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SMALL & MEDIUM BUSINESS TECHNOLOGY ALLIANCE

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SMBTANEWS...

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Voice over IP is a Viable, but Misunderstood, Technology for Small Businesses

Misconceptions about Cost and Complexity May Be Keeping Small Businesses from Adopting this Emerging Technology

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – DALLAS, TX – Small businesses may be missing out on the savings and options offered by Voice over IP (VoIP), simply because they do not have a clear understanding of the technology, according to the Small and Medium Business Technology Alliance. The Small and Medium Business Technology Alliance (SMBTA) – a sister organization of the American Small Business Travelers Alliance (ASBTA) – is focused on helping businesses better utilize technology. In a recent ASBTA survey, only four percent of small businesses surveyed indicated they use VoIP in their businesses, although 66 percent indicated they have heard of the technology.

“Our research is in alignment with recent industry studies that seem to indicate small businesses have not adopted VoIP technology because they don’t understand it,” said Chuck Sharp, SMBTA president. “Our sense is that small businesses may feel the

technology is too complicated or expensive to consider, even though neither is true.”

VoIP can usually be set up in 15 minutes or less. “It is very straight forward to install,” said Sharp. “You can utilize your existing broadband by either attaching a phone adapter to your broadband which allows you to use your current phone system, or by loading VoIP software on your PC or laptop and then registering with your provider. It is that simple.” And because all calls are made over the Internet, VoIP users do not pay extra for long-distance and international calls, charges that often make up a significant expense for small businesses.

Several companies currently offer VoIP service, including Vonage and Skype, with service packages ranging from free to around \$50 per month. Both companies cater particularly to small businesses, and offer introductory programs or special offers as incentives. In addition, now through September 5th, Intel is offering a free Skype Internet calling starter kit as part of its “Relax Pack” – a free gift with the purchase of an Intel Centrino Duo mobile technology notebook computer. Valued at \$400, the pack also includes a backpack, 20 free sessions of unlimited access at AT&T Wi-Fi hot spots, \$100 in Marriott Bonus Bucks, a Marriott two-for-one bonus round of golf, and a coupon to try the inflight internet service from Connexion by Boeing. See www.intel.com/go/relax for all the program details, including service availability.

“Many emerging technologies can appear intimidating and complicated, but VoIP is actually very straightforward and understandable,” said Sharp. “The technology has made significant advances in the last year, provides comparable sound quality to existing land lines, and does this at significant savings. VoIP is certainly worth the consideration of small businesses on a budget.”

For a comprehensive look at VoIP technology and all of its pros and cons, visit CNET’s review of Internet phones at http://reviews.cnet.com/4520-9140_7-5131535.html?tag=cnetfd.dir.

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About ASBTA and SMBTA:

ASBTA is a national organization dedicated to serving and educating small business travelers by providing information regarding travel and mobile technology. The Small and Medium Technology Alliance (SMBTA) is part of ASBTA focused on helping businesses better utilize technology. If you're a small business owner and want to learn more or become a member for free, visit our sites – www.asbta.com and www.smbta.com. Members of the media can receive a free copy of survey results by contacting ASBTA by phone at 469-648-0190 or email at surveys@asbta.com.