



D&M Communicator

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **How To Get The Most Out Of A Healthcare Plan** (pages 1)
- **Redundancy Is The Secret To Disaster Preparedness** (page 2)
- **Improve Your Negotiating Skills** (page 3)

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From The Desk Of The President

Summer is in the air! My kids are counting down the days until the end of school, and a much needed vacation is only days away.

While I am away from the office for a couple of days, one less thing I will have to worry about is what will happen if the office phone and/or data systems crash due to a disaster or a carrier problem.

As a result of D&M's implementation of a comprehensive disaster program, we now have redundancy on our voice and data systems. Not only does this system give me peace of mind, it should also comfort you since **we will be here to help you if you need us.** To learn how easy



Steven Gerhardt, President, D&M Enterprise Group

Regardless of whether negotiating is part of your job responsibility, the negotiating tips included on page 3 will be useful at the office, at a car dealership, or even when communicating with your spouse.

it is for your business to add a redundant system, see the story on page 2.

On a personal note, I want to thank our many clients who continue to refer D&M to their friends and business associates. It is through these referrals that we have been able to sustain double-digit growth for 7 consecutive years!

If you are pleased with the service D&M has provided to your company, don't be shy, spread the word and let your colleagues reap the same benefits. We are always just a phone call away — 888-357-5055.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Steve

Heal Your Business's Health Care Dilemma

Small business has become the engine that drives the American economy. In fact, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, and advocacy-funded research by Kathryn Kobe, small businesses in the United States employ about half of all private-sector employees and generate 60 to 80 percent of new jobs.

The SBA has stated that businesses with fewer than 20 employees spend 45 percent more per employee than larger firms to comply with federal regulations; and health care tops the list of expenses.

As a result, small businesses are at a serious disadvantage. However, more and more large insurance companies are stepping up to the challenge. Aflac, for example, is working with small business owners to provide a

variety of options and to educate employers about these options so that they can make informed choices.



The size of your small business should not prohibit you from offering quality medical coverage to your employees.

The following tips from Aflac may help guide small business owners looking for health care benefits:

- Shop for plans aimed at small businesses. Many insurers now

offer such plans designed with the small business in mind. Since several companies are competing for a large slice of this profitable market, you will be able to take advantage of premiums and special offers.

- Join a group. By joining together with other small businesses, you may be able to negotiate a better rate with your insurer.
- Check out HSAs. Taking advantage of a Health Savings Account allows you and your employees to set pre-tax money aside to help pay for health care costs. Other than the initial cost of administering the HSAs, there is no extra expense for offering them.

When Disaster Strikes, Will You Be Ready?

Regardless of the business you are in, the success of your operation will depend largely on how well you communicate with your employees, your customers, and your suppliers.

At the heart of this communication system are your voice and data services.

Simply put, without your voice and data services your business can not survive! Don't take my word for this; instead, simply recall what happened the last time you lost one of these services due to a power failure or the carrier went down.

Unless your office has a back-up generator or battery back-up, the next time you lose your voice and data services, it's likely in less than a minute you will realize the following:

- 1) You can't communicate with your customers
- 2) Your customers can't communicate with you
- 3) Your customer service is compromised
- 4) If you host your own website, your website is down (and so is the revenue the website generates)
- 5) With each passing minute your systems are down, you are losing money!

To avoid the potential problems listed above, the best plan is to have a predetermined course of action once disaster strikes. As the saying goes, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," or, to put it in monetary terms, you can spend a little now or lose a lot later! Specifically, the ounce of prevention D&M recommends is the establishment of a redundancy plan.

With a redundancy plan you have a

back-up system/solution that kicks-in when your primary system fails. How do you set up redundancy for your voice services? If you are a small business you can pay a minimal fee to have Remote Call Forward Variable (RCFV) set up on your main telephone and fax lines. You can access these lines from any phone, enter a code and the phone number(s) you want to change and the phone number(s) that you want the calls to be forwarded to. This takes about one minute.

If you have a VOIP service, you can go to any Internet connection, login to your account and using the dashboard interface you can reroute your calls. If you are a larger business you can get a service referred to by some carriers as DTO (Direct Trunk Overflow) or fail safe. Depending on what carrier you work with, the price can be as little as \$29.95 per month. With the DTO plan, if your service goes down, your calls will automatically reroute to a predetermined number. No action is necessary on your part to have these calls rerouted.

If your business uses toll-free numbers, you should also have a redundancy plan in place.

