

# A quickstart billing for *hosted telephony*

Comms Business Magazine talks to Kevin Harrison of TXI to see how he has added new income streams to his business and found the right billing solution.



Kevin Harrison of TXI

Dorset-based communications company TXI was formed in 1998 by Director Kevin Harrison to provide specialist services to the satellite communications sector.

Harrison quickly forged a reputation for the company and secured high profile, long-term installation and maintenance contracts with world-leading equipment vendors such as General Dynamics SATCOM (Vertex), Andrews and NEC.

“We are a small company with a total of 16 staff spread all over the world maintaining and installing antennas. We install satellite dishes up to 34metres in diameter and weighing more than 400 tons. It’s a very specialist field and many of our installations are used in very sensitive applications. Earth station antennas such as these are unable to maintain their reliability and performance levels if they are not inspected and maintained on a regular basis and here too we provide a service to our customers.”

About six years ago however Harrison looked to develop a second income stream and was introduced to hosted telephony.

“We liked the whole idea and concept of providing a non CAPEX-based telephony solution for business customers and explored the supply and reseller options available before deciding to become a provider with a Broadsoft platform-based supplier. Gamma Telecom sits behind the line numbering and we selected Griffin Internet for broadband access.

“We quickly gained a number of customers including Medway NHS Foundation Trust but did not have a billing system in place. It sounds a little bizarre now but at the time we were actually doing our bill run manually by matching CDRs to rate cards. A process that took three days to complete each month.

“Again we looked at a number of potential suppliers but found most wanted very high fixed monthly fees to take us on, one as much as

£1000 a month, but because we were just starting to gain customers our profits would have been considerable reduced by the billing costs.

“However, at the Convergence Summit at Sandown Park that year we met with billing company PRD Technologies who were a breath of fresh air.

“Firstly PRD Technologies understood our situation perfectly and they had a cost structure that suited us. At the same time PRD seemed more than willing to help out a small company such as ourselves as all the development time for the integration of their Quickstart billing solution was provided free of charge.

“Like ourselves PRD wanted to build relationships for the long term and so it has proved.

“PRD Quickstart helps keep our suppliers honest; they check out what our suppliers are charging us against the rate card. Any overcharging shows up immediately and they have saved us a considerable amount of money over the years.

“We have found PRD to be equally both proactive and responsive to our needs. Companies such as ours need to get our bills out on time every month with no fuss – we can’t afford delays. Some of our customers are billed directly by PRD and some are billed by ourselves and this is all managed seamlessly.

“One of our hosted telephony suppliers has now produced an integrated provisioning and billing solution with the PRD Quickstart application which is so much better for us as any adds, moves and changes to customer configurations are automatically billed correctly.

“We are now planning an expansion of our hosted telephony business for 2011 and beyond confident that we have all the elements to grow the revenue stream, hosted platform, broadband and billing, firmly in place.”