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Twenty years later – bill savings still a key issue

At CeBIT I had a discussion with people from *the full circle group* <http://www.fullcirclegroup.com.au/>. They are an independent expert group, providing comprehensive and advanced cost-saving solutions.

At the show we decided to do a test run with them. We provided them with billing information which they analysed and then compared with other suppliers. In the first run they came up with several providers, and when we asked 'what about company X or Z?' they said 'no problem' and ran the test again, using the companies nominated by us.

In easy-to-read pie charts you get the overviews of the various services, by duration, by call type. It was amazing to see that over the duration of our contract with our current providers the costs of the equipment had increased from 30% to 50%, not because those costs have gone up, but because call charges have declined.

But, even so, the various comparisons indicated that further call cost savings of as much as 25% could be made. Mind you, the overview indicated that some of the other providers would have charged us between 13% and 22% more based on our current billing.

So, overall we haven't done too badly.

In the end we decided to go further with the company that we already had selected as our preferred supplier. They were not the cheapest, but the difference was reasonable and acceptable. But for us the most important thing was that, with all that information at our fingertips, we now felt informed and comfortable about this. Before this analysis we felt that we didn't have any good comparative information that would allow us to make a well-informed decision.

The single largest complaint in the telecoms industry is billing, but with services like those provided by the full circle group it is possible to get a level of clarity. The company also indicated that, with larger bills in particular, they most often still find costs that should not have been charged.

That reminded me of a company – I think it was called Sharelink – who, back in 1991/1992, made much of bill analyses that led to spectacular cost savings by some of its customers. They received widespread press coverage at the time, but now, twenty years later, the telco industry is still not able to solve these billing problems.

And for this disservice these telcos provide we are required to pay an extra billing fee – somehow that doesn't seem quite right.

It is obvious that we continue to need services such as the ones provided by *the full circle group* and it is good to see that these services have come a long way; now providing the users with great analyses and accurate comparisons that enables them to solve these billing problems and - as we experienced - to make informed decisions about their future telecommunications requirements.

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