8x8

Moving Your Communications System to the Cloud, at Your Pace

Enabling a phased, flexible migration path to the cloud

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As a cloud communications provider, we often talk with prospective customers who are considering moving to the cloud, but are unsure of the path to get there. They essentially feel "stuck" with their current on-premises PBX system. When it comes to on-prem systems like Avaya, the idea of a big overhaul or having to move to a new system can be very daunting.

The hidden costs of indecision

While doing nothing may seem like the easiest path forward, maintaining a patchwork of legacy communications is actually counterproductive when considering the broader implications. Organizations that continue with disparate, aging systems often experience communication outages and unplanned downtime, not to mention potential security threats. For IT teams and decision-makers, service disruptions can cause knee-jerk reactions and the costly addition of even more hardware for backup communications.

In addition, legacy communication tools are limited in enabling quick and easy customer interactions on digital channels, and they put businesses at a disadvantage compared to competitors using cloud-based communications to enable omnichannel customer touch points. In the current business environment, the cost of doing nothing is unaffordable—and even a step backward.

Overcoming resistance to change

The companies we speak with are usually dealing with the following challenges, which can feed into resistance to change or apprehension around moving communications to the cloud:

- They can't see the financial return on the investment of upgrading their comms infrastructure

- They fear a potential IT nightmare if adopting a new system and changing providers goes wrong

- They're concerned about user resistance and potential organizational change management issues if business-as-usual gets impacted

- They're unable to find a true partner in a service provider that will offer a consultative approach for a successful migration

These are all legitimate concerns, and they're often seen as risks in moving what is central to the business, operations, and success: the communications system. However, this does not need to be the case. At 8x8, we've had years of experience helping customers move to the cloud with a time-tested methodology and in-house expertise from teams of project managers, deployment and line number porting specialists, solution delivery consultants, and API specialists with a long history of working with on-premises systems like Avaya. 8x8 can help businesses of all kinds take the first steps towards putting those fears to bed and confidently moving to the cloud.

If your company is on the fence about migrating from an on-premises Avaya system to the cloud, the following practical steps will help you better understand the process.

Building a custom migration plan

No two companies and system deployments are the same, which is why at 8x8 we believe in a custom approach to migration. We also understand nuances that come with contractual obligations or IT budgets that may require a more flexible migration approach. Our custom deployment strategy and methodology ensures that the move to the cloud can happen at your speed and your convenience, without creating silos or causing downtime or hiccups.

In the market for a true partner when you move to the cloud?

Look for a provider that offers the following:

1. A flexible, migration strategy that works for you

2. A move-at-your-own pace custom migration plan

3. Professional services teams that have demonstrated experience in staggered transitions and proof points of doing so at scale

4. A dedicated project and program management team that will partner with you every step of the way

Examining the current system

The first step in building a migration plan is to start by looking at your current system. We don't need to tell you that the traditional on-premises Avaya system is complicated. Typically, a massive infrastructure footprint like this would consist of centralized PSTN trunking at an HQ location, a backup system at a disaster recovery site, and connection of remote sites to the PSTN via an intricate web of private connections (MPLS, SD-WAN, VPN, etc.) requiring complex configuration.

An Avaya on-premises installation for a large enterprise may include:

- A central location with media gateways, call center software, CTI, and conferencing software

- Remote sites with local gateways, small to midsize hardware, and software to support analog, proprietary digital, and VoIP handsets

