



## Creating The “Ultimate” Demo

Selling services vs ‘wigits’ is tough because customers cannot see or touch or feel our services. Without seeing, it can be hard for a customer to think something is cool enough to purchase.

People tell me the most-often used tools for promoting services are bill stuffers, newsletter articles, newspaper ads and direct mail pieces such as postcards. Really, if we agree that selling service is tough because customers can’t see or touch it, should we rely so heavily on paper or printed means to promote services?

What if we were to make services tangible for people? Would customer service representatives be more comfortable SHOWING someone a service vs. reading a sales script? I think that demonstrations are much more exciting for employees and customers. You can create a powerful, controlled demo experience for your customers that will help you and other staff members explain a service to customers.

Before the demo, you really need to understand what you want to show. Let’s think about what we are promoting. Unified Messaging? Many of us are calling it voice mail. It’s more than JUST Voice Mail. Unified Messaging (assuming AP or APMAX) has a long list of available features. So many that it’s hardly feasible to tell everyone everything at once. And you wouldn’t want to.

Since many of our customers today need and want to be mobile, they are demanding more than just plain voice mail. We need to promote the advanced features of the service – because the standard features have become an expected level of service. You can’t count on showing or explaining all the features to your customers. Pick 2 or 3 (maybe 4) of the most exciting and ‘flashy’ features and concentrate heavily on those. If customers have questions about the other, more basic features, it will come out during the demo and their feedback to you. Consider showing voice mail to email and Phone Central/Online management features. If you also offer the Find Me/Single Number Service, consider a demo of that also.

As an example, you could explain to someone what voice mail to email is. “Essentially what happens when you choose voice mail to email is that your Voice mail messages are copied to an audio file and sent to your email account. Then you can play the audio file on your PC when you check email.” That sums it up. But, why not show it instead?

Invite customers into a demo of the service. Create a situation where they can pick up the telephone and leave a message for a test phone that has voice mail. Once the message is left, explain that the system is now sending the voice mail as an attachment to an email. Have them listen to the MWI (stutter dial tone). Check email on your test PC showing that the message is in email. Let the customer click on the message and play it back. Let them delete the message using the link in the email explaining that they STILL have the attachment in email for as long as they want to keep it. Cool!

This is showing Voice Mail to E-Mail, in a more personal and tangible way. You can set up at a home show, at the fair or at a business luncheon.

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This idea can be altered to work even if you are not face to face with the customer. Keep a test voice mail to email message in your inbox. As you are talking to someone over the phone, forward the email to them. They will be able to play the attached audio file and still get a good feeling for how the service would work for them.

How about Phone Central? You could explain the service. “Phone Central is a program that runs on your PC so that you can use it to retrieve voice mail messages and manage your personal voice mail settings such as your current active greeting.” That’s a great description.

# Over 150 Attend AP & APMAX User Meeting

Innovative Systems hosted more than 150 people for the 2008 AP and APMAX User Meeting held in Mitchell, SD.

User Meetings are perfect events for attendees to learn about Innovative Systems products, participate in discussions on topics that affect the future of our industry, as well as hear from other companies who are willing to share their experiences with different Innovative Systems services.

Roger Musick opened the General Session, and shared information regarding our latest advances in APMAX development, IPTV development as well as progress with the eLation product suite. Ryan Tupper outlined the features that can be expected in APMAX Release 3.0 and gave an overview of the IPTV product. Attendees also had the opportunity to view see the IPTV product in action.

This year's panel discussion included representatives from other business sectors and those focused on economic development in their rural areas. Panel participants included Drew Izatt, SilverStar Communications, Jeff Brusseau, SD Office of Business Development, Cindy Larson, Santel Communications, and Mari Jo Stormont of ALARIS Group, Inc. Technology provided by communications companies has the ability to attract and keep technologically-driven businesses. Panelists shared how they depend upon the technology for their business.

Breakout sessions included information on Unified Messaging, IPTV Technical sessions, Marketing Unified Message Services and Proven Telecommunications Advertising that Works presented by Charlene Taylor of Chaz Taylor.

Your participation and support of the User Meeting is what makes it successful. Your suggestions for topics for meetings are always welcome. *See you in 2009!*



**Save this Date:**  
**2009 AP and APMAX**  
**User Meeting**  
**August 25-26, 2009**

## Golf Outing Results

The Innovative Systems Golf Outing proved to be a windy challenge for a record 56 golfers.



1st Flight Winning Team: Gary Farris, Mike Kayser,  
 Bryan Roth, Jayson Keiper



2nd Flight Winning Team: Tom Lorenz, Donna Eul  
 Randy Olson, Bob Lind

## Iowa Telco Uses Plastic To Promote Their Brand

Premier Communications of Sioux Center, IA has been creating plenty of promotional traction with their customers by issuing prepaid calling cards.

