

Canny channel ready to tackle a tumultuous 2023

A year ago, we ran a Kaleidoscope titled "2022 aspirations: Setting out strategy in the era of uncertainty."

Whilst it would've taken a naive business leader to assume the world would regain equilibrium over the past twelve months, few might have guessed the raft of challenges they would be forced to face.

UK plc is staring into 2023 amidst a cost of living crisis, war on the continent and the continued economic fallout of the pandemic, however, a battle hardened and ever-optimistic channel remains positive.

Shrewd operators plan to turn risk to reward and capitalise on a rising tide of new technologies that will define the UK's response to the year ahead.

We asked our contributors to look forward into 2023 and shed light on the following:

- Their business aspirations for the coming year
- The top trends they believe will dominate the industry
- The best opportunities for businesses to maximise on
- Their key strategy and focus for the year ahead.



TIM MERCER
VAPOUR

"At a recent event I was struck by how flat the room was. The industry is preparing itself for a tough year, particularly when it comes to the economic climate and the impact that will have on client projects. For us, the focus will be looking at how we deliver more value to customers, further our consultative stance to ensure optimal cloud adoption and transformation projects, engage with the market generally, and continue to effectively interact with staff in the permanent world of hybrid working. I'm proud of the reputation we've carved for ourselves in the industry, particularly when it comes to the personality and authenticity of our brand, and this will be integral to our story in 2023. In the wider space I think we'll see more automation project deliveries in SMEs, network security by design will

become an even bigger topic, and the public versus private cloud debate will remain in sharp focus."



CHRISTIAN BLEAKLEY
FIRSTCOM EUROPE

"The combined impact of Covid, Brexit, conflict in Europe, the cost-of-living crisis and climate change has meant that there is no "business as usual" anymore. Our own industry, telecommunications, has changed beyond all recognition both in structure and how our customers communicate. Our tools for communicating have never been better, yet loneliness and isolation are increasing. My vision for 2023 is to make business more personal. We want to be the telecom partner where every customer contact is a positive experience, where customers ring us and expect to talk to someone who will listen and help. Where local knowledge matters and selling is based as much on features and benefits and personal relationships as it is on price. The high-water mark of the monolithic and remote corporation has passed, the next generation of successful business leaders will seize this opportunity."



MARK PILLOW
VOIP UNLIMITED

"Over the years, we've seen the race to offer voice services at the lowest cost run its course. Instead, we want our partners in a different race – a race of growth and impact within their customers' operations. Voxone, our new all-encompassing UC solution, is a key part of that strategy, offering all the functionality businesses need without having to keep upping the price, which tends to lead to customer pushback. Instead, Voxone is priced as a single tier that provides all the functionality, while protecting strong margins for partners. We're also laser-focused on reducing complexity for our customers and partners, even as we bring new products like Voice-over-Satellite into the market. Our professional services and technical teams are ready to take on the tough challenges end-users face, and we take those in our stride so our partners can reap the rewards of a genuinely satisfied customer."



ROB SIMS
ELITE GROUP

"2023 looks to be a challenging year for the whole of the UK, however, it won't be without opportunities for channel. With the first stop sell restrictions from the PSTN switch off starting this means providers need to make serious moves to support customers in the transition. With the plethora of alternative services now available this means customers have the widest choice of products to future-proof their business. The undoubted push for value for money, aka cheaper prices from customers as the economy slows, will create both opportunities and threats. Those businesses that focus on quality not just price will be best placed to succeed by demonstrating the benefits, not just the cost. Elite will continue to provide its multi-product solutions – UC, tech,

security, mobile & IoT that add value and reduce complexity, helping our customers to maximise their productivity and profitability."



MIKE VAN BUNNENS
COMMS 365

"We're looking to 2023 with a genuine sense of optimism and positivity. Yes, the last 12 months have been trying for nearly every business – even the channel – but as chip shortages dissipate, we anticipate massive growth across our IoT end-user bases. This will primarily be driven by operations focusing on finding cost efficiencies. Not only in terms of utility bills and being smarter with their energy usage, but also working in tandem with broader digital transformational strategies, to develop more agile operations where data informs every key decision. And we'll only get there by delivering the support our partners need. So, with a renewed focus on sales enablement and updated partner programme, we're ready to drive growth within our partners' businesses and ensure that as many UK operations as possible can realise the financial, as well as social, benefits of a truly transformational IoT solution."



Do you offer these products to your customers?



DAN DAVIES
MAINTEL

"As we approach 2023, Maintel will look to continue delivering on the excellent growth we've seen in Cloud Communications. We will also accelerate the growth in our connectivity and network security offerings, maximise on the opportunity that the big PTSN stop sell and switch off brings, and complement our existing network and cloud security offering with managed Cyber Security services. The trend toward public cloud unified comms, collaboration and customer experience services will continue, but with hybrid integration to both on premise and strong private cloud offerings still being a vital piece of the puzzle required to complete these solutions for organisations with more complex requirements. The drive to multi-cloud environments is also set to continue, which in turn will continue to fuel the demand for managed cloud networking, powered by SD-WAN and SASE

based technologies, complemented by the expertise needed to assist organisations in protecting themselves against the ever-growing threat of cybercrime."



