



# **RIGHTSourcing your Wireless Asset Management**

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Every day, businesses face a changing market landscape that forces continual optimization of current resources and assets to achieve results. One of the fastest growing elements in the arsenal of resources is your wireless communications program. Specifically, you need to consider how you utilize, maintain, and control your corporate wireless assets so that they contribute to achieving your overall company mission and vision.

Over the last 5 years, all major landline carriers have experienced tremendous challenges trying to preserve subscriber levels and ARPU in the face of the explosive growth of wireless communications. Traditional means of communications are quickly being replaced by modes providing greater flexibility. It has become evident that more companies now rely on wireless connectivity to proactively meet their client's needs in an anytime / anywhere service environment.

Times have changed indeed. Mad dashes and scary rides to get to a phone, knowing your client may potentially drop you, have been replaced by the never-ending quest for a decent signal and quiet semi-private place to talk. When you cannot find that quiet place, you send a text message or even a photo from your camera phone to deliver a message and convey a feeling of connectedness.

But there is more to the Wireless revolution. It is not just connectivity; it is also about productivity and convenience. Need critical client information, a project status update, a copy of that letter or contract, a look at the progress made on the construction site, or even just your favorite team's scores? They are now all a phone call or file transfer away. You do not even have to ask for information; it can be automatically delivered to you when you want through direct RSS and other feeds to your mobile device. With new mobile applications such as Twitter, Flickr, and Soonr gaining mainstream acceptance, real-time business and personal information exchange are melding together and providing additional challenges and opportunities. How you choose to manage this growing, dynamic, and increasingly important asset will determine how well you successfully move in the market for years to come. **Maintaining the status quo is not an option.** Regardless of your current methods, the drive to be flexible, the desire to utilize the latest technologies, and cost competitiveness will force re-examination of the all options available. **You need to have a well thought-out wireless program in place.** So how do you maximize the return from your wireless communications program? Do you Insource, Outsource or Solution-source?

## Outsource

Outsourcing is often the first option considered by management but the employees potentially affected rarely have input. Hence, there is usually a lack of productive dialog between these two groups to get the most accurate analysis of the situation. Identifying potential outsourcing candidates, evaluating their capabilities, and developing a plan to 'unwind' the internal processes and controls in an orderly fashion take time that



you may not have. They also require considering the effects of a permanent change in the operations of the organization, which would be very difficult and costly to reverse.

However, there are benefits to be considered as well. With outsourcing, the day-to-day problems are taken care of, and it allows your organization to refocus on what you do best – achieving your Mission and Vision. Your outsourcing partner will also likely have more highly experienced and knowledgeable resources dedicated to completing the tasks your internal resources may have shared with their normal work.

*Positives:*

- Outsourcing requires minimal internal effort to solve the problems challenging your organization.
- Your vendor now manages innovation and technology changes reducing your need to devote resources to this task. In many ways this can be looked at as a lease vs. own analysis.
- You have one external place to call to get results.
- You can refocus your time on managing strategic operational issues and achieving results.

*Noticeable Challenges:*

- Loss of full control.
- Process cost creep.
- Usually long-term commitment.
- Implementation costs in time, money, and staff.
- Staff redistribution or reduction.
- Reversing outsourcing is a large undertaking.

**Outsourcing** has potential benefits and can be the best possible decision for your organization. Make sure you conduct a detailed cost / benefit analysis considering all factors and make sure senior management understands the strategic nature of the decision. If all the facts indicate Outsourcing to be your best choice then make a plan to migrate to an outsourced Wireless Management System.

*Next Steps:*

- Include all organizational areas in the planning, especially operational personnel, so the entire transition process is understood and can be managed.
- Think long-term security – it is a critical part of outsourcing. If the vendor cannot perform, it may double or triple your initial and ongoing costs and force process challenges.
- Identify financial metrics and results – the numbers presented in the ‘sales pitch’ are not necessarily what accounting will see or deal with. Make sure internal financial teams are familiar with, agree to, and provide the measurements you will need to manage the new vendor.



## Insource

Your next choice may be to bring everything in-house and build the internal processes, procedures, and systems to manage your Wireless Program and assets. But isn't that what most companies have been doing for years?

