

The Seven Dirtiest Tricks of Telecommunications & Cloud Providers



and
How to Avoid Them

“They are all evil.”

Those were the words of my client, not me. I had asked him why he agreed to meet with me rather than trying to work directly with the service providers to evaluate telecom services for his new office. His response was both immediate and pointed.

Wow. Here is an industry that is mission critical to virtually EVERY facet of our lives. It not only touches every aspect of business, it is essential to the most basic, day to day functions of 99.999% of EVERY business. Without telecom services, the vast majority of our lives would quickly grind to a halt. And yet, the companies who make up that very industry, so crucial to our lives, are held in such contempt by so many. The impact of that moment was, to say the least, eye-opening. They’re almost as bad as politicians!! Almost...

In just over 20 years, we have witnessed and benefitted from the transformation of electronic communications from a hard-wired rotary phone in the kitchen, to instantaneous connection to virtually anybody, anywhere, any time. Along with it, we have seen the breakup and rebuilding of vast corporate empires controlling the development and delivery of those technologies.

To be fair, given the rate of progress experienced by technology in general, and telecom in particular, it is difficult to avoid a lot of mistakes that would tend to irritate and frustrate people. And I am not advocating the notion that “They are all evil”. However, much of their reputation is well deserved.

I have worked in the telecom industry for the past 20 years, selling everything from local and long distance minutes, to entire unified, multi-national networks, from wiring to wireless. And I have experienced the good, the bad and the ugly of most aspects of the industry. In that time I have learned some high-priced lessons along with some ways to avoid the pain I see businesses experiencing every single day.

Being a dragon-slayer at heart, I want to help where I can. So, in that spirit I’m happy to share with you, what I

have identified as the 7 most common things the telecom companies do that do the most to frustrate their customers.



#1

Finger Pointing

Your alert goes off in the middle of the night. Or worse, DOESN'T. And it's because your network is down. Business has come to a grinding halt. And you know it's going to be a rough day. You check the routers to make sure they don't need to be rebooted and then call the carrier...that's when it starts getting really ugly. After the inevitable navigation through phone jail and wait on hold, you describe the problem to the rep on the phone. They assure you they will get on it immediately citing their contractual promise of a 2-hour response time.

Tick...tick...tick....



2-hours later – You have just finished being chewed out by the customer service manager because her department is at a standstill. They cannot fulfill the multi-million dollar order they just received from your star sales guy who is calling you right now. EVERYONE is calling you right now. Well not everyone... No call from the carrier and it's been two hours. So you call them back. "Did you check the routers?" is the response.

"Yes, two hours ago. I told you that when I called earlier"

"Well we don't support those routers because you provided them yourself. And the circuit tests clear. So, the problem looks like it's on your end. You should re-check the routers and the wiring in the building."



If you haven't **yet** experienced this, congratulations! You're one of the very few fortunate ones. Finger-pointing usually first occurs during installation of services. Missed due dates, improperly configured circuits, incomplete installations, testing, or turn-up are all too common problems that occur, and this is just during installation. If there's a problem after the circuit is installed, their FIRST line of customer service is to blame the hardware vendor, the professional services vendor or even YOU as the customer.



Understand that the reason for this is simply, MONEY. The less blame they have to take, or the more time they can take means less money they have to give up in the form of bill credits. And the reason that many of these problems occur in the first place is MONEY. Typically their project management teams are consolidated in a centralized area and they never meet with the clients in person because they are 1,500 miles away and managing 20 other installations at the same time. Consequently, YOUR install does not get the attention it needs.

When I worked as an account manager for a large telecom service provider, I discovered that the difference between a stellar customer service experience and a horrific one, quite often, fell on my shoulders. As their account manager, my clients quickly learned that I THRIVED on charging to the rescue. So, when the finger pointing started, my phone would ring immediately. On would go the armor, out would come the sword, and my sales manager would see me coming from down the hall. He tried everything, from pretending he was on the phone to telling me he was just leaving for a meeting. But in the end, he knew that I was not letting go of it until the problem got solved and my client was safe again.

It helped that he cared as well. But, in the final analysis what it ALWAYS took, was dogged persistence in making the provider so miserable that it was easier to fix the problem than to continue putting up with me. And, unfortunately it is still much the same even now.

