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BIRCH TELECOM REDUCES LONG DISTANCE BILLING ERRORS BY 70%

Summerville, SC – On average ten Birch Telecom customers called each day complaining about billing errors. Those complaints increased churn and costs. Administrative expenses rose due to multiple and lengthy customer service calls, issuing credits associated with billing errors, and the arduous process of working with carriers to correct the routing on future calls. Kerry Pollard, Manager of Usage Billing for Birch Telecom, explained the problem was caused by a percentage of local traffic coming in on Birch's long distance trunks from other carriers.

Pollard's solution was to use Tele-Tech's Localizer data to filter CDR's from the long distance trunk so that local calls could be identified before assessing usage charges. The results were immediate and dramatic. Birch's error rate dropped from three percent to less than one percent giving the company approximately 70% fewer long distance billing errors. The Localizer data provided NPA-NXXs in the U.S. and complete coverage of local calling areas for RBOCs and independent telephone companies (ICO). "We need to know that we have all the data and that it's accurate," says Pollard. "Every phone number from every carrier that exists is in that system. So if I need to see whether a call to Dallas from a small ICO is local, I can."

The reduction in billing errors was solely attributed to the fact that local calls were removed from the process before they were billed. It may seem that billing for fewer calls might have a negative impact on billing revenue, but much of the revenue was being credited back to customers after a costly complaint process. Usage charge customer complaints dropped from ten per day to two per month. Using the Localizer data gave Birch a 99% reduction in this type of complaint.

Pollard also found that Tele-Tech's Customer Service Department provides another piece of important and essential information. They include back-up documentation and tariff references when questions arise about calling areas. "It's a bit easier to tell a customer something they don't want to hear when I have the back-up documentation to prove it," Pollard explains. Churn at Birch Telecom has gone down since implementing an accurate local calling data source as part of their billing process. If customers leave it's no longer because of long distance billing. "Localizer is doing exactly what we wanted," says Pollard.

ABOUT BIRCH TELECOM

Targeting small and mid-sized businesses, Birch Telecom serves 140,000 customers in more than 50 metropolitan markets across 12 states. Birch owns and operates an integrated voice and data network, and offers a broad portfolio of local, long distance and Internet services. The company's business plan includes expansion of its network-based services to additional markets through both growth and acquisition. For more information about Birch visit www.birch.com.

ABOUT TELE-TECH SERVICES

Tele-Tech Services, a division of KFR Services, Inc., has been delivering database solutions for CLECs, ISPs, IXC's, wireless service providers, VoIP service providers and other telecom market segments for 30 years. Tele-Tech is the leading choice for local calling area data, and call rating and routing because of its unsurpassed reputation for quality, accuracy, and reliability. Visit Tele-Tech at www.telecomdb.com or call 800-433-6181.

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