for outside dialing and voicemail cleared [mitel.comthehotelgm.com](#). Mitel also offers middleware and tools to integrate multiple PMS interfaces into one, which is useful for hotels using more than one system (for instance, a casino resort with gaming and lodging systems) [mitel.com](#). Beyond PMS, Mitel's solutions encompass **voice and data convergence** – many hotels use Mitel

to run not just phones, but also to interface with hotel Wi-Fi networks, DECT cordless phones, and even guest service applications. Mitel provides **contact center** modules (MiContact Center) tailored for hospitality, allowing hotels to manage guest inquiries across voice, chat, and SMS in a unified way mitel.com. This means a guest's request could come via phone call or text message and be tracked in one system, improving responsiveness.

Technical Infrastructure: Traditionally, Mitel systems have been provided as on-premises PBX servers (such as the MiVoice Business or older SX-200/3300 systems) installed at the hotel. These support both analog and IP phones, which is crucial since many hotels still use analog room phones – Mitel systems often come with interface cards or gateways to support dozens or hundreds of analog extensions alongside IP trunks. In recent years, Mitel has also embraced cloud and hosted models. Their **MiCloud** services (and partnerships with UCaaS providers) allow hotels to opt for a cloud-hosted PBX with hospitality features, eliminating on-site hardware while retaining integration capabilities csmsouth.com. Mitel's focus on hospitality is evident in features like emergency call alerts (staff get notified if 911 is dialed from a room), integrated **wake-up call systems**, voicemail systems that can cater to guests (with auto mailbox reset and multilingual prompts), and admin consoles for front-desk operators. These features are built into Mitel's software, reducing the need for third-party add-ons. One source highlights that *extensive support for different PMS systems* is a major pro of Mitel thehotelgm.com – indeed, Mitel's built-in PMS interface can speak multiple protocols and has decades of refinement. On the flip side, deploying a Mitel solution can be complex and typically requires certified technicians or partners, especially for chain-wide integrations or customizing features for a specific hotel brand's standards thehotelgm.com. Pricing for Mitel solutions is not published – it's generally provided via quote based on the size of the property and configuration (software licenses per user/room, hardware, etc.) thehotelgm.comthehotelgm.com. Many hotels consider the investment worthwhile given Mitel's reputation for reliability and the fact that it's an **approved/standard solution in many major hotel chains**.

Real-World Use and Service Quality: Mitel's impact on hospitality is illustrated by numerous case studies. For example, the Marriott Palm Beach Gardens hotel undertook a renovation that included replacing an 18-year-old phone system with Mitel's MiVoice Business. The new Mitel solution "featured the necessary functionalities and the capacity to integrate with the existing Marriott systems infrastructure seamlessly," and it was chosen for its ability to **grow and adapt** with the hotel's needs mitel.com. After deployment, the Marriott saw improved efficiency in guest service and easier administration (staff could even use modern wireless headsets integrated with the phone system to handle guest calls) mitel.com. This exemplifies Mitel's strength in **compatibility and future-proofing** – their systems often come with migration paths that let older hardware or phones be upgraded in stages mitel.com. Industry experts note that Mitel "offers a full suite of products for every size hotel," and virtually every major hotel chain has properties running Mitel systems csmsouth.com. Service quality is generally high – Mitel systems are known for robust uptime and voice quality. The company provides 24/7 support through its channel partners, which is critical for hotels that operate around the clock. In summary, Mitel remains a top competitor due to its deep hospitality feature set, strong integration, and proven track record of reliability and scalability in the hotel environment.

NEC: Comprehensive Hospitality Communication Solutions

NEC is another long-established player in hotel communications, particularly recognized for its **UNIVERGE** series of communications platforms used in hotels around the world. NEC's approach is to offer a *comprehensive suite* of hospitality solutions, covering guestroom phones, back-office communications, and even emerging technologies like IoT and facial recognition in some cases thehotelgm.comnec.com. An industry review ranked NEC as "best for offering comprehensive hospitality solutions," highlighting that from guest room management to staff coordination, "NEC has something for everyone" in the hotel sector thehotelgm.com. This wide-ranging approach is a key strength, as NEC can deliver voice, data, and even property management integrations as a one-stop shop.

Features and Capabilities: NEC's hotel communications systems (like the **UNIVERGE SV9300/SV9500** and the newer cloud-based **Univerge Blue** platform) provide all standard PBX functions plus a multitude of hospitality-specific features. These include interface support for **PMS integration**, guest voicemail with auto-clean on check-out, room-to-room dialing restrictions by class (to prevent, say, a guest in one room calling another if desired), and wake-up call management. NEC's solutions also embrace **unified communications** and mobility: staff can use NEC's mobile client apps or wireless handsets to stay connected, and even guests can have softphone capabilities if a hotel offers such a service. According to one analysis, NEC offers *voice and IP phone communications, unified messaging, and PMS integrations*, and even **softphone technology allowing smartphones or computers to function as hotel room phones** thehotelgm.com. This means a hotel could allow a guest to use their mobile device as an extension of the room phone system (with appropriate apps), or enable staff to take internal calls on their mobiles – a useful feature for large resorts. The NEC UNIVERGE platform supports voice, video, and web collaboration, which can be leveraged for conference centers in hotels or remote management by corporate offices thehotelgm.com.