Avoiding finger-pointing requires three very important steps:

1. Upfront negotiation and documentation of agreements – You have the most power BEFORE you sign a service agreement. So make sure you have, IN WRITING, the SLAs (Service level agreements) regarding installation timeframe, circuit turn-up, cutover, testing and disengagement. Your contract should also cover SLAs with respect to up/downtime, repair responsibility (including response time). And cancellation options due to non-performance.
2. Understand that SOMETIMES they're right. – It pains me to say it, but sometimes, the problem is NOT on the carrier's end. So make sure you have documented responsibilities of all parties involved of a cutover and all items which could affect a service disruption
3. Get a champion – Sadly, often times, you simply don't have the leverage to make them care enough to fix your problem. If you have a good account team, keep them. If you don't, then get one. You know...like...ME!!

Slamming —the illegal practice of changing your local or long-distance telephone service without your permission. Before a telephone company can switch a customer, it must obtain the customer's permission through a written or electronic letter of agency, an electronic verification from the customer's telephone number, or independent third-party verification.

Slamming used to be a much bigger problem, but it still occurs. It usually takes the form of switching over individual lines to a different, higher priced long-distance carrier. They usually pick one or two lines out of a large group, so it is more difficult to detect.

Here's how to avoid these overcharges:

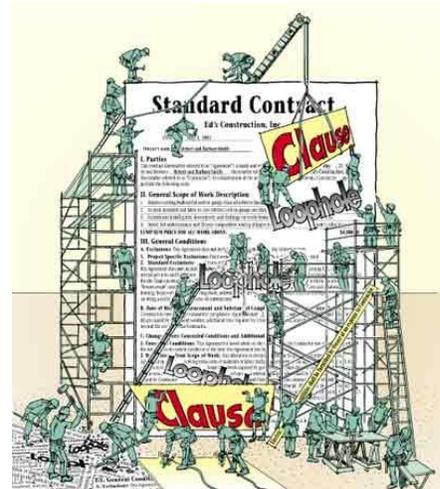
- It begins UP FRONT. Negotiate the right services at the right rate. That way you KNOW what should be on your bills. And wherever possible, negotiate contract terms which allow you to flexibility when mysterious overcharges occur.
- Document and keep track of your services, keep a file that tracks every line or circuit, the responsible carrier along with contact numbers, circuit ID's and contract termination dates.
- Regularly review your bills and services - at least every 6 months.
- Work with your accounts payable people and have them alert you if a telecom bill is higher OR lower than average.
- Once a red flag is raised, investigate it, DOCUMENT it and inform your telecom provider promptly and IN WRITING of any discrepancies. Do NOT let it go until you get satisfaction. And continue to be a thorn in the side of the carrier until they recognize that it's easier to fix your problem than to try and ignore it.

#3

Contract Clauses

They can tell you pretty much anything in the proposal process. But once they have your signature on the service agreement, the real truth comes out. I have found, in approximately 75% of telecom contracts that I've either evaluated or negotiated for clients, some clause that is seriously detrimental to the client.

To make matters worse, they pull little tricks, like referring to a website with an extended set of terms and conditions, to which you are agreeing by signing their agreement. Here are a few egregious examples:



The “Evergreen” Clause – This is a particularly nasty little clause if you’ve never heard of it. And it sounds so nice and refreshing, like a hike in the forest! It is however, aptly named to ensure the carriers’ pockets are “evergreen”. And I learned early on to make this a primary focus in ALL contract negotiations.

One of our clients absolutely loved the solutions we had discussed with them. The solution would double their bandwidth while decreasing their costs by about 35%. The



only matter left to discuss was the termination of their existing contract. It had been 3 years and 2 months since they had signed their 3-year term with their existing provider. So, they naturally thought that they were on a month-to-month basis.

NOPE.

They were mortified to find out that there was an “Evergreen” clause in their contract. It didn’t even renew to an annual basis. The evergreen clause renewed their contract for **THE LENGTH OF THE ORIGINAL TERM!** That’s right. **THREE MORE YEARS!** And there was not a darn thing anyone could do about it. The evergreen clause has been court tested and is absolutely valid.

The “Rate Change” Clause – One of my clients runs her own small business out of her home. But she needed a specialized type of ISDN service that is not very common any more. She had just signed a two-year term and was shocked to find, three months in, that they had changed her rates. And, in what direction do you suppose the rate change went?