There are already countless boxes of paper invoices filling file rooms. There are harried accountants and bookkeepers suffering through the monthly expense reconciliation and approval process, and you still have runaway expenses. There are seemingly constant calls to multiple vendors each speaking its own language but always willing to help you understand that "you did it wrong". The list goes on and on, and yet you continue to follow the same formula producing the same pain and lack of results. What you really need are automated tools to present the right data in a format that you and management would understand for making critical business decisions.

At every level in your organization, the information needed to make good decisions can be voluminous. This is certainly true in wireless programs where plans, assets, and users are constantly changing. Usually processing this data and presenting them in usable formats can be overwhelming because of the lack of available tools specifically designed for this purpose. You can benefit from increased visibility and control, in addition to greatly improved decision-making process, if a powerful system can be developed as part of your In sourcing effort. The right tools will assist you in implementing a Data-to-Information environment.

### *Positives:*

- You solve your problems your way.
- Innovation and technology changes can be chosen and customized to fit your strategic goals.
- You control your own destiny, not outside vendors.

### *Noticeable Challenges:*

- Capital cost for purchasing and maintaining software tools, if available.
- Process, system and staffing cost creep.
- Distraction from core activities.
- Implementation, training, and ongoing costs in time, money, and staff.
- Not achieving desired results.

**In sourcing** has potential benefits and can be the best possible decision for your organization. If you are one of the thousands of companies managing your own wireless program, you probably have already invested what you can afford and have achieved the best results that can be expected. If not, why haven't you done



something about it? Maybe it is because of lack of sufficient resources or management support. You have the option to rededicate yourself and your team to improving the internal solution. But is that your highest priority? Will it ever be?

### **Solution-Sourcing**

Ultimately, an organization should be allowed to build its own style of process control using BOTH in-house and vendor resources. The ability to leverage the strengths of both and flexibility to make changes quickly will provide the optimum solution. Solution-Sourcing combines the best of both worlds and has key attributes that make it the most attractive.

Start by establishing the primary goals for your wireless management program. For example, cost reduction and on-going containment, visibility and control of assets, and increased productivity for users. Next, determine the fastest and most cost-effective way to achieve your goals. That would include Identifying what information you need, where you can get it, and how you can leverage internal and external resources together to get results quickly. Finally, select a solution that provides ease-of-use and maximum flexibility because few things change as quickly as wireless, and what you need today will likely change in the very near future.

Carriers already provide the cost and asset information you need through their invoices. Your internal Human Resource system can generally provide the necessary user information. Here is the challenge: *how do you link the two sources of information?* How do you associate employees with devices? How do you gain access to meaningful management information regarding your costs and assets? This is where a vendor with a solution using modular software tools specifically developed to automate the analysis can be of great value.

By using special software tools for initial and on-going monthly reconciliation of billing/cost analysis and review of your wireless asset inventory, your wireless management process can be automated and require minimal internal intervention. The software tools can gather data, crunch numbers, and trend user behaviors, which will provide valuable insight and save you time and effort. With these tools, you can start to gain visibility and control.

Solution-Sourcing can provide further benefits to meet all of your goals. Increasing productivity for users through your wireless program means minimizing their downtime. A well thought-out wireless program provides users knowledge on how to best use their wireless technologies. Your internal helpdesk may be able to assist your users, but is wireless their primary focus or just another task among many. How much wireless training do they receive? Selecting a vendor who can provide focused wireless logistics and helpdesk services for your internal support group and directly to employees is another opportunity to boost



productivity. Getting replacement devices and answering questions quickly means your employees spend less downtime.

Solution-Sourcing provides “bite-sized” opportunities, one step at a time, with the most cost-effective blend of tools and service solutions. Every company is different and needs to address its priorities at a pace it can manage. Modular software solutions and services that can be implemented separately or in concert with one another give maximum flexibility and control over the process and pace of implementation.

*Positives:*

- Combining the best of Outsourcing and Insource.
- Solution-Sourcing requires minimal internal effort to solve the problems challenging your organization.
- You can get as much help as you need from your Solution-Sourcing vendor and do the rest in-house.
- You can refocus your time on managing internal operational issues and achieving results.
- You solve your problems your way.
- You control your own destiny, not outside vendors.

Your company knows what it needs to achieve and what information is important for management to make good decisions. Blending internal knowledge and capabilities with externally available solutions and services will provide the kind of control and results to support your objectives.