- All locations utilizing designated PSTN trunking for local dialing

- Voicemail servers deployed at each location to support voice mailboxes

- Additional financial and technical investment for high availability

The complicated web of traditional on-premises communications infrastructure
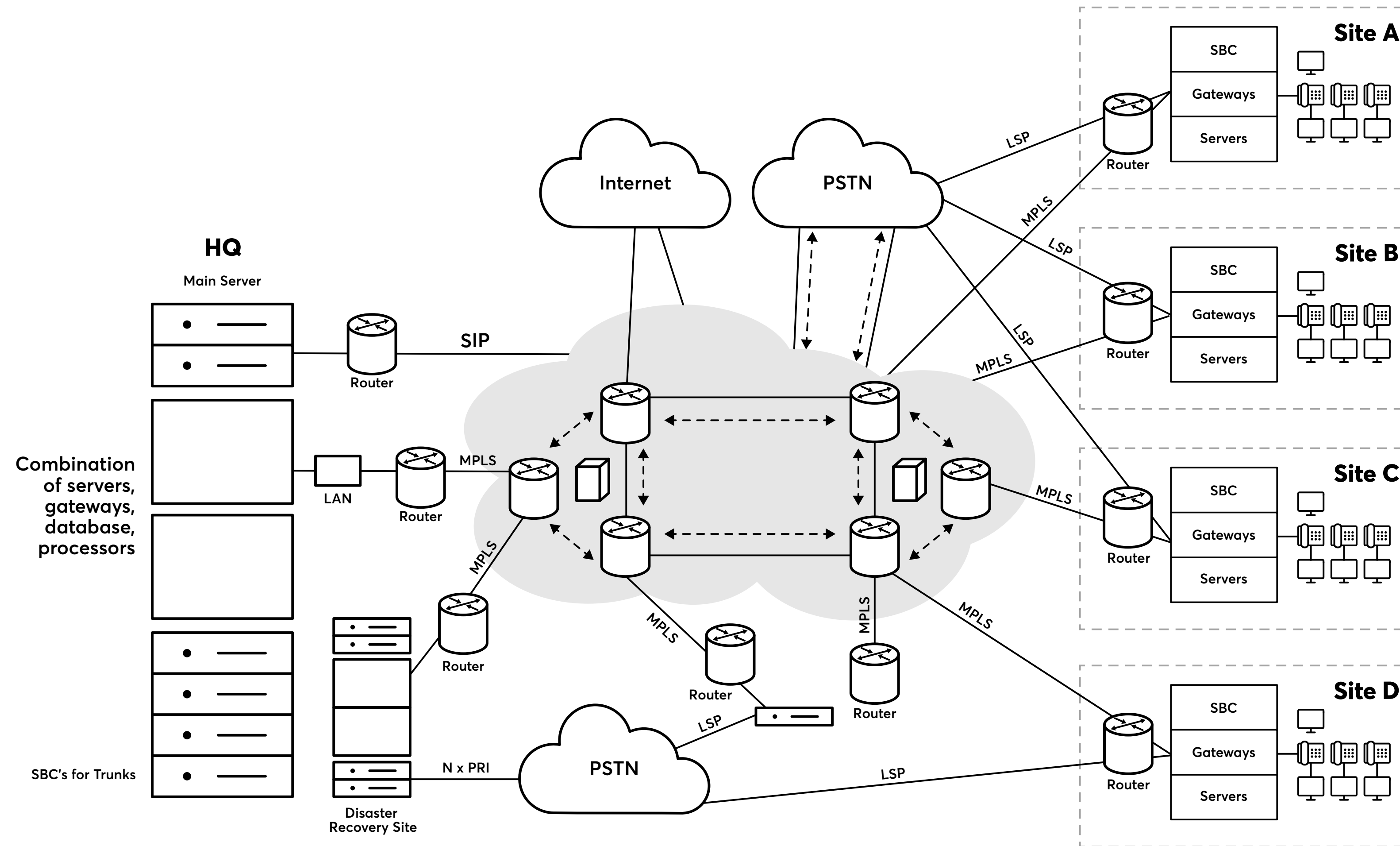
Planning a hybrid migration plan

We often work with organizations of all sizes that wish to only migrate a small number of sites at first, or conduct a pilot to understand best practices before moving the entire organization onto the new platform. We call this a staggered or phased migration approach. Moving the entire communications system to the cloud overnight can be overwhelming, and moving a few offices or a few departments at a time is a great way to ease into a new system.

You might want to consider a phased migration for the following reasons:

- To get set up and test the new system out at a few locations before a big bang deployment across the org

- To leave time to close out any existing vendor contracts

- To have the flexibility to accommodate current IT resources, staffing, other strategic projects, etc.