NEC also provides add-ons like call accounting systems (to bill guest calls or track usage) and integrates with building management systems for things like maid status (housekeepers can dial a code on the room phone to mark a room as cleaned, which updates the PMS). Their **hospitality middleware** tools enable connection with multiple PMS vendors or cloud-based PMS, which is crucial as hotels move to newer property management solutions. A notable capability of NEC's newer offerings is the focus on **customization** – hotels can tailor the phone system behavior to their workflow, and NEC's platforms are known to be very configurable (though this can also increase complexity) thehotelgm.com.

Infrastructure and Deployment: Historically, NEC systems in hotels were often large **on-premises PBXs** (NEC's older NEAX or current SV series) that could handle thousands of extensions – indeed, some of the biggest casino hotels in Las Vegas have used NEC for its sheer capacity csmsouth.com. NEC can connect both analog and IP phones, similar to Mitel. For smaller hotels, NEC offers more compact systems (like the SL2100) which are cost-effective but still include basic hospitality features. Increasingly, NEC is promoting its cloud solution (Univerge Blue) which is a hosted UCaaS model where the hotel pays per user/extension per month, and the core is in the cloud. This can reduce on-site equipment and make upgrades easier. However, many hotels, especially those with complex integrations or that require tight on-site control, still opt for NEC's on-premise systems. **Scalability** is a strong suit – one can start with a few dozen extensions and scale up to tens of thousands on the high-end NEC platforms. That said, industry observations indicate NEC's market presence in hospitality has been somewhat segmented: NEC is very popular in certain niches such as *small boutique hotels and very large luxury resorts*, but has not been as uniformly adopted across mid-sized chain hotels compared to some competitors csmsouth.com. This is partly historical; some chains had preferred other vendors, and partly because NEC's solutions might require more customization, making them a great fit for unique properties (like a one-of-a-kind resort) or very cost-sensitive small properties, but sometimes “too complex for smaller operations” without IT staff thehotelgm.com.

Integration and Compatibility: NEC prides itself on a **comprehensive approach**, meaning it can provide everything from the phones on the nightstands to the servers in the back office. The systems integrate with virtually any PMS via either direct integration modules or via third-party middleware (NEC often partners with integration specialists for cloud PMS connectivity). NEC's own software suite can include things like workflow management, emergency notification, and even integrations to guests' mobile devices (for example, sending a text message to a guest when their room is ready or if they have a voicemail). In terms of **unified communications**, NEC's platform can unify voicemail, email, chat, etc., which can improve internal staff communication and guest response times. For instance, a voicemail left on a concierge's extension could be emailed to their smartphone, or a guest pressing “Concierge” on the phone could ring a group of attendants, including those on a mobile app. These kinds of features illustrate NEC's focus on leveraging modern UC for hospitality.

NEC does not generally publish pricing; like others, solutions are quoted based on size and configuration. Some sources note that NEC's highly customizable solutions might come with higher initial costs or longer implementation times thehotelgm.com. For smaller hotels with tight budgets, an NEC system might be overkill unless tailored packages are used – indeed, one integrator suggests they often propose NEC for hotels under 100 rooms that **don't require full PMS integration**, implying that NEC can be a cost-effective simple solution in those scenarios csmsouth.com. Meanwhile, for a huge hotel (e.g., a casino resort) with tens of thousands of endpoints, NEC is one of the few that can handle that scale on a single system.

Pros and Cons: To summarize, **pros** of NEC in hospitality include its extensive customization possibilities, strong emphasis on unified communications, and a wide range of hospitality-specific features (from guest-facing to back-end) thehotelgm.com. Many of the world's largest hotels have at some point deployed NEC due to its reliability at scale. **Cons** include the complexity that comes with such flexibility – implementing an NEC solution might require skilled technicians and careful planning, and smaller hotels might find it more than they need thehotelgm.com. Additionally, unless buying through authorized dealers, getting pricing or info can be less transparent (NEC tends to work through channel partners). Overall, NEC remains a top competitor thanks to its rich feature set and trusted performance, especially for hotels looking for an all-encompassing communication solution that can be fine-tuned to their operations.

Cisco: Enterprise-Grade UC with Hospitality Integrations via Partners

Cisco is a household name in enterprise networking and communications, and while not traditionally focused on hospitality-specific telephony, it has a presence in many hotels due to its reputation for quality and integration with network infrastructure. Cisco's primary communications platform for voice is the **Cisco Unified Communications Manager (CUCM)**, often deployed with Cisco IP phones, or its cloud-based Webex Calling service. Hotels that are heavily invested in Cisco's data networking gear (switches, routers, Wi-Fi) sometimes consider Cisco for telephony to have a unified infrastructure. Indeed, Cisco is frequently “asked about” by hotel IT teams because of its pervasive presence in networking csmsouth.com. However, Cisco “has never created a full-service VoIP telephone system *specifically* for the hotel/motel market” and out-of-the-box it lacks some of the niche hospitality features and integrations that specialized providers offer csmsouth.com. As a result, Cisco solutions in hotels are almost always paired with third-party hospitality software or middleware to fill in those gaps.

