

MACs By the IT Book

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Moves, Adds, Changes. What used to be a dependable revenue source is now a minor revenue annoyance. But hey, revenue is revenue right? Maybe.



IPT (Internet Protocol Telephony) is changing the landscape in how vendors do business and customers expect change. Now that customers are getting “web access” or the ability to look into the heart and soul of their telephone systems along with access to all those settings- the new process leaves vendors feeling a different sort of pinch.

The ability to cope with customers changing programming and making mistakes is or can be a haunt for many systems. Way back in 1997-1999 period, the NBX system later bought by 3Com had an embedded log. The ADMIN log showed every MAC in every area including reboots. By virtual show of hands- which systems provide this same “feature” today?

The data folks may follow guidelines as set forth by ITIL, (Information Technology Infrastructure Library) which is a set of “best practices.” Within these set of guidelines is defined the **“Change Management Process”** and in summary here’s how it goes:

There’s a issue, new patch or upgrade. The request for change and is then logged by the Network Admin formalizing the request. A manager approves the request for further action and the request goes into the planning process to address a rollback (what to do in case of failure/disaster) and how the request will be deployed. Then, a peer review of the request studies the request and plan. The request is signed off by an executive on the change board for implementation and logging into a database to show the audit trail.

I ‘just’ want my speed dial numbers changed to reflect upper and lower case spelling of the names assigned for all my speed dial numbers.

The traditional method is to make it happen, just do it, get it done and by thunder get on it. Now you want me to do what again?

Herein is the understanding. Voice and IT folks are different and whatever you think you can do to unbundle years of “practice, habit or nature,” then you need to study further. Training isn’t going to be handing voice staff a set of books to study and test upon. This may sound flippant and if it is then thank the users of voice services. Don’t overstate the need to the IT folks either, you may end up feeling like your feathers have been plucked and they don’t tend to ‘react’ the same way. After all, it’s only a simple request to change my speed dialing names to show upper and lower case letters. Perhaps this change is too basic for the ITIL best practices or ITIL isn’t clear on telephony or I need to read ITIL 3.0 in its entirety. I can’t imagine the significance of this request going to another executive for signing off and the number of hands to go through before getting it done. Converging is pretty easy on the surface, now try developing and learning new ways to manage the convergence.

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