



The Communicator

A Monthly Telecom Update from RAM Communications

Vol. 3
Issue 2

copyright
2003

voice 847.358.0917 fax 847.358.1340 www.ramcomminc.com info@ramcomminc.com

www.fcc.gov

The Last Resort For Billing Disputes . . .

Sometimes situations arise where, despite a customer's best efforts, phone companies are unable or unwilling to comply with certain requests. In some cases, RAM may call upon a client's old carrier a half dozen times for service cancellations that are never completed. In other cases, clients receive phone bills from carriers they never heard of. These situations can create long hours of futile activity for everyone.

In these cases, RAM relies heavily upon the Consumer Complaints Division of the FCC. In our experience, the FCC is willing and able to address unethical telecom practices when all other efforts fail. The FCC's process is not quick but it is effective. Within thirty days of registering a complaint, the FCC notifies the phone company in question. At that point, the phone company has two choices: either deliver documented proof that the client owes the money billed (via a signed contract) or, drop the billing matter altogether. If the phone company does not correspond with the FCC within thirty days, the client is free of any obligations. The FCC further enforces this law by fining the offending carrier and creating a public record of the incident.

If you would like more information, simply visit the Web at: www.fcc.gov/cgb/complaints.

If you wish to file residential or business related complaints, you will need: a copy of the phone bill in question, a record of phone calls or written correspondence with the carrier in question, and, billing information for your current provider. Look for the "Filing a Complaint" section. You will find clear guidelines for filing electronically, via fax or via the postal service.

The FCC is a good last resort and, a good way to avoid paying legal and administrative fees. Please call RAM Communications if you have any further questions.

RAM Professional Services

RAM Communications is pleased to announce its latest offering, RAM Professional Services. There are two versions designed to provide quality control for all your business telecommunications needs.

RAM Complete goes above and beyond RAM's normal support program. For a monthly fee, RAM assumes all your telecommunications tasks and manages them for you. Aside from normal phone service support, RAM will help coordinate equipment vendors, national account planning, telecom budget planning, and complete service contract reviews. If it's related to telecommunications, RAM is here to help.

The second program is called RAM Project. With RAM Project, clients control their outsourcing costs and still receive high quality support. If your business has a special project or a specific problem that requires our expertise, Project is your answer.

RAM Communications is very flexible. Call us anytime. We'll be happy to sit down and develop a program that meets your company's budget and technical requirements.

Acronym Corner

QoS Quality of Service is a VOIP protocol that gives voice calls priority over data transmission

ANI Automatic Number Identification transmits the billed party phone number to the other party's caller ID display

CCIS Common Channel Interoffice Signaling enables phone companies the ability to send address, number information and other data across the public phone network as well as rerouting calls during service outages

Saving Clients Time, Money and Aggravation



The Communicator

A Monthly Telecom Update from RAM Communications

Vol. 3
Issue 2

copyright
2003

voice 847.358.0917 fax 847.358.1340 www.ramcomminc.com info@ramcomminc.com

VOIP: What is it?

What's the Hoopla About? Part II

In our first installment covering Voice Over Internet Protocol, we highlighted some history and functionality of this phone technology. Now, we will touch on some key areas where VOIP is an ideal business application and where it is not.

In our first article, we made a critical distinction between the two types of VOIP calls. The first and most common, IP to public, sends an IP-based call from a local computer network and terminates the call at a phone number on the public network. The second method, IP to IP calling, sends a call over the internet to another internet-based number. If a business has two locations, for example, and sets up a private network for IP phone calls, then there are features and savings to be explored. Remember, the only way a VOIP call is free is if it terminates on another IP network.

In a multi-location, IP environment, businesses can save money *if* most of their phone calls run between their own offices. Large corporations have taken advantage of this scenario for several years now. Most smaller, single location businesses will not enjoy any savings because their calls go to public-based phone numbers and not IP-based numbers.

What is important for all business owners and IT Directors to remember is this: VOIP is a software application. As a software application, VOIP delivers calling features and tools not found on traditional phone systems and services. VOIP enables executives to travel and change their office environments quickly and easily. If a user has an IP phone, it can be carried and used anywhere in the world as long as there is an internet connection available.

IP telephony allows end-users (remember, this is software) ability to program their own voicemail features, do-not-disturb programs and "follow me" services. A "follow me" service allows a user ability to forward calls from their office phone to any computer or IP-based phone. VOIP is about the freedom to move and keep your office with you. There are great call management features as well.

If you would like to have more information, please call RAM Communications at 847-358-0917 or email us at: info@ramcomminc.com

Telecom Trends . . .

FCC Inhibits State Regulations Governing VOIP Providers

The Federal Communications Commission handed down a significant ruling on November 9, 2004. The ruling declared that Internet telephony services are "not subject to traditional state public utility regulation". The ruling not only encompasses VOIP offerings from traditional phone companies, it also covers those Internet-based phone services provide by cable companies.

The reason for the ruling is based on the very nature of VOIP. Since the service runs on Internet connections, there is no way for anyone to separate interstate and intrastate calls. No one, for example, will know if an IP call originates in Japan much less in Wisconsin or Illinois.

The FCC also concluded that VOIP carriers are subject to the same public safety requirements as traditional phone companies. This means all VOIP service are required, by law, to provide E911 information to local emergency operators.

These latest rulings are significant to state governments and to business consumers. The FCC is continuing to take regulatory powers away from the states when it comes to VOIP services. So, it will be the FCC's responsibility to decide how VOIP products are taxed and regulated. As both residential and business users gradually adopt VOIP technologies, state and local governments will certainly lose taxable revenues they've relied on for decades.

Business consumers will also be forced to address public safety when it comes to VOIP. Until a VOIP service is E911 compliant, safety for employees must be called into question.

Saving Clients Time, Money and Aggravation