



November 19, 2007

Hello? Can You Hear Me Now?

As you might have heard, The Sun no longer wants to provide partial reimbursement for the business calls you make on your personal cell phone. Instead, the company would rather you do one of two things:

OPTION #1

Turn over the phone you currently use, and the plan, to The Sun. You'll keep your phone number but The Sun becomes the owner of that number, the phone and the plan. This might work for you if it is important that sources, clients or other businesses who regularly call you need to use the number you already have. Personal use of the phone is discouraged, although "minimal" use will be allowed.

Or

OPTION #2

Be assigned a company phone using Sprint or Cingular/AT&T as your carrier. The Sun will give you a new phone number to give out to the people who need to reach you for business purposes. Since The Sun will be paying the bill every month, again, personal use is discouraged, although "minimal" use is allowed. The upside of this option is that your personal cell phone and plan remain your own. But you would be responsible for carrying two cell phones with you during normal working hours. (This is something Sun photographers have been doing for quite some time.)

Neither option is perfect. Some of you have balked at turning over your personal, expensive property to The Sun, and rightfully so. Others of you have complained about being saddled with the burden of carrying and keeping up with two cell phones.

The Guild has argued both points, in addition to mentioning that it is likely cheaper for The Sun to continue its current reimbursement practices. Nevertheless, the company is going forward with its new policy. To ease the transition, the Guild has been able to secure a little more time for members to decide whether they want to choose options 1 or 2. You now have until March 1, 2008 to make a decision. This should give you at least a little more time to decide what works best for you. And at the very least, take the holidays to research cell phone plans to determine whether you can save money by reducing the minutes on your current personal plan; after all, you'll now be using a Sun phone during the work day.

As you are thinking about changing your cell phone plans, please note that as a union member you can get a 10% union discount at AT&T (formerly Cingular).

Info at <http://www.unionplus.org/att-wireless.cfm> or <http://www.getunionwireless.com/>. If you already have AT&T/Cingular, you can get the discount going forward. The Union Plus website also has a variety of other discounts available to union members at <http://www.unionplus.org/>.