



MSP chief targets IT services as key opportunity p8

Meet a man guided by strategic foresight p18



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# Murphy calls for switch to UCaaS

**RESELLERS who respond to industry change with a proactive mindset will gain an unassailable advantage, says Gamma Business Managing Director John Murphy who warns that sticking to your knitting and ignoring UCaaS is not an option.**

**SPECIAL REPORT**

According to Murphy (pictured above) the UK comms channel has reached a critical moment that demands a positive response, and he believes that it's more important than ever for resellers to proactively target additional revenue streams, or risk losing out.

"There's a ticking clock on the traditional comms market and channel partners who ignore this evolution risk being

left behind," warned Murphy. "It's important for partners to get into new markets."

He says the industry has fully entered into an era of transition and the requirement to develop portfolio propositions dominated Gamma's partner conference last month (October 10th, QEII Centre, London), where the move to UCaaS was emphasised as a key way forward for resellers.

"There are six million UCaaS seats still up for grabs

in the UK market," commented Murphy. "This isn't just about upgrading technology, UCaaS offers flexibility, full integration and scalability – and it's about embracing the evolving collaboration landscape."

"Partners need to push the SIP to UCaaS transition. Sticking just to what you know for too long and not adapting to the evolving market could result in a lost foothold."

**See pages 22-24 for the full Gamma conference report.**

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## Welcome comment



Stuart Gilroy

ANALYST firms like Gartner (see opposite) spend much of their time assessing market trends and predicting IT spending patterns and the levels of investment organisations are likely to plough into their technology purchases, and when. That's quite something

isn't it. And naturally, business leaders put a lot of stock in the strength of these forecasts as they plan for the future.

But Gartner's latest predictions for GenAI as a major driver of imminent investment by CIOs in 2025 appears to be double sided, because the think tank also deduces that GenAI likely won't live up to expectations and end user organisations in the main won't be quite ready for it next year. In other words, the predicted boom in spending on GenAI will be largely driven by an overestimation of its current efficacy.

So where does that leave channel business leaders in terms of their thinking and planning around GenAI? Probably a little confused like me. A solid prediction about what happens next would be very useful for channel players in need of actionable strategic guidance. But let's be positive because we've been told for a long time now that GenAI will be the next big thing. Just like we were told that UC would be the next big thing when it emerged millions of years ago – but still the UC and UCaaS opportunity is being missed by so many in the channel.

Cutting through the hype and striking a balance between current and future opportunities with a grounded strategy has to be the order of the day – with perhaps a stronger emphasis on existing underserved markets like the shift to UCaaS. In fact, targeting the premium UC and UCaaS opportunity was a strong theme at Gamma's Gammaverse partner event last month – see pages 22-24 for the full report.

Stuart Gilroy, Editor

To keep up to date with the latest channel news, as it happens, visit [www.comms-dealer.com](http://www.comms-dealer.com) daily

# Big spike in IT spending



Gartner points up big increases in IT investments

DEMAND for GenAI is set to boost global IT spending by 9.3% next year (to \$5.74 trillion), claims Gartner.

Its analysts predict that server sales will also be a major growth driver along with software and IT services.

"Current spending on GenAI has been predominantly from technology companies building the supply-side infrastructure," commented John-David Lovelock, VP Analyst at Gartner. "CIOs will begin to spend on GenAI, beyond proof-of-concept work, starting in 2025."

It follows that GenAI could become a priority area for the comms and IT channel next year, but Lovelock also cau-

tioned that its potential may be overestimated and that demand might weaken due to certain limitations.

"More money will be spent but the expectations that CIOs have for the capabilities of GenAI will drop," he added. "The reality of what can be accomplished with current GenAI models, and the state of CIOs' data, will not meet today's lofty expectations."

More certain, it seems, is Gartner's predictions for spending on software which is expected to increase 14% to \$1.23 billion in 2025, up from 11.7% growth this year. IT services is tipped to grow 9.4% to \$1.73 billion in 2025, up from 5.6% in 2024.

## Editor's picks

COMMS channel veteran Daron Hutt is said to have netted a circa £100m-plus windfall through the sale of 4Com to Daisy. Hutt founded Bournemouth-based 4Com in 1999. The company grew organically and through acquisitions and according to reports Hutt sealed a £215m sale to Daisy founder Matthew Riley, boosting Daisy's SMB base by around 17,000 businesses to over 200,000 customers.

PRIME Networks has bagged its sixth acquisition since securing a debt funding package with Clydesdale Bank in 2018. The MSP pocketed Tamworth-based Solution Support in a deal that strengthens its service offering and extends its regional presence. Prime Networks Managing Director Mark Simons described the transaction as 'another major milestone in our growth journey'. "Our vision is to build a national MSP catering specifically for SMEs, and our acquisition strategy has enabled us to expand our geographical presence, now covering the midlands, London and the south coast," commented Simons. See page 6

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CXEX transforms the way businesses manage their customer and employee interactions. Traditionally, under 10% of these interactions are reviewed, meaning vast amounts of valuable data are missed. CXEX AutoInsights changes this, using AI-driven voice analytics to automatically assess 100% of interactions, providing businesses with actionable insights that lead to enhanced processes, training, and sales outcomes.