Core Offerings: Cisco's CUCM is a robust IP PBX/UC system used in many industries. In a hotel deployment, Cisco CUCM would handle call processing for front desk phones, admin offices, and could also be used for guest room phones (typically IP phones in higher-end hotels, or analog phones via Cisco analog gateways or adapters). Cisco's system excels at **call quality, security, and scalability** – it can support many thousands of phones and is known for strong security features (encryption, network security integration), which some hotels value for protecting guest data and calls. A recent ranking cited Cisco as a top choice “for robust security features” in a hotel phone context thehotelgm.com. Additionally, Cisco's telephony can integrate into a hotel's overall IT environment: for example, integrating with Cisco Meraki Wi-Fi (for hotspot calling or location-based services) and with Cisco's network management (so voice is part of the same monitoring as other systems). This holistic integration is attractive to

hotels aiming for *converged infrastructure*. Cisco's solutions support unified communications features like voicemail-to-email, mobile twinning (ringing a user's cell phone and desk phone simultaneously), and videoconferencing – which can be used for internal meetings or even events in conference centers.

Hospitality Feature Integration: Because Cisco's native software doesn't inherently "know" about hotel check-ins, room numbers, etc., specialized third-party solutions are used to bridge the gap. One popular approach is using middleware like **Percipia** or **Imagicle** with Cisco. For instance, Imagicle's hospitality suite can *"integrate your preferred Cisco platform with your hotel's PMS and provide staff and guests with a five-star experience, from check-in to check-out,"* enabling features like room phone activation, guest name display on phones, wake-up call scheduling, minibar posting, do-not-disturb controls, and more imagicle.com. Essentially, Imagicle or Percipia add the hospitality logic that CUCM alone lacks. Percipia's software similarly unlocks "automated wake-up calls, guest check-in/out, and housekeeping room status updates, all utilizing Cisco CUCM" percipia.com. With such integrations, a Cisco-based solution can function on par with a hospitality PBX – guests can receive personalized service (e.g., a call to room service identifies the guest by name and room), and staff can use specialized tools for managing guest requests. Cisco's voicemail system (Unity) even had a Hospitality integration package historically, allowing interface with PMS for guest voice mailbox management cisco.com.

From an **infrastructure** standpoint, Cisco solutions in hotels might involve a CUCM cluster (on-prem servers or a cloud instance) that connects via SIP trunks to the telephony network. If analog room phones are used, Cisco has analog telephone gateways (like VG series) or hotels use third-party analog adapters. Increasingly, some modern hotels using Cisco are opting to put IP phones in rooms (especially in new builds where Cat5/6 is wired to rooms). These IP phones could even be running on Power-over-Ethernet from the same switches that provide the room's internet, simplifying infrastructure. Cisco also has the advantage of offering a broad range of related technology – for example, **Cisco contact center solutions** for reservations or guest support call centers, and **Cisco emergency response** tools that can enhance 911 handling in hotels.

Strengths and Considerations: The strengths of choosing Cisco for hospitality lie in its enterprise-grade reliability and the benefit of integrating voice with the rest of the hotel's Cisco-powered IT environment. Cisco hardware is known to be durable and long-lasting csmsouth.com, and many IT managers appreciate a single-vendor approach for support. Moreover, Cisco's ecosystem (including Webex) means a hotel could leverage the phone system for staff collaboration or even offer conferencing services to guests. However, as noted, Cisco doesn't natively cater to all hospitality nuances. One telecom consultant bluntly states that Cisco's phone product mix "cannot compete on a feature or integration level with the dominant players" in hotel telephony when it comes to specialized functions csmsouth.com. Thus, the **total solution cost** for a Cisco-based hotel phone system must factor in the additional software (and support contracts for that software) to handle PMS integration, voicemail management for guests, etc. This can make Cisco solutions relatively pricey compared to some competitors, especially for smaller hotels – the hardware, licenses, and third-party add-ons may put it "above some of the other options on the market" in terms of price tech.cotech.co.

Another consideration is technical expertise: many hotel IT staff are not as familiar with Cisco telephony as they are with, say, Mitel or NEC which have been hospitality staples. This means hotels often rely on Cisco partners/integrators who understand both Cisco and hospitality to implement the solution correctly. On the bright side, Cisco's extensive partner network includes specialists who have developed templates and integrations for hotels. For example, **PrideVel** and other system integrators offer "Cisco-centric hospitality convergence solutions" that integrate with all hotel PMS and deliver typical guest services on Cisco platforms pridevel.com.

In summary, Cisco can absolutely serve a hotel's phone needs, particularly in large, tech-forward hotels or those aligning with Cisco for strategic IT reasons. Its solutions will be **high-quality and secure**, and with the right integrations, capable of all hospitality functions. Hotels like the idea of using Cisco for its longevity and the comfort of "one throat to choke" (one vendor for network and phones). Yet for a turnkey hospitality phone system, Cisco requires that extra mile of integration, which is why in pure hospitality market share it historically lagged behind specialized vendors csmsouth.com. Still, Cisco remains a significant competitor, especially as hotels modernize and consider cloud-based unified communication platforms that emphasize mobility and security – areas where Cisco's experience is strong.

