

# Tellabs® Global Services Helps Large Cable Operator Update Inventory Management Database and Processes

Improved record keeping supports growing backhaul business by enhancing customer support, capacity planning, and reducing time to install service.

## Summary

Providing high-speed backhaul connectivity to cell towers on a wholesale basis is an important opportunity for cable multiple systems operators (MSOs). In pursuing this opportunity, it's critical for MSOs to recognize that mobile operators have much higher expectations about service level than the residential customers who comprise the majority of the typical MSO customer base.

A large MSO is aggressively pursuing the wireless backhaul market and has taken steps to enhance its ability to serve mobile operators. An important goal that they set to help enhance service levels was to make better use of the network inventory system the company had purchased the previous year.

The MSO enlisted Tellabs Global Services for help in achieving that goal. Tellabs conducted an audit of their inventory system to determine what information needed to be added. The missing information was then gathered and uploaded into the system. Tellabs Global Services also established a consistent methodology for the operator's technicians to follow to help ensure that information will be properly added to the system in the future.

The net result is an inventory database the MSO can use to enhance customer service by proactively notifying customers of any scheduled or unscheduled service disruptions. More detailed and accurate information also enables the rapid provisioning of new services and enhances the inventory system's ability to support network capacity planning. Although triggered by the desire to better serve backhaul connectivity customers, these benefits also extend to other business and residential customers.

## Partnering with Tellabs Global Services

The operator undertook the inventory database update project knowing that as its mobile backhaul business grew, its existing database could not provide the detailed documentation to support the level of service quality that backhaul customers demanded.

"The cable operator had grown its cell tower backhaul systems very rapidly," recalls Tellabs Executive Account Manager Denise Turner. "They would win business, then rush to fulfill the orders." In that rush, information about the equipment installed at the site was not well documented in the inventory system—and management was concerned about the potential long-term impact this might have.

"Backhaul customers expect to be able to call one place and find out what's going on with a circuit and there was no way to do that without updating the database," explains Jay Tallmon, Tellabs



A more complete database helps speed new services rollout.

professional services manager. "If a particular piece of equipment were to break down, technicians needed to be able to see what was built on top of it and what circuits were built on it."

"It was a conscious effort to step their game up," observes Turner.

When the operator decided its inventory database needed a major update, the MSO also realized it would be difficult to complete the project without outside assistance. The company simply did not have sufficient staff or the skills needed to complete the process of identifying, gathering and inputting missing data in a timely manner.

The MSO considered several different companies for the project and chose Tellabs after a review of potential partner qualifications, even though Tellabs does not provide the operator with any networking equipment. As Turner recalls, "When they dove into references and got a better understanding of our abilities, others paled in comparison. We were the only ones that could understand the depth and breadth of what they were looking for and how they wanted it to be tied in with past documentation. We were the only company that understood how to build a model and do the survey fieldwork and the database portion. Others could do one or two of those things. We could do all three."

## The Project

The first phase of the project was to conduct an equipment audit for one market in which the MSO operates. A team of Tellabs Global Services personnel met with the operator's staff at the corporate and regional level. Tellabs obtained information about the cable modem termination systems, ROADMs and metro Ethernet equipment the MSO had deployed.



Detailed information about these systems was not consistently recorded in the inventory database. In some cases, an entire piece of equipment was missing, making it impossible for technicians to enter information about individual circuits configured over that equipment. Consistent record-keeping methodologies had not been established, so some records were only available locally. And in some cases, documentation was entered into the inventory management system in the form of tabs, with no easy means of retrieval.

Tellabs auditors gathered the information that needed to be entered into the inventory system, compiling it based on a consistent template created by Tellabs. This information was then handed off to Tellabs' inventory systems experts, who determined whether or not each data element was recorded in the MSO's system. Missing data was collected and entered into the system.

It took the Tellabs Global Services' team about three months to compile the necessary information for the first of the MSO's five regions, create the information template and enter the missing data into the inventory system. At the time of writing, Tellabs Global Services was in the process of completing the same task for the four remaining regions and additional Tellabs teams had been deployed to support the project.

"Considering the volume of work involved, if the client did this in house it would have taken years to complete," says Tallmon. "They just don't have the staff available with the right skills levels for this work."

## Project Benefits

Several important benefits have resulted from the inventory database update.

One is a substantial reduction in the amount of time required to fill an order. Previously, this took about 45 days because of the time required to track down accurate information about the underlying network infrastructure. Now it should take the MSO just a few days to fill new orders—and the manpower cost per order also should be reduced substantially.

Capacity planning is also simplified as a result of the upgraded database. "The system now tell you what percentage of capacity is used. If a circuit is oversubscribed, it lets you know," explains Andrew Luffy, Tellabs network consultant.

The upgraded database also should make it easier to troubleshoot network problems—and if a circuit experiences a planned or unplanned service disruption, technicians can now proactively notify any customers on that circuit.

Ultimately the net effect of these service enhancements is a stronger market position and increased sales for the MSO.

Using the newly established processes for entering data into the system, the cable operator's personnel are better equipped to keep the inventory system up to date and the quality of data will be improved.

## Executive Summary

### ■ Client

North America Cable Operator

### ■ Tellabs Role

- Conducting an audit of the client's inventory system to determine what information was missing
- Gathering the missing information
- Updating the database to add the missing information
- Establishing a consistent methodology for the operator's personnel to follow to ensure the proper uploading of information in the future

### ■ Business Results

- Enhanced customer service by giving the operator tools to proactively notify customers of any scheduled or unscheduled service disruptions
- Time to install new services reduced from as much as 45 days to just a few days as a result of more complete information about network inventory and configuration
- Enhanced capacity planning resulting from more complete network utilization and over-subscription information
- Stronger market position

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