Telephone Answering Service Report

This report recommends the adoption of the Unite Me service from Unite Communications to replace the current PBX system and voicemail services provided by Bell Canada, in order to provide virtual call forwarding and voicemail services.

This proposal allows members, who choose to participate, the ability to log in and receive TAS calls on their home or cell phone instead of at the Intergroup Office.

This solution adds more flexibility to our current operations without a large investment (21.95+tax, 75.00 one-time setup fee).

This report also recommends the transfer of the line 613-237-6000 to Unite Communications (no cost), and the removal of voicemail services from the Bell Canada account, leaving only one business line (613-237-6003) in the Intergroup Office.

These proposals would reduce our current Bell Canada bill from 154.91+tax to under 50+tax a month (excluding internet, Yellow Pages, and Long Distance).

If accepted, the monthly savings to Ottawa Area Intergroup would be approximately 75-100 dollars and provide greater opportunities to members to do service.

JUNE STATISTICS

Coverage:

Janet C. has monitored telephone answering service over the past several months. As an indicator, here are the current statistics for the month of June.

In June, there were 120 time slots to be filled between the hours of 10 AM and 10 PM, 7 days a week.

According to the call log, only 78 slots were filled by volunteers. This indicates a 65% coverage.

Calls:

According to the call log, there were 179 calls answered:

- 50 Repeat calls
- 88 Request for Assistance/Information
- 41 Current Members

There were 24 voice messages:

- 19 Assistance/Information
- 1 Current Member
- 4 Hangups

Please keep in mind that not all volunteers follow the correct procedure and record all calls and messages in the call log. Therefore, these statistics represent a minimum, rather than an accurate reflection of calls and messages received.

This indicates, however, there is less than 2 calls reported per shift. There are many shifts where no calls are received. We can assume call volume continues to decline due alternative access to information, in particular, the website. This may lead to a perception among members that telephone answering is not important form of service, or that missing an assigned shift is acceptable.

However, not everyone has access to the internet, and while call volume is low, it remains a vital point of contact to the still-suffering alcoholic.

What is clear, is we are not, as an an organization, meeting the needs of our community. The hand of AA is not always there.
Telephone Answering Service Report

CURRENT SYSTEM

Volunteers

Currently, each day is divided into 4 volunteer shifts of 3 hours each, 7 days a week, from 10AM until 10 PM. There are a total of 84 shifts a week. Volunteers on Mon-Fri shifts between 10AM and 4PM also provide coverage for literature sales.

Technology

Currently, our telephone service is provided by Bell. We have a central number (613-237-6000) that, that directs calls through a PBX system (which we own) to one of two lines (613-237-6000, 613-237-6003). Should the first line be busy, the system falls over to the second. If both lines are busy, or there is no answer, it falls over to voicemail. The phone line can only be forwarded to an outside number from within the office.

We currently pay 154.91+tax monthly (excluding Internet, Yellow Pages, and long distance charges).

UNITE ME SYSTEM

Once the (613-237-6000) number is transferred, the Unite Me system by Unite Communications takes over responsibility for call forwarding for the Ottawa Area Intergroup Helpline.

The system is a virtual PBX system. The services indicated in the estimate (attached) allow for members to sign into the system via phone or internet, to receive emails, and access voicemails.

However, this does not affect members ability to still do telephone answering in the office, if they so choose.

BENEFITS

The Unite Me system provides the following benefits:

- Members will have the choice to answer TAS calls from either the Intergroup office on the phone in the office, or outside the office on their cell or other phones, providing flexibility on doing TAS service.
- Montreal is using the same system, therefore this system has been tested for use in an AA telephone answering service for over a year. Montreal reports 96-98% call coverage.
- This provides more opportunities to members to do service, in particular individuals who have mobility issues or disabilities.
- Coordinators and/or members have the ability to change where calls are being forwarded to instantly from the internet or from their phone.
- Voice messages, if not responded to, can be sent via email to the TAS coordinator in the form of a wave file.
- Full call statistics are available online, providing us with a more accurate picture of call volume and missed calls.
- Negates the need for more expensive services and a second line in the office, currently in use by Bell Canada. Estimated savings of 75-100 dollars month.
CONSIDERATIONS

VOICEMAIL
If the call is forwarded to a members personal phone, and the member does not pick up, the call will go to their personal voicemail.

However, if we set the Unite Me voicemail to pick up after 4 rings, then this will pre-empt the call going to the members personal voicemail.

CALL LISTS
There have been concerns in the past about the distribution of the member 12-Step list outside the Intergroup Office.

However, this information may be uploaded into a password-protected secure section of the Ottawa Area Intergroup website. It will not be possible to download or copy this information. This solution provides adequate protection to the names and numbers of members on the list.

CALLBACKS
If a member receives a voicemail, the member will need to back on their personal phone line.