By leveraging advanced AI, CXEX turns massive amounts of voice data into easily accessible and interpretable insights. These insights, displayed through user-friendly dashboards and reports, allow businesses to identify trends, measure performance, and make precision-driven improvements in real time. This leads to optimised customer service and sales functions, benefiting from higher revenue generation and improved win-loss rates. In customer support, CXEX enables higher first contact resolution rates and reduced handling times, ultimately improving customer satisfaction (CSAT) and Net Promoter Scores (NPS).

AutoInsights also places employee experience at the forefront. By identifying areas for training and process improvement, companies gain happier, more engaged employees and lower staff turnover. This improved EX translates into reduced

costs and more efficient operations.

Organizations across industries, including finance, retail, telecoms, utilities, and the public sector, can benefit from the powerful insights generated by CXEX. AutoInsights provides a strong return on investment (ROI) but also ensures businesses meet compliance requirements with proactive risk management tools. The AI-powered solution can detect emotional cues and analyse sentiment, enabling businesses to address customer concerns early or flag potential fraud risks.

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## NEWS ROUNDUP

# Kubus gains £9m funding

## M&A news

**3CX Platinum Partner Grapevine Connect has been snapped up by Gradwell Communications. The Exeter-based reseller was founded in 2016 and is Gradwell's second transaction, building on The Technology Group deal in 2021. Grapevine Connect was an existing partner with Gradwell supporting its customers while the founders established their new venture. Gradwell CEO Jamie Ward stated: "We have admired the business as there is alignment in terms of values, market expertise and 3CX capabilities. This will be the first of several M&A activities for us in the near future."**

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CIRENCESTER-based Kubus is ramping its growth efforts and managed services proposition following a £9 million investment boost from BGF.

Kubus provides IT infrastructure solutions around networking, server, storage and cybersecurity to blue chip businesses and public sector organisations worldwide.

The company was founded in 2003 and in its latest financial year notched up £35 million turnover and £2.6 million EBITDA.

The BGF investment will enable Kubus to support growth through acquisitions, boost its marketing and sales capabilities, bolster its operational infrastructure and explore the viability of new market opportunities and strategic partnerships. Its current technology partners include Juniper Networks, Cisco, Dell, Fortinet and Pentera.

Kubus CEO Andrew Humphrey stated: "This investment will allow us to accelerate our global growth plans, innovate faster and deliver greater value to our customers."

As part of the investment Paul Brennan has been appointed Non-Executive



**Andrew Humphrey**

Chair through BGF's Talent Network. He sat on the board of BGF-backed Amdaris which was acquired by Insight Enterprises (a Fortune 500 business) in August 2023.

## comms dealer

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## Editor's news picks

**CLOUDCOCO'S parent company is to focus on its product reseller business following the expected sale of IT managed services subsidiary CloudCoCo to Aspire Technology Solutions for circa £9.2 million. CloudCoCo group Non-Executive Chairman Simon Duckworth said: "The proposed sale enables us to eliminate long-term debt and focus on expanding our value added reseller operation, particularly in e-commerce, where we see a significant opportunity. Alongside this we are in advanced discussions for the sale of our Connect business to strengthen our financial position and streamline our proposition. While FY24 has presented trading challenges we are confident this strategic shift will secure the group's long-term future."**

**A NEWLY formed trade body working under the Tech Industry Forum (TIF) moniker has acquired the Cloud Industry Forum (CIF) from the Federation Against Software Theft. CIF will operate as the core of the Tech Industry Forum but with a broader agenda to promote the interests of the whole sector. TIF founder and CEO David Terrar said: "We are broadening our remit to include all areas of technology vital for growth in today's economy, from security and AI to cloud and storage. We will continue to serve medium and large companies but also want to support smaller organisations that make up the vast majority of businesses in the UK tech sector. There's a gap and we aim to fill it."**

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## Energy fits the bill for Daisy partners

There must be a sound business reason for a highly successful company in the telecoms sector to start offering energy solutions to its reseller channel.

A case in point is Daisy Partner Business, one of this industry's leading telecoms providers, which remains steadfast in its long-held mission to independently challenge BT in the SMB market.

Director Julien Parven has no doubts that the decision to partner with Fidelity Energy was a good one and the success achieved is testament to that. In the six months that Daisy has actively been offering energy solutions to resellers, it has already generated over £600k in commissionable partner opportunities.

"One of our first opportunities represented £14k in commission via a single partner and another has opened discussions with the world's third largest manufacturer of titanium," enthused Parven. He now considers energy as a core component of DPB's channel offerings, built alongside the first-class end-to-end solutions provided by Fidelity Energy.

"We have had considerable success with onboarding a large volume of wholesalers, dealers or retailers within the telecoms space who have a customer base they can confidently offer energy to. Few were offering energy which, given sustainability considerations, has become a priority for all types of solutions providers.

"For us, this is about introducing new technologies. Our core market is partners operating in the SMB space where customers consume energy and business technologies as well as telecoms services. When you couple this with AI innovations and the move from traditional



Julien Parven - Daisy Partner Business

energy consumption to green energy, there is an absolute synergy to package this solution and take it to market through our partners."

