

Global Communications Management Best Practices

With businesses more reliant on communications than ever, and worldwide data traffic poised to exceed one zettabyte (one trillion gigabytes) per year, there has never been a greater need for effective management of its costs. Today's globalized economy further complicates this issue, as communications lifecycle and cost management providers no longer have the luxury of operating in a single country.

Today's global challenges

In order to operate effectively in today's globalized communications and computing environment, a communications lifecycle and cost management provider has these challenges to overcome:

Taxation

Each country has its own taxation structure; whether at the country, regional, or local levels, all the details must be captured and tracked. Exemptions from taxes like VAT (value-added tax) and GST (goods and services tax) complicate the issue, as do any applicable taxes on stipends for mobile expenses. Stipends can be taxable benefits in some countries, and it's important to work with the enterprise HR/Tax function to ensure you are capturing the correct information. International communications management providers need systems that can adapt to working with multiple tax systems and their inevitable changes.

Exchange rates

It's not just that exchange rates that vary by currency; the ways in which they're applied do so as well. Many enterprises apply the exchange rate on the date of payment, but large multinationals also apply quarterly or even *annual* exchange rates instead. In a world where trading is done at microsecond speed, these differences can significantly affect international telecom costs, and a communications portfolio and cost management system has to be able to apply them accurately by applying the enterprises' policy and work closely with the enterprise to identify and reflect any rate change practices.

BYOD, corporate-liable, and everything in between

Between the pure CL (corporate-liable) approach where the organization owns both devices and plans, the pure BYOD (bring your own device) model with employee-owned devices on company-owned plans, a spectrum of hybrid approaches exist. The model a client uses reflects regional laws, business culture, and needs. An effective communications portfolio and cost management system suits each client's individual approach while providing best practices and management reports to understand the benefits and costs of their policy decisions.

Multiple mobile accounts per user

Communications portfolio and cost management systems need to be ready to adapt to emerging mobile use patterns. From global travelers using multiple SIM cards for a single phone to users with multiple cellular-enabled devices such as tablets, laptops, and mobile Wi-Fi hotspots, "one user, one mobile account" can no longer be the baseline assumption. How multiple devices are tracked and displayed to the end user can provide information and support that reduces help desk calls and allows management to track the types of devices used by person, department or organization. Continued increase of mobility usage and new device introduction means that keeping track of *who* in the enterprise has *which devices* and *how* they are used becomes not only a technology refresh or bandwidth capacity decision but impacts costs significantly, especially if not monitored closely through a managed inventory.

Changes in the EU

Two recent changes in the EU are greatly affecting business mobility and data protection. A communications portfolio and cost management system needs to account for them as they develop throughout 2016:

1. The EU is redefining carriers' ability to charge for roaming in its member countries in 2016 and beyond, which will benefit both travelers and businesses, and
2. The EU Court struck down the US/EU Safe Harbor information-sharing agreement, leaving many aspects of data protection undefined. We are monitoring this issue and working with our legal counsel and partners to ensure that our architecture and services remain complaint with data protection practices and regulations as they evolve. The United States is working with the EU to identify new ways to enable global business while still protecting an individual's right to privacy as defined by the EU regulations.

GSG's global experience

At GSG, our international experience has allowed us to cultivate a knowledge base of global characteristics and requirements, as well as the relationships necessary to function across multiple countries and regions.

Our trusted partners, worldwide, give us the ability to combine local expertise with our international reach and capabilities. Just as the world is always evolving, so is our global strategy, as we constantly update our software and services to match our partners' and clients' technology requirements and comply with the laws and regulations where they operate. Our knowledge of the global communications environment, and the ability to adapt as it evolves, is a key capability that GSG brings to partners and clients.

The most important value that GSG brings is deep knowledge and experience managing telecom and networking environments globally. Even at our inception, we were a global company that provided BPO services for telecom expense and mobile management companies worldwide. That experience guided the design of our SaaS applications suite, services and solutions, which cover communication cost management for fixed, mobile, and network environments.

Best practices are often core to our engagements. Not every service is necessary, cost efficient or even possible with every country-carrier combination. Our implementation and program management experts advise clients throughout the process on the best possible application of our solutions to meet their unique enterprise requirements often country by country — whether that be the total spend per service type globally or who the largest mobility users are.

We develop an accurate inventory providing visibility to the costs of running your communications. As a benefit, the solution delivers savings and optimization to the telecom environments because of the detailed data captured and sustained. GSG works with large multi-national clients across multiple industries, scores of service providers, spread over many countries, in several languages to make communications environments manageable. Our applications suite, services and solutions can be easily extended to incorporate telecom-related data in standard formats, and our teams are adept in translating not just language, but also international telecom and business practices, regulations and other issues that arise when working worldwide. Adapting to ever-evolving global and technological matters is at the heart of what we do.