In an emergency, to have a toll-free number rerouted can take a few seconds with some carriers and twenty minutes with others. Data services are another area where you need to plan for the inevitable loss of service and have a redundancy plan in place.

If your Internet goes down what will you do? Do you have a back-up solu-

tion? Do you have to sit and wait for the carrier to fix your problem? We advise our clients to have Internet access from two providers.

The first connection is the primary connection for everyday use and the other serves as a backup. For smaller companies D&M recommends you go with a cable connection as your primary Internet source and DSL for your back-up. If FIOS is available, make this your primary and cable as your back up.

For larger companies D&M recommends getting T-1 service from two different providers. With multiple T-1s, you can use BGP (Border Gateway Protocol). BGP makes routing decisions based on path, network policies and/or rule sets. If one circuit goes down, the other circuit would carry all of your traffic.

In today's world of fast-paced communications, reliance on the Internet, and staying connected is more important than ever. With a redundancy plan in place, your business will continue to flow smoothly and without the risk of upsetting your clients or your bottom line.

Because there are several variables that determine how best to set up a redundancy plan for business, contact your D&M representative to determine which approach will work best for your business. The result will be a plan that allows you to be proactive, instead of reactive. For more information, call your Project Manager at 888-357-5055 or email us at customerservice@DMenterprise.net.

Quote Of The Month

"Every man is the architect of his own fortune."

Sallust
(86 BC-34 BC)
Roman Historian

"Did You Hear About..."

In 1914 Thomas Edison's factory in West Orange, New Jersey, was virtually destroyed by fire.

Although the damage exceeded \$2 million, the buildings were insured for only \$238,000 because they were made of concrete and were thought to be fire-proof. Much of Edison's life work went up in flames that December night.

At the height of the fire, Edison's 24-year-old son, Charles, searched frantically for his father. He finally found him, calmly watching the fire, his face glowing in the reflection, his white hair blow-

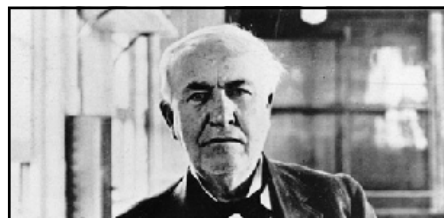
ing in the wind.

"My heart ached for him," said Charles. "He was 67 — no longer a young man — and everything was going up in flames. When he saw me, he shouted, 'Charles, where's your mother?' When I told him I didn't know, he said, 'Find her. Bring her here. She will never see anything like this as long as she lives.'"

The next morning, Edison looked at the ruins and said, "There is great value in disaster. All our mistakes are burned up. Thank God we can start anew."

Three weeks after the fire, Edison managed to deliver the first phonograph.

Even in the face of the most cruel adversity, Edison not only looked for the positives, but attempted to instill that attitude in his followers. This was a sign of true leadership.



Thomas Edison was not only a great inventor, but he was also a great leader.

Basic Negotiating Tips

You don't have to go to a negotiation seminar to sharpen your ability to negotiate, although that's not a bad idea if you use this skill on a daily basis. Here are some basic negotiation principles, skills, hints and tips to help you learn.

We all negotiate in our personal and professional lives. We negotiate when we go to a garage sale, or when we want a raise, or when we are dealing with members of the public.

Sometimes it is easy to negotiate, but at other times, when we have a great deal at stake or we are upset, the task can be intimidating or difficult.

We are going to talk about some tips to effective negotiating that can help you work more effectively with your customers, co-workers, and boss. They are also applicable to other interpersonal situations.

Overview of The Negotiation Process: Negotiating is the process by which two or more parties with different needs and goals work to find a mutually acceptable solution to an issue. Because negotiating is an interpersonal process, each negotiating situation is different, and influenced by each party's skills, attitudes and style. We often look at negotiating as unpleasant, because it implies conflict, but negotiating need not be characterized by bad feelings, or angry behavior.

Understanding more about the negotiation process allows us to manage our negotiations with confidence and increases the chance that the outcomes will be positive for both parties.

Barriers To Successful Negotiation

Viewing Negotiation: As Confrontational Negotiation need not be confrontational. In fact effective negotiation is characterized by the parties working together to find a solution, rather than each party trying to WIN the contest of wills. Keep in mind that the attitude that you take in negotiation (e.g. hostile, cooperative) will set the tone for the interaction. If you are confrontational, you will have a fight on your hands.