The decision to look at energy harks back to a period when DPB was highly acquisitive, bringing in businesses that enhanced its skill sets in areas such as managed IT and a range of non-telecom services.

"During this period, we decided our ambition was to not only be a telecoms provider but position ourselves as a technology business. When we researched the energy market, Fidelity Energy stood out due to its standing in the telecoms sector and reputation for helping resellers boost revenues and add value through energy.

"There was already a legacy relationship with CEO John Haw, and the ambition and culture of the two organisations were very similar.

"From the outset, we were impressed by Fidelity Energy's commitment to our business. Transacting through their portal is a breeze, and they clearly have the relevant infrastructure to help our partners develop and profit from energy solutions.

"Equally important is support. Fidelity has dedicated team members with the skills to support our partners and help them confidently address larger opportunities and expand their digital transformation journey across telecoms and into energy," concluded Parven.

## BUSINESS INTERVIEW

# Prime time for driving growth

Prime Networks Managing Director Mark Simons described last month's acquisition of Tamworth-based Solution Support as 'another major milestone in our growth journey'. Here, he shares insights into Prime's ongoing development and plans to build a leading national SME-focused MSP.

### When was Prime Networks established?

Prime Networks was founded in 2009 and became part of a reverse takeover of the IT division of Modern Communications in 2013. The business immediately benefited from the enlarged product and service portfolio and experienced a growth spurt through being able to cross-sell IT and telephony to the newly merged client base.

### What have been the main turning points for the business?

Prime grew organically between 2013-2018, creating a client base with a wide range of customers and industry types. In 2019 Prime secured a significant debt funding package to start its buy and build programme which saw us complete our first transaction, Constant IT, which was immediately followed by the acquisitions of Control-Escape, G3 Solutions, Our Tech Team, TNSC and most recently Solution Support. Our acquisition strategy has enabled us to expand our geographical presence,



Mark Simons

### We will progress our buy and build while always pursuing organic growth continues

now covering the midlands, London and the south coast. We will progress our buy and build supported by financing partner Clydesdale, while always pursuing organic growth continues.

### What are your longer-term objectives?

Our long-term strategy is to create a national managed services provider that caters specifically for SMEs, enabling them to benefit from superior products, services and support. Our technology partners include Microsoft, Sophos, N-able,

Datto, Fusemail, Cisco and Unifi. We are engaging with our vendors around the deployment of Microsoft Co-Pilot and see a surge in requirements relating to security services.

### Your biggest career achievement?

Being able to retain clients who started with us in 2009 and who we have grown alongside throughout our business journeys.

### How did you get into the IT sector?

Prior to founding Prime Networks I worked in several sales roles in the property industry. I was always put forward to deal with IT and telecoms contracts and believed that I could create a service provider that solved issues from the customers' viewpoint.

### What are your leadership priorities?

Client satisfaction is at the heart of what we do and a key factor in all decision making at board level. We live and die by our reputation and customer satisfaction and retention are key levers in our business model. ■





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# New targets IT services as

**An ability to flex, optimise vendor partnerships and evolve integrated solutions will ensure a competitive advantage is always within reach, according to F One Technologies co-founder and Sales Director Lee New.**

**N**ew's comms career kicked off in 2005 with Peach Telecom where he spent eight years before deciding to set up his own business alongside co-founders Alex Viola and Adam Monaghan, who also worked for Peach Telecom. They established F One Technologies in 2013 with just £25,000 but plenty of determination to succeed, initially operating out of a spare bedroom in Monaghan's parents' house at Chandler's Ford. "Looking back, it was one of the best decisions we ever made," stated New. "But there were moments when we questioned our sanity."

a great team and shape the company culture we had always envisioned."

More recently, noted New, a significant milestone has been expanding into full WiFi networks and IT services, which build on F One Technologies' portfolio of cloud phone systems, Internet and mobiles. "This has really fuelled our growth and it doesn't look like it's slowing down any time soon," added New. "WiFi 7 is set to be another game changer for us and we're closely monitoring how AI can transform telecoms by enhancing customer service and boosting efficiency."

Securing NEC and Gamma as partners early on was a game changer, noted New. "Knowing us from our time at Peach they waived their usual requirements which was a huge vote of confidence," he added. "Our next office move was to a converted barn on a local farm; and in June 2021 we secured our own office in Southampton. Finally, we had a workspace without chickens wandering in. This gave us the space to build

"But our biggest opportunity right now lies in IT services. We already provide offerings like Office 365 and antivirus software but there's so much more potential to tap into. As IT and telecoms continue to converge we see significant growth opportunities in this integration, allowing us to deliver more innovative and comprehensive solutions."

New's short-term priorities are to focus on ensuring that F One Technologies'



Lee New

**Our capability to offer a package, from telecoms to IT solutions, will keep us ahead of the curve**

core services continue to run smoothly while the business expands its IT offering. "We're aiming to grow IT into a significant part of the business," explained New. "Recruitment is also a key

priority. We need to bring in the right people to help drive us forward. And, of course, keeping our customers happy remains at the heart of everything we do. That's always been our priority."

F One Technologies employs around 30 staff and has circa 1,000 customers, primarily SMEs (mainly 8-10 users), although the company has also successfully ventured into the enterprise space.



