

Next Year: Resolutions or In Search of Solutions?

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By Matt Brunk

Tradition would have that we make our New Year's resolutions- things that we want to do and accomplish. I remain hopeful that in 2008, I'll be writing more about solutions that we have sought and implemented and yet are still coming to terms with how to manage them in 2008 and beyond. Implementation and change go hand-in-hand and change isn't always welcome or convenient.



So, for 2008, here's what you can expect.

The Unknown: whatever strikes me is what motivates me. Often, it's a management issue such as managing how enterprises are going to administer and implement MACs (Moves, Adds, Changes) on their new IPT platforms. Then, it could be some software or hardware solution that really juices me because I can see value. Maybe it's the exploitation part in me that says sell this, it's a good widget. Then, around some dark telecom carrier corner there may be a written rule or some unwritten ones that give everyone pause.

The Unheard: I don't always hang with the big dogs and do spend more time with the little ones scrapping over a huge market. There's a lot of opportunity in "little." Unknown companies and or names isn't a bad thing. We've learned that and witnessed first hand the wealth and value that they (little companies) generate.

The Unexpected: hearing the same drum beat about saving money by moving to IPT and all the other marketing spins really does create an illusion of truth. An act of faith is putting your money where your mouth is and then standing by your decision or admitting you simply made a mistake. Perhaps the timing was off for early adopters of IPT and arguably, these first deployments were more than an adventure into the unknown. Pioneering then, brought forth what we call Internet Protocol Telephony today. This isn't an excuse for the many mistakes made but rather a reflection on those willing to journey and venture into what we know users still take for granted until there's a problem. Today, no one can argue that we don't have more value to offer with telephony whether it's hosted, hybrid, running on an enterprise server or an IP-PBX. Lest not we forget TDM- which somehow is a misnomer that undoubtedly some think of as a dirty word. TDM is still alive and well, and not to mistake or over calculate for how long and where.

Long Distance is too alive and well but it's less important. Once the crutch for switching to VoIP now it's less significant. I learned from a former boss that 'telecom is like a money game constantly changing and moving.' It pretty much sums up what we are still doing today. In 2007, we deinstalled more "pure" IP-PBXs and replaced them with Hybrids. I'm still optimistic about Hybrid IP-PBXs and not because I'm pegged as an 'interconnect.' I'm not your traditional interconnect. It's simply been a convenience (the label). My Hybrid can 'transform' and I'm not talking about battery vs. gasoline power like my wife's Ford. I'd argue that most implementations today are hybrid in nature and there's no such thing as a pure IP-PBX. In my spare time, I test and evaluate equipment, systems and services- an activity that was incorporated into our business in 1989. We do have an insight into some pretty cool technology and this year it's coming from some pretty experienced folks that come from a rock solid call center background. I see any company with any telephone as indeed- a call center. While not everyone agrees, most will agree that a lost call may equate to lost revenue.

The Unpopular: just because it's something everyone does and accepts doesn't mean it's right. It's simply accepted. My adoption of Apple wares isn't likely to sway enterprise readers but it may give a kick to some of my competitors. Communications and information are as important as ever. Better equipped at doing both impacts the bottom line and survivability doesn't mean who's number one, but rather the one that can stay at it the longest and remain profitable. Effectiveness still counts. Adopting new methods doesn't mean we have to build new empires and when you consider the past as a teacher- empires come and go. The opportunities are huge as are the gains or losses associated with the methods. Outsourcing one's doorway to their business (the telephone system) shouldn't be a scary thing but in reality it always is.

2008 for me, my company and my family will be a new adventure. As we continue to explore and implement new ways of doing what is sometimes assumed as the right or only way, you can bet there will be more hybridness to just about any solution and it seems that still, there is no "one solution" and maybe that's not a bad thing to leverage against any vendor. There's a lot of information supporting change to the how and what we are doing with energy, technology and that thing

that many still take for granted- the telephone.

Last summer, some of our dreams started to materialize and that wasn't due to wishing, wanting and waiting. Instead, planning, hard work, patience along with hope and prayers did take us beyond what we thought possible. I've been driving a company truck since 1989 and in the fall, switched over to a company car and that was after a painful decision to buy a non-hybrid company car. The Apple adoption I mentioned earlier was the slower of the projects and unlike the "traditional" rip and roar of any telephony cutover, we've had time to breathe and learn more about leveraging our investment. We are still "converging" our wares and squeezing the old faithful opex that never wants to go away. We keep finding ourselves doing more along with the ingrained urge to do it for less such as the resistance to hold out buying iPhones which saved us a hundred bucks each and we learned a new lesson about what a phone is supposed to look like.

This year will be challenging along with rising inflation, the evils of politics, and paying the piper for sins of the past financial misgivings of low personal savings and high indebtedness along with a rising thing in the financial sector called write down. Foreign tourism may be up because of the devalued dollar but my belief is that the USA is still the best buy for any currency and moving into a better telecommunications infrastructure will propel us ahead and we still will lead, not rule or dictate. As it's always been in telephony- challenging, so will others discover. These are the things that impact business and if the money isn't moving or moving in the right direction, you can expect some of those plans will be shelved for fairer weather. VoiceCon 2008, is just around the corner and according to last years survey of attendees- nearly 70% of IPT implementations had issues. But that's not surprising to me. Looking back to history again as a teacher, TDM or traditional telephony endured many such episodes. Stay tuned to No Jitter and please remember: NO BUGS!

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First time I've read your blog and I plan to add it to my list to continue. Realistic view of voip and none of that omg, voip is dead. The "unheard" in voip ... equivalent to entrepreneurs. It's pretty exciting to serve this type.

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