

September 2010

In This Issue

- Global Expansion - "It's a Small, Small World"
 - Ongoing Community Service: Advocate Networks Helps Sheltering Arms Lay Sod on new Playground
 - The Power of the Audit: A Self-Funding Investment
 - Behavioral Analytics and Modeling: Are your Management Dashboard reports telling you enough?
 - Network and Marketing Intelligence
 - Upcoming Events
-

Global Expansion - "It's a Small, Small World"

By Tim Wise,
Co-Founder & Co-President,
Advocate Networks, LLC

2010 has been another significant growth year for Advocate Networks - 64% growth in revenue; recognized by Inc. Magazine as one of the 5000 Fastest Growing Companies in the United States; and expanded our geographic presence in New York City, Washington, DC, Houston, Texas and the Carolinas. However, the most significant area of growth has been our clients with a global presence. These clients are based in every major region around the globe: North America, South America, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia Pacific regions.

Operating in multiple global regions creates significant challenges for IT organizations, especially in terms of communications services. A globally focused company must deal with different service providers (typically by region), varying standards and interfaces, differing service availability as well as language and culture issues for managing communications. The complexity of this varying environment can be daunting to manage for many IT organizations.

By utilizing a common methodology and framework, we have been successful in assisting clients with normalizing this seemingly complex, global environment. Recently, we completed an audit of a major foreign airline recovering nearly \$1M US in billing errors by a foreign PTT (historical in-country monopoly). Similarly, we completed a global strategic sourcing effort across each major region - North America, EMEA and AsiaPacific - resulting in over \$9M in annualized savings. Finally, we have worked with several clients in planning global WANs (wide area networks) across multiple regions and vendors. The common thread for success in these global engagements has been a disciplined methodology of assessment, planning, design, optimization, strategic sourcing, implementation and management.

The key to success in a global environment is marketplace knowledge by country and region to apply to your communications services objectives. Knowledge helps to create simplicity in dealing with the complexity of global operations. To learn more, please contact Tim Wise at (678) 987-5995 or tim.wise@advocatenetworks.com.

Ongoing Community Service: Advocate Networks Helps Sheltering Arms Lay Sod on new Playground



Members of the Advocate Networks team gathered early the morning of June 11, 2010 to lay sod for the Sheltering Arms new playground at their Cobb Facility. Sheltering Arms is metro Atlanta's oldest nonprofit child care provider and one of its most respected, serving more than 3,600 children and their families each year, in [17 child care centers](#) in seven counties.

Our volunteer project started by reading stories to each of the 6 classes. Each classroom had a special "Mystery Reader" and a great new book was donated to each group of children. Next, the hard work began! The Advocate team placed and watered sod for the entire day, resulting in a dramatically improved playground for the children in day care at the Sheltering Arms Cobb center.

In appreciation, each of the 6 classrooms of children made posters with their hand prints and expressions such as: "Thanks for our New Playground." Advocate Networks was honored to volunteer for Sheltering Arms, an organization that makes a significant impact on early learning and the well-being of many families in our community.

The Power of the Audit: A Self-Funding Investment

By Gerry Carson, Managing Consultant, Advocate Networks, LLC

A third-party audit of communications spending has the power to generate significant return on investment while also cleaning up the network inventory. Most audit efforts are structured as a contingency project, thus, a customer has no out of pocket expense. Billing errors in telecommunications are estimated at between 4% and 10% of annual spending for larger telecom service providers. This represents a negative hit to margins and a savings opportunity for many players in the market. Payment of fees is based on a percentage of findings and thus an audit project is a self-funding investment.

So exactly what is a telecommunications audit?

An audit assesses the correctness of charges from a billing, contract, network, and tax perspective. A closer look at each of these areas is required to understand the impact an audit can have:

- **Billing:** Comparing billing rates to contract rates ensures that the correct rates are being billed. Comparison of billing and contract rates is not difficult, but telecom expertise is required to evaluate whether a product or service is priced out correctly.
- **Contract:** This area of audit focus assesses contract terms and conditions, such as tiers, discounts, milestone payments and growth incentives.
- **Network:** Comparing invoices to network inventory reveals whether you are paying for the correct network elements in place. This part of the audit typically identifies disconnected circuits that remain on the bill and also circuits that can be disconnected.
- **Tax:** Careful review of taxes can yield significant return given the myriad of exemptions and changes in the tax field.

What is an audit strategy?

For service providers that have multi-million dollar telecom cost of goods sold, auditing every penny may prove too costly and inefficient. The audit process, what is audited, and the order in which items are audited, are all critical to success. The best audit strategy is structured around change events, including technology migration, network grooming, acquisitions, customer losses and other key factors. Just as many small businesses fund their own expansion, an audit should identify findings early in the project that justify continued effort.

