

The Communicator

vol. 1
no. 2

A Monthly Telecommunications Update from RAM Communications

TAXES, TAXES, AND FEES!

Since April 15th is around the corner, we thought it would be rather timely to discuss those wonderful taxes and access fees on your telecom bills. Unfortunately, your phone bill taxes and fees are almost as high as your business and income taxes. While we can't negotiate reducing your telecom taxes, there are a few ways to minimize those fees.

Long Distance Access Charges: LD access fees have risen substantially in the last eight months. Individual line fees are now \$4.33 per line. So, if you have modem lines or any voice lines that are not being used for long distance, eliminate the LD services on them. This will help eliminate unnecessary charges.

Linebacker: For those of you using Ameritech services, please review your bills! You can lower your Ameritech bill safely and easily by eliminating Linebacker. Linebacker is a nonessential service for your inside wiring. Businesses can save substantial money eliminating Linebacker. Call us today for more information.

RAM TIP: RELOCATION PLANNING

If you or someone you know has plans to move business locations, you need to be aware of several things. Moving can be very exciting and stressful, and we want to make sure your telecom services move as smoothly as possible. Here are a few key points to remember when planning your move.

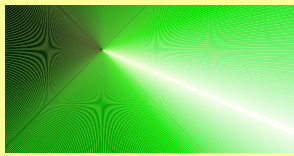
Location, Location, Location: The availability of certain telecom services can vary greatly throughout the Chicagoland area. Be sure to check your potential new 'home' with RAM. We can help you determine if services like DSL are available in your new location. Knowing any potential service limitations ahead of time will help you pick the best service area for your new office.

Get a Firm Date: It is extremely important to establish your move-in date as soon as possible. Telephone and Internet providers need at least six weeks to install and test your services before your people move in.

Property Management Information: It's always a good idea to check the building requirements with your new property manager. For example, is there fiber available in your building? Will the PBX vendor have access to the building phone closet or is it locked? Answers to these questions will help the phone company install your services more quickly and efficiently.

Equipment Inventory: Many times business moves require new or upgraded phone equipment. (The same can also be said for your computer equipment.) Since phone equipment and phone services go hand in hand, RAM strongly recommends clients set up a planning meeting with both your service provider and equipment provider. We are more than happy to set up a vendor meeting on your behalf. Vendor meetings will help you answer important questions and concerns about the tasks at hand.

These tips give you a starting point. As you can see, there are many important things to consider in your move. We're only talking about your telecom services! RAM will be more than happy to help you plan and implement your new services to help you save time and aggravation. Please call us as soon as you have any relocation plans.



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THE MANY ADVANTAGES OF COLLOCATION

Every business owner or operator has projects and goals they want to accomplish. There are many challenges and distractions that make these agendas difficult to fulfill. In at least one respect, some telecom providers can actually help businesses achieve their goals.

Collocation services are not new; however, most small and midsize businesses have never even heard of collocation much less know its potential benefits. We feel the best way to explain its value is by showing you a typical business scenario:

ABC Company has tried to keep its escalating computer budgets down.

They would also like to utilize their IT staff for their original purpose –creating and implementing their website and e-commerce plans.

Presently, the IT staff is spending most of their time trouble-shooting servers and upgrading the staff's computer software.

Unfortunately, both problems have worsened over time.

Finally, the CFO asks B Telecom to come in and analyze their data and internet needs with the IT Staff. B telecom has a facility available to host and maintain ABC's network and web servers –24x7. This frees up the IT Staff from their maintenance duties. B Telecom's facility is also more secure. No one is allowed into the equipment area without authorization and ID. B Telecom's monitoring and support staff keep ABC's IT Staff aware of all changes, upgrades and service issues by email and phone call. B Telecom can also supply ABC with updated software titles and support for their daily business needs. ABC's computer budget is reduced greatly since they no longer have to pay expensive software license and upgrade fees. B Telecom simply charges a monthly service. The service is substantially lower than ABC's current costs when software, hardware and human labor costs are calculated.

Is collocation right for your business? Here's a quick checklist. If you answer 'yes' to at least two of these questions, your business may want to consider investigating collocation. Call RAM today for more help.

Are your business computer costs increasing more than 10% annually?

Is the IT Staff using their talents for your revenue-producing projects or for computer maintenance?

Does your entire staff have access to your network hardware –computer room?

Do your clients ever have issues accessing your company's website or online services?

ACRONYM CORNER

Here are some more acronyms for your telecom dictionary:

ILEC	I ncumbent L ocal E xchange C arrier (i.e. Ameritech, Bell South, etc.)
SLA	S ervice L evel A greement (telco performance guarantee)
CSR	C ustomer S ervice R eport
ISP	I nternet S ervice P rovider
FOC	F irm O rders C ommitment (tentative installation date)
ASP	A pplication S ervice P rovider (business software provider)