8x8's custom upgrade plan for Avaya customers ensures that our team moves at your pace and aligns with your long-term strategic plans. We understand that not every one of your locations may be ready to move to your new 8x8 solution at the same time. We collaborate with our customers to develop a comprehensive phased go-live approach.

As an example, you can start by moving a small number of sites or replacing smaller Avaya IP office PBXs at branch locations and moving them to the cloud. Looking at the image below, let's say that site A and site B are ready to move to the cloud with 8x8. For these sites, we make every effort to ensure a seamless process, including porting numbers and replicating or updating call handling rules and call flows. Your service will stay up the entire time— from start to finish—and our goal is to replicate the state of your current configuration for these sites.

For users and sites on the 8x8 platform, connecting to the 8x8 cloud is fairly simple. Multiple connectivity options, such as 3G/4G/5G/LTE, broadband, SD-WAN, and MPLS, can be utilized based on user and business needs. 8x8 customers enjoy full feature parity on all connection types, and maximizing quality over any connection, including OTT and mobile, is a foundational principle of the 8x8 platform, infrastructure, and architecture.

Phased migration to 8x8; hybridization or co-existence is a step in the process
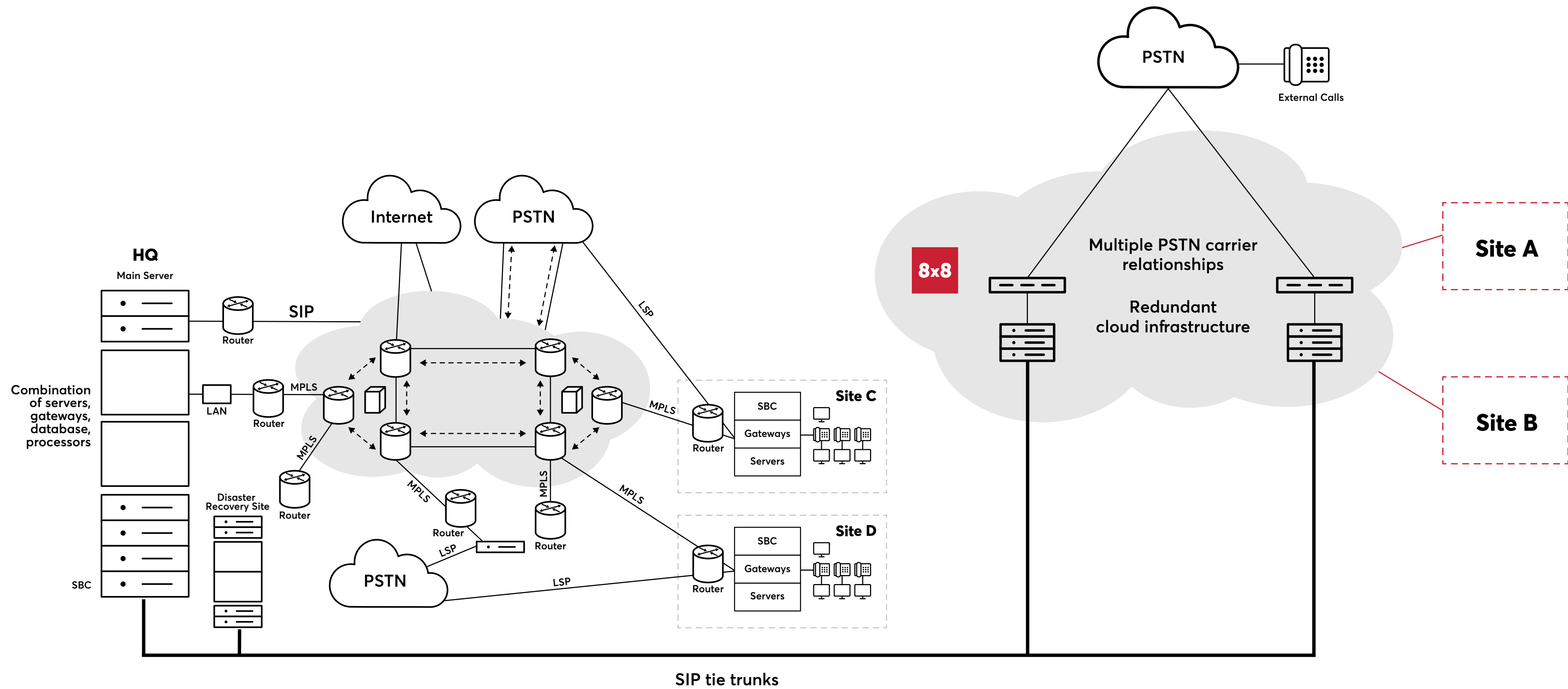
A phased, yet integrated migration can be accomplished by overlaying dial plans between the legacy footprint and the cloud, and utilizing SIP tie trunks or call forwarding to enable each set of users to seamlessly reach the other, as if it were one system across the board.

