



Coordinating a Large-Scale Telecom Cutover

Replacing a phone system sounds straightforward—until you realize what it actually involves.

Multiple locations.

Different legacy systems.

Hundreds of devices.

And a hard deadline: **Everything must work by Monday morning.**

That was the challenge we faced when our organization needed to replace an aging phone system and unify operations across facilities in **California and Minnesota, as well as Sonora, Mexico.**

The Challenge

We weren't just upgrading technology—we were solving fragmentation.

- Two separate phone systems that didn't communicate
- Over **250 phones across multiple buildings**
- A mix of **digital and analog devices**
- No accurate map of where phones were physically located

And all of it needed to be consolidated into a **single, unified platform**.

Taking Ownership of the Process

Once the decision was made to standardize on the **Allworx system**, I led the site-level planning and execution.

This wasn't a plug-and-play deployment.

It required building structure where none existed.

Building the Foundation

1. Establish a System of Record

We started by exporting all extensions and user assignments from the existing system—creating a baseline dataset.

2. Create a Physical Device Map

There was no existing documentation of phone locations.

So we built one.

- Imported facility floor plans into Visio
- Assembled in a team familiar with the buildings
- Traced every phone by physically locating it
- Matched each device to its extension

This became the **single source of truth** for the entire project.

Designing for the Environment

Not every solution works everywhere.

In a **manufacturing / foundry environment**, running new network lines across the plant floor wasn't practical.

So we made strategic decisions:

- **~70 plant floor phones remained analog**
- Office and cubicle users transitioned to **VoIP with passthrough connectivity**

This balanced **cost, practicality, and performance.**

Execution Planning

From there, the focus shifted to precision:

- Ordered VoIP devices, analog adapters, and PBX infrastructure
- Rebuilt punch block layouts to support hybrid connectivity
- Pre-mapped every extension to a device using MAC address tracking
- Labeled and staged all equipment for deployment

By the time the hardware arrived, every detail had been planned—execution became a formality.

Preparing the User Experience

Technology changes fail when users aren't prepared.

So alongside the technical work, I developed **end-user documentation**, including:

- Voicemail setup and passcodes
- Greeting configuration
- Call retrieval instructions
- Updated extension formats (moving from 3-digit to 4-digit dialing)

Every user received clear, simple guidance before the cutover.

Cutover Weekend

With planning complete, execution became coordinated and controlled.

- Deployment teams installed and configured VoIP devices
- Analog systems were transitioned to the new environment
- Every phone was tested in real time

By Monday morning, the system was fully operational.

The Result

- Seamless transition across a complex, multi-building environment
- Zero major disruptions to business operations
- Standardized communication platform across all locations

The vendor later told us:

“This was the smoothest cutover we’ve ever seen—especially at this scale.”

Why This Matters

Projects like this aren’t just about technology—they’re about **execution under pressure**.

This initiative reflects how I approach large-scale IT work:

- Build structure where none exists
- Make practical decisions based on environment
- Plan deeply so execution is predictable
- Focus equally on **technology and user experience**

Because success isn’t just getting systems live—it’s making sure the business never feels the disruption.

If you’ve been through a large-scale cutover, you know—the real work happens *before* the switch is flipped.