

Cable & Wireless – Automated Billing



About Cable & Wireless

Cable & Wireless Worldwide is a global telecoms company providing a wide range of high-quality managed voice, data, hosting and IP-based services and applications to large multinational companies, governments, carrier customers and resellers across the UK, Asia Pacific, India, Middle East & Africa, Continental Europe and North America. Established in the 1860s, Cable & Wireless Worldwide helps more than 6,000 organisations deliver their goals. Their vision is to be the first choice for mission critical communications.

Cable & Wireless owns the UK's biggest fibre network dedicated to business users of telecommunications and has an international cable network spanning approximately 425,000km in length.

The Challenge

Telecom carriers survive on the number of minutes they are able to bill their customers. Detailed and accurate logging of all calls is a fundamental component of every national and international voice switch, regardless of vendor or type of technology.

These switches generate billing records. Because billing file generation is such a critical activity, it is vital to verify and track the successful creation and completion of each file, and to quickly identify problems with file generation: billing occupies hard disk space; disks fill up and other problems can occur.

Cable & Wireless's initial solution was cumbersome and time consuming. Every day an operations engineer had to interrogate Cable and Wireless' OSS database for all alert messages relating to billing files, across over 200 voice switches. These alerts were then extracted and mailed to an end-user colleague in business operations who had to manually match up "file open", "file close" and "file error" messages. Problems had to be identified, before manually entering all billing file names and their associated messages, creation and completion times to a local database. This resulted in tedious, manual, repetitive work by two people, executed daily as an after-the-fact activity.

In Brief

Industry

- Global Telecommunications

Challenge

- Reduce the billing cycle
- Streamline billing process
- Provide realtime visibility of billing activity

Solution

- Cortex – Billing Alert Reconciliation

Benefits

- Eliminated 60 days of manual effort per year
- Ensure billing integrity
- Realtime visibility of billing activity

Automated Billing Alert Reconciliation

When Cable & Wireless approached Cortex, IT Process Automation (ITPA) was the immediate and obvious way to automate this vital but tedious activity.

All that was required was to understand how each switch technology generated billing file alert messages, and for these to trigger the appropriate problem automation sequences within Cable & Wireless' Cortex network management system. Some intelligent temporal reasoning was required, since certain events needed to be tracked for a period before action was required from Cortex.

The resulting ITPA sequences update the end-user's database within seconds of any switch issuing an alert. This now gives him immediate visibility of the "open", "closed", or "problem" status of every billing file, and ensures that his reconciliation is up-to-date and complete at all times.

The Benefits

Cable & Wireless now enjoys a variety of benefits with a direct and tangible financial and operational result:

- Mundane human activity of over *60 working days per year* has been totally eliminated
- Operations and business divisions both have complete, and up-to-date visibility of all billing file activities
- Any problems, critical in the case of billing systems, are identified instantly: these can then trigger additional automation, cause analysis and corrective actions
- The resulting savings free up an operational engineer and a business analyst to concentrate on true value generation tasks

Innovise ESM

Innovise ESM works with IT organisations to improve their ability to innovate and respond to the changing needs of the business. Whether the challenge is reducing costs, corporate governance, taking on new services or consolidating infrastructures, Innovise ESM provides the impartial advice, expert skills and the service management technology to enable IT organisations to manage continuous change.

Innovise ESM offerings include:

- ITIL Service Management Consulting
- Enterprise IT Management Solutions
- Network Management Solutions
- Process Orchestration
- Training Solutions
- Technical Support Services



Summary

Cortex enables our customers to re-align IT with the business. To approach problem resolution and future planning from a more business and service oriented perspective rather than in a fire fighting and reactive manner. Although it's difficult to put a value on aligning IT goals and objectives with those of the business as a whole, it's not at all hard to appreciate the enhanced value and improved perception this brings to information technology and its operations, as end users and executives alike begin to benefit from increased productivity, enhanced end user experiences, and a less trouble prone working environment.

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