

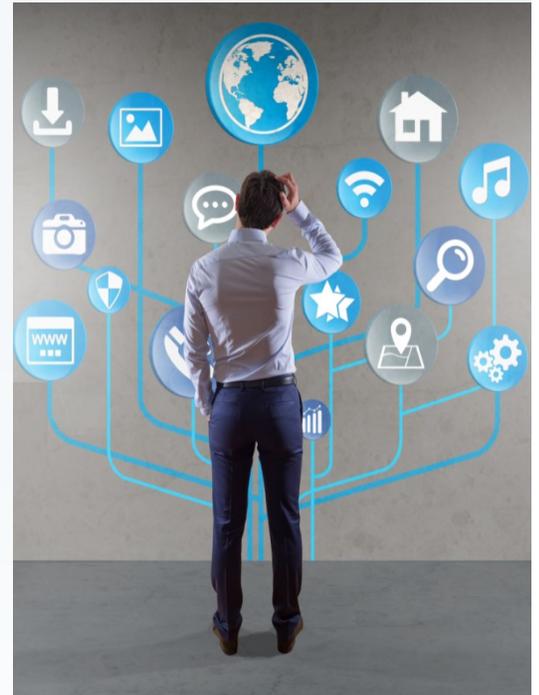
2021: The Year of the Audit

In a recent article Eric Krapf, publisher of “No Jitter”, (Enterprise Connect eNews - January 7, 2020), noted:

“Communications teams have been consumed with the emergency of the pandemic, and most probably have not had the staff or time to plan any kind of ordered transition to the new WFH environment.

“Routine practices like telecom audits may have fallen by the wayside in 2020, and enterprises may have been reluctant to decommission services even if no longer in use due to the WFH shift – no one really knew how permanent that shift would be, so the safest course had been to stand pat.”

Organizations have had to modify their communications infrastructure and connectivity processes and procedures to accommodate the new environment. New services such as video conferencing and remote access to corporate data had to be implemented on short notice with little regard to short-term costs or longer-term applicability or usefulness. At the same time, some services may have become under-utilized or unnecessary.



Abilita System of A³

AWARENESS

- Baseline inventory with usage & costs, strengths - weaknesses, capacity vs. corporate and business IT needs.

ANALYSIS

- Audit, optimize, identify options to address corporate needs

ACTION PLAN

- Implementation of approved options, project management, continual monitoring, alerts, strategies, vision of future, technology changes.



How Well Do You Know Your Communications?

Enterprises are looking to 2021 as a year for a new reality – pressure to reducing costs for services underutilized or no longer the right fit.

~ Eric Krapf, Enterprise Connect eNews, 1/7/21



enterprise
CONNECT

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What do you have and how much does it cost?

There are two sayings that sum up the challenge “You can’t fix what you don’t know is broken.”, and “You can’t manage what you don’t measure.”

The first step is to become aware of all services and their associated costs. It is necessary to establish a baseline of the inventory. In short, a telecom audit. The audit provides a snapshot in time showing what services you have and what you are paying for those services.

For many organizations, this can be an eye-opening deliverable. Identifying the services and their associated costs in a single document can be very revealing.

A key to getting a complete picture is to make sure that all services are considered. Services such as conference calling, faxing charges, and video services need to be considered. In addition, there may be significant mobile device charges associated with the organization.

In addition to the costs of telecom related services, the contracts associated with those services need to be reviewed. Topics like automatic renewal clauses, the ability to down-size services if warranted, verifying that contract rates match actual bills are issues that need to be analyzed and negotiated.

“Abilita has truly lived up to their commitment to deliver bottom line savings and reduce our communications technology headaches! Abilita was able to deliver to the County and our Health Department cost savings of over 50% of our spending. Even better, they took care of implementation, which was no small task!”

~ Chippewa County, MI

 analysis**Where is it and do I need it?**

This second step is more than just a technical question. The organization needs to match telecom services with business requirements, making sure that services that are under contract or being paid for are actually being used. Likewise, verifying the services being billed are scaled correctly to meet the needs of the organization in the new environment. Perhaps some services are now underutilized while others have become more heavily used.

Here are two examples that may be identified on an audit:

- Organizations may continue to pay for legacy services that should be replaced with new technology. An example could be paying for individual fax lines when eFax service would be much less expensive and become part of the corporate network.
- It is not uncommon for organizations to continue to pay for services that have been replaced but have not arranged for legacy services to be discontinued and billing stopped.

The analysis phase should address the identification of options for the optimization of services and costs, and to define the business rationality for moving forward.

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How do I get from here to there?

Getting from here to there is more than just waving a magic wand and assuming everything will work according to plan. Every action taken will have an impact. Hopefully that impact will be a cost reduction or increased productivity. But contingencies and backup plans need to be considered in the event that something doesn't go right the first time.

The action plan shouldn't be considered once and done. Modified services need to be monitored constantly to detect anomalies and any business-related issues that may arise. This brings up the issue of an audit (a place in time snapshot) or an Expense Management program. Some organizations will have a focused effort every 2 or 3 years to review telecom and IT expenses through an audit process, and then try to adjust based on the new business model.

A true Expense Management program and engaging a technology consultant provides greater visibility into the ongoing costs and can provide insights into technology trends that an internal staff can't keep up with or may not have the technical expertise to handle adequately.

The question in every technology planners mind should always be – “what happens the next time.....”? Engaging with an experienced communications technology consulting company can help guide an organization in the planning for current requirements and in the design of contingencies for future challenges.

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Abilita Consultants have years of experience guiding organizations through the process of bringing **awareness** and **analysis** with the development and implementation of **action plans** for our clients. 2021 should be the “Year of the Audit”.

To find out more, contact us today:



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