Avaya: Legacy Leader Adapting to Modern Hospitality Needs

Avaya is a well-known name in enterprise telephony and has a long history in hospitality, tracing back to its AT&T/Lucent heritage. Many older hotels deployed Avaya PBX systems (like the Definity/Communication Manager or the smaller Avaya **IP Office**) for their proven reliability and rich feature set. Today, Avaya's portfolio for hospitality includes both on-premises solutions (Aura Communication Manager for large enterprises, IP Office for mid-market) and cloud or hybrid offerings under the **Avaya OneCloud** umbrella. Avaya has been used by numerous hotels and resorts; at one point Avaya claimed that a majority of the world's top hotel groups used Avaya technology for guest communications businesswire.com. Even if exact figures vary, there's no doubt Avaya has a large installed base in hotels, particularly in North America and Asia, and continues to be a competitor in new projects.

Hospitality Features and Integration: Avaya's Communication Manager (CM) is a high-capacity PBX that, when enabled with the **Hospitality package**, offers features like guest name display, check-in/check-out integration, automatic wake-up call scheduling, room status codes (housekeeping codes dialed from phones), and emergency call alerts. Avaya provides a **PMS Interface** software (often referred to as PMS-Link) that links Communication Manager with a hotel's PMS to exchange information in real time documentation.avaya.com. This allows, for example, the PMS to signal the PBX when a guest checks in, so the PBX updates the room phone's class of service and name. Avaya's voicemail systems can be configured for hospitality as well – each guest room can have a mailbox that is automatically activated and password-reset at check-in via the PMS link. However, it's worth noting that not all Avaya systems had every hospitality feature natively. The **Avaya IP Office**, which is aimed at smaller installations (and has been used in many limited-service hotels), required third-party adjuncts for full hospitality functionality. For instance, IP Office did not originally include built-in wake-up call or hospitality voicemail features, so solutions like **DuVoice** were often used as middleware to handle those tasks and integrate IP Office with PMS tek-tips.com. Avaya partners like Percipia also offer middleware to integrate Avaya systems (both CM and IP Office) with modern hotel applications, including guest mobile apps and in-room entertainment, thereby extending Avaya's capabilities in a hotel environment percipia.com.

In terms of features, Avaya's strength has been in **unified communications and contact center** – which some hotels leverage for their reservations centers or internal communications. An Avaya system can unify voice, chat, and even video; for example, Avaya's newer platforms allow integration of hotel staff smartphones (with Avaya softphone apps) and support advanced call routing (helpful if you have a central reservations office serving multiple properties). Avaya also introduced solutions for what it called the "Intelligent Hotel Room," integrating the phone system with IoT devices, smart TVs, and personal voice assistants, to personalize guest experiences cablinginstall.com. This indicates Avaya's awareness of trends like voice-activated services for guests (e.g., using an Alexa-like device or Avaya's voice AI to request hotel services).

Deployment and Pricing: Traditionally, Avaya systems in hotels were on-premises hardware (like the S8300/S8500 servers for CM, or IP500 chassis for IP Office). These required upfront capital investment and maintenance contracts. Avaya has since shifted focus to software and subscriptions – an Avaya PBX can now be delivered as a virtual machine or as a cloud service (Avaya OneCloud). In fact, Avaya even partnered with RingCentral to offer "Avaya Cloud Office" for small businesses, though that particular product is more generic and not specifically tuned for hospitality. For larger hotels, Avaya OneCloud UCaaS or CCaaS can be deployed, but many hospitality customers still opt for on-prem or hybrid due to integration needs with local systems (PMS, analog phones, etc.). Pricing for Avaya solutions is typically **quote-based**; license costs depend on the number of extensions, and additional fees for hospitality integration software may apply. Avaya does not generally publish price lists for hospitality, but as a guideline, the cost is in line with other enterprise systems – competitive for large deployments, though perhaps not as cost-efficient for very small properties compared to cloud PBXs.

Real-World Example and Strengths: A case study highlighting Avaya's role in hospitality is the *Old Mill* luxury hotel in Toronto. The Old Mill had an aging PBX and decided to upgrade to Avaya **IP Office** as "a more flexible, scalable, and cloud-based alternative" to meet modern demands uctoday.com. The Avaya solution was quickly deployed and integrated with the hotel's existing accounting and PMS software – the integration was smooth because IP Office could easily tie into those systems, which underscores Avaya's integration capability in practice uctoday.com. Moreover, IP Office supported a hybrid of analog and digital lines, allowing the hotel to gradually replace old phones and avoid a flash-cut, while also reducing maintenance costs going forward uctoday.com. This example demonstrates Avaya's **agility and backward-compatibility** – an Avaya system can often be introduced without ripping out every legacy component all at once, thanks to support for analog, digital (TDM), and IP endpoints in one system.

Avaya's **voice quality and reliability** have generally been rated highly; these systems are built on decades of telecom expertise. Many hotels that installed Avaya in the 1990s and 2000s found them to be workhorses that rarely went down (some are only now being replaced after 20+ years). Avaya also excels in **call center applications**, which is relevant if a hotel or chain uses the phone system for a reservations center or a guest service center handling calls for multiple hotels. Avaya's contact center (Avaya Aura Contact Center or Avaya Experience Platform) can integrate with hospitality CRMs and loyalty databases to provide personalized service to callers, which can be a differentiator for high-end hotels.

One challenge Avaya has faced is the financial struggles and changes the company has gone through (Chapter 11 reorganizations in recent years). This caused some uncertainty among customers. However, the core products continue to be supported and developed, and Avaya has signaled a commitment to cloud and AI enhancements. For example, Avaya is incorporating more AI-driven features (like virtual agents and conversational IVR) which hotels could use for guest inquiries and bookings in the future aiello.aideluisio.com.

