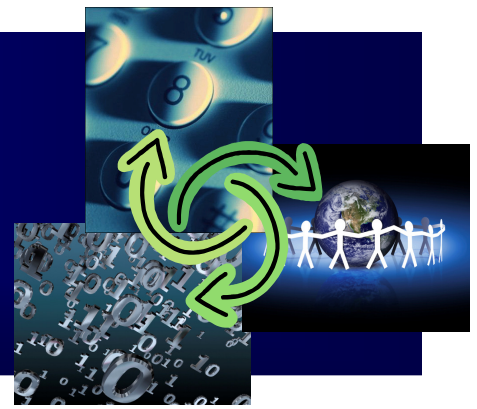


CURE FOR THE COMMON CARRIER



November, 2009

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Special points of interest:

- A Better Way
- Telecom Cost Savings
- Contingency Planning

A.C.T.I.O.N.

THE STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL TELECOM PROJECT

Telecom projects can be time consuming and tedious. Every carrier claims to have the ideal solution for your unique needs. Knowing how critical your voice, data and Internet needs are to the survival of your business, the wrong decision can negatively impact you for years. Once you have made your decision, the fun really starts. Listed below are some simple steps that we call A.C.T.I.O.N. to ensure that your project runs smoothly.

Accountability ~ From the start, make sure that you understand who will be responsible for each project element. Communication should be in writing just in case you need a reference later on in the project.

Contracts ~ You should always read the contracts thoroughly to understand the termination liabilities, upfront costs and all the fine print. Any verbal commitments should be confirmed in writing.

Time Frames ~ Because there are often many vendors involved in any telecom project, it is vital that you understand the next steps. Contracts need to be approved. Orders have to be placed. There is the physical installation of the telephone lines and the final testing and turn-up of the services. Knowing these critical dates will eliminate many of the surprises that accompany telecom projects and help to keep all parties involved on schedule.

Implementation ~ It is D Day. You have completed all the planning and are ready to turn up your new services. Make sure that you have a written plan. It is also valuable to have contact information for any escalation points that might be needed. You expect the best, but it is important to prepare for the worst.

Optimization ~ Once you have completed the bulk of the conversion, you should test your applications. Dial all your telephone numbers, including toll free. Test web browsing, e-mail and any VPN connections related to your Internet. If it is a data solution, ensure that all remote locations have access. Making small adjustments are much easier when you have all of the parties engaged compared to trying to assemble the team a few days later.

FiNalize ~ OK. This one does not start with N, but it is a critical step. Once you have completed your project, update all your documentation including circuit ID's, support contact information and contract end dates. Completing this step while everything is fresh in your mind will save time later. It is also valuable to review the first couple of bills in detail. It is much easier to fix billing right away rather than allowing it to sit for a couple of months.

Managing any telecom project can be very complex. A project ran smoothly allows you to continue seamlessly, adding the value and cost savings that you expected. A disjointed project can lead to downtime, idle workers and lost customers. By taking ACTION, you significantly increase the likelihood that your project will go as expected. At Orion, we have 15 years of experience guiding our clients through the entire process; from proposal to planning through implementation and providing on-going support. Call us today and see how we can help.

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Your Cure for the Common Carrier

Telcom Tidbits

FROM ORION COMMUNICATIONS

Promo Time

As the end of the year approaches, carriers are looking to cut deals to end the year strong. There are contract buyouts, extra discounts and other concessions that can be combined to have customers convert their telecom services. Now is the time to reduce costs, evaluate your options, upgrade services and increase bandwidth. As an experienced representative of most of the major carriers, Orion can help to negotiate the best deal for your telecom services.



It's More Than the Rate

When looking at proposals for telecom services, it is important to review the whole picture.

Hidden Fees and Charges ~ Many times there are extra charges that didn't show up on the proposals. Request that service fees, taxes and extra charges all be included on the proposal.

Bundles ~ Carriers often offer bundled services. Although the proposal may save you money, the bundled offer may be more than you need when other promotions may save you even more.

When reviewing your options, make sure you are looking at all the elements including the rates, usage, projected volume and the taxes/surcharges.

New WI Area Code

Effective October 17th, a new 534 area code was launched in northern Wisconsin to accommodate requests for additional telephone numbers. This is not an area code split, but instead an overlay.

