MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I feel honored and fortunate that you depend on GCC for the most critical needs of running your business — your telephone communications system and networks.

I've recently read that it is easy for companies to lower their high standards in slower economic times — we will not do this. GCC continues to offer consulting free of charge to help you discover if an upgrade is a good way to keep your vital telecomunications system up-to-date without breaking the bank. Contact your GCC Account Executive or our service department to discuss your options.

This issue contains an article that spotlights the concept of economically modernizing your phone system by reusing (as much as possible) equipment that you already own. We have been using our office phone system for 16 years and with mostly the original sets! We've added capabilities, but since we did not need to totally replace our system, we have enjoyed a considerable savings in capital expense for cutting-edge technology. *Paul F. Denaro*, **President**

Clients Use Their Phone System to Maximize Productivity

Clients are adding new functions to their phone system to achieve increased value and maximum productivity. Some of these features include:

Presence. This feature allows individuals to see the phone status of others in the company. Are they on the phone, away from their desk, or in a meeting? Knowing the answer speeds the handling of calls, and callers are happier because they spend less time on hold or bouncing around trying to find help.

Outlook® Contact Integration. This function allows all contacts to be searched by an efficient dial-by-name tool associated with the phone system. While dialing from Outlook® is available, it often requires opening multiple pop-up windows to select and call a contact.

Multiple-site Call Coverage. This feature enables a central attendant to answer calls received by any site in the network. The attendant knows which site to answer the call as, and can transfer the call to anyone in the system.

Call Recording. This function has become an inexpensive way to verify orders, assess customer service, train, and help protect against expensive errors and miscommunications. Recording can be used on an on-demand basis or as always-on for every call use. Many existing voicemails already have this ability.

General Communications happily provides consultations for our customers to evaluate new ways to use the phone system.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, A SALES DEMO OR SERVICE, CALL US AT 781-756-5100, EMAIL TO INFO@GENERALCOM.COM, OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE: GENERALCOM.COM. RECEIVE A FREE GCC T-SHIRT WHEN YOU SIGN UP FOR OUR ENEWSLETTER—SEE DETAILS ON PAGE 4.

TeleTOPICS

Reuse, Recycle...Replace
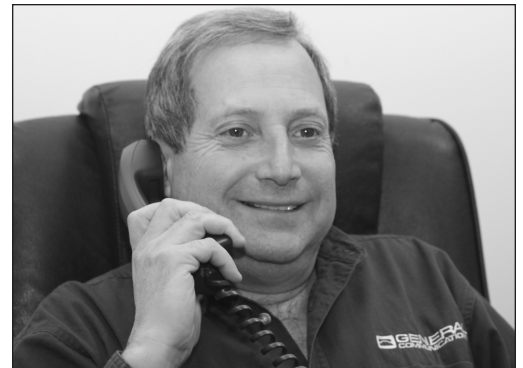
Before purchasing an entire new phone system or being told "your system is too old to upgrade," check with your GCC Account Executive to see what savings can be had by migrating existing parts from your current system to a platform that will keep your business communicating efficiently for years to come.

Today's phone systems have new features and capabilities that require more processing power and memory capacity that was unavailable a few years ago and it's this section of the architecture that may first see an end-of-life.

Vendor Overload...?

GCC Helps Clients with a Broad Range of Telephone & Data Communication Services

Many firms find it difficult to communicate with multiple vendors for their organization's information technology needs. With our many years in business, we have seen the need for a single vendor to address or at least guide our clients through their various technology choices. Common areas often overlooked are internet security, remote access and data recovery.

To offer a broader range of options to our clients, General Communications has partnered with key IT vendors to offer services with LAN/WAN connectivity, internet security, remote access, email services, and data recovery solutions.

Internet security has become a major concern for businesses of all sizes. As more information becomes stored electronically, there is more potential for unauthorized access. Proper firewall implementation, anti-virus software and anti-spyware are tools to keep vital data safe from unauthorized use.

Just as the need for remote voice communications is being addressed by Voice-over-IP, remote access to a company's LAN can be just as important. Numerous solutions are available allowing full secure access to a company's computer network. Such solutions may employ the use of a VPN (virtual private network) or advanced products such as Cytrix.

When data servers are running smoothly, it is common to take information accessibility for granted. However, in the event of a server failure, a company's operations can come to a screeching halt. Such failures are the reasoning behind having good hardware redundancy and a data recovery plan in place. To avoid any downtime, hardware solutions such as mirroring hard drives, dual processor and dual power supplies are commonplace. In the event of a catastrophic failure of a key data server, data backup solutions are vital in order to restore important data. In addition to hardware redundancies, data backup solutions are available in the form of nightly backups or even up to the moment of a server failure. Offsite backup solutions are also employed for a complete disaster recovery.

General Communications can be your source for your organization's information technology needs. Simply contact our office for a consultative conference on your current information technology status and where you need to be.

Bob Hulsman
Providing GCC Clients with Expert Telephone Installations

Bob Hulsman is certainly no stranger to telephones — he started helping his brother repair Tadiran systems in Ireland more than 20 years ago.

He enjoyed the work and was exceptionally good at it, so when he came to the states, he decided to make telecommunications his career and joined General Communications.

"As installation manager, my work starts once clients decide to upgrade or replace their communications system,"

Bob said. "I perform a site survey to determine where the phones and server should be installed, discuss the installation schedule, and review the parts list to make sure we have everything that we need.

"We install all sizes of systems from just a few phones to 200 or more. Although we still install traditional digital systems, most of our customers are choosing Voice-over-Internet-Protocol (VoIP) systems because of their superior features and outstanding performance," he continued. "When we install a new VoIP communications system, we integrate the new phones with the existing computer and Internet system, coordinate with carriers, and remove the old sets. The changeover is seamless — we don't miss a beat and our customers don't have to worry about missed calls or downtime."