Up, of course! Upon investigation, we discovered that the carrier had hidden a clause in her service contract that allowed them to raise her rates at any time and claim “Increased costs” forced them to do it. What is the point of a term agreement if it does not protect you from rate increases? Well, it protects the carrier from having to worry about you changing service because of their crummy service.

And did you know there are standard clauses that can be EASILY negotiated in to protect you? They don’t advertise them.

For example:

Business Turndown Clause - This gives you the option of reducing or eliminating services with no penalty if business takes a turn for the worse. Make sure that this is CLEARLY defined

SLA - The Service Level Agreement (SLA) sets out the performance characteristics of the services you are purchasing. Standard SLA language from most providers frames these as merely aspirational objectives, not contractually enforceable commitments. This language needs to be changed to establish performance guarantees. Failure to meet those guarantees should expose a carrier to substantial liabilities.

Unfortunately, carriers routinely offer only very modest credits as a customer’s exclusive remedy for SLA failures. These need to be increased substantially together with the addition of a termination right for chronic failures. Finally, don’t forget to except the SLAs from your contract’s general disclaimer of warranties language to avoid the argument that the SLAs are nullified by that provision.

#4

Once They've Got You, They Really Don't Care.

Have you ever noticed that the only times you hear from your carrier are when they want to sell you something? Have you ever called, mid-contract to try and get your provider to fix a problem or clear up a billing concern?



One day, a client and I were having lunch. We had recently resolved a major billing problem he was having with his carrier. He had been fighting with them for SEVEN months. Now, by “fighting”, what I mean is that HE was calling, sending e-mails, letters, smoke signals and whatever else he could think of. The carrier’s idea of fighting was to simply ignore him. The customer service people on the phone would tell promise him the problem was cleared up. When he tried to escalate it, e-mails and calls simply went

unanswered. Meanwhile both the CFO and the President were breathing down his neck, and he was looking bad.

So I got to slay that dragon, which, for me, was a few phone calls to escalate the situation to the right people and illustrate how this problem would become THEIR problem. They solved the issue the same week and even provided substantial bill credit to compensate him for the previous overcharges and his aggravation.

“You really pulled me out of the fire. How in the world did you do it?” He asked me.

“Simple math”, was my answer. He looked at me as though I had grown a second head.

“Let me explain” I said. “Your monthly bill is approximately \$5,000 a month. Right? And you have about 18 months left on your contract. So, no matter how bad they treat you right now, you’re not going anywhere for at least a year and a half. And, sadly most of their customers assume it’s the same all over. So, most of them won’t jump ship even when they have the opportunity to do so. Consequently, their MAXIMUM risk is \$5,000 a month in renewal loss and a sternly worded Yelp review. The sad fact is that you’re just not that important to them. “

“The GOOD news however, is that you ARE that important to me. And, I represent, either directly or indirectly, probably a million dollars a month of existing business and something like \$10,000 per month of NEW business. That’s all at risk if they tick ME off.”

“That’s not fair.” He lamented.

“You are correct”, was my only response.

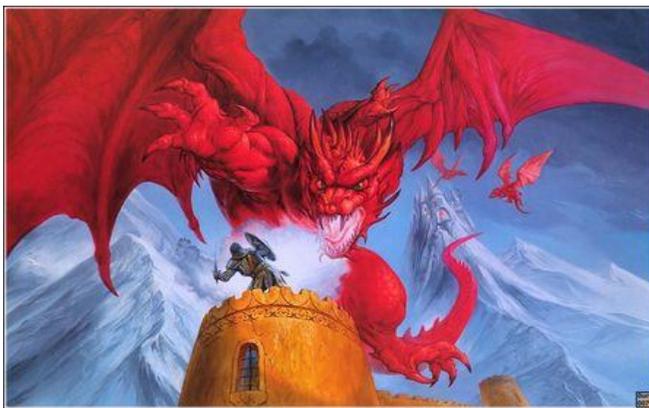
He ordered extra dessert because I was paying...

If I may, please allow me to take a moment to clarify a few points.

If my story paints me in as the sole hero of the story, single handedly slaying dragons, you would have every reason to believe me to be completely mad. Perhaps you've seen this saying...?



I assume you've noticed, as I have, how much BIGGER dragons are than the knights battling them? And they've got those long talons, really big razor sharp teeth, and they fly. And, if that's not bad enough, they breathe fire! What kind of idiot would want to fight THAT?



