

Multi-Tech Telecommuter Solution Eases Pain

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Since installing the early IP-PBXs in 1999, afterwards and present day - I hear complaints not only from TDM VARs but also IT VARs and telephony dealers and manufacturers about the nightmares associated with supporting telecommuters and their IP phones.



In **Telecommuters –the Goldmines**, the US government commissioned Booz Allen Hamilton to perform a **study of teleworkers**.

Reading the study is worthwhile as is concentrating on a key idea of providing a technical support mechanism for teleworkers that meet their needs as well as delivering solutions specific to their environment.

My customer with a **Panasonic Hybrid IP-PBX** and **call center** was anxious to get IP hardwired phones working in employee's homes and for good reason. One technical employee supports other remote workers. He gladly discontinued his Vonage service after experiencing call quality using the **Multi-Tech SOHO RouteFinder RF820**.

Initially, we invested about 30 hours to get the three home locations connected then we spent another 15 hours troubleshooting pre-existing conditions. Thanks to great support from Multi-Tech and willing teleworkers- we were more than successful.

The first site was very easy since the internet connection was **Verizon FIOS**. We placed the RF820 in a DMZ and programmed the VPN tunnel back to the RF820 sitting at the corporate site. Then all the routing and firewall issues were ironed out at corporate. We ran the lone phone for a month before continuing to the next two installations. Call quality was excellent and no downtime.

The second and third sites were hindered by what appeared to be routing issues at corporate. What we discovered was a faulty integrated switch/router and after replacing it- other nagging and seemingly minor issues were resolved. The second home was connected via **Comcast Cable** and the call quality is generally very good to excellent with only occasional distortion or clipping of audio. The third home took the longest even though this user also has Verizon FIOS with a twist of **FIOS TV**. Her home TV service was experiencing issues as was her internet connectivity when we traced the route back to her home and found her gateway somewhere in New York (she lives in Maryland). Verizon replaced the ONT, router and cable- and ever since she's had no issues on any of her services.

All three workers log in and out of the company ACD, provide technical and managerial support and access the company servers that are onsite and hosted. They are as if they are in the office. Three months may be a short measure of success but I wouldn't want to be the one trying to take their remote IP phones and Multi-Tech gear away from them.

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