

## Telecommunications Industry Changes (Fall 2011 Update)

The telecommunications industry is in a constant state of change. Whether it is voice, data, or cellular the companies are consolidating and the technology is evolving. The most recent deal was made by Century Link who acquired Qwest. Also there has been the recent announcement that Windstream has made a deal to purchase Paetec. This transaction is not complete as of yet, there are rumors floating around that another carrier may jump in at the last minute but the end result will be the same, one less carrier to work with. These deals affect millions of subscribers by consolidation of network infrastructure, customer service organizations and billing systems.

Currently the U.S. has only four major wireless providers. However, this could soon be three as AT&T has announced their intention to acquire T-Mobile in the near future. The process of a merger can be incredibly frustrating as an end user.

### **Tips to be aware of when your carrier may be affected by a merger:**

- First, do not assume everything is going to go as smooth as the carrier may suggest in marketing materials. Fiber infrastructures are usually affected, and that means the routing of data traffic may be changed. As an end result latency can be affected this may have a positive or negative impact on your data network.
- Secondly, customer service may be affected in a consolidation effort to reduce overhead. Your normal means of communicating with the carrier may no longer exist. Hold times may increase, and customer service reps may not be knowledgeable about your current services. You will need to ensure you know who to reach out to in the event there are service issues and/or billing needs. In doing so, ensure you have access to your full account number, billing telephone number and additional numbers and circuit IDs. It's feasible, that a billing migration will take place resulting in a change in your account number. Don't be surprised to be on-hold for an abnormally long amount of time, and the need to transfer your call to different personnel.
- Third, create an inventory of all your current service and associated contracts to ensure that if a billing issue arises, you can backtrack and show proof of your negotiated rates. If billing issues do arise, document all communication as far as who you speak with (name, number, badge ID and extension), date and time of call and most importantly request a confirmation number of the open ticket.
- Fourth, negotiating a contract prior to acquisition can be advantageous from the standpoint that the carrier rep may be able to make concessions to win the business. This is evident currently by the aggressive promotions T-Mobile is running. Be sure to request an executed copy of the contract. The closer your deal is to when both companies merge increases the likelihood the new contract will get lost in the shuffle. Installation may take longer than anticipated and/or promised; rates may be billed at higher than promised, and your account rep may no longer be with the company. So be prepared to fight for what was promised to you.
- Fifth, reevaluate redundancy. In this day and age redundancy should never take a back seat. With recent and upcoming mergers you must reevaluate your redundancy plan. You may be utilizing WIndstream as your primary MPLS carrier, and utilizing Paetec as your backup. After the merger these two companies will be the same. The failsafe

mechanism that if one carrier drops a backup is in place may no longer be valid. Ensure this conversation is discussed and measures are put in place to create the redundant path your business requires.

***Sound like a lot to add to your already long to-do list?*** Why not cross that off and call UtiliTech? Our industry experts have been analyzing telecom bills for over 30 years! And remember, there is no-risk in calling us. UtiliTech only gets paid when you see a refund or realize a savings.

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Step 2 Fax or email the bills to our Auditing Team at 610.777.2699 or [Savings\\_Info@utilitech.com](mailto:Savings_Info@utilitech.com).

Step 3 Allow our Auditing Team up to 30 days to review your billing data, your state's tariff guidelines, and prepare a detailed presentation of findings.

Step 4 Review the presentation of findings with our Auditing Team and give us your approval to implement the billing changes and/or request your refunds.

Or, call us at 800.238.6753 and let us guide you through the process. It's really very simple to get started today.