

WHITEPAPER

The Dangers Lurking Under the Surface of Mismanaged Telecom



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Introduction

Cloud adoption, hybrid work, IoT, SD-WAN, and mobility have fundamentally reshaped the telecom landscape. Yet behind the scenes, many organizations are still managing their telecom estates with legacy tools: static spreadsheets, manual processes, and disconnected data sources that were never designed for this level of complexity.

Spreadsheets offer a false sense of control. They are difficult to maintain, impossible to keep fully current, and inherently limited when it comes to visualizing an entire telecom estate in motion. Without automatic updates, even the most carefully maintained spreadsheet becomes outdated the moment a change occurs. By managing your estate in spreadsheets, you are introducing risk, blind spots, and inefficiencies across the organization.

This challenge becomes even more critical when reconciling expenses. Telecom invoices are notoriously difficult to decipher, often inconsistent, and frequently inaccurate. Allocating charges, validating costs, and identifying billing errors through manual review is time-consuming and unreliable, leaving organizations exposed to unnecessary spending.

Beneath the surface of every telecom estate lies significant opportunity for optimization, automation, and measurable savings. But those opportunities cannot be realized without first uncovering the hidden threats that spreadsheets simply cannot reveal. To gain control, organizations must move beyond what they can see on the surface and address what is happening underneath.



Under the Surface: **Disconnected Services That Are Still Being Billed**

When spreadsheets are used as the primary system of record for inventory and invoices, manual checks become the only line of defense against billing errors. This approach leaves organizations vulnerable to paying for services that have already been disconnected.

Because spreadsheets do not automatically reconcile invoices against internal inventory, disconnected circuits, or services can continue to be billed unnoticed. Human error, timing gaps, and outdated records all contribute to spend that quietly drains your budgets month after month.

A Telecom Expense Management (TEM) system eliminates this risk by automating invoice auditing and reconciliation. Every charge is validated against live inventory data, and discrepancies are flagged immediately for review and dispute. The result is that money stops leaving the organization without accountability.



Under the Surface: **Off-Contract and Higher-Than-Normal Costs**

Telecom providers do not follow a universal billing standard. Charges vary widely in format, terminology, and structure, making it difficult to identify when costs deviate from expectations and when they should raise concern.

Without a TEM system in place, organizations can be billed more than contractually agreed rates, incur unexpected surcharges, or absorb new charges without realizing it. These issues often go unnoticed because there is no systematic way to detect anomalies across providers and billing cycles.

A TEM system automatically audits every invoice and applies cost intelligence across the estate. Alerts are generated when charges exceed predefined thresholds, increase unexpectedly, or appear for the first time. This proactive visibility enables organizations to dispute invalid charges promptly, even before they become normalized line items on the invoice.

Without these safeguards, organizations miss critical opportunities to recover spend they should never have paid.



Under the Surface: Retired Assets Still Appearing on Invoices

Telecom environments are constantly changing. Moves, adds, changes, and disconnects (MACDs) occur every day. When spreadsheets are not updated in real time (or at all) retired assets can continue to appear active, both in records and on invoices.

This disconnect creates multiple layers of risk. Organizations may continue paying for retired services, operate with inaccurate network maps, and make planning decisions based on incomplete or bloated data. Over time, the telecom estate becomes harder to understand, manage, and optimize.

Complete inventory management is critical across the entire asset lifecycle—from planning and procurement to retirement and offloading. A TEM system ensures continuity between MACD activity, inventory records, and invoicing. As changes occur, data is updated automatically, keeping the estate accurate, current, and defensible.

When inventory reflects reality,
your costs follow suit.



Under the Surface: **No Ability to Confidently Budget, Plan, and Track**

Budgeting and forecasting in telecom are notoriously difficult when expense data is fractured across multiple spreadsheets. Comparing budget to actuals becomes a manual, time-intensive exercise that delivers insight too late to be actionable.

Without a centralized view, organizations struggle to understand where money is being spent, how costs are trending, and how future changes will impact budgets across asset types, locations, and cost centers. Forecasting becomes reactive, rather than strategic.

A TEM system changes this dynamic. With integrated Power BI analytics and drill-down reporting, teams gain deep visibility into expense data at every level. Financial forecasting reports provide both actual and projected expenditures down to the individual inventory item. These projections are informed by invoice charges, allocated expenses, and pending inventory actions tied to active tickets.

The result is confidence. Confidence to plan, to forecast, and to make decisions grounded in real data rather than assumptions.



How a Telecom Expense Management System Helps You Uncover It All

A Telecom Expense Management system provides the visibility required to move from reactive cost control to informed, strategic decision-making. By unifying inventory, invoices, circuits, contracts, and financial data into a single system of record, TEM brings clarity to an otherwise fragmented landscape.

With automation at the core, teams reclaim time previously lost to manual audits and spreadsheet maintenance. Your team's productivity increases, invoice errors decrease, and estate optimization becomes continuous rather than episodic.

Most importantly, TEM evolves alongside your organization. As telecom estates grow more complex, expense management must keep pace. This means using a system that seamlessly unifies tasks, data, and workflows into one secure environment. The organizations that succeed are not those that see only what is visible, but those willing to explore beneath the surface and act on what they uncover.



Trust Calero to Help You Navigate Your Telecom

At Calero, we don't just provide software, we provide a partnership that helps you tackle the hard stuff. Our single, unified technology business management platform turns murky waters and guesswork into actionable insights, reliable data, and confidence in your telecom estate management. See all of your telecom expenses and assets in one easy-to-navigate platform that blows excel sheets out of the water.

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