Summary: Avaya remains a top provider for hospitality phone systems by virtue of its **robust feature set and installed base**. Its systems deliver all essential hotel features (often through a mix of native capabilities and partner integrations) and are known for reliability and excellent audio quality. Avaya solutions can be scaled from a small boutique hotel using IP Office, up to a global chain using Avaya Aura across multiple properties. The need for third-party integration is diminishing as Avaya builds more features in (especially in Communication Manager), but it still exists for some deployments. Hotels choosing Avaya typically do so because they trust the brand's legacy, appreciate the powerful unified communication options, or have existing Avaya infrastructure to leverage. With new cloud offerings and AI integrations, Avaya is adapting its historically PBX-centric approach to meet modern hospitality needs, making it a continued strong competitor in this space.

Feature Comparison of Top Hospitality Phone Systems

To help compare these providers, the table below summarizes key features and characteristics relevant to hotel deployments:

FEATURE / CAPABILITY	CLEARLYIP (COMXCHANGE)	MITEL	NEC	CISCO	AVAYA
Hospitality Focus	Built exclusively for hospitality with specialized features clearlyip.com .	Hospitality-specialized modules (30+ years in hotels) csmsouth.com .	Comprehensive hospitality suite, part of broader portfolio thehotelgm.com .	General UC platform, needs add-ons for hospitality csmsouth.com .	Long history in hospitality, with specific hotel feature packs documentation.avaya.com .
PMS Integration	Native support for all major PMS (Opera, Hilton, Marriott, etc.) clearlyip.com .	Native PMS interface (FIAS, etc.) for common hotel systems thehotelgm.com .	Native PMS integration; supports multiple PMS vendors via middleware thehotelgm.com .	Requires third-party middleware (Percipia, Imagicle) for PMS link imagicle.com .	Native PMS link in Comm Manager; IP Office via third-party (DuVoice) documentation.avaya.com/tek-tips.com .
Guest Services Features	Wake-up calls, voicemail, room status, guest name on phone – all built-in clearlyip.com .	Full hospitality feature set (check-in/out, wake-up, minibar posting, etc.) built-in.	Full feature set (check-in/out, DND, wake-up, billing) available; highly customizable.	Core calling features only; hospitality features delivered via add-on software imagicle.com .	Full feature set on large systems (wake-up, check-in/out, etc.); mid-size system needs add-ons.
Deployment Models	On-premises, Cloud (Hosted by ClearlyIP), or Hybrid options clearlyip.com .	On-premises PBX; Cloud offerings via MiCloud/UCaaS for some segments.	On-premises PBX (UNIVERGE SV series); Cloud via Univerge Blue (UCaaS).	On-premises (CUCM appliance or virtual) or Cloud (Webex Calling).	On-premises (Aura CM, IP Office); Cloud/Hybrid via Avaya OneCloud.
Analog Phone Support	High-density FXS gateways (24–96 ports) for legacy analog rooms clearlyip.com .	Yes – analog cards/gateways in PBX or via SIP gateways.	Yes – analog support built into systems (legacy TDM ports or gateways).	Yes – via Cisco VG analog gateways or third-party adapters.	Yes – analog line cards (on IP Office, CM) or media gateways.
Scalability	Scales from small motels to large resorts (tested in hundreds of hotels) clearlyip.com . Cloud hosting allows easy scaling clearlyip.com .	Highly scalable (from <50 rooms to 1000+ room mega-hotels on one system) csmsouth.com .	Very scalable; capable of both very small (<100 rooms) and very large deployments csmsouth.com .	Enterprise-scale (supports thousands of endpoints, used in large deployments, e.g. casinos with Cisco network).	Highly scalable; Communication Manager supports large hotels and chains, IP Office for smaller ones.
Mobility & Unified Comms	Mobile softphone app for staff; integrates with in-room voice assistants clearlyip.com . UC features (chat, etc.) included.	Mobile DECT and smartphone client options for staff; unified messaging, contact center modules available exceltelecom.com/mitel.com .	Mobile extensions and smartphone apps supported; UC platform integrates voice, video, collaboration thehotelgm.com .	Strong mobility (Webex app, Jabber) for staff; excellent integration with Wi-Fi and networking gear.	Mobile client (Avaya Workplace) for staff; strong unified messaging and contact center options.
Notable Strengths	Hospitality specialization, rich feature set, flexible deployment, cost-effective (often lower TCO).	Proven reliability, chain-approved, extensive PMS support, broad product	Customizable end-to-end solutions (telephony +	Best-in-class security and network integration, quality hardware, one-stop-	Renowned voice quality and stability, large install base, advanced contact center & guest experience capabilities.

FEATURE / CAPABILITY	CLEARLYIP (COMXCHANGE)	MITEL	NEC	CISCO	AVAYA
		range for any hotel size thehotelgm.com .	beyond), known for large scale and innovative tech (e.g., IoT integration).	shop for IT infrastructure.	
Potential Drawbacks	Lesser-known brand (newer company), relies on reseller network for support (which can be a pro or con).	Some solutions can be complex to implement; pricing not transparent without quote thehotelgm.com .	Complexity if heavily customized; may be overkill for small hotels, and less ubiquitous support network in some regions thehotelgm.com .	Lacks native hospitality features – must add third-party integrations; typically higher cost for equivalent functionality csmsouth.comtech.co .	Smaller systems need middleware for full features; corporate turbulence in past years, which some buyers watch carefully.

