Choosing phones for a California office in 2025 is not just about dial tone. It affects how your **Phone Systems Company California** team sells, supports customers, documents conversations, and handles emergencies. It also has to play nicely with a patchwork of California and federal regulations that your IT or operations team will live with for years.

I have sat on both sides of these decisions: helping clients move from old Centrex and key systems to VoIP, and then later cleaning up rushed cloud migrations that broke 911 routing or call recording rules. The brands on the invoice matter far less than how they match your specific footprint, risk tolerance, and budget.

Still, there is a practical starting point. If you run or support offices in California, a small group of providers consistently show up in RFP shortlists, procurement committees, and IT Slack debates.

How California offices are choosing phone systems in 2025

Most California businesses are buying a business phone system, not a simple line. That usually means:

- Virtual or cloud based PBX with features like auto attendants, call queues, voicemail to email or Teams, and analytics.
- Softphones and mobile apps so employees can work from home, on the road, or from a coworking space.
- Integrations with CRM, ticketing, and collaboration tools such as Salesforce, HubSpot, ServiceNow, Microsoft 365, and Google Workspace.
- Support for hybrid environments, where you may still have a few analog lines for elevators, alarms, fax, or door phones.

Two realities frame the 2025 conversation in California.

First, traditional POTS landlines are being phased out. You can still get them, but prices are creeping up, and the carriers are not hiding their intention. The exact year landlines will disappear is not set in stone, but by 2027 you should assume that standard copper based business lines will be difficult and expensive in many parts of the state. When people ask, "Can I just have a landline without internet?" The honest answer is "Yes, but you are swimming against the tide, and it will cost you."

Second, regulations have teeth. Kari’s Law, RAY BAUM’s Act, California’s privacy rules, and various industry specific mandates (healthcare, financial services, public sector) all touch phone systems. Emergency calling and caller location, call recording consent, and data retention are recurring topics in California deployments.

Within that context, the question "What are the top 3 phone service providers?" Becomes narrower: which companies can reliably support cloud telephony, California compliance, and your mix of office, remote, and mobile workers.

The short list: top 5 phone companies for California offices in 2025

If I had to create a shortlist for a typical California office, it would look like this:

1. RingCentral
2. Zoom Phone
3. Microsoft Teams Phone (with a direct routing or operator partner)
4. Dialpad

5. AT&T (for hybrid and sites that still depend on physical lines or dedicated circuits)

There are many strong alternatives, including Nextiva, 8x8, Vonage, and specialized SIP trunk providers. For specific niches, one of those may be a better fit. But when I look across dozens of deployments in San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, Sacramento, and the Central Valley, these 5 come up again and again.

Let us walk through each, with an eye on strengths, weaknesses, and where they fit.

RingCentral: the all around workhorse, born in California

If someone asks "Who has the best phone system for a general purpose California office?" RingCentral is almost always in the top 3 of that conversation.

RingCentral built its name on hosted PBX before it was fashionable. Its headquarters are in Belmont, which shows in the product. It tends to handle California specific needs better than many national competitors, especially around complex multi site deployments.

In real projects, RingCentral makes life easier for IT teams that want a single pane of glass for voice, fax, messaging, and sometimes contact center. Provisioning numbers, setting up auto attendants, and managing call flows are relatively straightforward. There is a reason procurement teams keep shortlisting it when they ask, "What are the top 5 phone companies we should invite to bid?"

Where RingCentral shines for California offices:

- Strong feature set out of the box, from call queues to analytics.
- Deep integrations with Salesforce, Zendesk, and other SaaS tools used heavily by West Coast tech and services firms.
- Reliable support for E911 with user location management, important for hybrid offices and flexible seating.
- Good coverage of California markets, including numbers and porting in secondary and rural exchanges.

Where you need to be careful:

Pricing can sprawl if you simply add licenses without revisiting plans. I have walked into offices where half the users were on premium tiers they did not need. RingCentral can also feel heavy for very small offices or teams who mostly live inside Microsoft Teams.

