



Before Tying The Knot

The corporate mobile plan has many benefits like reduced call charges, higher levels of customer care and so on. But selecting the best one from the plethora of plans available in the market can be a challenge. Here are some points to keep in mind.

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Communication lies at the core of any business. Big or small, companies work on exchanging ideas. As the US businessman Lee Iacocca once put it, "You can have brilliant ideas, but if you can't get them across, your ideas won't get you anywhere". That said, choosing the right mode of exchange is an important part of forming a communication strategy for businesses, especially, the small and mid sized enterprises where ideas do a lot of talking. And, today, most of this talking is done on mobile phones.

Therefore, choosing the right mobile plan is a crucial step for an SME.

Today, several businesses opt for corporate mobile plans, as they are a handy, hassle-free solution to their communication needs. In many firms, a major chunk of the cost of communication comprises the employees' mobile bills. Almost all service providers dish out corporate mobile connections. The plan should be tailored to suit your business needs.

Here are some cool tips to make sure you get the best corporate plan:

Fix your needs

Does the plan suit your needs? Before selecting a corporate mobile plan, first identify your business and employee requirements. The question to



answer here, is, 'Who is calling whom, and for how long?' The key to getting the most economical plan is to understand your firm's calling needs and to find a plan that fits your usage pattern. The service providers usually have pre-set plans based on some estimated needs of typical customers. As a spokesperson from Bharati Airtel puts it: "We make a plan based on the specific needs of the company, where usage to a particular segment is high". Before formulating a tariff package for a company, service providers usually conduct a basic survey specific to a company. This is to determine the average usage pattern of the company's employees. The spokesperson for Vodafone says: "While setting a corporate plan, the key process is to determine usage statistics and after this, we propose a best-fit plan, which is not available in the open market. So, know your needs and make the plan accordingly."

The cost factor

It's your money honey. So, make the most of it. The cost per call that the plan offers should be less than what an open-market plan offers. While the amenities offered by the service provider are important, keeping costs down is also crucial. The billing structures of most plans are so complicated that at first glance you do not get a clear picture on the tariff, and the pitfalls in the form of add-on charges and taxes. Scan the talk value, call rates, and SMS rates in detail before selecting a plan.

Check offers like free SMS, the zero balance facility, reduced call rates for some user groups, holiday calling, discounts for off-peak hours, reduced national SMS rates and so on. Service providers may have specially configured value-added services for a particular user group. You can choose them according to your company's needs. Special corporate tariffs with benefits like cheap National Long Distance (NLD), International Long Distance (ILD) can do a lot of good. In corporate plans, service providers usually reduce security deposits and also provide higher credit ratings in the plan. Sanjeev Malhotra, director – Employee Services, GlobalLogic says, "Our plan has benefits like reduced call rates and free SMS among closed user groups. It has no security deposit and activation is free."

Another issue is the roaming charges. The ideal situation is no roaming cost. Usually service providers offer a reduced roaming rate on the corporate plan. And in your business, if outstation travel plays a big role, don't hesitate to go for a 'zero roaming charge' plan.

And, after all, you should check the flexibility of the plan too. Call rates are being slashed day by day, and it is not wise to continue in the old tariff if the rates are coming down in the general plan. This issue should be cleared before going in for the agreement.



Coverage and reach

So, you fixed your needs and your call budget. Now check on the reach of the service provider. If yours is a small-scale marketing company, with products in rural markets, then your marketing executives need to travel a lot more into rural areas. Here, you need good coverage from your service provider. In this case, you should get a provider who has the maximum rural coverage. Inadequate mobile coverage damages your business productivity.



Customer care

Check the customer care and support facilities of the service provider. This includes replacement of SIM cards and guarantees for handsets, if any. Also, ensure the period of the contract beforehand. It's also better to choose a plan that has zero downtime. As business never stops at 5 pm, go for a 24/7 customer support plan. Make sure there is a collection box facility on your campus where the employees can drop their cheques.

In business, maintaining contacts is as important as creating a new one. So, changing your mobile number could create many hassles. Even though most service providers allow switching to the corporate plan from a general connection without changing the number, it should be clarified beforehand. And, another matter of concern is whether employees can retain the terms of the plan even after quitting the company. This should also be cleared before signing on to a plan.



Others in the ring

Once you have an idea about your calling needs, budget and other requirements, have a look at the plans offered by other major players. Plans should be compared and you must go for the option that gives the maximum benefit to your business needs. Websites of the service provider, brochures and sales personnel will help in getting a clear picture of what's being offered.

