Avaya Demystified
by Walt Medak

A: This topic is an observation rather than a question. I have had the opportunity to install many miles of cable in my career, and see hundreds of switch, server and telecom rooms. I see one common mistake so often I thought it was worth mentioning. Tie-wraps, zip-ties, cable-ties, call them what you will. The little, nylon cable securing device is a cable installers best friend. Run your bundle of cables, wrap a zip-tie around them and cinch it up good and snug. Quick and easy. However, it is exactly that ease of use that can cause a problem. Back in the good-ole days when installers used to lace in and tie cables with wax-coated cotton string, it was easy to determine just how tight you were getting the string. With a zip-tie, it is very easy to over-tighten them around the cables. This can cause a number of problems. As a performance issue, over-tightening a zip-tie can actually interfere with the critical specifications of today's high performance structured cabling. More importantly, it can also be a safety issue. The insulation on most cables, power cables included, is not technically a solid material. Over time, a zip-tie that is too tight can actually displace the insulation and cause a short-circuit. I'm not trying to discourage the use of zip-ties, although a cable job done by an experienced technician with wax string can be a thing of beauty. Just be very diligent, as you should be with all your work. Also, keep in mind there are different types of zip-ties as well. Some are rated for plenum areas, some are not. Others are made to be UV-resistant for use outside. As with anything, be sure to use the right tool for the job and use the tool right.

Q: I'm getting concerned about our Intuity voicemail system and just how long it's going to last. We haven't been having any problems with it yet, but I don't want to be stuck looking for replacement options in the middle of the night on a weekend. Is the OEM the only option?

A: I hate to say it, but I think you are wise looking to replace your Intuity. It is getting extremely difficult, if not impossible, to find replacement parts for the older voicemail systems including the 5-slot Definity Audix, the 2-slot Audix Slim and the Intuity Audix. When you can find parts, you're replacing something that's 10 years old with something else that's also 10 years old. You might buy yourself a little bit of time but, as with any other PC, parts will fail over time. Especially on a system that is always running 24/7. The good news is the OEM is not the only option. There are a large number of manufacturers of voicemail systems that will work well with your Definity system. The OEM voicemail systems have some integration capabilities that the non-OEM systems don't, but most of them should be able to do everything your current Intuity can do and more. We have been working directly with one vendor in particular to try to overcome the integration issues. When we have those issues resolved, I think we will have an even better option available than OEM, at a much better price as well. Give us a call and we'd be glad to discuss some options with you.

And as always, if you have any questions please call 800-452-6477, or visit us at www.medak.com.