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3 Strategies to Save Costs on Your Telecom

In our time dealing with telecommunications environments, both as a seller of and a buyer of telecom services, we've gleaned a lot of great strategies we'd like to share with you. Because we know how telecom companies structure their pricing and billing, and because we know that most often, telecom billing contains errors, we offer these ideas to you.

Controlling costs associated with this essential business tool is one of the easiest and fastest ways to pull your costs into line, allowing you to do reallocate those dollars elsewhere in your organisation.

1. Create and maintain an inventory of services being used

- Collect all invoices being paid for telecom, datacom and services (telephone company bills, cable bills, hardware maintenance, etc.)
- Create a spreadsheet with column labels: Site Name/Number (if multiples exist), Site Address, Service Type, Provider, Account Number, Contract Start Date, Contract End Date, Monthly Cost, Install Date, Disconnect Date, Notes.
- Match each invoice to the site being serviced. For example, if you have multiple locations, match the phone bills for site #123 to that site in the spreadsheet.
- Do the same for wireless services if your company provides wireless devices to employees. This is important even if your company reimburses employees for wireless devices.
- Match each wireless phone number to the employee, department and site. This can be easily downloaded from the supplier portal if the wireless device was ordered with user specific information as identifier.
- As services are ordered or disconnected, update the inventory accordingly so that you know precisely what you're paying for each month. This will also help you track any overbilling should disconnected services not stop billing.

2. Create a program to actively oversee current vendors and services.

- Review provider contracts annually to prevent auto-renewal of outdated pricing models.
 - It's common for service providers to include an "auto renewal" clause in their contracts. These clauses

usually give the customer a specific timeframe before the contract term expires, to notify the supplier that the contract should not be renewed. If the customer doesn't notify the supplier, the contract term renews, at the original pricing, often for a full new term.

- These same suppliers usually have lower priced services as the market drives higher functionality at lower cost.

■ Access provider reports regularly to check for cost errors and opportunities to eliminate waste.

- Outdated plans
- Zero use devices-very common among large organizations
- Excess data usage-common when employees use their corporate device for personal reasons such as streaming
- Make sure your landline services are billing according to contract. It's surprising how often there are errors on the bill (average 60%)

■ Don't be afraid to go shopping!

- Many companies overlook these cost savings which can be attained simply by either renegotiating the contract with the existing provider, or evaluating other providers who are willing to attract the customer with lower rates.

3. Where possible, centralize procurement of services to maximize bulk pricing opportunities and incent suppliers.

- Suppliers love large opportunities so bundle as many locations together as possible and incent suppliers to give you better pricing on the whole.
- Centralization of procurement and billing saves operational costs internally-fewer bills to pay and easier ordering of services.