Some Good Alternatives for Voice Calls

This Zoom Cable Modem/Router is for connecting to the Internet, not for making and receiving phone calls. There are a number of good ways to make and receive voice calls, and here are some of them:

1) **You can use your cable service provider.**
   This is normally one of the costlier options – typically an extra $20 per month plus tax for service, plus an additional $8 per month for the EMTA equipment you’ll need. Prices depend on your cable service provider. You may be billed significant extra charges for long distance and international calls. Note that cable companies are not required to route 911 emergency calls to the nearest emergency service providers. Often the required equipment is big and bulky.

2) **You can use mobile phones.**
   This is often a good lowest-cost alternative. Here are some potential disadvantages:
   A) You may have problems in certain parts of your home, especially if it’s a big home and you're far from a window. If this is a problem, you should check out phones like the Panasonic® Link2Cell phones. You can have multiple cordless phones throughout the home, with the voice connection provided by your cell phone, ideally near a window. For more information about Link2Cell, please see [www.zoomtel.com/link2cell](http://www.zoomtel.com/link2cell)
   B) It may be expensive to make international calls. In that case you should consider using Skype™ for international calls. Please see the Skype discussion below.
   C) If you have children, you need a good way for a babysitter or an older child to make an emergency call. One approach is to have a low-cost cell phone with some prepaid minutes. These are available from leading electronics retailers including Best Buy®, Walmart®, and Amazon® at very low prices.

3) **You can plug a VoIP phone adapter into the LAN port of your Cable Modem/Router.**
   This normally gives you good quality, inexpensive calls in the USA and internationally, and an easy way to connect the phones in your home that are connected to the wiring that at one time went to your phone company. If you lose power, you won’t be able to make a call unless your cable modem/router and VoIP adapter are connected to an Uninterruptible Power Supply. Here are some popular VoIP phone adapters:
   A) **Obi® adapters.** These are typically about $69 and they work with Google Voice™, a very low cost phone service with many features. For more information about Obi adapters, please see [www.zoomtel.com/obi](http://www.zoomtel.com/obi)
   B) **Ooma®.** Ooma’s adapter plugs into your cable modem/router and costs about $129, but you'll typically pay about $3.50 in taxes and fees per month. Ooma can port over your original home number for a one-time fee of $40. For more information about Ooma, please see [www.zoomtel.com/ooma](http://www.zoomtel.com/ooma)
   C) **Vonage™,** whose adapter and phone service are available at leading retailers including Best Buy and Walmart. For more information about Vonage, please see [www.zoomtel.com/vonage](http://www.zoomtel.com/vonage)
   D) **MagicJack™.** MagicJack plugs into your cable modem/router and costs about $20. The annual cost of service is only $20. You currently can’t port over your original home number. For more information about MagicJack, please see [www.zoomtel.com/magicjack](http://www.zoomtel.com/magicjack)

4) **You can use “landline” service from your phone company.**
   This uses the wiring that normally connects to the phones in your home. One advantage of landline service is that the phones work even when your home loses power. Landline service offers the gold standard in 911 emergency services. The most expensive landline plans can be very expensive. However, you can probably get a less expensive plan (typically under $20 per month) if you check prices online and you pay extra for long distance calls you make. Please check with your local phone company for details.

**Skype™**
Whatever you choose, please consider Skype for international calls. Calls from one Skype user to another are free! If you’re calling a phone instead, there’s a low, reasonable cost. Normally you use Skype from a computer that has a microphone and speaker. For more information about Skype, please see [www.zoomtel.com/skype](http://www.zoomtel.com/skype)

**Useful Links**
There are some good survey articles about good ways to handle voice calls. Please go to [www.zoomtel.com/voice](http://www.zoomtel.com/voice) for links to these articles and for other links mentioned in this note.