

# Shining a Light into the Shadows of Telecom and Wireless Expenses

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*A recent survey of IT executives by Gartner* cited attaining business intelligence as the top priority for CIOs this year. Business intelligence is a nearly impossible state to achieve when it comes to managing telecom and network infrastructure expenses, unless you've got the right management platform. CIOs who put the right tools in their arsenal for 2020 can tackle this challenge, as well as reduce their costs each year.

The challenge starts with the carrier-direct model not being conducive to such an undertaking. A law firm with multiple offices must leverage multiple carriers across multiple products and locations. You're hard-pressed to find one carrier who will provide the right tools to analyze your spending, much less have the ability to tie all the data together in a meaningful way. Most carriers provide only one of these options:

- Paper-based and hard-to-decipher summary invoices;
- CD-based billing with jargon-laden information; or
- Bare-bones e-bills that do not tie charges back to inventory.

Forget any attempt at tying charges back to cost centers, business units or employees, or any means of determining outliers; after all, the carriers have no interest in pointing out areas of savings or runaway costs that might affect their bottom line. The responsibility is left to the IT or telecom manager to leverage basic spreadsheets and try to make sense of it all.

If you're one of the progressive organizations that's decided to leverage a consolidator to streamline the sourcing and billing of telecom services, you've won half the battle. Instead of 100 invoices, you might get just a few. Although, the tasks of proactive reporting and analyzing data remain the responsibility of the same otherwise-engaged IT or telecom manager.

But there is an even better way to obtain telecom business intelligence and potentially reduce costs: leverage a telecom lifecycle management (TLM) platform. A TLM application acts as a central repository for telecom expenses across multiple carriers, products and locations. A full-featured platform can also support the loading of wireless invoices through a wireless expense

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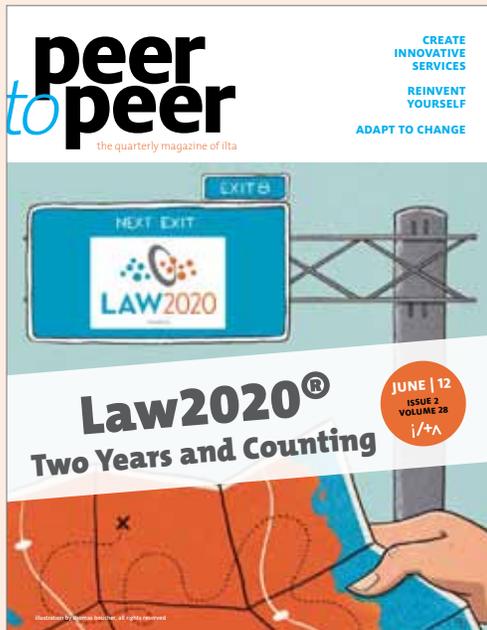
management (WEM) module, giving the organization a full view into its spending across both landline and wireless services.

A TLM platform also provides business intelligence in the form of actionable tasks that can generate immediate hard and soft savings. Reports may include:

- Annual spending trends by product, location and cost center
- Excessive charge reports, such as long-duration calls
- Potential areas of savings (e.g., zero-usage inventory or two-person conference calls)
- Effectiveness of infrastructure projects, such as VoIP upgrades to eliminate interoffice calling

These automated reports put the information at the telecom manager's fingertips, so she can act upon it quickly to achieve cost savings promptly. The best applications also provide a global view with CIO reports that assist in preparing budgets and analyzing where the organization has been and where it's going.

TLM and WEM are new to all but the largest law firms, and they constitute a dramatic shift in how telecom is managed. They will surely be required tools in the CIO's arsenal for 2020, providing the business intelligence to drive control, savings and competitiveness. 



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