Currently, there is a permissive dialing period where 7 digits can still be called. However, **effective July 17th, 2010**, it will be required to dial the whole 10 digits.

This should not impact the usage rates for local calls, but it is advised to review the first couple of bills to make sure. There may be changes required for your telephone system to revise how calls are routed with the new 10 digit dialing.

Did You Know ...

By the end of 2009, Orion Communications will have put back over \$6,000,000 into the pockets of our customers relating to telecom services. We have completed 150 projects in the last three years, averaging a monthly cost reduction of 28%, often including one-time credits for past over-billing. Knowing that every dollar counts, why not let us produce similar results for your organizations?

STRATEGIC PLANNING

POSITIONING YOUR ORGANIZATION FOR 2010 AND BEYOND

For a number of organizations, pushing through 2009 was a challenge. Tough economic times took a toll on even the best of plans. The last thing many organizations want to add to the pile to consider is the tedious and time consuming area of telecom services. However, communications service is the entry point to your business. Understanding your current telecom services combined with the technology that is available to you can make or break your organization looking to the future.

The Big 3

Business Continuity ~ Do you have a Plan B should any part of your telecom services be unavailable for any reason? Many organizations revert to a panic mode when things are not working as expected. Creating a comprehensive plan can be very complex when considering all of your critical

applications, but did you know that there are simple steps that can be followed to ensure business continues as usual?

Cost Reduction ~ Looking back over the past year, there are many vital projects have been cut from the budget. If these projects could have been funded, what positive impacts could have been realized?

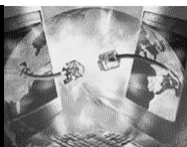
Alignment ~ For many organizations, telecom costs are merely expense line items on the P&L. But, telecom upgrades can significantly influence the overall productivity of your organization.

If telecom services are essential to your organization, it is time to contact Orion Communications. We can help you take a strategic look at your telecom services to see how certain elements can help propel your organization in the years to come.

CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

INSURANCE RISK MANAGEMENT COMPANY

Challenge



Solution

Changes in customer needs required the integration of several communications applications, many of which were outsourced. Telecom and system costs were increasing exponentially as these outsourced applications were being individually adapted to meet the changing needs. The customer needed more control of their systems so that flexibility could be maximized to meet future objectives.

Challenges:

- Isolated systems were minimizing flexibility.
- Internet access was too slow to meet changing needs.
- A geographically diverse user base required multiple telephone system platforms.
- Telecom costs were much higher than necessary.
- Telecom services were spread across several carriers which made on-going support time consuming.
- Multiple communications applications were becoming increasingly difficult to integrate.

After evaluating their options, it was determined that in house solutions needed to be developed to maximize productivity and flexibility. By converting the individual hosted solutions into a series of internal resources, the customer was able to build a platform that could be easily adjusted to the ever-changing needs of their customers. The system integration was completely funded by telecom savings generated from the project.

Outcomes:

- Reduced telecom costs by 46%, generating \$80,000 per year that could be reallocated to fund new internal applications.
- Increased Internet speed by 200% better supporting new applications.
- One seamless telephone system to supporting internal and remote users.
- New telephone system applications increasing user productivity and improving business flow.
- Increase voice line capacity by 130% providing a path for growth and flexibility.
- By consolidating carriers, on-going support was more manageable.

HAD ENOUGH?

THE OVERWHELMING TOLLS OF TELECOM

Are you tired of monitoring telephone bills and spending endless hours reconciling errors? Is the turnover of your telecom carrier teams making your head spin? Are you overwhelmed by new technologies and carrier options? You know that there has to be a better way.

Introducing teleSAVE and teleTRACK+ from Orion

In order to meet the changing needs of our customers, Orion Communications has developed service offerings to help them reduce costs and increase overall productivity. Similar to outsourcing health insurance benefits to an expert in the field, Orion has 15 years experience managing solutions assessments, implementations and on-going support in the telecom industry.

Why Turn to Orion?

- Average monthly telecom cost reduction of 28%
- Expedited issue resolution
- Simplified billing
- Support for multiple carriers
- Single telecom point of contact

If you could transfer your telecom headaches to a highly trained, experienced group of professionals, fund any additional costs AND still save money each month, would there be value in investing some time to explore these options? Give us a call today and we will help evaluate how our services can help your organization.

Your Cure for the Common Carrier