

NO CALLING CARDS ALLOWED

Callback provides low-cost way around telecommunications legislation

THE CHALLENGE

Salim Chammas knew that an affordable long distance option was desperately needed in his native Lebanon. Per minute charges to the U.S. ranged from \$0.35 to \$0.80 through a fixed land line, and cellular rates were even higher. International calling cards would provide people with more choices; but due to government regulations, calling cards remain illegal in Lebanon. Salim knew there had to be a way to bring lower cost long distance safely to his country, and he called IPsmarx to see what could be done.

THE SOLUTION

IPsmarx developed a VoIP Callback system for Salim, one that he could set up anywhere in the world without having to leave his home, that would handle outgoing long distance calls as low-rate incoming VoIP calls. To make a call, his customers in Lebanon dial into his system with a U.S. access number through their regular phone line. The system rings but doesn't answer the call, so there is no charge to the customer. The system reads the customer's caller ID and then calls them back at their location; when they answer, they simply enter their PIN and the destination number they want to call and the system connects them over IP. The call is recorded as an incoming rather than an outgoing call, and costs a fraction of the PSTN's long distance fee.

His server and DID provider were placed in a U.S. co-location, ensuring that his system was backed by a safe, reliable and up to date telecommunications infrastructure and that his lines were always stable and of high quality. Using Least-Cost Routing, he was able to use multiple carriers and take advantage of competitive rates and high line availability. He also has the option to expand into other areas whenever he wants either by the same set-up or by installing gateways in destination locations and terminating his own traffic.

IPsmarx created several features for Salim. His customers can log on to his website and register their home number, so the system will recognize and authenticate their account automatically - no PIN needed. A multiple session module means that customers don't have to disconnect from the system to make another call; rather than hanging up at the end of a call they simply press 'pound' and enter another destination number. A lock-out policy blocks callers after ten incorrect PIN entries, preventing system hacks. IPsmarx is also developing a multi-lingual IVR that will analyze the incoming number and callback using prompts in the appropriate language.

"I had no idea that I could set up a system anywhere in the world and use facilities and equipment that isn't available in my location. I have a business I can grow, and equipment and service I can trust. I don't ever have to worry about it breaking down or going offline. I am so happy to be providing reliable and affordable service to people, and I have IPsmarx to thank for that."

Salim Chammas / Beirut, Lebanon

