

Corporate Costs

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As the partner and owner of VASoft for the past 15 years, I have often been blown away by how difficult it can be to get ahead as a small business, especially when you are up against the industry giants.

I have often wondered if it a small business man's curse, to be afraid the charge for the services we deliver. After all we don't have 3000 staff to carry in a month, nor do we have large corporate branding and office parks to pay for...and in many ways we are expected to justify our prices accordingly.

Today was just another case in point!

Let me explain...

We a small business are in the process of Proof of Concept at a fairly large potential client, who recently purchased a new PBX and Call Center solution from another vendor.

As our offering is all SaaS and Cloud based and we can make use of any Sip PBX, the client is keen to investigate our Tamaya Solution.

Today after approximately 14 days prior notice to the PBX company, we could finally meet them on site to connect our Tamaya soft dialer to the clients PBX for testing, prior to the POC starting.

At the last minute, we received a frantic call from the client, the PBX vendor had sent them an invoice for the work to be done on site today for an amount of R2500- approximately \$230. The client was most distressed and had considered cancelling the meeting. This would have stopped us, before we could start, thus effectively keeping us out the door.

Now I agree, the supplier has every right to charge for their technician time on sight, after all, the client did request the technician and the work to be done was as per the clients request. The PBX vendor was not going to gain anything by making the changes, in fact they could at risk in the big picture.

However I do know that had this been a VASoft client, the charges would have been significantly less, if charged for at all.

Of course this all give me pause for thought: Should we be charging more...will this make our clients more appreciative of our service efforts? We try to offer a cost effective, personalized, friendly, willing service, but perhaps that is not the requirement of the corporate business, which it appears is happy to be charged exorbitant fees. Maybe as a small business we really do need to learn the lesson that "business is business" or maybe, today was the turning point for the client, small business=1, big business = 0

Only time will tell, however I do believe that more corporate clients should be looking towards small business to deliver cost effective solutions.