What You Need to Know
The operational, logistical, and financial burden of managing telecommunications environments in-house, especially with the increasing complexity brought on by mobile and data, has led many enterprises to seek third-party solutions to manage their communications lifecycle. Communications Lifecycle Management (CLM) and Telecom Expense Management (TEM) vendors are commissioned to manage enterprise wireless and wireline services and to provide enterprise cost-savings and efficiency gains. One company responsible for this is U.S.-based Network Control, a provider of end-to-end lifecycle management for enterprise telecommunications. TEM vendors, such as Network Control, can provide cost savings for companies, increase IT productivity, and develop improved IT support for the organization.

This Blue Hill report will describe how a solar energy company and a large food distribution company successfully identified and implemented Network Control as a third-party vendor to recognize thousands of unused devices, and to streamline their logistics and helpdesk processes. Blue Hill saw how Network Control took action to reduce carrier costs by over $2.5 million on behalf of a client.

Network Control in Profile
Network Control is a U.S.-based provider of end-to-end lifecycle and telecommunications management for wireless and wireline services, as well as “next-generation TEM.” With expertise in TEM, voice management, and data management, Network Control manages either part or all of a client’s telecommunications environment with the goal of supporting cost savings, visibility, and additional managed services such as helpdesk and device support. Network Control offers a fully-managed solution that combines bill auditing and optimization, invoice management, device provisioning and recycling, helpdesk, and reporting and analytics; their solution goes
beyond traditional TEM to manage network downtime and needs-based requirements, as well as provide management and consulting support. The company primarily serves clients with between $100 thousand and $1 million in monthly telecom spend.

**Organizations Interviewed**

To support this research, Blue Hill spoke with Network Control and with two of Network Control’s customers: a solar energy provider and a large food distributor. Prior to choosing Network Control as a telecommunications management platform, both of these companies had complicated telecom and technology environments that required dedicated IT strategies and resources to support.

During these conversations, Blue Hill got a better understanding of the IT and operational challenges that drove these organizations to adopt Network Control to manage portions of their wired and wireless environments. Blue Hill also discussed with these organizations the benefits they saw from implementing Network Control from a resources, cost, or time-savings perspective, as well as in terms of additional capabilities or functions these customers can now support.

The large food distributor currently uses Network Control for bill auditing, procurement, device kitting, expense and usage management, and contract review for both mobile and landline. The solar energy provider began working with Network Control to manage the billing, setup, retirement, and contract negotiation and bundling for wireline services including analog telephone, cable modems, and DSL (Digital Subscriber Line), but has begun using Network Control to manage wireless and helpdesk needs as well.

**Key Challenges that Drove Investment**

Both organizations cited disorganization of telecom, network, and mobile resources in their organizations and a need to “clean up” accounts as reasons for considering a TEM provider, with one company previously managing telecom with a spreadsheet and paper-based system, and another claiming “thousands of lines not in use but still being billed.” Both companies wanted to save money and shift IT resources to higher-value services, or cut resources altogether. Said one IT Director, “the purchase and deployment of mobility and the reconciliation of telecom expenses is not a core use of [internal] IT resources and skillsets.” Dedicating senior IT team members to digging into bills and phone records was a poor use of resources for the company, which felt it would be able to better utilize IT personnel in other ways.
The primary reasons these companies chose to bring on a third-party TEM provider were to reduce costs, address a disorganized asset and service environment, and replace headcount to support telecom and mobility management skills that were not in-house. Both companies saw the value of bringing on a TEM solution to manage their IT resources. One of the companies had experienced cuts to its IT department, making wired and wireless outsourcing essential to managing its telecommunications needs. One IT Operations Manager cited a need to “manage something that was quickly becoming difficult to manage on our own,” in regards to the company’s telecommunications environment.

Implementation Experiences and Challenges

The two companies profiled found the selection and implementation of Network Control’s solution to be relatively straightforward and quick. In both cases, the companies were familiar with Network Control prior to selecting it as a TEM solution; one company brought on Network Control based on a previous VP of IT’s recommendation, and in another, the IT Director who selected Network Control had previously used Network Control at his prior company and “saw what happened once Network Control took over mobility at [his previous company] and knew they would do it correctly in [his current role].”

Both companies developed a business case for utilizing Network Control’s solution based on offsetting internal resources, and the potential for savings that were greater than the net cost of the solution. Therefore, neither organization went through a competitive bidding process and both went directly to Network Control.

Both companies considered the implementation to be straightforward and timely. One company described Network Control as “very efficient in knowing what needed to be done,” with the whole implementation process taking two months and requiring only that the company provide access to vendor portals, billing information, invoices, and some change management processes. The company says that the implementation was slowed by its own internal bandwidth in getting Network Control the necessary access, and Network Control could have implemented faster if not for the company’s own delays. Another company began working with Network Control strictly for wireline services, and 6-9 months after implementing this offering began using Network Control for wireless and helpdesk services as well. This company described the transition process as taking a few months, during which time the company gained familiarity with the solution and ensured that there was no impact on quality or level of service to employees.

“I think of Network Control as my guardian angels. There’s so much detail in the phone bill and they have it figured out.”

IT Director
Large global food distributor
ANATOMY OF A DECISION

The only trouble either company described in implementing Network Control was in transitioning help desk services, and maintaining best practices the company had gained from its previous internal ticketing system. The key challenge was in training thousands of employees to contact Network Control for IT support rather than the company’s previous helpdesk service, and this ended up being a more gradual shift than anticipated.

The company described this transition as a “warm transfer,” where employees would often first reach out to internal IT resources who would then direct the employee to Network Control instead. The company described relying on internal management structures to disseminate the changes and information, and after using Network Control’s helpdesk for several months, says that its helpdesk services are “working very efficiently now.”