# key opportunity

Turnover grew from £2.4 million in 2023 to £3.4 million this financial year, and New expects more growth as the firm expands into new markets. "Based on our current projections we anticipate doubling revenues in the next three years," he added.

## Partnerships

Today, F One Technologies' key vendor partners include Intermedia, Gamma, TP-Link and DrayTek. "But even our smaller partners have a huge role to play in helping us to deliver high quality solutions," stated New. "Looking ahead, we're committed to continuing our work with these partners while also exploring new technologies and solutions. Our approach is straightforward and always about keeping things simple. This also applies to our engagements with end users. Instead of pushing our own ideas we focus on understanding customers' needs and finding the best solutions to meet them."

This means responding to market trends like more people returning to the office post-Covid, observed New. "But remote working remains a significant part of the landscape," he commented. "Businesses still need flexible, cloud-based solutions to stay competitive. We're also witnessing growing demand for IT services as small businesses realise they need more than just a phone system to operate effectively. Our capability to offer a package, from telecoms to IT solutions, will keep us ahead of the curve. Although we're already 10 years into this journey it truly feels like we're only just getting started." ■

## Just a minute with Lee New...

**Role model:** From a business perspective, Richard Branson: I admire his willingness to take risks and push boundaries. On a personal level, Steven Gerrard stands out for his leadership, determination and dedication on and off the pitch.

**Your main strength and what could you work on?** I don't give up on anything until it's done right. However, I could work on letting go of control a bit more.

**Three ideal dinner guests:** Martin Luther King, the Dalai Lama and Rory Bremner.

**If you weren't in ICT what would you be doing?** I'd be a postman. If I ever fall out of love with telecoms and fancy a change, that's always been the job I'd go for.

**Your favourite comedian or comedienne?** Peter Kay. He's an incredible comic and comes across as one of the nicest people on the planet.

**One thing that motivates you?** On my last day at Peach Telecom a colleague said, 'I'll see you back here in a few months'. That's been a huge motivator, driving me to prove anyone who doubted us completely wrong.

**What talent do you wish you had?** To teleport. Just think of the time that would save.

**The biggest risk you have taken:** Going for a second child. I ended up having twins the second time around and now have three girls' weddings to pay for in the future!

**What do you fear most?** Leaving my children behind too soon, which is why I no longer entertain the idea of skydiving.

**Tell us something about yourself we don't know:** I've only ever written one poem, but it did get published. When I was in Year 5 I wrote a piece about Wembley Stadium that appeared in a book of poems by schoolchildren from across the country.

**Your biggest career achievement:** Reaching our 10 year milestone. In a highly competitive and saturated industry like ours, this is no small feat.

**What couldn't you do without in your job?** My business partners Alex and Adam. We have complementary strengths and weaknesses and decision making is easy: If two of us agree on something, it's a decision made.

**One example of something you have overcome:** The biggest hurdle was starting F One Technologies. We left behind secure jobs and took a leap into the unknown with no guarantees.

**How do you relax?** Walking our Labrador, enjoying a few pints at the local pub, watching obscure documentaries on just about any subject, and mixing in a bit of tennis and five-a-side football.

**Top tip for resellers:** Build strong relationships. Whether it's with customers or suppliers, those relationships will be your safety net when times are tough, and your springboard when things are going well.

**If you were to write a book what would it be about?** I'm fascinated by comedy shows like The Office, Early Doors and The Royle Family, how they turn ordinary settings into something timeless. I'd try to capture that same brilliant humour, with relatable characters and those awkward moments that make us laugh because we've all been there.

**What are you most looking forward to?** Retirement. I dream of living in the middle of nowhere surrounded by fields and sheep, where no one can bother me.

# One Touch Switching (OTS) legislation – how can telecoms avoid penalties and fines?

In today's telecoms industry, regulatory compliance is a critical priority. Failure to comply with stringent regulations means telecom providers can be hit with costly penalties.

One Touch Switching (OTS) legislation simplifies the process for customers switching line and broadband providers, placing new demands on telecom business management systems. Anvil's contract management software meets this need. Under OTS, providers must inform customers about their current package, contract length, termination fees, and effects on related services before switching. Failure to provide accurate information can lead to compliance breaches, operational risks, significant fines, and reputational damage.

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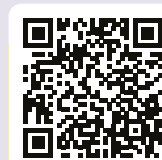
switching. Anvil's automated alerts provide timely, accurate updates, reducing delays and errors that could lead to non-compliance. This transparency builds customer trust.

**Simplified Contract Termination:** Managing cancellations, especially under OTS, is streamlined. Anvil's workflows guide customers with clear instructions and provide compliant documentation, simplifying the process for both providers and customers.

Designed with telecom providers in mind, Anvil's solutions simplify compliance while enhancing efficiency. By automating processes like contract notifications, renewals, and cancellations, Anvil enables providers to focus on service delivery while staying compliant with OTS and other regulations.

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# Positive change urged

**Node4 Channel Director Ashley Butcher spotlights the huge potential of new channel ecosystems to tackle business and societal challenges, and why the comms industry is innately capable of driving positive change fuelled by optimism, agility, innovation and collaboration.**



Ashley Butcher

have varying degrees of understanding around the issues and market trends that are reshaping ICT buying preferences. "Some resellers are well-informed and ahead of the curve, while others are lagging behind and struggling to keep up," he added. "Resellers need to invest more time and effort in researching and analysing the market, listening to their customers and anticipating their needs. MSPs with deeper customer relationships are generally selling more value added services."

