

Costco Wants In Too

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After reading my personal email, a flyer caught my attention from **Costco**. It wasn't the 46" Sceptre LCD HDTV- it was the limited time offer for a **SimpliPhones PBX** Phone System for \$7,199.99 .



Costco's offer is a limited time offer. The ad and **online demo** of the SimpliPhone gives the SMB contemplating a phone system purchase that they can easily DIY their next business telephone system.

Free Toll Free technical support, 30 days money back guarantee and installation by almost anyone in 2 hours! This all sounds great.

Costco isn't the first to try hawking telephone systems to the DIY market and won't be the last. I'm a bit surprised by some of their advertising and claims which although are probably true- "that almost anyone can do" and "there is nothing else to buy."

Forget about protection on the CO lines, power, battery backup and anything else electrically connected. Dump any requirement for any knowledge and or troubleshooting those IP calls and issues associated with the gateway connecting to the internet to make those "free" telephone calls. With the features of ACD it must be a no brainer for almost anyone.

This isn't to say that DIYers can't do a good job. Sure there are companies with the expertise. Marketing hype as in this case builds up customer confidence and the effect later when the buyers find themselves in situations requiring something more than free telephone support isn't going to make long lasting relationships with these customers.

Is this the effect that commoditization has on the industry? Well, it stinks. Maybe the SimpliPhone is a great product with just lousy marketing. Everyone wants in on telephony- certainly there's a message that isn't hidden. There must be droves of companies not happy with their existing telephony solutions or perhaps it's just an unmet need that I don't grasp. Either case- companies making claims "that almost anyone can do" and "there is nothing else to buy" watch out. Customers don't buy into everything they read.

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