Compare & Contrast: Cisco IP MPP Phones & Cisco Unified IP Phones

Objective

This article will explain the similarities and differences between Cisco Multi-platform Phones (MPP), which are made for small to medium size businesses, and Cisco Unified IP Phones, that are made for Enterprise (large) businesses. If you are interested in a one-time conversion from one type to the other, visit [Cloud Upgrader](#).

Cisco IP MPP Phone

Cisco Multiplatform Phones (MPP) provide Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) communication using Session Initiation Protocol (SIP). SIP is the most often used signaling protocol that initiates, maintains, and terminates real-time sessions. These sessions may include voice, video, and messaging applications. This eliminates the need for traditional phone lines, making phones more portable within the company. With VoIP, a phone uses an existing network infrastructure and internet connection instead of costly T1 phone lines. This gives the ability to manage more calls with fewer 'lines'. Other beneficial options include placing calls on hold, parking calls, transferring calls, and more. Some models allow video communication in addition to VoIP.

MPP phones are built to look like a regular phone, and are used only for that purpose, but essentially, they are a computer and are part of your network. MPP phones require either service from an Internet Telephony Service Provider (ITSP) or an IP Private Branch Exchange (PBX) call control server. WebEx Calling, Ring Central, and Verizon are examples of an ITSP. Some examples of IP PBX services that work with Cisco MPP phones include, Asterisk, Centile, and Metaswitch platforms.

Cisco Unified IP Phone

A Cisco Unified IP Phone, that runs on Enterprise firmware, also provides unified communications, just like the MPP phones do. They even have some of the same numbers for their series of phones. However, these phones are intended for use *exclusively* with a Cisco Unified Communications Manager (CUCM), an internal call manager. Only an Enterprise business, a large company, would purchase a CUCM, as it would be cost prohibitive for a small or medium size business.

A phone intended for use with a CUCM cannot register with an outside ITSP or IP PBX. They are built to interact with the internal CUCM only. In that same regard, an MPP phone cannot be used with a CUCM.

Note: If you recently purchased the wrong model of phone for your business, you

should exchange it for the correct one.

Convert Firmware

If returning is not an option, you can do a one-time conversion from MPP to Enterprise or vice-versa. This requires the purchase of a separate license for each phone.

If you would like to consider a conversion, click Cloud Upgrader for more information.

If you would like to view the Frequently Asked Questions for the conversion, click here.

For general information on the phones or the CUCM call manager, click on the following links:

Cisco IP Phones with Multiplatform Firmware

Cisco Unified IP Phones

Cisco Unified Communications Manager (Call Manager)