These top performing MSPs have realised their potential to meet the changing expectations of their customers by addressing big issues such as closing the skills gap and becoming more diverse and inclusive, believes Butcher. "The channel is facing a challenge in finding, attracting and retaining the right talent, especially in the areas of cloud, security, IoT, AI and digital transformation," he stated. "The channel is also lacking diversity and inclusion which limits its ability to innovate, compete and grow."

"Addressing these issues means collaborating with the right channel providers and investing more in training, development and certification, creating a more inclusive and engaging culture, and promoting more diversity and representation in the channel." ■

**W**orking together to drive mutual success has long been the channel's modus operandi – but the collaboration agenda is fast expanding into a bigger dimension with the channel's future success likely hinging on the creation of new, multifaceted ecosystems, according to Butcher. "Given the requirement to link Net Zero planning with the supply chain, and that the ICT market is growing in complexity, the channel needs new ecosystems," he stated. "These should be more diverse, inclusive and sustainable. They should involve traditional channel players and new actors like start-ups, social enterprises, NGOs and academia. They should align goals and values with the ESG agenda and be committed to reducing carbon footprints, improving social impact and enhancing governance practices."

On the question of whether channel firms are capable

of meeting these objectives, the outlook is positive, believes Butcher. "The resilience, creativity and agility of channel businesses is a positive success factor," he added. "Despite the challenges caused by the pandemic the channel has shown its ability to adapt, innovate and support customers and communities. I am also seeing a lot of collaboration and co-creation in the channel with businesses working together to solve problems, create value and deliver outcomes. And there is enthusiasm and optimism in the channel. For example, the recent surge in investment from private equity companies."

Technology procurement trends are also driving change, shifting from traditional hardware and software sales to more value added services such as cloud, security, IoT, AI and digital transformation. "These services require channel firms to invest in new skills, capabilities and

partnerships, as well as to adopt a more consultative and customer-centric approach," added Butcher. "Resellers and MSPs could do more to embrace industry change by adopting a growth mindset, being proactive and agile, and constantly

## The channel needs more diverse, inclusive and sustainable ecosystems

learning and innovating. They could also leverage the resources of partners who can provide access to new technologies, solutions and markets. Resellers could explore additional revenue streams by expanding their portfolio, targeting new segments and creating new business models."

The implications of these changes involve both opportunities and challenges for channel businesses, observed Butcher. "Some of the barriers to positive change are inertia,

complacency and resistance to change," he noted. "Channel businesses may be reluctant to move out of their comfort zone or are afraid of losing their existing revenue streams. They may also lack the vision, strategy or resources

to transform. The channel needs to embrace change as an opportunity, not a threat. Resellers and MSPs need to be willing to experiment, learn and fail fast."

According to Butcher's observations, resellers

## Butcher's four steps to growth readiness

1. Understand customer needs, challenges and goals, and deliver solutions that meet or exceed their expectations.
2. Embrace change: Be open to new technologies, solutions and markets, and be ready to adapt and evolve.
3. Create new value propositions, business models and revenue streams, and differentiate from the competition.
4. Build strong relationships with vendors, distributors and peers.

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# Closing the green gap

**Preparing the channel to take full advantage of the industry-wide sustainability opportunity is a top priority for Nimans, says Marketing Director Stephen McIntyre. Here, he provides a progress report on the distributor's Net Zero strategies and calls on the industry to close the green gap between larger and smaller resellers through a tailored collaboration approach.**



notable accomplishment, it's important to note that this is part of a broader sustainability strategy. We have already moved to 100 per cent renewable electricity sourcing, and 100 per cent of our general and plastic waste is converted to energy, while 100 per cent of our cardboard is recycled into more cardboard.

### **What are the main challenges you face when implementing green strategies?**

We recognise the challenge posed by our current hybrid working model with staff typically now in the office three days a week. As people gradually return to the office more frequently we're strategically timing this rollout to align with increased on-site presence. This approach not only advances our sustainability objectives but also adapts to evolving work patterns, ensuring maximum impact and utilisation of the EV charging facilities as office attendance grows.

### **What other initiatives is Nimans introducing to progress its green agenda?**

To advance our Net Zero strategy and continue minimising CO2 output we are planning to install StEve electric vehicle chargers in our car park. This initiative aims to encourage the adoption of electric vehicles, reduce emissions associated with commuting and business travel, and demonstrates our commitment to our One Plan Sustainability Programme. By providing convenient charging facilities, we're not only supporting our employees in making greener choices but also extending our environmental responsibility to our visitors. ■

### **In your experience, is the reseller channel more receptive to the sustainability agenda compared to a year ago?**

The channel's awareness of sustainability has grown, particularly among larger resellers, and mainly driven by customer demands with sustainability becoming a crucial factor in large tenders. However, larger resellers often have more resources to implement sustainability initiatives, whereas smaller ones may face different pressures and priorities with fewer resources. This challenge can be addressed through education and support in implementing sustainable practices, and there is potential for industry players like Nimans to lead by example. Our goal is to bridge the gap between larger and smaller resellers in sustainability awareness and implementation.