Table: High-level comparison of hospitality phone system providers and their capabilities.

Industry Trends in Hospitality Telephony

The hotel communications landscape is evolving rapidly. Hoteliers are increasingly looking beyond traditional PBX systems and embracing technologies that enhance mobility, guest engagement, and operational efficiency. Three key trends are shaping hospitality telephony in 2025 and beyond: the shift to cloud-based systems, integration of mobile solutions, and the infusion of AI into guest communications.

Shift to Cloud-Based Systems

Many hotels are transitioning from on-premise PBX hardware to **cloud-based phone systems**, or at least considering hybrid models. Cloud-based telephony offers greater flexibility and scalability – hotels can add lines or new features without installing new on-site equipment, and updates are handled by the provider. This is particularly attractive to smaller hotels or those without full-time IT staff, as it reduces maintenance burden and upfront capital expenditure clearlyip.comdeluisio.com. In a cloud model, the phone system's core software runs in a data center, and the hotel connects over the internet. This can **lower costs** (often a subscription per room or per user model) and ensure the hotel is always on the latest software version. As one industry blog notes, "cloud-based phone systems are rapidly gaining popularity in hospitality, offering the flexibility to scale as needed and eliminating costly hardware, allowing hotels to focus on guest experience" deluisio.com.

Another advantage of cloud systems is easier integration with other cloud-based hotel applications. For example, a cloud PBX can interface with a cloud PMS or CRM through APIs, enabling real-time data sync (for instance, guest profile data used to personalize voicemail greetings, or triggering an automatic text to a guest's phone when they miss a call in their room). Cloud telephony also supports multi-property configurations: a hotel group can run a single virtual phone system partitioned by property, simplifying management and enabling direct dialing between sister properties or centralized reservations. **Reliability** in cloud setups is addressed by geo-redundancy – providers can distribute services across multiple data centers so that even if one goes down, calls can be re-routed (ClearlyIP's hosted platform, for example, leverages such redundancy clearlyip.com). That said, hotels considering cloud telephony must ensure they have robust internet connectivity with backup links, as voice will depend on it. As broadband becomes more ubiquitous and reliable, this barrier is lowering, which further drives adoption of cloud solutions in hospitality.

Mobile Integration and Staff Mobility

Mobile integration is a major trend as hotels seek to untether staff from the front desk and ensure responsiveness anywhere on property. Modern hospitality phone systems increasingly offer **mobility options** that empower both employees and guests to connect on the go deluisio.com. For hotel staff, this means smartphone apps or cordless Wi-Fi phones that integrate with the main phone system. A housekeeping supervisor with a mobile app can receive a call from the front desk or a guest request as if they were at their desk extension, improving efficiency. Engineers or security personnel carrying a mobile extension can be reached instantly by dialing their extension, rather than relying on walkie-talkies or overhead paging. As noted in a trends report, "housekeeping, maintenance, and front desk staff can communicate seamlessly via mobile devices, ensuring tasks are completed promptly and guest requests are addressed in real-time" deluisio.com. This kind of integration not only speeds up service (e.g., a housekeeper can be informed via app about an urgent room clean request) but also helps capture service data (the system can log when the staff responded, etc.).

For guests, mobile integration is about meeting the expectations of the smartphone era. Guests increasingly prefer self-service and using their own devices. Hotels are responding by enabling features like **guest mobile apps that tie into the phone system** – for example, an app that lets a guest chat or call directly to guest services without picking up the room phone. Some hotels allow the guest's smartphone to become an extension of the room phone during their stay (so they can receive calls to their room on their own device, or use it to call hotel services from anywhere). While privacy and security need to be managed, these features can greatly enhance convenience. Additionally, mobile integration extends to messaging: systems like Mitel or Avaya allow hotels to integrate SMS/text messaging for guest requests, which then are routed to the appropriate staff or department.

Mobile technology also plays a role in **guest recognition and personalization**. If a guest calls the front desk from their mobile (via the hotel app), a modern integrated system can recognize the caller ID and treat it like a room call, presenting the guest's information to staff. This blurring of lines between "room phone" and "mobile phone" is likely to continue. We also see the rise of solutions like hotel-branded softphone apps or even QR codes in rooms that, when scanned, initiate a VoIP call via the guest's phone to a hotel service center (bypassing telephone charges). Overall, mobility in hospitality telephony is about making communication more **accessible and instantaneous** for all parties, which drives better guest service and more efficient operations.

AI-Powered Guest Engagement

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is beginning to transform how hotels handle guest interactions over the phone. **AI-powered telephony** in hospitality often takes the form of virtual agents, chatbots, or intelligent call routing systems that enhance or automate aspects of guest service. For instance, AI-driven phone systems can handle routine inquiries – when a guest calls for common requests (restaurant hours, Wi-Fi password, etc.), an AI virtual assistant can answer immediately, freeing staff to focus on more complex tasks deluisio.com. This is analogous to AI chatbots on websites, but via voice. These systems use natural language processing so that a guest might say, "I'd like extra towels," and the AI can log the request and forward it to housekeeping without human intervention. According to a hospitality tech futurist, *"AI-driven phone systems are capable of handling a wide range of guest interactions, from answering common inquiries to processing room service orders, freeing up staff to focus on more complex tasks"* deluisio.com.