Huge telecom companies, like dragons, have us outmatched in almost every way. They are bigger, stronger, richer and better armed. They've got armies of lawyers, tons of money. They own the very infrastructure that is mission critical to your business. And they have no obvious reason to fear, or even respect us. So it seems mad to do battle with them.

So, I found out how to do three things:

- 1) **Make The Fight Fair** – On our own, you and I would be hopelessly outmatched. So, to make the fight fair, I got an army. I affiliated myself with a host of “master agencies” These companies not only provide, terrific engineering help, but more importantly, they represent a large enough book of business to the service providers, that they respond much better to requests and concerns
- 2) **Make Us Be Not Quite So Tasty, Even With Ketchup** – This is a little trickier. What I did, was to develop key relationships within the telecom providers as well as the master agencies. As a result, I have resources within them that help make me much more bitter to chew on. Simply put, it becomes easier and less expensive to give me what I want (good service for my clients) than it is to ignore me.
- 3) **Know Their Weakness** – Notice that I said they've got us outmatched in ALMOST every way? Everyone's got a weakness. Superman's is kryptonite, Indiana Jones is snakes, and I don't like spiders.

Well, the telecom service providers have a few weaknesses of their own, IF you know

how to exploit them. The three main points of vulnerability are:

- a. **The Public Utilities Commission** – This is the governmental body that oversees the telecom companies. If you've properly documented your beef with them, sometimes the mere threat of a formal complaint to the PUC can be enough to get them to move out of your way.
- b. **The Clock** – Here's an industry secret. Telecom reps are HEAVILY evaluated and measured on a monthly and quarterly basis. There is ALWAYS a huge internal push at the end of the month to get orders in and ENORMOUS pressure applied to the reps from several managerial levels to do so. Usually at the end of the month, they bring in as many administrative and engineering staff together as possible to process those orders. So, you don't want to have a technical problem around that time. HOWEVER, negotiating contract terms and last-minute rate changes is IDEAL at this time. And, this end of month pressure is magnified at the ends of quarters and fiscal years, it's a real thing. And you CAN use it to your advantage.
- c. **Their Competition** – If you show a carrier that their competition will give you what you want, 9 times out of 10, they will give it to you as well. This should come as no surprise. I believe they call it, "human nature". But it certainly holds true in this industry as well, if they are able to do so. The caveat here is that, truly in a significant number of cases, different providers legitimately have different abilities to provide special consideration. This is a weakness best exploited in the beginning of a relationship. Although I have on some occasions used it to inspire cooperation.



#5

They're Probably Overcharging You

The CEO of a telecom company for whom I worked, shared some wisdom with me some years ago at a training session.

“Do you know how we make our money, REALLY?” He asked me. At the time I was young, inexperienced and wanting to prove that I was up to the challenge of being asked a loaded question by the CEO of a major telecom conglomerate, I wasted no time in confidently stammering, “....uuuuh....well...ummm...good customer service?....” all while smiling weakly at him.



He gave me this look for what seemed like an hour and a half and sort of half-sighed.

“No. It’s not customer service.” he said as patiently as he could. “We make money a tenth of a cent at a time.” He went on to explain that, by making a one-tenth of a cent adjustment in something like long distance rates, they can add tens of millions of dollars of PROFIT every year with little to NO backlash from their customers, especially when those customers are under contract with contract clauses that allow them to do it!

And they’ve got a lot of ways of either hiding your actual costs or withholding pricing reductions that are available to you. Here’re some of the big ones:

Surcharges – Look at your bill. How is it that the \$350 PRI you ordered is now \$570? Simple, Government surcharges. You’ve got, federal, state, and even local taxes and surcharges to deal with like, EUCL, LNP, E-911, and dozens of others.

These are, for the most part, legitimate charges that the carriers are required to charge.

Although I’ve seen plenty of these charges incorrectly applied, and ALWAYS in the favor of the carrier. However, have you ever noticed that when you ask for pricing, they NEVER include these charges in your projected costs? Part of the answer as to why is actually legitimate. To be fair, the surcharges are frequently changed by forces outside the control of the carrier. However, different types of circuits require different types and levels of surcharges. So, having



that information can have an impact in weighing different options when you are evaluating new services.