Please contact Gerry Carson at (678) 987-5905 or gerry.carson@advocatenetworks.com in order to learn more about the Advocate Networks Audit process, and find out what we can do for your company today.

Behavioral Analytics and Modeling: Are your Management Dashboard reports telling you enough?

By David Crew, Vice President of Strategic Accounts, Advocate Networks, LLC

Business leaders in the communications industry are continually confronted with the challenges of developing, managing and evolving their service offerings to meet the sophisticated, ever-changing needs and expectations of their clients. These leaders spend countless hours contemplating whether their company is probing deep enough into their customer and product performance data to enable them to make sound business decisions.

As an example, common churn analysis & reporting includes:

- Churn counts (# subscribers)
- Churn by customer type (customer segmentation)
- Churn by service type
- Churn code entered in when process the disconnect

The value of information generated from Business As Usual (BAU) Dashboard reporting does not empower effective decision making. With this methodology, only high-level statistics are captured and reported and little is known as to the underlying factors effecting customer behavior.

Aligning critical business events (e.g. economic, competitive and technological) with customer activity history creates a more in-depth understanding of customer behavior. At Advocate Networks we refer to process as Customer Behavioral Analytics. Effectively, the detailed analysis provides the business leader with an understanding of the customer levers-or "Predictors of Behavior."

Advocate Networks has considerable experience working with Customer Level Analytics, supporting a wide variety of voice and data products. As a value-add partner, Advocate Networks functions as a flexible workforce to answer questions quickly, efficiently, and cost effectively. Please contact David Crew at (703) 624-8099 or david.crew@advocatenetworks.com to learn more.

Network and Marketing Intelligence

By Tom McLean, Principal Consultant, Advocate Networks, LLC

Network build out and effective marketing are two seemingly different functions with a deep symbiotic relationship. A company cannot sell service if the network is not there; the philosophy of "build it and they will come" does not necessarily apply. No matter which function you have, marketing or network planning, several critical questions must be answered.

- Where is customer demand?
- What do the customers need from a bandwidth and service perspective?
- Where is the competition?
- How do I maximize the effectiveness of limited resources?

These are hard, relevant questions and the answers often come anecdotally from "feet on the street" observations. Certainly this is valuable information but it only pertains to what the field sees. What about the things the field does not see. This is where the advanced tools and data that the Advocate Networks team has at our disposal, become very valuable. To answer these questions, our team matches our client's footprint to the locations served by competitive carriers, the levels service and capacity competitors can provide and calculated levels of bandwidth/service requirements for individual businesses. Combining this level of market intelligence with our client's corporate strategy and goals provides a solid basis for determining network deployment and marketing strategy. It does not end here though. To make marketing and sales efforts more effective, our competitive analysis can also be applied to the development of tactical marketing campaigns surgically targeted at competitive weaknesses, lack of competition and capitalizing on strengths.

If you would like more information on how the Advocate Networks team can enable your company to be more proactive and timely with marketing and network planning, please contact Tom Mclean at tom.mclean@advocatenetworks.com or 678-987-5960.

Look For Us!

COMPTEL

September 13th-15th

Location: Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center

Dallas, TX

[Visit Website](#)

Inc. 5000 Conference

September 30-October 2, 2010

Location: Gaylord National Hotel & Convention Center
Washington, DC

[Visit Website](#)

SIMposium - The Charm of IT

October 3-5, 2010

Location: Omni Hotel, CNN Center

Atlanta, GA

[Visit Website](#)

2010 Wireless Infrastructure Show

October 4-7, 2010

Location: Westin Diplomat Resort & Spa
Hollywood, FL

[Visit Website](#)

Women of the Year in Technology Awards

Advocate Networks' Co-President, Scott Fogle is a judge

November 10, 2010 at 5:30pm

Location: Renaissance Waverly Hotel

Atlanta, GA

[Visit Website](#)

To learn how Advocate Networks can reduce your communications expenses, please contact Scott Fogle at (678) 987-5990 or scott.fogle@advocatenetworks.com.

Referrals are always appreciated (and rewarded)! Please contact Susan Schroeder at susan.schroeder@advocatenetworks.com for information about our referral program.

This publication of "Out Front" is provided quarterly by Advocate Networks.

© Advocate Networks, LLC 2002-2010

Advocate Networks
6525 The Corners Parkway
Suite 310
Norcross, GA 30092
Phone: 1-888-251-6789
Fax: (678) 987-5999

© 2010. Advocate Networks. All Rights Reserved