Results

Both organizations have seen significant benefits from outsourcing services to Network Control. One company went so far as to say “I think of Network Control as my guardian angels. There’s so much detail in the phone bill and they have it figured out.” Both companies described being much more organized after implementing Network Control and were able to accomplish this organization and increased visibility into wireless and wireline services while saving money. One company is using Network Control to manage over 10,000 lines and devices and is in the process of turning off over 1,000 devices that were duplicates or no longer used, resulting in significant cost savings. The company previously found “zombie” phones and MiFi’s to be a “tremendous issue” but has since been able to mitigate this by working with Network Control to ensure devices are canceled and removed from billing. Additionally, this company previously had several hundreds of pieces of returned equipment per month for repair and replacement, requiring a complicated logistics process of shipping devices across the country. Now, the company can instead ship directly to Network Control, which then handles shipping the device back to the employee.

From a cost and time savings perspective, one company has now been able to dedicate all costs for employees previously handling wireline to new areas in the company, and says this is “like having additional employees added to the workforce without having to pay them.” The time it takes for IT tickets to be completed has decreased dramatically, and there is no more backlog of IT issues to be resolved; previously, the company had 2-3 people handling tickets, whereas Network Control has 8-10 different people dedicated to resolving IT tickets for the company. This company achieved direct carrier cost reduction of over $2.5 million compared to its pre-Network Control environment.

“Network Control genuinely cares about what’s going on, and takes the time to get to know their clients. The company has a ‘Mom-and-Pop’ feel—the bottom line is to make customers happy, and Network Control goes above and beyond.”

IT Operations Manager
Solar energy provider
The large food distribution company was able to quantify over $250,000 per year in savings, or the full-time equivalent of one senior IT manager. Prior to onboarding Network Control, most of the work for setting up and changing employee plans and devices was done by technicians who cost the company at least $100,000 per year each. Using Network Control has eliminated the need for these additional resources, saving the company significant IT costs.

Recommendations

Based on discussions with both Network Control and Network Control clients, Blue Hill Research provides the following recommendations.

1. **Network Control should be considered for companies seeking to manage wireline or wireless telecommunications with a high-touch and support-oriented solution.**

   Network Control excels in the level of customer support and service it provides, and this was reflected by the improvements noted by both companies to whom Blue Hill spoke. Blue Hill found that by outsourcing helpdesk and logistics services to Network Control, companies realized efficiency and productivity gains, as well as a higher level of customer support and interaction than they previously had internally. In order to match the helpdesk and logistics support Network Control provides, companies would typically need to dedicate several full-time IT employees to these tasks, which would be expensive and would prevent these employees from providing higher-value services to the company.

2. **Blue Hill notes that US-based companies seeking to identify and reconcile unused or duplicate IT assets through a combination of logistical and billing optimization approaches should consider Network Control.**

   Clients of Network Control were able to reduce costs after implementing Network Control’s aggregate solution by identifying unused and duplicate IT assets. The combination of billing optimization, support, and equipment logistics that Network Control provided to its clients produced greater savings than providing either cost savings or reverse logistics and device support in isolation. Blue Hill believes this combination of physical, logistical, financial, and service support in managing mobile and landline network equipment is necessary to maximize savings and fully rationalize inventory.
3. Blue Hill observed that Network Control provides IT resources that often supplement or replace existing IT support staff for telecom and mobility support.

Blue Hill spoke to Network Control clients who chose to outsource all logistics and helpdesk support associated with their telecom and mobility activity. Compared to the option of managing telecom and mobility in-house, these companies found that Network Control provided direct cost savings for telecom and mobility spend, improved efficiency, and provided the ability to triple the IT support resources who could respond to trouble tickets while reducing the total cost of support.

4. Network Control has an opportunity to provide additional services to customers such as support for and management of third-party applications and services to continue to deliver client value after the initial contract.

Network Control’s clients spoke very favorably of its solution and were extremely pleased with Network Control’s level of customer support. Based on their experiences with Network Control, customers were interested in outsourcing additional IT asset management to Network Control, such as auditing, reconciling, and managing third-party software licenses and services. As Network Control’s customers indicated a high degree of trust in the solution, Network Control has an opportunity to provide additional support by expanding billing and inventory management options to manage additional IT needs for an organization.

Conclusion

Outsourcing time-consuming and resource-intensive IT tasks, like bill pay, contract negotiation, device provisioning and kitting, and identifying unused or duplicate IT assets, to a Telecom Expense Management (TEM) solution can save organizations significant time and money. To better understand how Network Control, a provider of end-to-end communications lifecycle management, meets these needs for its customers, Blue Hill spoke to two IT managers about their experiences selecting and implementing Network Control solutions. Blue Hill has seen carrier savings of over $2.5 million from using Network Control to manage wireless and wireline assets and services. Customers described receiving improved helpdesk support and faster ticket response times after utilizing Network Control for IT support. Based on these conversations, Blue Hill recommends Network Control for companies seeking to identify and reconcile duplicate and unused IT assets, achieve cost savings and efficiency gains from outsourcing helpdesk and logistics services, and receive high-touch customer service and support.
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Chief Research Officer

Hyoun Park is the Chief Research Officer of Blue Hill Research, where he oversees day-to-day research operations, delivery, and methodology focused on vendor and technology selection. In addition, Park covers analytics and enterprise mobility technologies as a noted advisor, social influencer, and practitioner. Park has been named as a top 10 Big Data, analytics, and mobility influencer including quotes in USA Today, the Los Angeles Times, and a wide variety of industry media sources. Over the past 20 years, Park has been on the cutting edge of web, social, cloud, and mobile technologies in both startup and enterprise roles. Park holds a Masters of Business Administration from Boston University, and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Women’s and Gender Studies from Amherst College.

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