Since purchasing the Innovative Systems Calling Card/ Prepay Service in 2003, the 3000+ access line company located in Northwest Iowa has printed thousands of calling cards preloaded with long distance minutes. According to Scott TeStroete, Premier's Marketing Director, they have no expectations that this is a revenue generator, but the service has become a significant promotional tool. "As we speak, I'm printing out a bunch of them for the local college radio station. Dordt College's KDCR is having a radio auction and this is a great way for us to promote our company and make a donation that doesn't cost us much at all."

According to TeStroete, statistically only 50% of the cards given out are ever activated. Of those only about 50% of the minutes get used. As a protection they usually have the Calling Card/Prepay service create them to expire in 60-90 days. Over the years, Premier has come up with many applications for the pre paid calling cards. Everything from using them as thank you's to the volunteer firefighters, to offering them as a promotional piece for customers who upgrade their services.

"Once the packages are set up it's very easy to generate cards as needed, TeStroete adds, we have 40 to 50 different designs and if a group like Pheasants Forever comes in and ask for a donation, we can grab a JPEG of a pheasant and paste it into the program. When you think of promotional items, free long distance certainly distinguishes us as a communications company and unlike a t-shirt, one size really does fit all."

Premier Communications is the communications leader of voice, video and data services providing service to over 20 communities in Northwest Iowa. Utilizing their extensive fiber optic network, Premier Communications offers the best in:

- Cable Television Programming
- High Speed Internet Services
- Local & Long Distance Telephone
- High Capacity Circuits
- i wireless Cellular Service

## "Speed" a Common Theme for Central Oklahoma Telephone Company



What happens faster for Central Oklahoma Telephone Company since their conversion to the eLation billing system? Well, just about everything.

When asked what has changed since the conversion to eLation Billing system, the common theme is that things are 'faster' now. Everything from processing toll to running billing – it's increased the speed at which things happen, making the company more productive and less frustrated.

SueAnn McGee, Billing Supervisor for Central Oklahoma Telephone Company, likes the fact that she can process all of her toll files at one time. Submitting a single file at a time is a thing of the past. "I like that with eLation everything is done in one simple step from rating to guiding the records to the appropriate account. There is no need to go back and apply multiple processes to the same file," says McGee.

Using calculated charges in place of USOCs has also helped improve billing accuracy for Central Oklahoma. "Sometimes the CSRs would not add USOCs correctly or take them off if needed," said McGee. "Now that they are calculated charges, everything is much better." She also feels they are more precisely applying city taxes for customers within certain city limits as well.

From a customer service standpoint, Central Oklahoma believes their new billing invoice format also makes answering questions more straightforward for customers and for staff. "The billing format is easier for us and for customers to read. The fact that the bill we look at on our system is identical to what the customer has in hand makes communicating with customers much easier," says McGee.

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# Work More Efficiently Using These Tips:

## From the AP Technical Support Team:

APMAX Unified Messaging allows your communications company to have any potential customer the use of many Innovative Systems Unified Messaging features. Obviously, you can offer the service to your subscribers. The ability to add Voice Mail subscribers that are NOT your traditional customers is an added bonus for both the subscriber and your company.

For Example, assume there is a resident in the community that is not a customer of yours, either landline or wireless. You can add them as a Unified Messaging subscriber in the APMAX and have them CFB (call forward busy) and CFD (call forward no answer) their landline or wireless phone to your Unified Messaging administration number.

In order to do this, the APMAX UI must have the NPANXX mapped to the service. Once it is mapped to the service you can add subscribers to the group. To do this in the APMAX UI, right-click on the APMAX UI icon in the Command Center, and select Subscriber System Map. In this window, select the Add button to add the NPANXX, AP system, and the Service to the APMAX UI. Note: If you are adding this subscriber to the Manage Subscriber add-on, you will need to put in the Default Subscriber System in the Subscriber System Map.

After configuring this window, a subscriber from this group can now be added to the Voicemail>>Manage Subscriber add-on, as well as the Subscriber Management add-on.

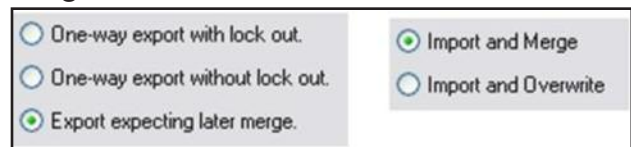
*Note: This could also allow the communications company to use virtual mailboxes from NPANXX group.*

This is currently being done using a wireless phone with a nationally known provider. The subscriber is using Phone Central to manage voice mail, receiving wireless voice mail messages via email and receiving notification on the wireless phone for specific callers – all Innovative Systems services.