If your users are already steeped in Teams or Zoom, RingCentral sometimes feels like "one more app" to them, which invites adoption friction.

Zoom Phone: fast adoption where Zoom already rules meetings

For any California office that standardized on Zoom meetings between 2020 and 2022, Zoom Phone is a natural question. I have seen more than one CEO ask their IT director, "Why do we still pay another company for phones when we use Zoom for everything else?"

Zoom Phone built on that momentum. It turns the Zoom client into a softphone, with desk phone support where needed. For California companies that have a lot of remote workers or distributed teams, this is attractive.

Strengths for California offices:

The user experience is familiar. Getting sales and support reps to live in a single app for meetings, messaging, and calls cuts training time. Zoom Phone has matured quickly with features that used to separate the big telephony players: multi level auto attendants, call queues, shared line appearance for executives and assistants, and solid call recording.

Zoom also handles E911 location services reasonably well, especially for offices that use managed networks with consistent IP addressing. For multi floor Bay Area or Los Angeles offices, that is non negotiable.

Watchpoints:

Zoom Phone still lags behind RingCentral in some of the more esoteric PBX features used in complex legacy designs. If you are migrating from an elaborate Cisco or Avaya system with heavy use of hunt groups, analog integrations, or overhead paging, do not assume feature parity without a proper discovery.

Also, Zoom's strength in video can distract leadership from telephony details. You still need to address things like "What does *82 do on a landline, and how do we handle caller ID unblocking or blocking equivalents in Zoom?" Or "How will we manage call park and pickup in shared workspaces?" IT has to drive that detail.

Microsoft Teams Phone: ideal when Microsoft 365 is home base

For organizations that live inside Microsoft 365, Teams Phone is often the most strategic choice, even if it is not always the cheapest in pure per seat pricing. Many California enterprises and public agencies are already standardized on Microsoft for identity, productivity, and security. Adding voice into that ecosystem reduces the number of vendors and consoles the IT team must juggle.

Teams Phone itself is two pieces: Microsoft's own phone system capability, and connectivity to the public telephone network through either Microsoft calling plans or a third party carrier using direct routing or operator connect. In California, that often means pairing Teams Phone with AT&T, RingCentral, or smaller carriers that specialize in SIP trunking.

Where Teams Phone wins:

Governance and security are noticeably stronger than many standalone phone platforms. If your risk team asks, "Which phone is least likely to be hacked?" They really mean, "Which vendor fits our identity, MFA, and conditional access strategy?" Microsoft's answer is compelling, especially for regulated industries like healthcare or finance in California, or for organizations that must worry about the dark side of the internet, phishing, and compromised accounts in a serious way.

Compliance recording, retention policies, and eDiscovery are first class citizens in Microsoft 365. For legal, HR, and compliance departments, having voice records show up in the same place as email and Teams chats is powerful.

What to watch:

Teams Phone is not a turnkey small business phone system. If you grew up on key systems or simple hosted PBX services, Teams can feel abstract and complex. You almost always want a partner to handle design and deployment, especially for multi location California offices.

Call quality also depends heavily on your network design. A congested or poorly managed Wi-Fi deployment in a San Jose startup hub can make Teams voice look bad even if the service itself is fine.

Dialpad: California born, AI heavy, and sales centric

Dialpad is another Bay Area company that has grown into a serious player. It began life very much as a VoIP innovator with a focus on user experience and AI driven transcription and coaching.

For California offices with heavy sales, customer success, or support functions, Dialpad is often on the shortlist. Its live transcription and post call analysis are popular with revenue operations teams and managers who want better visibility without drowning in manual call notes.

Strengths:

The interface is clean, and users generally adopt it quickly. Dialpad’s analytics and call center features are strong for the price, which makes it attractive for growth minded tech companies and professional services firms.

