

# VoIP Provisioning: Don't Wait to Automate!



## Is it time to automate your VoIP Provisioning?

- Hit the market window faster than your competition
- Become profitable sooner, even with low take rates
- Roll out new services quickly – in weeks, not months

### Executive Overview

VoIP has finally arrived. Incumbents and competitive carriers alike have begun the move from TDM-based switching and are beginning to deploy VoIP services in greater volumes. Recognizing the tremendous opportunity that VoIP represents, providers know they must deploy their VoIP offering quickly to take advantage of this growing market, but also in a manner that is cost-effective, scalable and profitable.

In this highly competitive environment, an effective automated service fulfillment solution—such as Atreus xAuthority—is a must. The reasons for automating are compelling:

- Avoid the slow and error-prone manual provisioning process that is characteristic of complex IP-based services like VoIP.
- Reduce errors and speed up the service delivery process as VoIP order volumes increase.
- Reduce the cost to process each order. Offload internal effort by extending self-signup and self-care capabilities to your end customers.
- Manage risk by deploying multiple services simultaneously.
- Prevent customer churn by flexibly combining must-have services into innovative bundles.

# Don't Wait to Automate!

Many providers in the early stages of launching VoIP or other advanced services believe they can wait to automate the provisioning of their offerings. But this strategy can be costly—both operationally and in the race to win market share.

Continuing to use slow and error-prone manual processes results in higher operating costs, delays in launching your VoIP offering, and decreased customer satisfaction. On the other hand, implementing an effective automated service fulfillment solution can reduce your operational costs and help you grow your business.

## Do More with Less

From an operational perspective, automation allows you to do more with less. By automating your provisioning processes for VoIP and other IP services, you can dramatically reduce provisioning errors, as well as the time required to provision each customer. These efficiencies, in turn, allow you to scale your business—offer more services and win more customers—without increasing your operations and support personnel. In addition, because your cost to complete each order is lower, you can achieve profitability with lower service take rates. Moreover, because it speeds up the service provisioning process, automation can actually have a positive impact on service take rates. Customers are more likely to sign up for services that can be activated quickly and easily.

## Don't Bet the Farm

Back office automation helps providers manage the risk associated with deploying new services in two important ways:

- flow-through provisioning, which reduces operating expenses for every order; and
- service development automation, which employs reusable components, managed entitlements and service-aware portals to speed the development and delivery of new services

For the time being, in absence of a “killer app”, a “killer” service delivery environment is required to survive and thrive. Because your cost to deploy each new service in an automated environment is considerably less than with a manual provisioning process, you don't have to “bet the farm” on any single service. Instead, you can factor the risk across a group of services, and depending on the initial take rate for each of these services, you can decide which ones should be discontinued and which ones will form part of your core service bundles.

## Happy Customers are Loyal Customers

Your end customers also benefit from the adoption of an automated provisioning solution. Because of the range of choice in today's market, customers demand innovative service offerings and expect a quick turnaround on their service orders. If these needs are not addressed, customers will quickly turn to the competition. Certain customers must be able to directly order and manage their services. However, this must be done in a very controlled way, without exposing a confusing amount of technical detail. Further, different groups of users will require different privileges based on their requirements or level of expertise. By achieving and maintaining the right balance, you can reduce internal effort—particularly when customers self-provision using a customer portal—and dramatically improve your customers' experience, which in turn promotes customer loyalty.

So even if your current order volume in the IP services space is small, automation makes good business sense. In fact, if you wait too long, you'll be left behind.

## Why Automate VoIP Provisioning Now?

- Hit VoIP market window fast before the competition
- Manage risk by offering multiple services simultaneously
- Achieve profitability sooner, even with low service take rates
- Roll out new services quickly — in weeks, not months
- Bundle VoIP with other “must-have” IP services and prevent customer churn
- Reduce operating expenses by decreasing the cost to provision each user
- Implement automation now, before order backlog occurs
- Meet customer expectations by allowing self-sign up and self-care from day one
- Reach out-of-region customers via automated self-service portals

# It's More than just VoIP

While VoIP provides an exciting opportunity for revenue growth, many service providers and their customers are finding that VoIP by itself is not enough. While price is a significant differentiator, it may not be sufficient and sustainable. You can lure new VoIP customers with the promise of low rates, but to retain their business, you have to augment your voice offering with innovative value-added IP services.

When the price of VoIP services falls—as it has already begun to do—the services you bundle with your VoIP offering become

critical—not only for building customer loyalty, but also for gaining market share and maintaining profitability.

Atreus provides more than just a VoIP solution. The Atreus solution is uniquely architected to provide the flexibility required to provision any kind of service, such as voice, messaging, access, and desktop applications, and also facilitates the creation of bundles made up of diverse services.