However, the member may choose to use *67 to block his/her number from appearing. This is his/her personal choice, and not necessary in accordance with the traditions. Please recall that the international directories contain first and last names and numbers of individual members. Also, it is important to note it was common during previous iterations of the telephone answering service in Ottawa, prior to the Bronson Centre office, to forward and respond to calls in this manner.
UNiTE ME SERVICE PROPOSAL

Prepared For:

OTTAWA AREA ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
Executive Summary

Thank you for allowing UNiTE Communications the opportunity to earn Your Organization’s business. After speaking with you, I understand that Your Organization requires a communications solution. **UNiTE Me is a solution that fits your requirements.** UNiTE Communications entire Corporate Philosophy is based upon the following four basic principals:

**Reliability**
Our systems are fully redundant, secure and monitored 24/7/365. Our servers are hosted in the same Major Telecom Facilities as Canada’s largest telephone companies. For Your Organization this means top tier reliability. This also provides UNiTE access to tier one telecom services, as well as a self healing internet backbone, all providing you, the end user, with maximum uptime. Our facilities also provide us with a power supply that will keep your service operating, even in the face of a major power event, such as the East Coast blackout of August 2004. The bottom line is UNiTE has put the measures in place to give you the peace of mind that your business requires to serve your clients.

**Experience**
We’ve been doing what we do for a long time. We have over 20 years experience in the telecommunications messaging business. We’ve been around long enough to understand that each company’s needs are unique. We listen to what you need and work to provide a solution that is best for your situation, rather than make Your Organization fit some cookie cutter solution. And as much as we know that nobody knows our business better than we do, we know that nobody knows your business better than you do. That’s why we listen to make sure our solutions solve the issues you need solved.

**We Focus on YOU**
At UNiTE we know that we are only as good as our service. For that reason, all of our personnel are dedicated to exceeding your expectations. UNiTE assigns your account to a representative who becomes and remains your point of contact. We know you’re tired of companies that provide you different answers every time you call. At UNiTE you deal with real people with real names, not just people with first names, or employee numbers. You deal with people who understand your service configuration requirements, and we are accountable for what they tell you. Help is always available when and if you need it. Let’s face it, we all know the term “customer service” is so overused and thrown around, it’s become meaningless. Let our customers tell you themselves how well we treat them. We’d gladly provide references. In addition to that, we offer no charge evaluations of our services so you can experience it all for yourself. Once you are a client, we have to continue to prove ourselves, since we never require you to sign a contract.

**Value**
We’re able to offer you leading edge and unique services that are very competitively priced. Simply put, our job is to deliver more for less. With UNiTE you never have to install anything. With UNiTE, you, the client, never have to maintain a thing, you’ll never have to
worry about outgrowing a solution. Since UNiTE is constantly adding new features, and improving functionality, concerns of becoming obsolete are not concerns at all. The bottom line, is that UNiTE will provide Your Organization peace of mind. We allow you to concentrate on one less thing, so you can focus on what’s most important, your business.

**How will UNiTE VIRTUAL OFFICE Work for me?**

The way Unite will work is as follows

- **The Caller** - Your callers call your UNiTE ME number and are instantly forwarded to the location you choose. If the line is busy or unanswered then the callers may leave you a detailed message.

- **You** - You always have control over where your calls are directed. For example, you may be in the car all day, so you can simply call in and easily redirect the calls on the fly to your mobile phone. Therefore, a caller to your UNiTE ME is simply connected with you in the car. When you return to the office, you easily log in via phone, or web to change the number back to the office phone. Calls routed to the UNiTE VOICEMAIL, can alert email, cell phone, pager or all of the above to notify that a message is waiting. This allows the opportunity for a quick response to messages left. The UNiTE VOICEMAIL can even forward the message as a wav file right to your email, so the user can double click and listen right from your desktop, Blackberry, iPhone, Android, etc.

- **Features** - UNiTE is constantly adding new features and functions. Our features are designed to help you maximize efficiency, as well as convenience. Some examples are
  
  - **UNiTE Fax** - Each Subscriber can be provided with a personal fax telephone number. Faxes sent to this number are automatically sent to that users email inbox. The user then has the option to keep, archive and/or print what they need, and delete what they don’t. They can share important fax documents with others easily via email. The fax feature saves on toner, physical fax machine wear and tear and paper. It adds a level of privacy to your fax communication by assuring your faxes are not only always available to you but are seen only by you, and not sitting in a common fax machine for all to see.
  
  - **Self Help Web Site** - UNiTE provides a Web Portal so you may perform a lot of the same functions via the web that you can perform via the telephone, such as Listening to Messages, Viewing Faxes, Changing Call Routing, Modifying Notification Methods, etc.
  
  - **UNiTE TeleSwap™** - This unique feature allows the user to transfer an incoming call from one telephone to another. For example, say one user has their calls routed to their cell phone, they answer a call and they have a landline available right next to them. UNiTE TeleSwap™ allows them to transfer the call off their cell phone to the landline. Imagine how much that feature alone will reduce the cell phone usage bills.
UNiTE VOICEMAIL BOX - Holds 50 messages, each of which can be up to 5 minutes each. Messages that are saved in the mailbox are stored for at least two weeks.

Billing

Our services are billed on a month to month basis, there are never any contracts to sign or any long term commitments to make.

Monthly Investment for Your Organization

UNiTE Me Number (new or existing)

$21.95 per month plus applicable taxes - Flat Rate (New or Ported Telephone Number)

One time Activation / Configuration - $75

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

✓ General Fax Number with Fax to Email
  $FREE

✓ Additional Local Numbers
  Give Your Organization a local presence in any of 600+ Canadian Cities and 1400+ American Cities.
  $7.50 per month each (FLAT RATE) - One time porting costs $25 each

✓ North American Toll Free Number
  $2.95 per month (Includes 100 FREE Minutes per month) additional minutes 3.9 cents

I will follow up with you in a few days, however, if you have any questions in the meantime, please call me on my direct line toll free 1-866-760-2888.

Thanks

Brian L. Presement
Business Development Manager