CRAIG PATTERSON
ARYAKA

"Initially a steppingstone in returning to the office, we expect hybrid work environments to not only endure, but flourish. Though, many organisations still haven't developed the foundations from which to build a secure and reliable WAN to facilitate hybrid working effectively. In our constantly connected workplace from anywhere, whether international or UK-based with multiple sites, enterprises need to put additional resources into protecting their network from threats, whether direct (like cyberattacks) or peripheral (such as infrastructure faults or outages). A converged SD-WAN and SASE ecosystem, that puts zero trust at its heart, is the key transformational tool for end-users – and to secure the ever-expanding enterprise threat perimeter! Delivering solutions to these challenges has massive benefits for reseller partners too, providing an opportunity to

increase margins by managing those services alongside established upsell roadmaps that have been tried, tested, and honed by our partners, to maximise buy-in."



DAVID WARDELL
EVOKE

"Leadership teams have recognised that in 2023 the 'working harder' mantra must be replaced by 'smarter working' strategies. The industry is moving on from a focus on MS Teams and CRM/PMS integration, to conversations around the convergence of data technologies. SQL access, Power BI, Tableau and the like are increasingly dominating strategic reviews. We are also witnessing an exponential growth in chatbot development in a wide range of areas, most notably ChatGPT in the marketing space. Key will be alliances with the right partners and progressive technologies as increasing developer time is dedicated to maximising the opportunities offered by open API's. 2023 will be all about 'out with the old and in with the new'. And as for my personal aspirations?

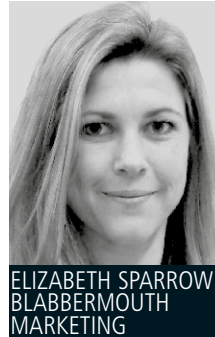
Well, I would like to take as many 'bumps out of the road' as I can for my clients, colleagues, family and friends."



AARON FOX
TELXL

"TelXL's aspirations for 2023 are to see an accelerated delivery of CCaaS solutions to SMEs through our growing network of channel partners. Economic pressures mean businesses everywhere will seek to do more and for less. Primarily, this means having the right technology at the right price to enable businesses to offer exceptional experience for their customers. It also, and just as importantly, ensures the chosen technology is implemented and leveraged correctly. In the coming year, TelXL will focus on driving customer experience for customers in the SME space through empowerment of its partners to deliver against differing needs. A part of that agility will see availability of a complimentary platform for UCaaS resellers, providing natural overlay to augment UCaaS systems with

progressive and accessible CCaaS functionality. TelXL will also continue to answer the growing need for flexible and easy-to-implement solutions in an underserved SME market."



ELIZABETH SPARROW
BLABBERMOUTH
MARKETING

"While the channel's internal understanding of transitioning to All-IP and the 2025 switch-off is at an all-time high, more work still needs to be done to educate end-user businesses about its impact. The proof being there are still millions of ISDN lines still live! Not only should this be a part of all regular discussions resellers have with current customers, but prospects should be educated through the sales journey too. Not only priming them for more product-specific conversations, but also proving the reseller's credibility by considering the prospect's long-term success as well. This is where effective marketing, leveraging personalised messaging and automation, ensures optimum lead generation without taking time away from more targeted, account-based efforts. We've also found that Calls to

Action (in emails for example) that direct prospects to book a specific time are far more effective than linking to 'contact us' pages on websites!"



PHILIP MAGUIRE
AUXILION

"Growth. That's the big focus. We've publicly stated our ambitions to acquire a company in the UK and that's something we'll be prioritising on. We're focused on further investing in the UK market and leveraging the incredible talent here. In term of a recession, we've been in this position before, so we know that cost control, change management and managing spending will be key priorities for organisations. We expect a huge focus across the industry on transformation programmes that maximise efficiencies, particularly around process improvement. Companies will need to leverage their assets and existing technology effectively to ensure that they're getting ROI and adding value through their services. Ultimately, businesses want a partner that understands their strategic objectives. It's less about finding

opportunities than it is finding solutions for your customers. In the eye of the storm, business leaders want the support and advice of companies they trust."



SOHINI RAITHATHA
REDSQUID

"Redsquad's aspirations for 2023 are the extended development of our technologies that are a part of our overall strategy as an MSP with a focus on security. We'll also have a big focus on the ISDN and PSTN switch off and migrating both new and existing customers onto future proof and efficient technology, along with the full fibre roll out. Information about the switch off is still too low, and the opportunity to support businesses through this transition is enormous. We continue to see an upward trend of organisations investing in their cyber security, as stakeholders face the serious risks of facing a breach. To overcome the increase in cyber-attacks, we are developing solutions in-house, such as RedSquid Cyber/Kill, to provide our customers with the XDR, SOC and

SIEM technologies that will make them secure and bring peace of mind. Solutions we continue to invest in, so we can keep making a difference."



PHILIPPE DU FOU
INTERMEDIA

"Hybrid work is here to stay. As companies around the world contend with economic uncertainty whilst adjusting to more permanent hybrid work operating models, the opportunity for partners to deliver the tools that enable business users to collaborate and communicate from wherever work is happening is profound. We also see customers asking for a combined solution for UC with CC, therefore the market prefers vendors who can provide a consolidated offering. We see channel partners and vendors being acquired or going bankrupt. Make sure you choose a vendor that is there for the long term and can provide a solution available globally. Our key strategy for 2023 is to continue to partner with the UK channel as our sole means of going to market and making sure the

channel has everything they need to delight their customers while growing their own futures."

Cyber security
Networking & Connectivity
Unified Comms & Voice
Mobile Solutions & IoT

Start reselling our industry
leading solutions - Get in touch

0333 234 9911
wavenetwholesale.com
wholesale@wavenetuk.com