

Times have changed but this

As we introduced ourselves to the channel in the pilot issue of Comms Dealer, we wrote that to get started we had “begged and borrowed the valuable time of some industry professionals to give us their unbridled viewpoint on various issues”.

In the 25 years since, we have continued to question (and sometimes pester) our friends as the industry has warped and changed around us all. This peer contribution has helped Comms Dealer’s archives represent a history of the channel, written from the perspectives of those on ground zero, who have lived and breathed every twist and turn.

To catch up with some of our good friends, we asked a host of frequent collaborators to get nostalgic and take themselves back 25 years to remember some of the tech they were selling at the time. Some were already serving this channel in its infancy whilst others were blissfully unaware of what they were soon to step foot into.

We then supplied each contributor with a crystal ball to conjure their most ‘Black Mirror’ visions of how resellers will operate in the next 25 years and with visions of holographic conferencing to call-making contact lenses, they did not disappoint.

Whilst things have been all change for the past 25 years, and will continue to be for the next 25, one thing has remained consistent, and that is the support we have received from those who occupy this space with us.

Comms Dealer founder Nigel Sargent puts it in a nutshell: “This is a dynamic industry. Fast moving, creative, innovative and never, ever dull. The way the channel community reacted so positively when the pandemic first hit to keep the UK emergency services and crucial organisations communicating is testimony to that.

“But what makes it special is the relationships and friendships that have been formed. Of course, its competitive, but when support is needed, people are there for each other. You have been there for us for 25 years and we are very grateful for that.”



FRASER FERGUSON
KUBENET

WHO WERE YOU WORKING FOR 25 YEARS AGO?
I was the owner of KFJ Resourcing, one of Scotland’s largest recruitment businesses.

WHAT WAS YOUR ROLE?
I was a director of the business.

WHAT PRODUCT OR SERVICE WAS YOUR PRIMARY SOURCE OF REVENUE?
Perms and temps. I recruited for all the big telcos back then, like Telephone Rentals, Mercury, NTL.

WHAT WAS YOUR ABIDING MEMORY OF THAT TIME?
Telephone canvassing which was a great buzz and networking was non-stop. It seemed like you were at dinners and lunches six days a week!

WHAT ICT TECHNOLOGY DO YOU THINK RESELLERS WILL BE SELLING IN 25 YEARS’ TIME?
Smart technology and subscription everything.



TIM BROOKS
PRAGMA

WHO WERE YOU WORKING FOR 25 YEARS AGO?
Crane Telecom.

WHAT WAS YOUR ROLE?
Dealer Sales Manager, supporting resellers in London and the South East.

WHAT PRODUCT OR SERVICE WAS YOUR PRIMARY SOURCE OF REVENUE?
Goldstar GDK key systems. Then it was all about going digital, ISDN, voicemail and auto attendants.

WHAT WAS YOUR ABIDING MEMORY OF THAT TIME?
Long days in the car driving around London with a very large and heavy demonstration system, and lots of great nights out with resellers and colleagues.

WHAT ICT TECHNOLOGY DO YOU THINK RESELLERS WILL BE SELLING IN 25 YEARS’ TIME?
What a question. I wonder what we will be selling in five years’ time! Technology changes so quickly! What I am sure of is that resellers will still be guiding and supporting businesses to make the right technology decisions and being there when they’re needed if things go wrong!



ANNA ROPER
NINE GROUP

WHO WERE YOU WORKING FOR 25 YEARS AGO?
I was a receptionist for Swedish telco Telia AB in London.

WHAT WAS YOUR ROLE?
Front line operations at Telia. This experience was pivotal in enabling me to achieve my ambition of becoming a Sales Director.

IN YOUR EARLY DAYS IN COMMS WHAT PRODUCT OR SERVICE WAS YOUR PRIMARY SOURCE OF REVENUE?
Call traffic termination. There was no CPS or line rental back in those days, never mind ICT solutions!

WHAT WAS YOUR ABIDING MEMORY OF THAT TIME?
My first telecoms trainer gave a wild example of how in the future, we might be able to order shopping online. What’s now normal, once felt so impossible.

WHAT ICT TECHNOLOGY DO YOU THINK RESELLERS WILL BE SELLING IN 25 YEARS’ TIME?
Artificial intelligence. By using analytics, smart communication tools could eventually help anticipate user requirements. A long way from call traffic termination.



IAN FISHWICK
ADEPT TELECOM

WHO WERE YOU WORKING FOR 25 YEARS AGO?
I was at Telewest, London and South East Region. The business later merged with NTL and changed its name to Virgin Media.

WHAT WAS YOUR ROLE?
I was Managing Director.

WHAT PRODUCT OR SERVICE WAS YOUR PRIMARY SOURCE OF REVENUE?
Our primary source of revenue was cable TV subscriptions, but my team was also running the trials of 50Mb cable modems. Twenty-five years later, much of the UK still cannot get access to 50Mb. Absolutely ridiculous.

WHAT ICT TECHNOLOGY DO YOU THINK RESELLERS WILL BE SELLING IN 25 YEARS’ TIME?
The world will be even more connected, so we will still be selling connectivity in some form, although by then it maybe satellite and 6G as well as fibre.

wavenet

wholesale

Prepare your customers for the

full-fibre future

industry will always innovate



DAVID HUGHES
INCOM

WHO WERE YOU WORKING FOR 25 YEARS AGO?

Incom Business Systems Ltd.

WHAT WAS YOUR ROLE?

Salesman.

