

Rebooting...Minutes Lost

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Whenever a discussion involving “any nines” service level surrounding IPT; there seems to be some undisclosed moments that don’t last seconds but minutes. Without understanding the finer details, users and customers are often led astray or simply not told what to expect.



The term “Pure” IP-PBX has stuck and it doesn’t mean that the IP-PBX is in fact not mixed or adulterated with any other substance, nor is it by definition perfectly in tune either. But, I’d give way to agreeing that in the abstract form- IP-PBXs are pure IP Telephony (IPT). Oh, by the way- you can expect down time for a lot of various reasons including MACs (Moves, Adds, Changes).

We replaced another “legacy-PURE” IP-PBX this weekend. After making the directory changes to all the DN’s (Directory Numbers), I recalled doing the same thing 7+ years earlier to this very same IP-PBX we were then installing. The difference is when we apply the changes to the newly installed Hybrid IP-PBX; the changes show up when the effected telephones go off-hook and then back on-hook be it momentarily or minutes later. IP telephones however, generally require rebooting of the phones for the same changes. Most IP telephones take one minute or longer to reboot. Some IP-PBXs will update some changes to phones but not all, and it depends.

In the good ole’ days, changes meant revenue and revenue is always a good thing for vendors. Moves, adds, changes (MACS) revenue to dealers is a customer expense which is a negative for customers. While using MACS as a justification to purchase an IP-PBX; it likely won’t provide a return on an IP-PBX investment. It will reduce customer expense and knock down the time to perform the change. For the SMB/E this isn’t often a real big deal although for some, it could be. For the cubicle farms in L-Enterprise it is a big deal. MACS need to be tightly controlled and implemented at such a time so as to not cause loss-of-dial-tone to the users’. After all, this may lower the user’s productivity or negatively impact their workflow. Pure IP systems aren’t so pure and change management really needs more focus on what the IPT system can and cannot do in real time. In IPT today, some MACs translate to downtime and controlled downtime is better than uncontrolled or unexpected downtime.

So the difference seems to be that Hybrid IP-PBXs are capable of performing more, not all, changes in real-time and IP-PBXs, those PURE boxes- are not as capable doing the same number and kinds of changes in real-time. Maybe it sounds like I’m splitting hairs but my hope is that the next generation of IPT software will accommodate real-time MACS not in some or most areas, but all areas. Less is sometimes better.

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