**For more information on this scenario, or others you may be considering, contact Innovative Systems AP and APMAX Technical Support at 605.995.6120.**

## From the eLation Mapping Support Team: **Export & Import**

Communications companies hire engineers to design and/or build new facilities. eLation Mapping software allows the communications company to export the database with the maps and staking sheets to the engineer. Both can continue to work on the same map and/or staking sheets. Care must be taken for both to not be working on the same item. When the engineer wishes to update the communications company, or when they have finished the project, they can merge the two files into one.



Common mistakes are importing the wrong file or failing to import the new one.

Here are five tips to keep the process a positive experience:

**1. Use a checklist** of the steps and compare what has been done against the Export History. The steps are usually the same. *For example:*

**Export** 1 - Check in Sheets. 2 - Export Expecting Merge. 3 - FTP to Engineer.

**Import** 1 - Check in Sheets. 2 - Import and Merge. 3 - Run Map Consistency Checker. 4 - Check Error Log. 5 - Copy Import file to 'Used Import' folder, 6 - Do the Export.

- 2. Set up a standard file naming scheme** that includes the date such as TelcoToEngineer09-10-08.
- 3. After using a file, remove or store the file.** Don't leave an old file where it could be accidentally reused.
- 4. After 'Import and Merge',** check the Error Log for conflicts. Contact Mapping Support for how to handle conflicts if any exist.
- 5. Use Map Consistency Checker** to repopulate boundaries and, if needed, republish the maps.

**If you have questions regarding this tip, please contact eLation Mapping Support at 605.995.6120.**

# Creating The Ultimate Demo *...Continued from page 1*

But, why not show it instead and make it a little more personal.

Invite the customer to participate in a demo of the service. Open Phone Central on your test PC. Log in to your test account. Have your customer call the number and leave a message. The customer will be able to watch as a new message pop up notification appears on the screen. Then, let the customer click around in Phone Central in order to listen to the message on the PC. You might even have the customer change the current active greeting through Phone Central and then call the number so they can hear that the greeting was changed.

Taking the promotion of a service like voice mail beyond the paper really opens up the way customers can get to know a service.

What about making customers familiar with Find Me or Single Number Service? Find Me type services are vitally important to your company because they anchor the customer to you. Like it or not, customers are going wireless. Find Me or Single Number Service combines the mobility of wireless phones with the stability and reliability of landline phone. Give customers a good reason to also keep their landline service.

You could explain to a customer that the Find Me or Single Number Service allows you to ring up to 6 different numbers at the same time or in a certain order. But, wouldn't the experience be better understood if you could SHOW them about the service?

Have a test number that you can call where the customer would hear an announcement that the service is attempting to locate 'John Doe'. Have it set up that your cell phone rings in your pocket or that another phone in the demo area rings. Go crazy: Use Phone Central right there with them and pop the customer's cell phone into the service. Then, their phone will ring during the demo.

If you are working with APMAX Single Number Service, once the customer can visualize how the multiple phones will work, they will be able to better understand when you explain the additional features of being able to transfer calls between numbers. Think of how much more exciting it will be for customers to see your services in action. As a customer service rep, it would be more comfortable showing someone how the service works than explaining from a script. You reps will know the service much more thoroughly by demonstrating it – which means they will be more comfortable showing it in action.

We do still need all of the paper communications pieces. We still need newspaper ads, bill stuffers, bill messages, and all the same things we've been using. But, we need to be able to make these services tangible for the customer so they will pay closer attention.

If we agree that services are harder to sell than widgets because customers cannot see or touch or feel our services. Without seeing, it can be hard for a customer to think something is cool enough to purchase. Then we agree that something has to be done to find another way. A controlled demo is another great way.

## Central Oklahoma Telephone Company *...continued from Page 3*

What else is improved for the Central Oklahoma team? The Billing process for their three companies is now much faster and more efficient. They are able to create custom reports using the Advanced Search functionality. And, the link between Billing and Financials allows them to more efficiently complete accounting functions for their three companies. Where before, the dollar amounts flowing to Financials were large, lump sums that required additional handling in Financials; now, they are able to move information to Financials without all the additional work.

Central Oklahoma Telephone Company provides local telephone service, cable TV service and Internet service to several communities in Oklahoma.

### Upcoming Events

*All events are held at the Innovative Systems office unless otherwise noted.*

<b>October 2008</b>	<b>December 2008</b>
<b>October 7-8</b> eLation User Meeting Highland Conference Center Mitchell, SD	<b>December 25</b> Closed Christmas Day
<b>October 14-15</b> APMAX Training	<b>January 2009</b>
<b>November 2008</b>	<b>January 1</b> Closed New Year's Day
<b>November 27</b> Closed Thanksgiving Day	<b>February 2009</b>
	<b>February 3-4</b> Staking & Mapping User Meeting Highland Conference Center Mitchell, SD