WHAT PRODUCT OR SERVICE WAS YOUR PRIMARY SOURCE OF REVENUE?

Aastra (Mitel) Telephone Systems, ISDN 2 and 30 via BT and Cable & Wireless.

WHAT WAS YOUR ABIDING MEMORY OF THAT TIME?

Being in awe of people who ran their own businesses.

WHAT ICT TECHNOLOGY DO YOU THINK RESELLERS WILL BE SELLING IN 25 YEARS' TIME?

Wow, what a question! I think it is safe to say that no matter what the technology is, end users will still need help, support and guidance to deploy and support it and therefore the role of the 'trusted adviser' and value add reseller will still be as important as ever!



DAVID ALLDRITT
HIGHNET

WHO WERE YOU WORKING FOR 25 YEARS AGO?

I was newly established in my own business.

WHAT WAS YOUR ROLE?

Supplying canoes, kayaks and associated clothing and equipment.

WHAT PRODUCT OR SERVICE WAS YOUR PRIMARY SOURCE OF REVENUE?

Sales revenues had nothing to do with tech but running the business did. I'd never have survived without a fax machine!

WHAT WAS YOUR ABIDING MEMORY OF THAT TIME?

Email was via dial-up so that was done at lunchtime. It would be a few years before I had a mobile, and a few years more until there was any reception in the Highlands!

WHAT ICT TECHNOLOGY DO YOU THINK RESELLERS WILL BE SELLING IN 25 YEARS' TIME?

The young entrepreneurs of 2046 will still be selling solutions for communication, productivity, security and data storage, but the keyboard will have gone along with the fixed handset.



ROB SIMS
ELITE GROUP

WHO WERE YOU WORKING FOR 25 YEARS AGO?

Telia, an international carrier based in London. It was part of the Scandinavian PTT.

WHAT WAS YOUR ROLE?

Business Development Manager, UK Resale Channel - my first job in comms and still one of the best.

WHAT PRODUCT OR SERVICE WAS YOUR PRIMARY SOURCE OF REVENUE?

Cheap minutes, the good old days of 35ppm for wholesale mobile calls!

WHAT WAS YOUR ABIDING MEMORY OF THAT TIME?

The best expense account you could imagine and a really great team to work with!

WHAT ICT TECHNOLOGY DO YOU THINK RESELLERS WILL BE SELLING IN 25 YEARS' TIME?

Holographic conferencing utilising AI for 'in room' appearances



CHRIS MORRISEY
LILY COMMS

WHO WERE YOU WORKING FOR 25 YEARS AGO?

I had just joined Genesis Communications, a mobile service provider in Manchester.

WHAT WAS YOUR ROLE?

Business Advisor

WHAT PRODUCT OR SERVICE WAS YOUR PRIMARY SOURCE OF REVENUE?

Mobile communications.

WHAT WAS YOUR ABIDING MEMORY OF THAT TIME?

It was the first fast growth business that I had joined, and it was so exciting and fast-paced compared to traditional industries like banking. I saw ordinary people earning millions.

WHAT ICT TECHNOLOGY DO YOU THINK RESELLERS WILL BE SELLING IN 25 YEARS' TIME?

Projectors or 'in air' comms i.e. no screens, touch and voice control. One provider will probably have a big market share.



PADDY COPPINGER
WHITE HORSE TELECOM

WHO WERE YOU WORKING FOR 25 YEARS AGO?

I had qualified as a helicopter pilot, just as a global recession hit. Flying jobs were hard to find so I joined a lovely, local company in Hungerford called Saxon.

WHAT WAS YOUR ROLE?

To flog as much as humanly possible to small independent motorist shops.

WHAT PRODUCT OR SERVICE WAS YOUR PRIMARY SOURCE OF REVENUE?

Magic Tree air fresheners, amongst other well-known car related brands.

WHAT WAS YOUR ABIDING MEMORY OF THAT TIME?

No smart phone, but a very cool, state-of-the-art car phone (incoming calls only due to poisonously high call costs!) and paper orders faxed through to HQ at the end of the day.

WHAT ICT TECHNOLOGY DO YOU THINK RESELLERS WILL BE SELLING IN 25 YEARS' TIME?

A White Horse injectable comms bot - touch your ear and make a phone call! Or perhaps a contact lens instead of a smart phone.



RICHARD ROBERTS
MITEL

WHO WERE YOU WORKING FOR 25 YEARS AGO?

I was Azlan Distribution, a network and communications IT distributor, based in Wokingham.

WHAT WAS YOUR ROLE?

I was the Business Development Manager responsible for launching their Cisco partnership here in the UK&I.

WHAT PRODUCT OR SERVICE WAS YOUR PRIMARY SOURCE OF REVENUE?

The full Cisco suite of products.

WHAT WAS YOUR ABIDING MEMORY OF THAT TIME?

Huge opportunity, hype days, the social buzz of distribution and the belief that absolutely anything was possible!

WHAT ICT TECHNOLOGY DO YOU THINK RESELLERS WILL BE SELLING IN 25 YEARS' TIME?

Communications technologies will always be central to the social and commercial fabric of the economy, and this will continue to develop. Better mobile connectivity will reduce reliance on hardware infrastructure. As the shift to service accelerates, resellers will play a critical role in consolidating those services into customised experience offerings.

Digital Britain is coming, become an early adopter and gain the edge against your competitors with Wavenet Wholesale.

Partner with
us today!

0333 234 9911

uk.wavenetuk.com/full-fibre