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How prepared are you?

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The BT Group revealed in a recent survey, 86% of businesses plan to move all communications to mobile phones following the Big Switch Off in 2025.

But how ready are Facility Managers and the premises they manage?

Recently, The BT Group sent a gentle reminder of the Big Switch Off in 2025, when businesses will no longer have the option to use a landline, as the communications giant plans to move all UK phones lines from traditional Public Switched Telephone Network to fully digital.

Nick Hawke, Business Development Manager at Pan RF (pictured), the global leader in wireless connectivity, reveals that a recent Pan RF poll stated an incredible 78% of office workers already choose to use their mobile phones at their desks, in meetings, and in communal areas for work purposes.

So, how prepared are FM and building owners for every tenant in the building to be on their mobile phones in the office? Can your digital infrastructure cope with demand?

Poor mobile connectivity for whatever reason is the building owner's responsibility, not the mobile phone operators. If you manage a building with already poor cellular mobile coverage, then this will only get worse, and it will affect your tenants daily and business will suffer.

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How to make the most of mobile signals?

You can implement several strategies and solutions to boost the mobile signal connection in your offices. Here are some steps you can take:

1. Begin by assessing the current 4G signal strength within your office building. Identify areas with weak or no signal reception using mobile devices or signal-strength apps. This will help you understand the scope of the problem and focus your efforts accordingly.

- Consider installing external antennas or signal boosters on the exterior of your office building. These devices capture and amplify the existing mobile signal from nearby macro cells and distribute it within the building. Then, signal boosters can be placed strategically to cover the areas with weak signal reception.

- Implement an Indoor Distributed Antenna System (DAS) to improve signal distribution throughout the office building. DAS consists of antennas and amplifiers that boost the 2G, 4G and 5G signal and distribute it evenly across multiple floors and rooms. This ensures better coverage and reduces signal attenuation caused by building materials that affect the mobile signal strength.

- If your office building has poor 4G coverage, consider deploying femtocells or small cells within the building. These devices act as miniature cell towers and provide localised 4G coverage in areas where the signal is weak. Femtocells are typically suitable for smaller office spaces, while small cells are more suitable for more significant buildings. But tread carefully. Several technical hoops need to be jumped through before being installed.

- Ensure that wireless routers, access points, or signal boosters are strategically positioned within the office building to optimise signal propagation. Experiment with different locations to find the best placement that maximises coverage and minimises interference.

- Evaluate the building materials used within your office building, some materials can significantly impact signal penetration. Materials like concrete, metal, and energy-efficient glass can impede 4G signals. Even buildings that have had the environments impact measured or external surroundings of the building can all have an impact. Where possible, plan to use signal-boosting window films, using signal-boosting paints, or strategically placing signal boosters near areas with signal interference.

- Engage with your mobile network provider to discuss the 4G coverage issues within your office building. They may provide insights, recommendations, or specific solutions tailored to your situation. They can also inform you about upcoming network infrastructure improvements or technologies that could enhance 4G connectivity.

- Once you have implemented the necessary solutions, ensure regular maintenance and periodic upgrades to keep the 4G network infrastructure functioning optimally. Stay updated with new technologies and advancements in in-building mobile telecoms to improve connectivity continuously.

There are many factors that will affect the signal in the building. For a site survey please contact: Nick Hawke, Business Development Manager, Pan RF

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