



Technology Seminar Alert!

Access Telcom will be hosting a Technology Seminar to discuss **Breaking**

Your Communication Barrier.

Event Date is Wednesday February 9, 2011 from 7 am to 9 am. This event will be held at our office located at 2202 E. Sprague, Spokane, WA 99202.

There are only 16 seats available!

To register please contact Brita Myhre at 509-340-0286 or Brita@access-tel.com. All reservations must be made by February 7, 2011.



Breaking Your Communication Barrier by LaVerne Biel

How can you break your communication sound barrier to increase business activity? The simple answer is to analyze where you are and change directions to where you need to be.

It can be as easy as utilizing technology to accelerate your business. Tony Hsieh in the *Harvard Business Review* states, “As unsexy and low-tech as it may sound, the telephone is one of the best branding devices out there”.¹

- Remove physical distances between staff
- Create a culture of innovation
- Tie into emotional needs
- Ignore your competition by competing at a different level
- Rediscover your purpose

VoIP systems embrace video, instant messaging, mobile devices, email notifications, visual voice mail notification, and more. I’m not willing to settle for peace and quiet at the office. I want the phone to ring off the hook.

How can a VoIP system rebrand your business? Give us a call at 509.747.2214.

“A phoneless cord is a great device for people who love peace and quiet”.
–Anonymous

The above quote caused me to smile. I reflected on how different my business communication is compared to my personal life. I relish quiet at home and noise at work. The noise and rumblings at work reflect activity and business!

¹ Hsieh, Tony. July—August 2010. Zappos’s CEO on Going to Extremes for Customers. *Harvard Business Review* pg 41-45

Quote of the Month:

Smart businesses do not look at labor costs alone anymore. They do look at market access, transportation, telecommunications infrastructure and the education and skill level of the workforce, the development of capital and the regulatory market.

Janet Napolitano

Who’s Who

Owners:

Kent (ext 302) and LaVerne Biel (ext 309)

Administration:

Mike (ext 304) - Accounting/Personnel
John (ext 308) - Project Coordinator

Phone Technicians:

Carl (ext 303) - Lead Technician
Charles (ext 307) Technician

Computer Technicians:

Greg (ext 313) Manager
David (ext 316) Network Engineer

Sales Personnel:

T.J. (ext 323) Communications Analyst
Brita (ext 306) Dispatch/Dial Tone Advocate
Charlene (ext 305) Customer Advocate

Making Your Business Seem Larger

The home based business landscape is changing. They have long appealed to entrepreneurs seeking costs savings. But appearing as savvy as business with more capabilities was a challenge. Now, with new services and technology, it's simple, faster and less expensive to compete with larger companies.

More people than ever see running a business from home as a viable option. Between 1999 and 2005, the number of self-employed people working exclusively from home leaped 25 percent, according to U.S. Census data. That's the most recent data available, but anecdotal evidence points to an even bigger increase during the recent economic downturn, as small businesses looked for expense reductions and laid off workers started enterprises. About one quarter of businesses with employees operate primarily from home, according to NFIB senior research fellow Denny Dennis.

The growth is expected to continue as companies looking to stay lean rely more heavily on outsourcing to home based businesses rather than hiring employees.

But even as the popularity of home-based businesses grow and the challenge of making it know that you're not a fly-by-night operation remains. Often, appearing larger than you really are can help you come across as stable and can reassure customers and prospects. We know that size has nothing to do with the quality of service you deliver, but it never hurts to appear well-established and professional.

"The perception of a larger business lends credence to a more substantial operation, whether it be more resources or more people," says NFIB member Paul Anderson of Anderson Accounting Services LLC, a home-based accounting consultant in Sterling Heights, Mich.

From virtual offices to phone services, here's how to make it happen— or how to work more efficiently, even if you've been running a home based business for years.

Get Out

First impressions matter. One key to making a lasting impact on customers is meeting them in a professional space, rather than inviting them into your spare bedroom or basement office. NFIB member Paul Rux of Paul Rux Associates Inc., a Mount Horeb, Wis., company that does business consulting, project management and college business course planning, decided when he started his company that he would never invite clients into his home office—a living room he shares with his wife, who is an artist. Although Rux believed more people will work from home in the future, he says his customers still aren't ready to except it. "Meeting in your home looks like you can't afford better," he says. "It looks like you can't be a part of the main-line economy."

Instead, Rux often takes clients to a reserved meeting room at the University Club of Madison, where he is a member. "It's a part of the image game...you want to send a message of quality," he says. "It's a way to brand yourself. It tells customers you value them."

For business owners who meet with customers frequently and need a more permanent office setting—or even want to appear as though they operate from that location—virtual office provide the amenities of a real office. From solid wood conference tables, to nice restrooms for clients, these spaces have the perks without the pricey rent.

There are providers that can give home based businesses access to the services of an office suite for a monthly fee, which ranges from \$100 to \$300 depending on the location and services provided. These include access to a private office with a meeting room, a professional business address, mail collection and handling services, a live receptionist and access to technology equipped conference rooms.

You may even be able to rent space from another local business owner. Katrina Harrell, CEO of YourSimple Bookkeeper, a Raleigh, N.C. based business that provides bookkeeping and accounting services to micro-businesses, only needs to meet with clients on occasion, so a local therapy proactive allows her to use a conference room for free. The

space is set up so clients can't tell it's an alternative arrangement. "I wanted to be able to play in the same field as everyone else, and I'm making it possible to attract clients that I wouldn't otherwise be able to attract," she says.

Amplify Phone Power

Enhancing your phone service with a virtual phone system can not only help you appear larger, it also streamlines the way you manage calls.

Virtual phone systems like ShoreTel and Zultlys use technology known as Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) to manage your incoming calls. They link with your existing phone service to control incoming calls with automated greetings, multiple extensions can use call forwarding to other landlines, cell phones and internet numbers.

This means you can take a business call from your cell phone when you're on the road—and the caller won't know his or her call was forwarded to you.

Virtual phone systems are also beneficial for entrepreneurs who operate more than one business or website.

In the past, automated answering systems required owners to purchase difficult-to-install hardware and expensive phones, but these newer, "virtual" systems operate through the Internet. Some use your existing phone, while others require phones compatible with VoIP technology. You log on to an online account to manage the system.

For more information on our Virtual Office Telephony please contact TJ at 509-252-1713 or tj@access-tel.com

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