For distributed California teams that mix office, home, and travel, the mobile and desktop experience is polished. It has become a serious competitor in conversations that used to be limited to the big 5 phone companies or what some call the "7 big tech companies" of unified communications.

Limitations:

Dialpad is not the best fit if you still need extensive support for analog integrations or if you are running large volume, high complexity call centers with intricate routing rules. For those, specialized contact center providers or enterprise focused platforms might be better.

Also, while compliance features have improved, you should assess them carefully if you are in a heavily regulated space. For a small to midsize California office without extreme compliance burdens, Dialpad is often more than sufficient. For a large health system or financial institution, you will need a deeper review.

AT&T: lifeline for landlines, circuits, and complex footprints

If you ask "What companies still offer landline service?" In California, AT&T is the one most people think of. Historically, it was "the phone company" in much of the United States. In the 1980s, before divestiture, many business owners simply called the local Bell company and asked for lines, and that was that.

Fast forward to 2025, and AT&T is no longer the only game in town, but it still matters a lot in California.

Where AT&T is indispensable:

If you have elevators, fire alarms, security systems, or legacy fax lines that are still certified only for copper POTS, AT&T is often the last major provider that can deliver them reliably in many California markets. When clients ask "Which companies still offer a landline?" Or "What companies now support original landlines?" The honest list is fairly short, and AT&T sits near the top for California.

AT&T is also a major SIP trunk and dedicated internet provider. For organizations that want a hybrid model, with a cloud PBX (such as Microsoft Teams Phone or RingCentral) but private SIP trunks or MPLS circuits for quality and reliability, AT&T often plays a core role.

AT&T has senior specific programs at the residential level, such as discounted home phone offerings. Questions like "How much is an AT&T landline per month for seniors?" Vary by promotion and region, but the point is that AT&T remains one of the few companies where you can still get a traditional landline standalone, without internet, even as prices steadily rise.

Challenges:

AT&T is rarely the most agile provider for pure cloud PBX functionality. Its own hosted offerings lag behind some of the newer players in ease of use and speed of innovation. For many California offices, AT&T is best as an underlying carrier or landline provider, while the user facing phone system layer comes from one of the cloud focused companies above.

Procurement and customer service experiences can also be uneven. If you go this route, make sure you have a strong account team and, ideally, an experienced telecom broker or consultant in your corner.

What about legacy landlines and old phone companies?

Any discussion of phone companies in California eventually runs into nostalgia and practical reality.

People still ask questions like "What were the telephone companies in the 1980s?" Or "What was the old phone company called?" In most of California, that was Pacific Bell, part of the Bell System, until the breakup in the early 1980s. Earlier still, American Telephone & Telegraph, now AT&T, Phone Systems Company California was effectively the backbone of American telephony. Some of the old names, such as GTE, have been absorbed into larger carriers or no longer exist as independent phone companies.

On the internet side, old dial-up providers such as AOL, CompuServe, EarthLink, and Prodigy carried many California businesses onto the early internet in the 1990s. Before AOL, there were systems like ARPANET and research networks that, in 1973, formed what many simply called "the internet" in its experimental form, long before web browsers. The first website ever appeared in 1991, well before mainstream commercial use.

Those stories matter today for one reason: dependence on legacy infrastructure. Many office buildings across California were wired in those eras, with phone closets designed for key systems from companies that no longer exist. When you migrate to cloud telephony, you inherit quirks from past decades, from mislabeled analog lines to ancient elevator phones that still expect a true POTS dial tone.

For senior citizens, there is also an emotional and usability layer. Questions like "What is the best landline service for senior citizens?", "Which is the best landline phone provider for seniors?", or "What is the simplest landline phone for seniors?" Keep coming up because handsets with big buttons, loud ringers, and straightforward behavior still matter. For home use, some California seniors prefer pure landlines because they still work without internet and often survive local power outages when cell networks fail.

