



## Call Accounting More Than Just Expense Management

**The telecom infrastructure is part of the lifeblood of any organization. From internal communications to business development and customer contact and support, telecommunications is at the heart of almost every critical process.**

The telecommunications spend area is so wrought with inefficiency...that most enterprises don't know how much they spend on telecom services, never mind how they can best manage those budgets.

– Aberdeen Group

Given its strategic role in helping organizations achieve their business objectives, getting full value from a telecom investment involves both expense **and** activity management tools typical in most call accounting solutions.

### Expense Management

It's no secret that telecom costs are a major financial drain for many businesses today. The press has reported for years that companies pay far too much for telecom services than they should because of sloppy validation and reconciliation processes and misuse of the phone system by employees and the lost productivity that results.

The Aberdeen Group concluded that “The telecommunications spend area is so wrought with inefficiency...that most enterprises don't know how much they spend on telecom services, never mind how they can best manage those budgets.”

There are many reasons why companies overpay for telecom services:

- A monthly avalanche of telecom bills
- Increasingly complex bills caused by the proliferation of carrier billing systems
- Telecom spending that is often spread across many departments in an organization, defying a coherent understanding of a company's actual spend
- Inadequate staff resources
- The addition of new telecom services

So how can companies gain more control over telecom expenses? By employing a Call Accounting solution that offers a systematic, integrated and best practices approach across the entire spectrum of potential telecom expense leak points, including:

- **Invoice auditing**—Ensuring that all invoices (past and present) are accurate is essential to recoup past overpayments and prevent future overpayments.
- **Cost center allocations**—Accurate and timely allocation of telecom expenses to enterprise cost centers is essential to proactive expense management.
- **Usage reporting**—Usage information that is reported back to business units makes leak points clearly visible and enables managers to stop expense leaks when the system highlights cases of misuse and abuse.
- **Spend analysis**—Provides the basis for negotiating better rates and improving efficiencies by consolidating vendors and eliminating redundant services.
- **Asset tracking**—Allows companies to accurately track telecom products and services that are constantly being ordered, employed, and discontinued.
- **Contract compliance**—A systematic review of rates ensures they are in line with those negotiated in the contract.
- **Supplier performance measurement**—If service-level agreements (SLAs) are not being met, refunds or other negotiated givebacks must be secured.

## Activity Management

Of all the factors that affect an organization's health and prosperity—and its future prospects—perhaps none is more important than employee productivity. And the primary function of a telecommunications system is to enable and maximize employee productivity. Unfortunately, if not properly managed, the telecom system can also act as a sieve through which productivity is lost.

Most employees use the phones for non-business purposes. To some degree, this is expected and even appropriate. However, every company has a subset of employees that abuse accepted limits by making frequent, lengthy, and/or expensive calls. These chronic abusers not only generate significant additional expense for the company, but also drain company productivity. Another group, the moderate offenders, can actually be a greater source of lost productivity due to their sheer numbers.

Without visibility, preventing productivity losses simply isn't possible. So one of the primary functions of activity management tools provided by call accounting applications is to provide insight through identification of non-business calling activity, including metrics such as source, duration, cost, and destination.

Another important aspect of activity management is proactively assessing the effectiveness of revenue-generating processes. The ability to monitor sales rep activity, for example, can keep the sales force properly focused, making the right number of calls to the right contacts and generally performing at their best.

Activity management tools can also enable companies to monitor and manage critical processes such as customer service requests and compare results with historical performance in order to make any necessary changes.

Activity management provides a **window into the enterprise** that:

- Facilitates a collaborative environment
- Aligns IT performance with business goals
- Provides innovative ways to:
  - Boost productivity throughout the enterprise
  - Improve operational efficiency
  - Maximize revenue
  - Boost profitability

Organizations that are able to mine and utilize the information that lies hidden in their telecom data have the means to develop a very real and powerful competitive advantage.

To learn how SAI can help your organization with activity management, complete our contact form or call us at (800) 775-0025, ext. 4516.

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