Therefore we are adapting our approach to meet the diverse needs of our reseller network, regardless of business size or resources.

### **Where is Nimans on its Scope 3 journey and how are you helping partners to move forward with their own Net Zero goals?**

Nimans' One Plan Sustainability Programme has made great strides and we are progressing our Scope 3 emissions journey by engaging with suppliers to prioritise the sustainability aspects of their products. Nimans is also fostering collaboration across the supply chain, encouraging partners to adopt sustainability frameworks and focus on greener practices through shared commitments to global sustainability objectives. Additionally, we are encouraging suppliers and customers to become, like

Nimans, signatories of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We have also participated in our customers' CO2 accounting on the various platforms that they have requested. This is made easier by our completion of CO2 accounting for 2022 and 2023 giving us the level of granular detail required for these submissions. This work has been completed and audited by The Climate Partners, a third party company to ensure accuracy and efficacy.

### **What gains has Nimans made across Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions?**

A major highlight has been the transition of all gas supply to RGGO (Renewable Gas Guarantees of Origin) certified gas. This strategic shift has eliminated a substantial contributor to

## **Our goal is to bridge the gap between larger and smaller resellers in sustainability awareness**

our CO2 output, marking a milestone achievement in our overall Net Zero journey. By choosing this renewable energy source we've substantially reduced our greenhouse gas emissions associated with heating and other gas-dependent operations. This change alone has propelled us significantly closer to our Net Zero targets.

While the switch to RGGO-certified gas is our most



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## November Channel Forecast Session: Getting fit for a Net Zero future

Committing to Net Zero is a big but necessary step for channel firms, especially as transparency on green strategies becomes a growing requirement for business partners as well as end users. In this Channel Forecast insight session, channel leaders assess where the industry

sits in terms of the journey to Net Zero, and they open the window on their sustainability progress, success factors and best practices, providing food for thought and action points that could accelerate sustainability practices across the wider channel as well as your own business.

### Join the debate!

To participate in this Channel Forecast session, contact **Heather Miles** on **07955 313 700** or [hmiles@bpl-business.com](mailto:hmiles@bpl-business.com) for full details.

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# Tackling the Scope 3 emis

The comms channel is getting to grips with sustainability governance as new Net Zero frameworks take shape and supply chain companies come under greater pressure to take positive actions on Scope 3 emissions.

Companies yet to take action on Net Zero priorities are coming under greater scrutiny from all corners of the channel ecosystem as demand grows for improved and transparent ESG reporting standards. This imperative is reflected in research by Colt Technology Services which questioned 1,500 IT leaders for its upcoming Digital Infrastructure Report, in which 69 per cent said that data for Scope 3 emission reporting was the most important factor when choosing a digital infrastructure partner. "Sixty two per cent would actually suggest that a supplier reviews its environmental goals if they did not align with their own," stated Caroline Griffin Pain, Chief Legal Officer, Colt Technology Services. "As an industry we're recognising the responsibility we have and the opportunity to make a difference."

For many companies, Scope 3 accounts for approximately 75 per cent of overall greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (depending on the industry), but just four in ten businesses are reporting on one or more Scope 3 categories, according to Griffin Pain. Without this data, organisations are not showing the full picture of their environmental impact. But despite this challenge Griffin Pain says Colt is making good progress



Caroline Griffin Pain

## As an industry we're recognising the responsibility we have and the opportunity to make a difference

towards its Scope 3 approved science-based targets and has so far achieved a 32 per cent reduction against its 2019 baseline. "Nearly 90 per cent of Colt's suppliers have signed our supplier code of business conduct, and 40 per cent of our Scope 3 emissions are with suppliers that have already set a science-based target," stated Griffin Pain.

### Embedding values

She explained that Colt has a 'sustainable by design' strategy that embeds environmental values and goals across the entire value chain. In recognition of its efforts Colt has secured the highest EcoVadis rating for the second consecutive year and received A- and A CDP

(Carbon Disclosure Project) ratings for sustainability and supplier engagement. New partnerships also form a key part of Colt's green strategy. The company is taking part in the UN Global Compact voluntary initiative (based on CEO commitments) to implement universal sustainability principles and support UN goals. And Colt is involved in a Scope 3 emissions workstream through the Global Enabling Sustainability Initiative.

PlatformX Communications (PXC) has also set science-based targets and Will Ennett, PXC's Head of Sustainability & ESG, is getting to grips with the challenge of attaining data

around emissions, particularly from suppliers who represent over 80 per cent of PXC's carbon footprint. "We've set a climate change measure around engaging with suppliers linked to our company bonus," stated Ennett. "Each part of the business has an assigned lead who engage with all suppliers individually to understand their challenges when it comes to operating more sustainably. We then work with them to find ways to set credible carbon reduction goals. By the end of the financial year over 85 per cent of suppliers by spend had set credible goals."

PXC has cut its operational emissions by 58 per cent compared to FY20 and is aiming for a 93.5 per cent reduction by FY30. "As part of this drive we've switched our supply to renewable electricity," explained Ennett. "We've also reduced the energy consumption in our data centres by 18 per cent in four years. We will continue to remove gas from our data centres and complete the switch from diesel to vegetable oils as backup generator fuel soon, in addition to advancing the decarbonisation of our fleets."

