

USPTO CASE STUDY

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The United States Patent and Trademark Office required managed broadband internet services for Trademark teleworkers.

The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), an agency in the Department of Commerce employing nearly 13,000 individuals, has been the federal leader in instituting telework as a critical element of its organizational and workforce strategy. Its telework program started in 1997, with 18 trademark attorneys working several days a week from home and sharing office space when they returned to headquarters.

By 2006, the USPTO had so successfully expanded their Trademark telework project, that they recognized the need to outsource the nationwide management of their teleworkers' broadband internet services. Desiring a small business with proven telemanagement success, the USPTO chose TSR, Incorporated to support teleworkers' existing broadband lines and to install commercial/business grade cable modem, DSL, or fiber optics, providing teleworkers access to USPTO's virtual private network (VPN). As an experienced Telecom Expense Management (TEM) company, TSR would be required to order, provision, install, support, move, change, and disconnect these lines, as requested, while managing the complex processes of invoice verification, consolidation, and carrier payment.

USPTO Objectives, Potential Challenges, and TSR Solutions

USPTO Objective 1

Transfer existing teleworker broadband to TSR's management control and support.

Challenge: To seamlessly transition USPTO lines to TSR management in a timely fashion.

Because transition is one of the most critical times in the lifecycle of service outsourcing, lack of communication, mismatched expectations, and the fact that not all issues and risks can be anticipated could easily hinder service transfer.

Solution: Using successful transition methodology employed for other large Government contracts, TSR was able to ensure sustainable service delivery for the Trademark organization. Our fully managed approach resulted in a seamless transfer of USPTO broadband services. By combining our methodology with the expertise of our fully-trained analysts, TSR was able to transition Trademark's 287 existing broadband lines in less than three (3) months.

TSR Broadband Management Services

- Experienced provisioning and bill payment analysts
- Reduced invoice processing and payment costs
- Every invoice audited at the most granular level of detail
- Elimination of duplicate and overpayments
- Minimized late fees and shutoffs
- Identification of unauthorized, unnecessary, and unused services
- Contract compliance and recovery of billing errors
- Control, visibility, and accountability over expenses
- An accurate teleworker broadband inventory
- Optimized asset and usage utilization
- Negotiated best rates
- One monthly consolidated bill

USPTO Objective 2

Provide for the ordering, provisioning, and installation of new broadband lines at the USPTO’s request.

Challenge: Demands on network performance and reliability have soared within the last ten years. Under the current USPTO model, operating procedures were too compartmentalized, legacy processes were too inefficient and the cost of adding additional telemanagement personnel was simply too great. What was needed was an outsourcing partner to assume the management of all new teleworker lines—coordinating installation and support between the USPTO, teleworkers, and carriers and finding the best broadband connection possible based on teleworker locations.

Solution: TSR’s vendor-neutral approach coupled with our patented technology and processes, allowed us to optimize the following order management services in an accurate and timely manner. As part of our provisioning solution, TSR:

- Pre-qualified and ordered new circuits with broadband carriers.
- Priced new circuits when a new carrier was introduced.
- Contacted USPTO teleworkers to coordinate installations.
- Scheduled installations with broadband carriers and monitored status until completion.
- Resolved any problems that occurred during or resulting from the initial installation.
- Processed moves, changes, and disconnections of broadband services, when requested.
- Ensured teleworker telecom inventory remained up-to-date and accurate – ALWAYS!

USPTO Objective 3

Provide Help Desk support for USPTO's teleworkers’ broadband lines.

Challenge: When a teleworker is dependent upon functioning broadband service to perform their Trademark duties, transmission slowness or outages can negatively impact their daily performance. USPTO needed to choose an experienced company who would work diligently to get the broadband service back into good working order as quickly as possible.

Solution: TSR provided USPTO ISP support between the hours of 5:30 AM and 10:00 PM EST, Monday through Saturday. Upon being notified of a broadband performance issue, TSR immediately ticketed the incident, diagnosed that root cause, and initiated connectivity restoration. Focusing on the dual goals of broadband availability and customer satisfaction, TSR’s Help Desk technicians were able to handle these customer issues with speed, efficiency, and professionalism.

In addition to incident management, technicians also reported all known and planned network outages to the USPTO as they were identified. And if issue trends or risks were observed, they were relayed to the Government along with suggested strategies to help in their mitigation.

TSR's USPTO Teleworker Statistics

- Average amount of carrier bills verified monthly –\$43,685.41
- Average number of Trademark teleworkers - 470
- Number of carriers used by Trademark teleworkers – 20
- Average Help Desk tickets per year – 140
- In the first 2 months of the contract, detected and disputed a carrier's overcharges, resulting in a \$18,570 credit to USPTO
- Detected and disputed a one-time carrier error totaling \$16,000
- Recovered \$52,366.93 in MRCs (monthly recurring charges) and \$29,891.93 in NRCs (non-recurring charges).

USPTO Objective 4

Provide invoice consolidation and bill payment services.

Challenge: Telecom bills are often the most complex and error-prone invoices an enterprise receives. The sheer number and complexity of invoices from multiple vendors—each with their own billing formats—creates high invoice processing costs and time consuming bill payment cycles. USPTO's increasing number of carriers, invoices, invoice cycles, billing formats, and service types made bill review, reconciliation, optimization, and on-time payment a challenge.

Solution: Upon receiving Trademark telecom invoices, through use of standardized procedures and innovative technology, TSR combined those invoices into a centralized database. This comprehensive database allowed us to verify billing accuracy and properly allocate costs across Trademark business units (e.g., Trademark Trial and Appeal Board). When needed, we initiated and resolved billing disputes directly with USPTO carriers. All processed invoices were then consolidated into one monthly, USPTO-specific invoice which was sent to the Government for payment. In turn, TSR paid each carrier invoice on behalf of the USPTO and ensured that each carrier received payment by the billing due date.

Trademark Telework Awards

The Trademark organization's unique teleworking program has won numerous awards since its inception. In granting one of those awards, the **2014 17th Annual Constance L. Belfiore Quality of Life Award**, the District of Columbia Quality of Life Committee stated:

As a large government agency, the Trademark Organization of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office took a bold and experimental step in 1997 to offer telework and flexible work schedules, save office and energy costs, and increase efficiency. The initiatives succeeded, and at present, 98 percent of the more than 500 lawyers take advantage of teleworking and flexible scheduling. They also benefit from advanced communication technologies and strategies, career development programs, and exceptional work-life balance benefits.

Telework at the USPTO continues to help the agency support its strategic goals to make the USPTO a model 21st century government agency. TSR is proud to have provided the reliable network connectivity necessary for Trademark's telework success.

ABOUT TSR

TSR is a certified woman-owned small business that has provided leading-edge telecom expense management (TEM) solutions to both private and public enterprises since 1994. Through a winning combination of patented software and services, our customer-driven solutions help track, integrate, and manage both fixed and mobile telecommunications infrastructure. Our full-spectrum TEM and telework broadband internet services help organizations attain immediate, sustainable telecom cost reductions while increasing operational efficiency.

For more information, visit www.tsr-inc.com.