Another application is AI-enhanced IVR (Interactive Voice Response). Traditional hotel IVRs are menu-based ("press 1 for reservations, 2 for front desk..."). AI allows a more conversational interface – a guest might say what they need in their own words, and the system intelligently routes the call or provides an answer. This can make the phone experience more natural and quicker. AI can also personalize interactions: if integrated with a CRM or profile database, the system might greet a loyalty guest by name and tailor options (for example, recognizing that the caller is VIP and prioritizing connecting to a live agent). **AI analytics** is another aspect: by analyzing call data, AI can glean common pain points or frequently asked questions, helping management improve services. Hotels can identify patterns like a surge in calls about a new facility or recurring complaints, and proactively address them deluisio.com.

In the realm of guest engagement, we also see AI blending with voice assistants in rooms (e.g., Amazon Alexa for Hospitality or specialized devices like Angie). These allow guests to make verbal requests that are processed by AI and either answered (ask about weather, etc.) or routed into the hotel's task system (request housekeeping, which then shows up on staff's task list). The phone system can tie into this by handling any voice calls that need to result (for example, if a guest says "I need to speak to the concierge," the voice assistant can trigger a call via the phone system).

AI is improving **staff operations** too. Consider an AI that listens to incoming calls and provides real-time transcription or suggestions to the reservation agent (like prompting upsell opportunities or providing the caller's past preferences). Some hotel call centers are deploying AI coaching tools that analyze how calls are handled for training purposes tech.co. These innovations are still emerging in hospitality, but they point toward a future where routine communications are automated and staff are augmented with AI, ultimately aiming for faster response times and more personalized service. As one hospitality tech article put it, *"hotels that embrace VoIP, cloud-based systems, AI-driven customer service, unified communications, mobility, and security will be well-positioned to meet the evolving needs of their guests"* deluisio.com – illustrating how these trends converge to define the next generation of hotel communications.

Conclusion

The hospitality phone system market in 2025 offers hoteliers more choices and capabilities than ever before. **ClearlyIP** exemplifies a new breed of specialized provider, delivering a solution finely tuned to hotel needs with flexibility and modern integrations, while legacy giants like **Mitel**, **NEC**, **Cisco**, and **Avaya** bring decades of experience and robust product lines to the table. Each provider has its unique strengths: Mitel's ubiquitous reliability and scalability, NEC's all-in-one approach and customization, Cisco's integration with enterprise IT and security, and Avaya's rich feature set and continuity from legacy to cloud. The right choice for a hotel will depend on factors such as property size, existing infrastructure, budget, and specific feature requirements (e.g. a large resort might prioritize a proven scalable system like Mitel or NEC, whereas a boutique hotel might value ClearlyIP's tailor-made focus or a cloud solution for low maintenance).

What is clear from this evaluation is that **integration capability** – with PMS, guest applications, and emerging technologies – is arguably as important as traditional telephony features. All top providers now emphasize their ability to interface with other hotel systems and support new channels of communication. As hotels continue to modernize, adopting cloud deployments, empowering staff with mobile devices, and leveraging AI for guest service, the chosen phone system must not only perform the basics flawlessly (crystal-clear voice calls and reliable uptime) but also serve as a platform for innovation. By carefully considering the offerings of ClearlyIP and its competitors, along with the broader industry trends, hotel IT managers and decision-makers can select a communication solution that elevates guest experience, streamlines operations, and remains adaptable for the future deluisio.com/deluisio.com.

Tags: hotel phone systems, hospitality communications, pms integration, pbx systems, telecommunications, guest services, cloud communications, voip, hotel operations

About ClearlyIP

ClearlyIP Inc. — Company Profile (June 2025)

1. Who they are

ClearlyIP is a privately-held unified-communications (UC) vendor headquartered in Appleton, Wisconsin, with additional offices in Canada and a globally distributed workforce. Founded in 2019 by veteran FreePBX/Asterisk contributors, the firm follows a "build-and-buy" growth strategy, combining in-house R&D with targeted acquisitions (e.g., the 2023 purchase of Voneto's EPlatform UCaaS). Its mission is to "design and develop the world's most respected VoIP brand" by delivering secure, modern, cloud-first communications that reduce cost and boost collaboration, while its vision focuses on unlocking the full potential of open-source VoIP for organisations of every size. The leadership team collectively brings more than 300 years of telecom experience.

