

## Vonage Gets Rave Reviews

The clear pioneer of VoIP phone service is Vonage. When it started out VoIP was still a technology limited to technophiles and geeks. Not surprisingly, the first reviews Vonage received were less than flattering, to say the least. The initial subscribers complained that VoIP phones were lacking in voice quality. It was not long before Vonage phones improved and came to be accepted, helping the company to gather up one million subscribers.

For most Vonage subscribers the Vonage phones are found to be easy to install. All that is needed is to plug a phone cable and the broadband connection into the adapter box. Once this has been done and the adapter has connected to Vonage's servers, the phone is ready to use. This user-friendly feature was integral to Vonage's ability to convert many conventional phone users to their service.

Another issue is the price. Vonage phone users were initially happy with the low prices offered by Vonage, which compared quite favorably with the prices being charged by conventional telecom companies. In fact, simply moving from landline phones to VoIP-based Vonage phones slashed the phone bills of several subscribers in half.

However, Vonage's prices do not compare quite so favorably with the prices of the newer entrants to the VoIP phone service market. While Vonage is still a market leader, it is beginning to feel younger, hungrier dogs nipping at its heels. Vonage's subscribers want it to maintain the price advantage they've come to expect, but due to Vonage's large subscriber base and rising overhead costs it is becoming increasingly difficult to do so.

Vonage's wisely counters this with the argument that it is providing better services than the smaller, newer entrants are. While its subscribers may feel that they will be better served if Vonage cuts its prices below the market level, they also accept the merit of this argument.

Vonage subscribers do not, however, any longer have complaints about the voice quality. Through innovation in the industry it is now comparable to the quality of conventional phones. Subscribers are also delighted with the added features Vonage offers such as caller id, call-waiting, call waiting disable function, distinctive ringing, repeat dialing, international call forwarding, return dial and three-way calling.

Vonage has won additional favorable reviews for including features like call blocking, call filtering, sequential ringing, secondary virtual phone numbers, additional service lines, toll-free numbers and Web-based management. Particularly welcomed is its number portability service. Thanks to this feature, users are able to retain their phone numbers even when they changed cities.

As a result of all these combined factors, the Vonage family continues to grow and grow.