Unfortunately, sometimes they are a bit underhanded in their approach. Recently, one carrier added a new fee to monthly phone bills it classifies as a “non-telecom services surcharge.” The company said they, “instituted a surcharge rather than a rate increase to reduce the number of changes to customers’ bills. The surcharge is applied at the customer-account level, rather than on individual services. A surcharge also can be more easily reduced or eliminated if future circumstances permit”.

However, classifying the fee as a surcharge rather than including it as part of a rate increase allows them to hike monthly bills on customers who may be locked into multi-year price-lock guarantees. The company said no customers who subscribe to voicemail or inside wiring maintenance will be exempt from the surcharge. And the fine print on his company’s three-year price-lock promotion states that surcharges are excluded.

Last year, this same company added a 99-cent-per-month Internet Cost Recovery surcharge on broadband bills. That fee **covers the cost of building and maintaining the company’s broadband network.**

WAIT!!! Isn’t that what they are charging you for in the first place???

And look carefully at your bill, there is often a separate section of charges which include “Plan Management” and other bogus charges which can have a significant impact on your monthly bill.

Promotions – Did you know that pretty much every carrier has monthly or quarterly promotions available to new customers? Probably - especially if you’ve ever worked with a telecom rep. They will pitch the promo with their carefully crafted proposal and tell you that it’s only good until the end of the month. OR

If they’re a little smarter, they will give you a proposal and then right after they ferret out their competition, you get a message that “This just came across my desk!” But the end line is the same. It expires soon. So, you need to get that paperwork in right away.

Newsflash - Sales reps and agents alike get REGULAR communications about the promos they are, and will be running as much as 6 months in advance. Additionally, local sales managers will sometimes even come up with pre-approved discounts of their own within their individual markets. And, there’s 2 more things you need to know:

1. In all the years I’ve been doing this, I have NEVER been unable to meet promotional terms after it “officially” ended. **Not once.** Here’s the deal. The promos are nothing other than a closing tool to provide an “impending event” to drive the sale. There’s not a sales manager alive who will pass up a deal the company was honoring last week.
2. In all the years of doing this, I have ALWAYS been able to BEAT the terms of those promotions by using their own game against them.

ICB Pricing – Every carrier that I work with has a pricing procedure called “ICB” which stands for “Individual Case Basis”. To utilize this process, the rep must “paint a picture” to upper

management by submitting as much information as they can to justify lowering the cost to the end customer. Among the criteria they look at is:

- Competitor price (Shocked? I thought not) – But be prepared to provide either some evidence of the competition's price or the bottom line price you are willing to sign. And the smart reps will ABSOLUTELY make this a closing tool. "If I can meet this price, will you sign?"
- Deal size – Obviously, the larger the deal, the more flexibility they will typically have. If you're ordering a single \$200 T-1, they're probably not going to be overly flexible. But you might be surprised at how flexible they can be on even relatively modestly sized deals. And NEVER be afraid to ask.
- Timeframe – Think of the ICB process kind of like "Priceline.com". Just like the pricing above, once they enter the ICB process, they are expecting to close the deal if they meet the time and price criteria. So expect a hard sell in order to get them moving on this.

Next story

I was doing a quick survey of a new customer, (Let's call him "Steve" because, well.. that's his name) who owns a small business employing 20 people. 15 of them were field service techs and never in the office. He wanted my help in placing a move order for his existing services. Here's what we discovered:

Steve was spending \$3,000 per month in specialized call forwarding services in order to keep certain phone numbers in different call areas and had been, for the past SEVEN YEARS. He was also spending about \$700 a month for Internet and almost \$500 a month in toll calling and long distance. He was also spending another \$250 a month on repairs of his tiny, piece of junk phone system for a total monthly telecom cost of about \$4,500. Did I mention he had an office staff of like, 5?? These call forwarding services were also insufficient to meet the call volumes from those areas. As a result, potential new customers were getting busy signals and he was losing business. He had accepted the situation because he didn't know there was a solution. And the carrier had about 4,500 reasons not to offer one.

So, I looked at him and said, "Steve, I know you just want to move your existing system. But, what if I told you that I could provide you with a brand new telephone system that will meet all the needs you have, keep all these numbers you need and get rid of the busy signals? And what if I told you that as a result, your telecom costs would be cut by 2/3?"

"I'd tell you to prove it."

I did.