In June this year PXC took part in an in-person event convened by Ofcom and agreed a set of priorities for sustainability goals. "These aren't yet public," stated Ennett. "However, I can

say that we have exciting initiatives coming that should have a big impact on both our own and the sector's footprint. A challenge we're trying to overcome is making sure there are common ways of calculating carbon footprints. It's in our interest to work together with competitors on this."

### Reseller engagement

PXC is also heavily engaged with its reseller community around sustainability. "At our FutureConnect event we had good feedback from the sustainability session with reseller partners keen to progress in this area," added Ennett. "We've also hosted regular monthly events and experienced more engagement. However, we would like to see the majority of resellers setting Net Zero targets and putting plans in place to reduce their emissions."

PXC also takes part in the Digital Connectivity Forum working group on sustainability and through the group works with the Government on a dedicated website that helps SMEs to reach Net Zero. PXC co-wrote the standard for IT and telecoms firms on this site which links to free tools that can help organisations calculate their carbon footprint.

For its part, BT aims to be a Net Zero business by 2041 across all GHG emissions, with a near-term target for

# mission challenge

## Tackling the Digital Divide



Will Ennett

### A challenge we're trying to overcome is making sure there are common ways of calculating carbon footprints

Scope 1 and 2 emissions of 2031. "Our Scope 3 emissions account for the vast majority of our overall emissions," stated Sarwar Khan, Sustainability Director, BT Wholesale. "It's crucial that CP's understand it's not just their own activity that determines their sustainability position, they also need oversight of their entire supply chain. Channel companies need to set goals with their supply chain providers. For example, BT expects its major suppliers to have sustainability targets in place within six months of working with us."

#### Driving efficiencies

To reduce emissions in its own operations BT is using renewable electricity, transitioning its vehicle fleet to electric models, and driving efficiencies across its networks and building estate. Khan reports good progress on all fronts. "We've cut the carbon intensity of

and customers. Our real-time energy and carbon dashboards, digital carbon calculator and sustainable network refresh have enabled partners to take control of their sustainability journeys and move forward with their own Net Zero goals. Through our product and services we've helped customers to avoid 3.8 million tonnes of carbon since 2021."

According to research by BT Wholesale, sustainability is now seen as a priority by 40 per cent of resellers and a third of channel customers. "There's still a significant number of businesses that don't have sustainability at the top of their agenda, so education is vital," added Khan. "Consumers are demanding more sustainable solutions and products and channel companies that fail to deliver will lose out on bids to competitors who prioritise greener strategies. A challenge for channel partners is knowing where to start, so vendors must make sustainability more attainable for all."

these emissions by 61 per cent against our 2017 base line," he stated. "We also disclose our sustainability data on an annual basis into CDP (A-rated eight years in a row) and EcoVadis (rated as Advanced) bringing transparency to our partners



Sarwar Khan

### A challenge for channel partners is knowing where to start, so vendors must make sustainability more attainable for all

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Damian Saunders, Managing Director; Sky Business Hospitality, Mid-Market & Wholesale

In the UK, 1.7 million households have no mobile or broadband internet at home – risking digital exclusion. For young people, this can mean a lack of access to education and learning tools, social connections, and other essential skills such as online banking. Sports spaces – such as local community sports clubs, stadiums and training centres – have long been at the centre of bringing people and entire communities together. With these spaces being crucial to bridging gaps between people, access to reliable internet is essential in fostering inclusivity, strengthening bonds – ultimately driving both social and economic progress. They serve as a vital tool for individuals to connect, share resources, and participate actively in their communities.

At Sky Business we are committed to helping to advance digital equity, through Sky's social impact programme Sky Up, which is dedicated to supporting individuals who are the most at risk of digital exclusion. Our Sky Up Hubs aim to create spaces that provide people with access to reliable internet connections, alongside tech equipment and digital training. So far, 70 Hubs have been opened, with over 7,000 devices using free connectivity, powered by Sky Business.

In September 2024, Sky Up launched a flagship Hub at The Brick Community Stadium in Wigan – the first hub established within a stadium. With internet access provided by Sky Business, this Hub serves as a vital community space, where individuals can study, access online resources and essential services and stay connected.

More recently, Sky Business partnered with Wifinity to launch a new connectivity service at Stebonheath Park Stadium in South Wales. This initiative offers free, high-speed public Wi-Fi to fans, and sponsors, significantly enhancing community access to essential online resources. The partnership ensures that everyone has the opportunity to benefit from the digital landscape.

By equipping key community spaces with reliable connectivity, Sky Business helps to give people from all walks of life access to resources to help equip them with new skills and stay connected to one another. As communities evolve, initiatives like these serve as a reminder of the importance of digital access and the positive impact it can have on people's lives, promoting greater participation and collaboration.

