

Four Stages of Enterprise Telecommunications Management

Stage Three: Analysis and Planning

A Purple Paper on Enterprise Telecommunications Management

Abstract

Enterprise Telecommunications Management (ETM) is not a product – it is a process and philosophy of business, using technology-based solutions and supporting services to manage the enterprise telecommunications environment. The process of ETM runs through four distinct stages. Similar to Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, each stage addresses a defined set of telecom management needs and desires.

As addressed in the white paper, Enterprise Telecommunications Management for the Network-Centric Organization, the needs of each stage build upon those of the previous stages. When the needs and wants associated with any particular stage are fulfilled, other more sophisticated and often more strategic needs and desires emerge. The four stages are:

- *Accuracy*
- *Allocation*
- *Analysis and Planning*
- *Acceleration and Enhancement*

Each successive stage reflects the increased sophistication of the organization’s relationship with the telecommunications environment and the increase in the strategic significance of telecommunications to an organization. Hence, network-centric organizations, whose business operations highly leverage their telecommunications infrastructure, are most likely to attain all four stages of ETM.

Analysis and Planning Stage

The initial challenges a successful ETM solution must address are an accurate accounting of all the services, equipment, users, and applications, as well as a proper allocation of network resources and costs.

Once these two stages have been achieved, the successful ETM solution can be used to provide support for network configuration and planning, and project management. Knowing what resources are needed allows for network tuning and supports project management for deployment of new services, applications, and equipment. When this occurs, the analysis and planning stage of ETM is being addressed.

Analysis in this stage means being able to evaluate the architecture of the network and its performance, with respect to the business objectives of the organization. Planning means leveraging the accuracy and allocation functions to ensure that the proper resources are available and deployed on a timely, efficient basis – knowing what will be needed and then tactically supporting the deployment of those services and resources.

Having an accurate and properly allocated environment provides the information that an organization, especially an NCO, can use to plan future requirements and analyze the performance of the current environment. This makes the analysis and planning stage of ETM a strategic function.

Specific activities addressed by the analysis and planning stage of ETM include:

- Ensure adequate network resources
- Fine tune the network configuration and design
- Optimize environment for performance and cost
- Ease roll-out and integration of new communications technologies into the enterprise environment (i.e. mobile communications)
- Relate telecommunications services and expense to business performance
- Provide a project management infrastructure for telecommunications network roll-outs, enhancements, and changes.

As an example, a major international food-service company uses Rivermine's inventory-powered, software-based ETM technology to manage the installation and activation of the telecommunications infrastructure at its new locations. Because the number of new locations opened is extremely high, and occur rapidly, delays in opening locations can have substantial financial impact. The inventory-powered ETM solution provides a new-location service template and a carrier-neutral ordering process – very important when locations are opening around the globe.

Summary

Analysis and planning are intertwined with and sequential to allocation and accuracy. While accuracy and allocation focus on tactical issues such as expense management and assignment of cost, analysis and planning spans tactical and strategic issues. Tactically, this phase provides the enabling foundation for managing the acquisition and deployment of services, applications, and equipment, and for fine-tuning the performance of the network. Strategically, it addresses a number of ROI and forward-looking questions:

- *“How well are we doing what we are doing?”*
- *“Are we getting good value for the expenditures?”*
- *“Should we be doing something different?”*
- *“Can we be doing things better?”*
- *“What should we be doing in the future based on what we’re doing now?”*

Creating an ETM solution that addresses analysis and planning cannot be done without first creating an ETM solution that is inventory-powered, as opposed to one that is invoice-centric. This indicates that older generation ETM solutions that are invoice-analysis and service-biased are not likely to be broadly useful to the NCO. We believe that analysis and planning is a defining characteristic of the latest generation of ETM solutions.