He loves me. And now, his customers love him. He called me from his new system to tell me so. Thanks Steve!

#6

They May Not Really Be a Good A Fit For You

Did you know that there are, literally HUNDREDS of telecom providers? And every single one of them has a different set of services and service areas. The vast majority of them are regional carriers, which means their service footprint is limited to a small number of metro areas, or, in many cases, a SINGLE area. Some of them are national, but not in every market. Some specialize in a few types of services, while others are more generalized. Here are a few examples of the chaos, with which customers are confronted:



- Every carrier has limitations of their coverage. One of the nation's largest competitive telecom service providers brags that their goal is to be in "all the NFL cities". So if you've got multiple office in different markets or are tasked with building out a new office in a different market, chances are good that you'll run into challenges getting a WAN built without using multiple carriers
- In California there are two "Incumbent" phone companies in different areas, who do NOT play well together. The incumbents are the MAIN phone company in an area. Now, most of the state is "served" by AT&T. But, there are pockets within the state where it is Verizon. Both of these companies have vastly different relationships with the competitive carriers who rely on them for leasing of physical lines to your building and space within their central offices to install their own network equipment. The



bottom line is, the more difficult it is for the competitive carriers to get service to you, the more expensive it's going to be, if you can get service at all.

- Cable Companies – These are “controlled monopolies” which means, in their area they are the ONLY cable company. They can sometimes provide a lot of bandwidth for a low price.



HOWEVER, there are serious limitations to that bandwidth. And they like to play little tricks. One cable company will tell you initially that cable IS available to your address. Often times “available” means that the building is close enough to their cable points of presence, that they can “build it out”. This means running cables to the building, generally at a cost of tens of thousands of dollars. By the way, they don’t tell you this until AFTER you’ve placed the order for their service.

- Some providers will “light” selected buildings. Lighting a building means installing a fiber optic link from the provider’s central office to the building. This allows for much faster and less expensive connections when it’s available. However, while you may get a good deal at one location, service might be FAR more expensive or even non-existent at your other locations. Not surprisingly, telecom reps are not always as up-front about these limitations when proposing new services for you.

Here’s another gem. It’s no secret that technology continues to advance at a rate unprecedented in history. And the telecom industry has benefitted from many of those technological advances. New products and services are introduced on an almost daily basis. And many of these services not only increase your productivity, they would save you money on your telecom bills. Yet, you probably don’t get a lot of calls from your commissioned account manager wanting to cut your bill.

Not long ago, I was selling phone systems and meeting with a new customer about the possibility of replacing their phone system. It wasn’t an enormous deal, probably about 75 users. We were about 10 minutes into the meeting when we discovered that their current system still had 2 years left on their 5-year lease. Realizing the sale was pretty much dead at that point, I was motivated to not waste any more of their time, or mine, in trying to convince the CFO to re-work all their leases.

“Look”, I said, closing my notebook. “As much as I would love to try to convince you to buy my phone system, you’re realistically married to this thing until the end of your lease. The ONLY way I could help you is if you were spending a ridiculous amount of money on conference bridging.” (There was a feature on the systems I sold. It was an on-board 64-port conference bridge which no one else had at the time)

“Well, we do a fair amount of conference calling through an outside company.” was her reply. I froze. “Would you please define, ‘fair amount of conference calling’ for me?”
“About \$6,000 a month” she said, innocently.

I opened my notebook back up. Then I explained how I could put a new phone system in essentially pay them \$3,500 a month to do it.

The client loves me now. The conference calling company...? Not so much.

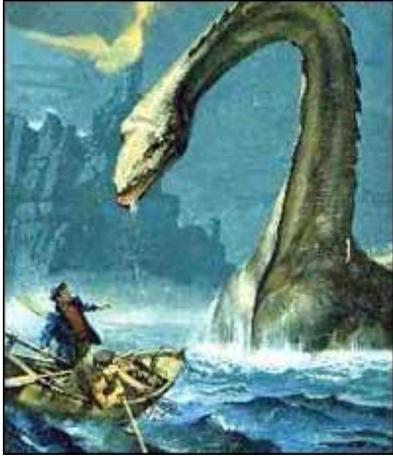
The customer didn’t know the technology was available. And, the conference calling company was certainly, not about to tell a \$6,000/month client how they to eliminate the need for their product. And this is NOT an isolated incident! At least half the telecom bills I examine have outdated rates (that are ALWAYS higher) or outdated services that are costing them money and perhaps more importantly, productivity.