Trying To Win At All Costs: If you "win" there must be a loser, and that can create more difficulty down the road. The best perspective in negotiation is to try to find a solution where both parties "win." Try not to view negotiation as a contest that must be won.

Becoming Emotional: It's normal to become emotional during an important negotia-

tion. However, as we get more emotional, we are less able to channel our negotiating behavior in constructive ways. It is important to maintain control.

Not Trying To Understand The Other Person:

Since we are trying to find a solution acceptable to both parties, we need to understand the other person's needs and wants with respect to the issue. If we don't know what the person needs or wants, we will be unable to negotiate properly. Often, when we take the time to find out about the other person, we discover that there is no significant disagreement.



A successful negotiation is one that results in a win-win scenario, not winner take all.

Focusing On Personalities, Not Issues:

Particularly with people we don't like much, we have a tendency to get off track by focusing on how difficult or obnoxious the person seems. Once this happens, effective negotiation is impossible. It is important to stick to the issues, and put aside our degree of like or dislike for the individual.

Blaming The Other Person: In any conflict or negotiation, each party contributes, for better or worse. If you blame the other person for the difficulty you will create an angry situation. If you take responsibility for the problem, you will create a spirit of cooperation.

Some Negotiation Tips

Solicit The Other's Perspective: In a negotiating situation use questions to find out what the other person's concerns and needs might be. You might try: **What do you need from me on this? What are your concerns about what I am suggesting I asking?**

When you hear the other person express his

needs or concerns, use listening responses to make sure you heard correctly.

For example: **So, you are saying that you are worried that you will get lost in the shuffle and we will forget about you...Is that right? If I have this right, you want to make sure that the phones are covered during lunch?**

State Your Needs: The other person needs to know what you need. It is important to state not only what you need but why you need it. Often disagreement may exist regarding the method for solving an issue, but not about the overall goal.

For example: **I would like an hour on Tuesday to go to the doctor. I want to make sure I am healthy so I can contribute better to the organization.**

Prepare Options Beforehand: Before entering into a negotiating session, prepare some options that you can suggest if your preferred solution is not acceptable. Anticipate why the other person may resist your suggestion, and be prepared to counter with an alternative.

Don't Argue: Negotiating is about finding solutions...Arguing is about trying to prove the other person wrong. We know that when negotiating turns into each party trying to prove the other one wrong, no progress is made. Don't waste time arguing. If you disagree with something, state your disagreement in a gentle but assertive way. Don't demean the other person or get into a power struggle.

Consider Timing: There are good times to negotiate and bad times. Bad times include those situations where there is:

- A high degree of anger on either side
- Preoccupation with something else
- A high level of stress
- Tiredness on either side

Schedule negotiations to avoid these times. If they arise during negotiations a time-out/rest period is in order, or perhaps rescheduling to a better time.

Negotiating is a complex process but one worth mastering. If you keep in mind that you are responsible for the success or failure of negotiation, and if you follow the tips above, you will find the process easier.

D&M Offers One Bill. One Company. One Solution.

MetTel Can Provide Services Coast-to-Coast!

MetTel, serving business customers in 48 states from Maine to California, has cracked the code to delivering comprehensive telecommunications solutions and meeting the needs of the most demanding clients. It's called MetOne. Consolidated billing, customized service plans, single-point-of-contact support, all at significant price savings. With all the quality, reliability and security that your business requires.

MetTel offers a comprehensive package of voice, data and Internet services including a full range of advanced and VoIP services. These services are provisioned through the nation's leading and most reliable providers including Verizon, AT&T, BellSouth, Qwest and through strategic relationships with other major

other major carriers. MetTel is able to offer D&M clients technically advanced products at exceptionally competitive rates while assuring them optimal service all the time, every time.



Above and beyond a national presence, competitive pricing, and leading-edge products and services, MetTel is a premier client care organization. Its MetOne program can drastically

reduce the costs and resources needed to manage your telecommunications services.

MetTel offers one consolidated invoice for all nationwide locations, dedicated pre and post sales support and a single-point-of-contact (SPOC) 24/7 for business clients. In addition, MetTel extends to its customers, state-of-the-art web-based tools to view and analyze your bills and generate reports designed to your needs.

MetTel is a national, one-stop shop. To see if your company can benefit from a MetOne Total Business Solution, contact your D&M representative today by calling 1-888-357-5055 or send us an email at: 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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