Bob also coordinates his installations with Barbara Osborn and Bob Scott who handle customer training. "We want to make sure that all employees understand and are comfortable with their telephones before the system goes live," he explained. "Training is scheduled prior to installation and we bring in the actual units to the client's conference room or other convenient location, so that the staff can practice with the phones and learn the new features such as unified messaging.

Bob has been part of the GCC team for 20 years. "I've seen dramatic changes in the industry, and one of the many good things about GCC is that training is a key priority for the company. We regularly receive training on new products for all our lines. The company has been very good to me, and I really enjoy working with the GCC team and all of our loyal customers."

The newsletter from General Communications Corporation, www.generalcom.com

Customer Profile *Laddawn®*

When John Dower joined Laddawn two years ago as system administrator, one of his major responsibilities was to research new phone systems for the growing Sterling, Massachusetts-based firm.

"We are a manufacturer of layflat and gusseted bags, and a sizable percentage of our business is done by phone," John explained. "We had outgrown our old phone system, but we weren't sure what we should buy. We have a busy call center, and we also have locations in Atlanta, Cedar Rapids, Dallas, and Reno. Getting the right system was critical for the continued success and growth of our business," John continued. "We evaluated six vendors with different solutions — we felt the partner we chose to implement and maintain the system was as important as the system itself. GCC was by far the strongest partner we talked to. They listened to our needs, and recommended a ShoreTel® VoIP System.

John Dower, system administrator, discusses the new ShoreTel system that GCC recently installed at Laddawn.

"GCC installed a system with 80 endpoints at our headquarters and satellite locations. The transition was seamless — we stopped using our old system on Thursday afternoon, and on Friday morning the new system was up and running.

Inside sales rep, Valerie Menard, says that the new system is easy to use and makes her more productive.

"The new system does everything we need it to do. It is so well integrated that it feels like the people in our remote locations are in the cubes next door. Our senior sales associates really like the fact that they can monitor incoming calls, and have the options of putting the first caller on hold, sending the call to voice mail, or routing it to another sales associate. Our inside sales reps are really benefiting from the full call history that the system is capable of recording, and the customer support team can work more efficiently because we can see the number of calls in the queue, and plan the call routing to make sure our customers do not have to wait on hold too long. And that's just a few of the features we love.

"GCC played a most important role in the entire process. And everyone at GCC who we worked with was outstanding. Bob Scott is the most capable pre-sales engineer that we've ever met. Steve Flagg helped install the system and made sure it worked properly, and Paul Denaro made sure the GCC team did whatever was necessary to make us delighted with our choice. We are confident that we are now providing a better experience for our customers, and that the system will help us continue to expand our operations."

But even though the core system may be out of steam, your phone sets, voicemail unit and other peripherals may still be in good working order.

Our manufacturers come through by allowing a high percentage of their older, legacy equipment to operate with their latest processors, servers and software. When a company expands, it can decide to add on the latest model of telephone sets or, for continuity, purchase the older model as long as they're available.

Owners of older TOSHIBA DK units can upgrade to the modern CiX platform allowing them to take advantage of VoIP, Unified Messaging, Computer Telephony Integrations and the latest 5000 series sets. Owners of the original Tadiran Coral systems can upgrade to the Coral IPX to provide the latest technologies for many times, half the cost of purchasing all new equipment.

Our clients join us in the expectation that the solutions we recommend strive to be "evergreen" — a new PBX should be upgradeable, expandable and robust enough to provide a very long lifespan. When the day finally comes when technology or expansion approaches the limitations of an existing system, total replacement usually comes to mind. However, an upgrade may be an economical bridge to modernization and it can be achieved via "backwards compatibility."

Bruce Kamin
bkamin@generalcom.com

Paul Denaro, president GCC, congratulates David Seward, technical manager, ZRG, Inc., and Ken Vancini, managing partner, ZRG, Inc., on winning GCC's client drawing for an office luncheon. Paul delivered the six-foot sub from Bob's Food Store in Medford, MA, to the Westboro, MA firm.

GCC's Products & Services

Digital Systems

VoIP Systems

Auto Attendant/ Voicemail

Unified Messaging

Voice and Data Cabling

Call Center Solutions

Call Logging/ Reporting

Call Accounting

IVR/CTI

Wireless Office Systems

Paging Systems

24/7 Emergency Service

Remote Service

Demo Center

Service Plans

User Training

781-756-5100

Remote Engineering Support Can Save Your Company Money

Every phone system needs occasional changes, updates, or repair. For example, new employees join the company and need an extension and voicemail. An employee leaves and needs to be taken off the system. Programming may need to be updated. With today's technology, a lot of these types of functions can be accomplished remotely.

GCC has a dedicated department that specializes in off-site changes and repairs, and we provide remote engineering support (when applicable) to assist clients in a faster, more efficient manner and save them the expense of an onsite visit.

"Now clients can save even more money. When you prepay for a four-hour block of engineering time, you can save an additional 10% over our standard remote billing rates (see coupon for details)," said Michaela Sterling, vice president. "There is no expiration on the use of this block of time and it can be renewed automatically.

"Once this is in place, all you have to do is call us with your requirements and our technician will log into your system and make the changes. Of course, not everything can be done remotely, so we also have on-site service plans."

If you have questions or want to sign up, please give Michaela a call at 781-756-5100.

Special Savings!
Save 10%
on Four-Hour Blocks of
Remote Engineering Support

Please read the article above to discover the benefits of buying remote blocks of engineering support. Questions/Sign-up: call Michaela Sterling at 781-756-5100.