2. Product portfolio

- **Cloud Solutions** – Including *Clearly Cloud* (flagship UCaaS), **SIP Trunking**, **SendFax.to** cloud fax, **ClusterPBX OEM**, **Business Connect** managed cloud PBX, and **EPlatform** multitenant UCaaS. These provide fully hosted voice, video, chat and collaboration with 100+ features, per-seat licensing, geo-redundant PoPs, built-in call-recording and mobile/desktop apps.
- **On-Site Phone Systems** – Including CIP PBX appliances (FreePBX pre-installed), ClusterPBX Enterprise, and Business Connect (on-prem variant). These offer local survivability for compliance-sensitive sites; appliances start at 25 extensions and scale into HA clusters.
- **IP Phones & Softphones** – Including CIP SIP Desk-phone Series (CIP-25x/27x/28x), fully white-label branding kit, and *Clearly Anywhere* softphone (iOS, Android, desktop). Features zero-touch provisioning via Cloud Device Manager or FreePBX "Clearly Devices" module; Opus, HD-voice, BLF-rich colour LCDs.
- **VoIP Gateways** – Including Analog FXS/FXO models, VoIP Fail-Over Gateway, POTS Replacement (for copper sun-set), and 2-port T1/E1 digital gateway. These bridge legacy endpoints or PSTN circuits to SIP; fail-over models keep 911 active during WAN outages.
- **Emergency Alert Systems** – Including **CodeX** room-status dashboard, **Panic Button**, and **Silent Intercom**. This K-12-focused mass-notification suite integrates with CIP PBX or third-party FreePBX for Alyssa's-Law compliance.
- **Hospitality** – Including **ComXchange** PBX plus PMS integrations, hardware & software assurance plans. Replaces aging Mitel/NEC hotel PBXs; supports guest-room phones, 911 localisation, check-in/out APIs.
- **Device & System Management** – Including **Cloud Device Manager** and **Update Control (Mirror)**. Provides multi-vendor auto-provisioning, firmware management, and secure FreePBX mirror updates.
- **XCast Suite** – Including Hosted PBX, SIP trunking, carrier/call-centre solutions, SOHO plans, and XCL mobile app. Delivers value-oriented, high-volume VoIP from ClearlyIP's carrier network.

3. Services

- **Telecom Consulting & Custom Development** – FreePBX/Asterisk architecture reviews, mergers & acquisitions diligence, bespoke application builds and Tier-3 support.
- **Regulatory Compliance** – E911 planning plus **Kari's Law**, **Ray Baum's Act** and **Alyssa's Law** solutions; automated dispatchable location tagging.
- **STIR/SHAKEN Certificate Management** – Signing services for Originating Service Providers, helping customers combat robocalling and maintain full attestation.
- **Attestation Lookup Tool** – Free web utility to identify a telephone number's service-provider code and SHAKEN attestation rating.
- **FreePBX® Training** – Three-day administrator boot camps (remote or on-site) covering installation, security hardening and troubleshooting.

- **Partner & OEM Programs** – Wholesale SIP trunk bundles, white-label device programs, and ClusterPBX OEM licensing.
-

4. Executive management (June 2025)

- **CEO & Co-Founder: Tony Lewis** – Former CEO of Schmooze Com (FreePBX sponsor); drives vision, acquisitions and channel network.
 - **CFO & Co-Founder: Luke Duquaine** – Ex-Sangoma software engineer; oversees finance, international operations and supply-chain.
 - **CTO & Co-Founder: Bryan Walters** – Long-time Asterisk contributor; leads product security and cloud architecture.
 - **Chief Revenue Officer: Preston McNair** – 25+ years in channel development at Sangoma & Hargray; owns sales, marketing and partner success.
 - **Chief Hospitality Strategist: Doug Schwartz** – Former 360 Networks CEO; guides hotel vertical strategy and PMS integrations.
 - **Chief Business Development Officer: Bob Webb** – 30+ years telco experience (Nsight/Cellcom); cultivates ILEC/CLEC alliances for Clearly Cloud.
 - **Chief Product Officer: Corey McFadden** – Founder of Voneto; architect of EPlatform UCaaS, now shapes ClearlyIP product roadmap.
 - **VP Support Services: Lorne Gaetz** (appointed Jul 2024) – Former Sangoma FreePBX lead; builds 24x7 global support organisation.
 - **VP Channel Sales: Tracy Liu** (appointed Jun 2024) – Channel-program veteran; expands MSP/VAR ecosystem worldwide.
-

5. Differentiators

- **Open-Source DNA:** Deep roots in the FreePBX/Asterisk community allow rapid feature releases and robust interoperability.
 - **White-Label Flexibility:** Brandable phones and ClusterPBX OEM let carriers and MSPs present a fully bespoke UCaaS stack.
 - **End-to-End Stack:** From hardware endpoints to cloud, gateways and compliance services, ClearlyIP owns every layer, simplifying procurement and support.
 - **Education & Safety Focus:** Panic Button, CodeX and e911 tool-sets position the firm strongly in K-12 and public-sector markets.
-

In summary

ClearlyIP delivers a comprehensive, modular UC ecosystem—cloud, on-prem and hybrid—backed by a management team with decades of open-source telephony pedigree. Its blend of carrier-grade infrastructure, white-label flexibility and vertical-specific solutions (hospitality, education, emergency-compliance) makes it a compelling option for ITSPs, MSPs and multi-site enterprises seeking modern, secure and cost-effective communications.

DISCLAIMER

This document is provided for informational purposes only. No representations or warranties are made regarding the accuracy, completeness, or reliability of its contents. Any use of this information is at your own risk. ClearlyIP shall not be liable for any damages arising from the use of this document. This content may include material generated with assistance from artificial intelligence tools, which may contain errors or inaccuracies. Readers should verify critical information independently. All product names, trademarks, and registered trademarks mentioned are property of their respective owners and are used for identification purposes only. Use of these names does not imply endorsement. This document does not constitute professional or legal advice. For specific guidance related to your needs, please consult qualified professionals.