In offices, the equivalent is staff or customers who are not comfortable with complex menus or smartphone apps. That affects how you design auto attendants, receptionist stations, and analog endpoints. You might deploy modern cloud phone systems while still retaining a few simple, easy to use analog sets in key places.

Security, smartphones, and executives

While this article focuses on business phone systems, board members and executives often conflate office telephony with their personal devices. They ask about "What phone does Elon Musk use?" Or "What phone does Donald Trump use?" Or "What phone do most billionaires use?" Those questions do not have simple, public answers, and they shift over time.

More useful are questions like "Which phone is least likely to be hacked?" And "Which is the most popular smartphone operating system?" In practice, most business users in California carry either iOS or Android. Globally, Android leads by market share, but in many US business contexts, iOS is disproportionately common among executives.

From a security perspective, a well managed, fully updated iPhone with strong passcodes and mobile device management often has an edge. But for office telephony, what matters is how your business phone system handles mobile integration, caller ID, and remote work. Whether your CEO carries the top 1 phone in the world by sales or a niche device matters less than whether the phone system protects company numbers and records.

If your executives routinely discuss sensitive deals, you should pay more attention to encrypted applications, device management, and policies than to brand lore.

How to choose among the top 5 for your California office

Once you accept that RingCentral, Zoom Phone, Microsoft Teams Phone, Dialpad, and AT&T are all viable choices, the real question becomes which one fits your environment and risk profile.

Here is a compact way I help California clients decide:

1. Start with your collaboration hub.

   If your team lives in Microsoft Teams all day, put Teams Phone at the center of the evaluation. If Zoom is your meeting heartbeat, Zoom Phone deserves serious weight. If neither dominates, RingCentral or Dialpad often present a cleaner, more neutral option.

2. Inventory your analog and special lines.

   Walk your buildings. Find every elevator, fire panel, fax, door phone, and credit card terminal. Identify which ones truly require POTS or which can tolerate an analog adapter. This step decides how much you still depend on AT&T or similar carriers.

3. Map regulatory and compliance needs.

   For healthcare, financial services, public sector, or legal environments in California, look closely at call recording policies, retention, eDiscovery, and E911 location capabilities. Teams Phone with the right carrier, or RingCentral with its mature compliance story, is usually easier to justify to auditors.

4. Model total cost of ownership, not just seat price.

   Include licensing, internet circuits, hardware, implementation, and ongoing admin labor. Sometimes the "cheapest landline provider" or the "cheapest cloud seat" is not the least expensive path when you factor in support tickets, downtime, and compliance work.

5. Pilot in a real office, with real users.

   Do not just rely on demos. Run a 30 to 60 day pilot in a California office with a mix of roles: reception, sales, support, executives. Test E911 using non emergency verification numbers that local public safety answering points provide. Verify how well the system deals with California’s caller ID and recording disclosure expectations, such as dialing codes like *82 (which unblocks caller ID on some landlines), *77 (often used for anonymous call rejection), or *69 (last call return) and their functional equivalents in your new system.

Final thoughts for California offices in 2025

If you grew up when Pacific Bell or GTE was "the phone company", it is tempting to chase a single, monolithic answer to "Who is the #1 phone company?" The landscape no longer works that way. Even the question "What are all the major phone companies?" Or "What are the major telecommunications companies?" Has fuzzy edges, spanning mobile carriers, cable providers, VoIP specialists, and cloud collaboration platforms.

For a California office in 2025, the practical approach is to:

Keep landlines where they are truly needed, with eyes open about rising costs and eventual phase outs.

Choose a cloud phone platform that fits your collaboration tools, compliance needs, and user habits, accepting that the "top 3 phone service providers" will shift over time. Design for resilience, security, and usability, rather than brand bragging rights.

When you do that, any of the top 5 outlined here can anchor a robust, modern phone environment for your California offices. The real differentiation comes from how carefully you match the tool to your environment, and how honestly you reckon with the mix of old copper, new cloud, and human habits that still define business communication in 2025.