The following features ensure a unified experience for users, even though you'll have two different systems during this hybrid phase:

- **A unified dial plan and extension dialing.** 8x8 provides SIP tie trunks, which enable dialing between the 8x8 environment and the existing environment while the migration is ongoing. 8x8 professional services and deployment teams will build a personalized plan and statement of work after they've discussed your dial plan requirements. 8x8 can provide SIP tie trunk connectivity to almost any outside platform.

- **Shared directory.** Even if users are on different platforms, they are still able to look each other up and connect as if on one system via a common directory.

- **8x8 PSTN coverage.** Your sites and offices immediately benefit from, and can leverage, 8x8's wide PSTN coverage without the need to utilize other carriers. And with pure cloud service in over 50 countries, remote staff and regional offices can make calls just as if they were connected via a traditional local landline. But they also have the value-added benefits of the 8x8 open communications platform, with no local carriers or gateways needed.

■ **Mix-and-match licenses and re-use desk phones.** We understand that there's no one-size-fits-all solution, and every user, office, and department can have different communication needs. So, 8x8 offers the ability to mix and match different types of licenses to create a customized bundle that meets your needs.

While most modern phones can be repurposed (which offsets some user learning curve and cost concerns), our teams can guide you on which devices would be able to be re-used and provisioned with the 8x8 service.

We do offer a wide variety of desk phones that meet simple knowledge worker needs, as well as more advanced receptionist needs. These phones don't have complicated cabling requirements and further simplify IT and networking complexities that come with an on-premises system. Our customers also typically find significant cost-savings in moving users to our softphone application (8x8 Work) for computer, mobile, and web, which is included with each license, instead of relying on hard phones.

The 8x8 eXperience Communications Platform

8x8's knowledge, experience, and expertise guarantee a smooth, safe, and seamless transition. A custom, flexible approach and best-in-class communications system is the perfect mix as you get ready to move to the cloud. With 8x8, you can bring together customer and employee experience with voice, video, chat, contact center, and APIs on one platform.

The 8x8 eXperience Communications Platform empowers enterprises with modern communication experiences, eliminates organizational silos, boosts employee productivity, delights customers, and unifies data to reveal deeper insights for smarter decisions and a more agile business.

With a single integration framework that connects with customer and service management apps, as well as productivity tools like Microsoft Teams®, you can save implementation time and maintenance dollars. Embeddable APIs enable low-code/no-code customized experiences, especially in the contact center with more robust omnichannel possibilities.

Taking your first steps towards modern cloud communications is simple with 8x8. Check out our Move to the Cloud Toolkit to speak with an expert or learn more about switching to 8x8.

About 8x8

8x8, Inc. (NYSE: EGHT) is transforming the future of business communications as a leading Software as a Service provider of 8x8 XCaaS™ (eXperience Communications as a Service™), an integrated contact center, voice communications, video, chat, and API solution built on one global cloud communications platform. 8x8 uniquely eliminates the silos between Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) and Contact Center as a Service (CCaaS) to power the communications requirements of all employees globally as they work together to deliver differentiated customer experiences. For additional information, visit www.8x8.com, or follow 8x8 on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook.