



# D&M Communicator

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## From The Desk Of The President

In early March I attended the Channel Partners Conference in Las Vegas. This industry trade show is the place for agents like me to meet and greet the carriers and service providers with whom D&M works on a daily basis.

The conference featured educational sessions and a tradeshow with more than 150 exhibitors. While not telephony-related, one event in particular at the conference deserves special mention.

It has been said that circumstances will often motivate someone to do something they would not ordinarily do. Such was the case when I, and 11 of my agent colleagues, were stuck in an elevator while attending



Steven Gerhardt, President, D&M Enterprise Group

a conference party. I'll spare you the details, but suffice it to say that it quickly became obvious to all of my fellow captives that a combination of agoraphobia and claustrophobia made me highly motivated to extricate myself from the elevator.

After what seemed like hours (in actuality it was less than 10 minutes) I was able to pry the doors open and we escaped the confines of the elevator.

As it turns out, the elevator incident is

a microcosm of D&M's approach to serving its clients: Just as I took the lead in taking action in the elevator, D&M takes the lead in finding the best solutions and carriers for our clients. Moreover, when you have a question or concern, we don't rely on others to solve your problems; we take the initiative to make sure your voice, data, and Internet needs are taken care of so you can focus on running your business.

If you need help, be it with your telephony needs, or getting out of an elevator, don't hesitate to call!

Steve

## 3 Ways A Poor Economy Can Create Opportunities

The website Sundog.net recently published this useful article, which was authored by Greg Ness.

A new Gallup Poll reveals dismal consumer confidence in the U.S. economy. Approximately 78 percent of respondents gave the economy a poor or fair ranking, and only 22 percent ranked it good or better. The numbers have been getting steadily worse all month, and I'm sure Wall Street's recent plunge has played a large part in the growing pessimism.

A CNN Money poll last week showed 48 percent of Americans are cutting back on their spending. Most people naturally assume a recession makes marketing's job more difficult. In many cases that's true, but economic downturns can also benefit resilient marketers. Here are three cases in point:

### 1) Recessions force people to

**reassess what represents a good value.** In more prosperous times, buyers are reluctant to reexamine their brand preferences. However, economic worries or hardships often force consumers and prospects to find out if there is something else out there that will get them all the benefits of their preferred brand at less cost. Recessions can help marketers break down what was previously the formidable wall to considering other options.

**2) During tough times, many companies go into head-in-the-sand mode.** When the going gets tough, some companies are either forced or simply choose to cut back on their marketing efforts. This is often a time when firms who are willing to counterintuitively increase their efforts can see the biggest gains. In most cases, share of mind eventually equates to share of market. If the competition cuts back

during a recession, other companies that stay the course or increase budgets can more easily dominate marketing channels and rapidly increase their own brand awareness.

**3) Consumers expect to see special incentive offers during a recession,** and this is a time smart promoters should be active and creative with ways to pique the interest of reluctant buyers. People know times are tough for companies too, so they will be expecting an "offer they can't refuse." Give them one.

Staying aggressive with marketing efforts during an economic slowdown is difficult to sell to top management, but the return on investment for such perseverance could end up being surprisingly more successful than efforts in good times.

# 5 Ways to Improve Your Company's Web Site

Today, a company's online presence is often as important as any brick-and-mortar storefront. But many small businesses still stumble when it comes to designing their company Web sites, and their image can suffer in the process.

Here are some tips to help small businesses improve their Web presence while avoiding some of the most common pitfalls:

1. Keep it lively. In addition to keeping the language of your Web site concise, consider writing with a sense of personality. A conversational tone can make visitors feel more comfortable and willing to take interest in whatever it is you're selling or promoting.

2. Avoid atypical fonts. Although it is vital to catch the viewer's attention right away, don't rely on strange or trendy fonts to do so. Stick with a standard set of fonts

and let the professionalism and content of your Web site do all the attention-getting.



3. Stay current. To prevent your Web site from seeming out of touch with modern online technology, consider featuring streaming video.

Companies like WhiteBlox ([www.whiteblox.com](http://www.whiteblox.com)) build and design streaming video players that can be smoothly incorporated into any Web page. The players also feature back-end analytics, so you can track your visitors' viewing habits with the player itself or monitor their participation

in polls and surveys that come coupled with the technology.

4. Use ads sparingly. Ads can be a great source of extra revenue, but having too many can be distracting and make the site appear cluttered.

Consider setting a personal limit as to how many advertisements you'll feature at one time. If you're using WhiteBlox or another streaming video player, feature paid ads at the beginning of the videos or broadcasts.

5. Use your own photos. In an "About Us" section, include real pictures of the people who work for your business. Stock photography can give your Web site a canned appearance, whereas photographs of your personnel can add a genuine touch.

## Quote Of The Month

"Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere."

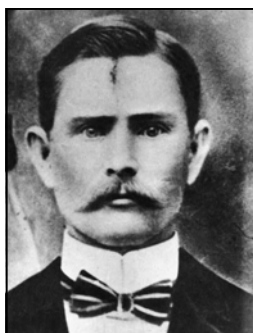
Albert Einstein  
(1879-1955)  
German-American physicist

## "Did You Hear About..."

The notorious American Wild West bank robber Jesse James (1847-82) was hunted and demonized by the authorities, but was held in high regard by many ordinary folk. Here's an example of why:

The story goes that Jesse James and his gang had taken refuge for a few days in a ramshackle farmhouse after one of their raids. The old widow who lived there fed the men, and apologized for her modest offerings and the poor state of the accommodation.

While the gang laid low, they learned from the widow that she faced eviction



**Jesse James was a bandit with a heart!**

their robbery to settle her debt - several hundred dollars,

from her landlord and was expecting a visit from his debt collector any day.

Taking pity on the old lady, as they left, the gang gave her some of the spoils of

which was a small fortune in those days.

The gang moved on, but only to a nearby copse, where for a couple more days they watched and waited for the arrival - and departure - of the debt collector, whom they promptly held up and robbed.

Of course, we don't advocate stealing from anyone, but the moral of the story is don't judge a person based on their reputation. Form an opinion based on your own experiences.

# Increase Your Cell Phone's Signal While Driving

More than 200 million Americans have cell phones, according to the Telecommunications Industry Association, and people rely on them no matter where they are. Yet sometimes there is a noticeable drop in signal strength inside the car.

There are two issues that affect in-car signal loss.

Either you are driving through a dead zone - an area where the signal is weakened or non-existent - or your car might actually be blocking part of the signal.

This signal loss can be a problem, because one of the many reasons new users purchase a cell phone is for secu-



**Wi-Ex's zBoost reduces dropped calls while driving.**

And according to the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles, nearly half of all users have used their cell phones to report car trouble, medical emergencies, crimes, and drunk or reckless drivers. These well-timed calls have saved lives and prevented accidents.

"A weak car signal is problematic for people who rely on their cell phones for safety. In some cases, you may be driving along and get too weak of a signal to use your phone," says Lloyd R. Meese, chief executive officer of

Wi-Ex, a company that uses a patent-pending technology to increase signal strength inside the car.

"Although safety is a good reason to have a cell phone in the car, the cell phone has expanded beyond voice applications for many drivers and commuters.

They need continued signal to return phone calls, check Web sites for travel information or check on the location of their child's soccer match."

New technology that amplifies and improves the signal is available in the form of a U.S.-manufactured signal booster called zBoost. The zBoost wireless unit, when installed in the car via an adaptor plugged into the cigarette lighter, provides more miles of uninterrupted signal, decreases dropped or missed calls and extends the battery life of the phone. It works with major phones and carriers and supports simultaneous use.

Wi-Ex's zBoost is available at premier consumer electronic stores such as Radio Shack or Fry's and online at Tiger Direct or Solid Signal. For more information, visit [www.wi-ex.com](http://www.wi-ex.com).

## Small-Business Servers Support Telecommuters

Americans are showing they can get their jobs done from just about anywhere outside the office. And as more businesses expand in size and geographic scope, they are finding new technology to help employees who telecommute.

About 45 million Americans are working from home, according to a survey conducted by ITAC, a telework advisory group. The survey also found that out of 135.4 million workers, 20.6 million conducted work in their car and 16.3 million worked while on vacation.

By installing a server with Microsoft Corp.'s Windows Small Business Server 2003 software on it, businesses can store all of their documents, e-mail messages, calendars, and images in one location. Additionally, employees can remotely access all company documents as well as programs and data on their desktop — from anywhere in the world. With a server, mobile devices such as Smartphones and Personal Digital Assistants also can connect users to e-mail, scheduling

software and other programs as though they were working at their desks.



**With the right equipment, working from home has never been easier or more productive.**

A small-business server can help increase a company's productivity and efficiency by allowing a specialized computer to perform services and run software for other computers, or "clients," on its network. For the millions of Americans who need to work when away from their office, Windows Small Business Server 2003 offers a solution that includes

Remote Web Workplace. This application allows employees to access anything on their work desktop from any PC in the world that has Internet access.

Many employees who work in a business without a server can't be very productive. They're also unable to back up their data or prevent unauthorized users from accessing their computers, all common problems small businesses experience that can be prevented by server software can prevent. Later this year, Microsoft plans to launch a new release, Windows Small Business Server 2003 R2, which will include even more advanced security features.

The ITAC survey also found that during the past year, the number of employee telecommuters increased by 30 percent. As this trend continues, so will the need for integrated solutions such as small-business servers.

Whether or not their employees telecommute, companies are realizing the benefits of using small-business servers to streamline processes and decrease costs.

# D&M Works With TotalTel For Hosted IP-PBX Solutions

Due to a need to simplify network management and lower costs, Internet Protocol (IP) communications is rapidly gaining mainstream acceptance among small- to mid-size businesses (SMB). This departure from traditional PBX and key office phone systems has rendered the business "phone closet" obsolete. In order to allow our clients to take advantage of all the functionality, productivity, and cost efficiencies of IP telephony, D&M has partnered with TotalTel.

## Enterprise Features for All

IP-PBX technology brings many benefits to the SMB arena as it enables the convergence of voice and data networks, making voice simply another application on the data network. IP communications provide businesses with flexibility, scalability, and many new features that are not currently available in existing technology. For example, a small business can now present a big business appearance with an auto attendant/virtual receptionist that answers incoming calls 24/7. This feature extends a personal greeting, which can be routed by extension, name,

directory, or the company's business requirements.

A hosted IP-PBX solution offers great advantages for a business, yet selecting the appropriate provider can be daunting since each provider claims to have the expertise along with the most cost-effective and best solution. Some considerations when planning to implement a hosted PBX provider would include the size of the organization, the number of locations that need service, remote users and current bandwidth usage.

When budget is also a major concern, the hosted solution is an affordable enterprise grade office telephone system for any size business that eliminates the capital expense associated with premise-based systems.

## Unify Communications

Another benefit that comes from this leading-edge technology is unified communications. Business professionals can achieve complete mobility with one phone number that rings to an office, home, or wireless phone. Regardless of whether someone is

traveling, working from home or out of the office for a meeting, the call can be routed to any number. There is the additional functionality that allows the user to accept or reject calls with a message. Any calls that go to voice mail can also be delivered to an email account.

The benefits of unified communications also extend to wireless users calling internationally. With the wireless bypass service, the caller can circumvent their wireless provider to make international calls at the lowest international rates. A second local number can be added that rings on to any type of phone from anywhere in the United States or internationally from cities worldwide. In distant cities, a local direct inward dial (DID) number provides businesses with the advantage of offering savings to a customer or business colleague.

For more information on how your business can benefit from a hosted IP-PBX and Unified Communications solutions, call your D&M representative 888-357-5055 or email us at [customerservice@DMenterprise.net](mailto:customerservice@DMenterprise.net).

## About D&M

Founded in 2001, D&M Enterprise Group has thousands of satisfied clients. D&M utilizes a consultative approach to thoroughly examine every aspect of each client's telecommunications needs and then recommend specific cost-saving and performance-enhancing solutions. We specialize in medium to large-scale applications that include DS3, T1, as well as phone equipment installations.

As independent telecommunications experts, we have the luxury of offering our clients objective advice that truly serves their best interests. Once our clients' telecommunications needs are identified, we match these needs with the services offered by more than 20 of the nation's leading carriers and equipment manufacturers we represent. Because we have the ability to select from a wide variety of carriers and equipment, we can guarantee our clients that they are getting the **best solution** available at the **lowest possible cost**.

**HOW WE DO IT:** D&M does all the comparison shopping for you! Using proprietary software, D&M analyzes your existing communication, Internet, and data transfer usage. Once this analysis is complete, a comprehensive, customized proposal is prepared that shows the savings you can expect from competing carriers who can provide the same, or in some cases, superior service, at a lower price. Based on your needs, D&M will also recommend service and equipment changes that will save you money too.

In addition, D&M uses proprietary software, which we call our COMMauditor system, to analyze every invoice to ensure you are being charged at the contracted rate and that you are not charged for equipment or services that were canceled or never ordered. We also track all your telephony assets and vendor agreements.

The combination of increasing the efficiency of your business by ensuring you are using the proper services and equipment, along with monitoring your bills for accuracy, guarantees your company will be performing at maximum efficiency without overspending.

As your single point of contact, D&M makes it easy for you to spend your valuable time running your business while we make sure your telecommunications, Internet and data transfer needs are being supplied by the highest quality providers at the lowest possible cost.



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