

BRINGING PHARMACY CALL COSTS DOWN WITH VoIP

Victorian-based Neighbourhood Community pharmacies share their experience in the first trials of business-grade internet-based telephone services.

Pharmacy profile

Heathershaws Central Park, Mackie, and Waverley Road are three large Neighbourhood Community pharmacies in Melbourne's inner south-east, with about 30 staff between them. The Glen Iris, Malvern and Bentleigh East stores work together as a team and have a great deal of stock movement between them.

Managing business and patient wellbeing

Escalating costs were the motivator for Heathershaws Pharmacy to connect to the Fred Phone, according to Business Manager Chris Jones. The three Neighbourhood Community pharmacies were interested in any business innovations that can help them dedicate as much time as possible to client health and wellbeing while at the same time managing business time and costs.

Call costs plummet with 'the bat phone' – key benefits

Business Manager Chris Jones says, "We really encourage the stores to work together as a team. As a consequence we're on the phone together all day with short but necessary calls about everything, including stock."

Heathershaws Central Park

- \$9.95 Fred Phone subscription x 3 pharmacies per month
- constant calls
- 30% reduction in call costs across all three

"Our phone bills were going through the roof. When we analysed the calls, a really decent proportion of them were between stores.

"We call it our bat phone. Installation was easy. I couldn't believe how easy it was. There was a supply issue at first because Fred had so much interest, but then we pretty much plugged it in, with a tiny bit of configuring. One store did it with help and one did it without.

"The phone bills have pretty much disappeared. Now we get a phone bill with pages and pages of calls that we make and we don't pay for. We'd have to say that there's been a 30% reduction in our overall phone charges."

Technology solution – benefits and learnings of a managed service

The group achieved call costs savings using a Fred Phone, Fred's business grade internet phone service. The Fred Phone uses VoIP technology, or Voice over Internet to let callers make free calls to any of 700 pharmacies that currently have a Fred Phone.

According to Paul Lattimer, Internet Services Manager, "What really makes a business grade service is the support and back up on top of quality. "We emphasise that a Fred Phone is a supplementary line rather than a replacement of the main phone line. The technology is reliable but is still being perfected. It's important to have a back up just in the event of an issue with the broadband connection."

“ Free calls to 700 pharmacies around Australia – and growing. To date 700 sites around Australia have started using Fred Phone.

- unlimited free telephone calls between any Fred phone
- 12c untimed national calls

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The technology solution

- Cordless phone pack (2 phones, one for either end of the pharmacy) \$129
*pharmacies can also supply their own standard phone handset
- \$9.95 subscription each store, per month – 40 (25c X 40 = \$9.95) free calls a month will recover that investment
- VoIP Phone adaptor \$129
- lead-time of a few days
- Fred Phone kits are programmed and put together in Fred's warehouse so that it comes straight out of the box and only needs to be plugged in – 3 power adaptors and one blue data cable - before you're ready to start making calls.

For more information

For more information about any of the technologies or issues discussed in this case study, contact Fred:

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