

## AFFECT YOUR BOTTOM LINE... BY RE-EVALUATING YOUR MOBILE COMMUNICATION

The boom in wireless telecommunications in business is nothing short of phenomenal, exceeding predictions (IEC 1999) that it would grow to 30% of total telecom expense by 2005. A recent Yankee Group study indicated that corporations classified as much as 15% of their personnel as "mobile" (2000).

Although wireless is being embraced as an effective tool for business productivity, many companies, in an effort to maintain control of their wireless assets and expenditures, have yet to develop an integrated wireless strategy.

The current competitive business climate dictates an increased focus on the bottom line, and now more than ever, one place to tighten business expenses is right in your hand – It's your wireless phone.

### MANAGING THE BOOM

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Contrary to popular conception, use of cellular phones came about by individual employee choice rather than through specific corporate policy or strategy. The end result is that many accounting and IT departments have not efficiently accommodated the growing dependency on cellular phone usage.

As a result, the corporate tool of choice for managing wireless payment is often the employee expense report. Although this is not a cost-efficient strategy, it is perceived as efficient, because:

- Costs are distributed to the appropriate department or cost center
- Expense report approval process provides oversight by local management
- Employee responsibility for the phone and plan purchase simplifies implementation
- End-users, rather than the corporation, are responsible for payment to service providers

#### **One must also consider the downsides to this approach which include:**

- No purchasing leverage with service providers
- High cost of expense report processing (\$36 per report, based on a 1997 study by American Express )
- No device standardization - necessary for deployment of new services

- No centralized asset management and control of services
- No trending or forecasting of usage and spending
- No accurate accounting of who is using wireless
- No clear data on specific wireless expenditures, or identification of service providers

To help accomplish business objectives and to effectively embrace exciting new communications technologies ( including personal digital assistants, Internet-ready phones, etc. ), use of the expense report needs to be abandoned in favour of a more effective and cost-managed business model.

## GETTING A HANDLE ON WIRELESS

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Few companies would consider having employees purchase and expense the computer equipment used for business, and yet that same decision is too often left to the individual employees when it comes to wireless phones.

Corporations must recognize that wireless phones have become just as crucial to business as the computer, and must begin to understand, control and manage mobile assets as well as they manage other valued technologies.

Accordingly, many businesses are now embracing corporate billing as the best practice to consolidate service providers, improve overall service, and to manage costs. Specific benefits of this corporate model include:

- Corporate discounts on chargeable minutes
- Control of vendor, plan, and hardware
- Centralized usage and billing information
- Lower overall administrative costs

## CONSIDER A MOVE

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Implementing such an all encompassing corporate strategy can be an overwhelming task, but accessibility of third party tools will help streamline the important task of centralizing and managing wireless technologies and costs. Web-based applications fully integrate usage and billing data from all sources, now allowing companies with more than one service provider a centralized, timely and flexible management solution of those assets and costs.

That flexibility extends to proactive assessment. Applying the latest technological advancements, corporate users are able to assess and implement the best usage plans and maintain the lowest cost per minute on a month to month basis.

## **ABOUT ALLIANCE INFORMATION SYSTEMS**

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Alliance Information Systems is proudly Canada's only cross-carrier provider of enterprise wireless management solutions. Headquartered in Calgary, Alberta, Alliance Information Systems and the allianceone tool provide companies with unprecedented cross-carrier visibility into their wireless spending.