

zBoost SOHO YX545 Dual Band Signal Booster Review

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Everyone knows that cell phones have become commonplace for daily life, but how many also know that they've also replaced landlines in many small home offices? Or that having a dependable cellular connection when indoors is not guaranteed by even the latest smartphone technology? That's where a cellular signal booster comes in: to bring the cellular signal where where it is strong but unneeded to where it is needed, but weak. My friend Jerry works from home in what many would call a "typical" home office — one section of his living room being his office space. He's close to a highway overpass and used to the sound of cars. But what he can't get used to is the measly 1 bar cellular signal strength that his state-of-the-art Blackberry receives when seated at his desk. I can remember many a call to him that got dropped or didn't make it through at all. Having this happen to my calls is bad, but considering that his phone is his business' "lifeline", it couldn't be worse. So I thought I'd help out.



I've been using the zBoost Metro signal amplifier to boost my iPhone's reception for a few years now, so I had high hopes that zBoost's SOHO YX545 Dual Band Signal Booster model would work as well for Jerry. There's not a whole lot to setting it up, but you do need to do it in the proper order to gain the results needed. The first thing we looked at was how we to mount the antenna, as it needs to be at least 15 feet minimum above the base unit vertically (i.e., in a straight line). We had the choice of mounting it outside a window or in the attic and chose the former, as this would make the installation easier. The signal antenna screws into one end of a bar and the other end accepts the included mini-coaxial cable. A bracket is included also for positioning it, but we used temporary means to hold the bracket in position.

This was sensible since the placement might need to be altered and it would be easier this way.

We then ran the coaxial down using an existing cable channel that was already there. If this hadn't been available, we would have just run the cable through the side of the window; first having drilled a small hole next to the window and then closing it up with silicone and placing a waterproof channel over the outside cabling as protection against the elements.

The base unit was placed on top of a small bookcase that was (aprox) directly below the antenna, with the free end of the coaxial cable going into the base unit's antenna port. The power cable was than plugged into the back but not the AC outlet (there's no "Off" switch). The final touch was to screw the base unit's antenna on and slightly angle it towards the desk at the other end of the room.



Jerry stood by the desk and showed me the 1 bar that he had been living with. Walking around the room only brought up another bar when we got closer to the windows. I looked at my iPhone and its reception strength mirrored his. He went back to his desk and I went over to the base unit and plugged the power in. I went back to Jerry and he moved his phone in a small arc and showed me the 4 bars he was now getting. I accompanied him as we walked around the room and repeated what he had done, only with my own phone and got the same results.

We hung out in his office for the afternoon and the phone reception stayed high— he placed a few calls and told me that he hadn't been able to hear or be heard as clearly before. I verified this by getting in my car and driving about a mile away before pulling over to give him a call. I could now hear him fine. I could also stop at In-N-Out Burger and bring back some burgers and fries and have him pay for them. After all, I had been the one who had brought the SOHO YX545 over.

Bottom line: The zBoost SOHO YX545 Dual Band Signal Booster does one thing and one thing only: it takes a cellular signal from where it is strong and transfers that signal to where it needs to be used. For the small office where having continuous and consistent cellular reception is vital, the retail cost of \$399.00 (though it can be bought for less than that) is a glad price to pay.