## Case Study: Aliant Telecom

### Profile:

- Incumbent provider in Eastern Canada
- Over one million subscriptions across 900 000 homes and 70 000 small and medium businesses
- Offers suite of hosted SMB services

### Objective

- Generate new revenue from business and consumer markets with new IP services
- Profitably deliver IP application services like Hosted Exchange, PC Back Up and Anti-Virus

### Results:

Using the Atreus Service Fulfillment Solution, Aliant achieved significant results:

- Reduce operating expenses by decreasing the cost to provision each user
- Implement automation now, before order backlog occurs
- Allow self-sign up and self-care from day one

“Aliant chose Atreus because they offered a solution that enabled customer self-provisioning for online services in both the SMB and Consumer markets. This delivers significant benefit to Aliant because it not only reduces service provisioning costs but also enables a “try-it-you’ll-like-it” approach to new service introduction, driving what we believe will be higher rates of adoption.”

- Mike MacNeil

Director of Business Planning & Service Development

## VoIP Provisioning: It's Not a DIY Job

A common option for providers looking to enter the VoIP space (and the IP services space in general) is to build a provisioning solution in-house. This may seem like an attractive option, particularly for providers who have previously developed systems for provisioning basic connectivity services; however, the need to introduce VoIP and other new IP services quickly, combined with the inherent complexity of these services, makes the task considerably more difficult.

For example, many IP-based services (like VoIP) are session-based. They are not simply either “on” or “off”, but rather on-off, on-off. They are also often delivered to the desktop and are typically highly configurable and feature rich—characteristics that further increase their complexity.

As well, given their relative immaturity, IP services are subject to more change, such as the development of new vendor devices, new releases of device software, and new protocols (sometimes non-standardized). Even the services themselves are in a state of flux — while the customer needs evolve — and can have very short in-service lifecycles. Without the proper tools, keeping pace with this amount of change can be a costly proposition.

Given this complexity, an effective solution must provide the following minimum functionality:

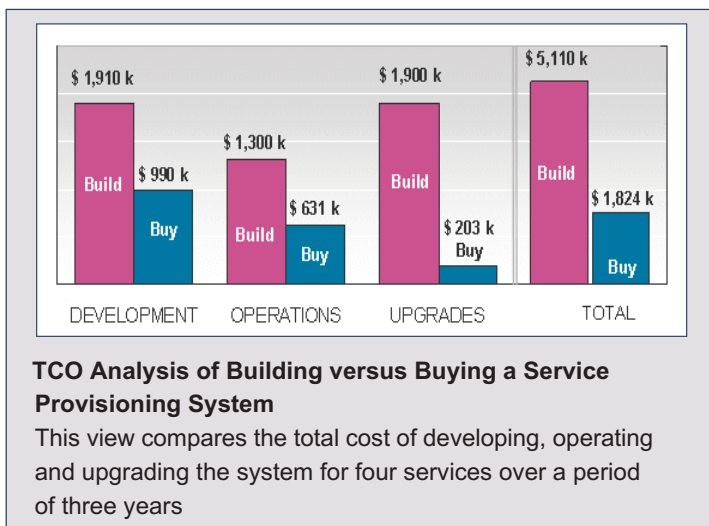
- allow rapid creation of new services to hit critical market windows
- provide cost-efficient introduction of new services
- handle the inherent complexity of advanced IP services, but make it simple enough for service users
- provide standards-based integration with other OSS vendors and systems
- support extensive customization

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## VoIP Provisioning: It's Not a DIY Job ...continued

Developing an in-house solution that meets these requirements is a challenging undertaking, and the risk of delays and cost overruns is high. But the development costs alone don't tell the whole story—operations, maintenance and upgrade costs all factor into the total cost of ownership (TCO) of the solution.

Based on market studies, the total cost of ownership (TCO) of building a service fulfillment solution along with a suite of IP services is more than double the cost of buying, operating and upgrading the Atreus Service Fulfillment Solution over the same three-year period. (See chart below.)



When broken down by cost component, the Atreus solution is more cost-effective than building a solution in each of the areas of development, operations and upgrades. While Atreus provides significant cost savings in each of these areas, the most striking cost savings are realized in the area of upgrades—that is, upgrades to the service fulfillment platform and supported service devices, as well as feature extensions to existing services. In this area, the Atreus solution provides a cost savings of upwards of 80 percent. By contrast, as more services are rolled out using the in-house solution, the upgrade costs will in short order equal or exceed the initial development costs of the solution.

In addition to these obvious cost savings, the Atreus solution also allows you to roll out services more rapidly and, as a result, begin generating service revenue sooner. Because of the time required to develop an in-house service fulfillment platform, the delivery of an initial service is delayed by almost a year. On the other hand, by choosing the Atreus solution, you can deliver your first service in less than six months and also introduce two additional services in the first year.

## The Atreus VoIP Solution

Atreus Systems' highly-flexible, carrier-grade service fulfillment solution is ideally suited to the complexities of VoIP service introduction and delivery. In addition to facilitating the rapid and efficient provisioning of both residential and business VoIP services, the Atreus solution also has the flexibility to provision a diverse suite of advanced IP services on a wide array of vendor devices.

Whether you are an incumbent voice provider or a new entrant in the voice market, the Atreus VoIP solution will allow you to

- evolve from TDM- to packet-based technology, by allowing you to provision both the network devices and customer premise equipment required by VoIP

- handle the complexity of VoIP and other advanced IP data and video services and bundles
- improve your customers' experience by allowing them to self-activate and manage services from an easy-to-use self-service portal
- optimize the return on your investment by effectively reducing the time to deliver and bill for services