The fix for this is simple. Your services should be regularly and objectively reviewed by you or a trusted resource who understands your goals and needs, at least twice a year. If you are working with an outside resource, you absolutely MUST have a trusted relationship with them.



#7

They Really, REALLY Want You To Go It Alone.



There is a common thread running through the previous six dirty tricks of the telecom industry. At the risk of being uncharitable to their motives, the entire system beginning with the initial sales call and running throughout the life of the provider/client relationship has evolved to the point where it, all too often, preys upon the unsuspecting, overly trusting or uninformed. It sometimes does it in subtle ways, through confusing proposals, confounding billing, obscure and difficult to comprehend contracts and paperwork. And regardless of the actual intentions of the service providers, the industry can, and often is, a minefield.

Almost 10 years ago, I started this company. And I sat down after helping my first customer through an arduous evaluation, selection and implementation of his services. He was a respected IT Director at a prestigious non-profit foundation in San Francisco. I wanted to know what motivated him to work with me and what benefit he felt I delivered him.

Now, I thought that I brought him cost savings and new technology, but his response really surprised me.

“Yes, you delivered those two things, certainly. But I could have gotten those things on my own. The REAL benefit you provided was in guiding me through a very complicated and, from a business perspective, DANGEROUS process that, even as an IT Director, I realized I was unfamiliar with. You helped me avoid some very impactful mistakes. And your involvement allowed me to focus on a whole host of other, mission critical things both related and unrelated to this project”

I paid for lunch that day.



I got a call from the President of a top-rated network integration company. He wanted MY help. Now, this is a company that designs, installs and maintains computer networks for organizations with hundreds, and even thousands of users. And did I mention that he's the PRESIDENT? And, by the way, he worked his way up from being an IT technician. So this guy KNOWS technology.

"What in the world do you imagine I help YOU with?" I asked him, trying unsuccessfully to contain my incredulity. His response made me rethink my perspective on technical gurus.

"Three things" he said, matter-of-factly.

"One, you're closer to the new product developments in the telecom industry than I am. So, I need you to make sure we don't need to rethink the designs we're proposing.

"Two you're connected to hundreds of carriers, RIGHT???" He was looking at me sharply at this point.

"Yes, of course"

"I need someone who can respond and get me multiple quotes quickly. And three, telecom's a pain in the neck. That's why we don't sell it. I've got other things to worry about."

And, with that, the meeting was over and I was whisked off to the design engineer's office.

My point, notwithstanding the self-congratulatory nature of these stories is, despite the vast amount of technical knowledge that IT Directors, CIOs and even company presidents have, the telecom industry is fraught with peril. And, whether a result of design, accident or natural selection, it is heavily weighted in favor of the service providers. And while I haven't asked them directly, I'm pretty sure they would prefer to maintain that advantage.

So, here's my advice. Don't give them what they want. Don't go it alone. Get some reinforcements, get a second set of eyes on the contracts, find a trusted resource that knows the industry and who can advocate for you during the sales process, contract and rate negotiation, install and ongoing customer service issues.



Epilogue

As my way of saying thank you for your interest and your dedication to read through this report, I would like to make you an offer if you are interested:

If you feel that it is helpful, I would like to offer you a complete analysis of your telecom and/or cloud services. I will include a complete breakdown of all your telephone lines, data circuits, telephone system and cloud services which will include circuit ID's, pricing, carriers and contract termination dates.



This offer is valued at well, a LOT. One client of mine just paid a consultant \$20,000 for

the info I could have given him for free, which is, incidentally, the price I will charge you (free...not \$20,000)

WAIT...WHAT??? WHY??? This seems insane!

Yes, I know. Here's the deal; I am a trusted resource to my clients. The reason we're not working together yet is because you have no reason to trust me. I totally understand that. So, my goal is to prove to you, how I work. Then, when it's time, hopefully we'll have the opportunity to work together.

All you need to do is to let me know that you're interested. Send me an e-mail at



brad@qcentus.com.

We can schedule a brief phone conversation and go from there.

The ONLY thing I will ever ask in return is for referrals of others you know that I can help. And then only if you believe in me!

Thanks for taking time to read through this! I hope it was entertaining and helpful.