For more information go to: <https://www.skyup.sky/digital-hubs>



# Vaish doubles down on e

**Vaioni Group Managing Director Sachin Vaish continues to drive the expansion of his business model and proposition, pursuing an integrated technology and agile go-to-market approach supported by the right people.**

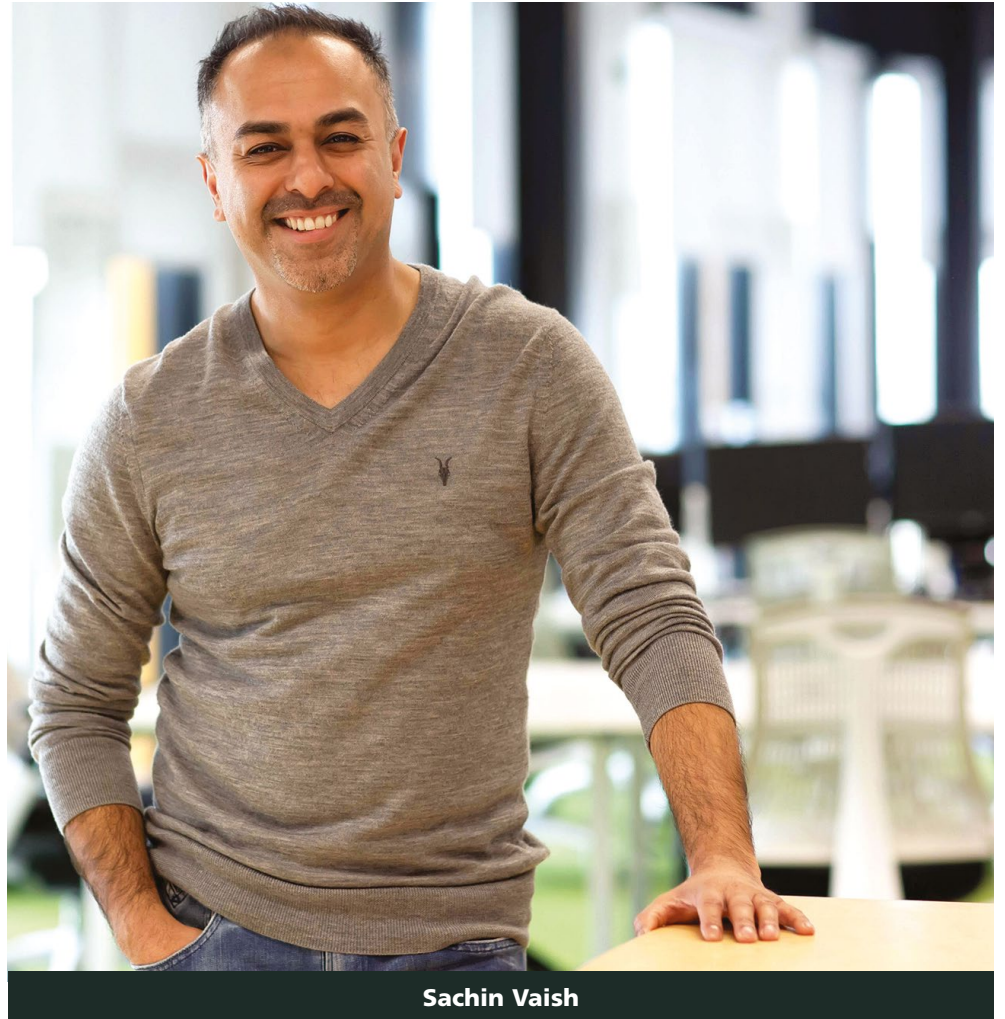
**V**aish has always displayed a knack for locking into important market developments and reorienting the business for an advantage. This was particularly evident when he transitioned his company from an early IT focus towards connectivity. And he continues to adapt, strategise and fine tune, doubling down on SD-WAN, aggregating altnets and cybersecurity opportunities, for example. Furthermore, Vaish's technology and people priorities are strategically interconnected and both are key to the success of Vaioni's business model.

But achieving this balance remains a challenge because smart recruitment isn't just about finding people with the right skills – their ability to thrive in certain fields of operation is also critical, observed Vaish. "Hiring people who truly understand how to operate in a smaller environment is crucial," he stated. "Many have failed in our company because they don't

understand how a smaller organisation operates and just don't get the business."

According to Vaish, 2023 was a transformational year for Vaioni in terms of expanding the product and service portfolios for channel partners. Last year also showed that growth remains steady, currently sitting at circa £9 million revenue with 35 members of staff. "Our sales grew 30 per cent from last year and we've embedded ourselves into some brilliant businesses, large and small," added Vaish. "Our greatest success is still in the connectivity space, mainly around 1Gb-10Gb services, but also critical connectivity which is what we are known for. Our SD-WAN proposition has been especially successful, offering a full turnkey solution with hand-holding and support from the outset. This helps partners to navigate their way through a complex technology."

Vaish remains confident in his ability to identify and maximise market



Sachin Vaish

**As with most smaller businesses especially, speed of execution is one of the most important skills to have in the organisation**

opportunities and to prove the point he is also shifting his strategic focus and attention to the altnet landscape. "There are over 40 altnets and most of them are not well known or utilised," he added. "We see a great opportunity in leveraging some of the altnets' infrastructure to deliver faster, better and cheaper connectivity, so we are in the middle of building a major FTTP (Ethernet will be included) network, aggregating all the major networks into our automated VCeX platform (Vaioni

Connectivity Exchange). For the channel this means a single platform for all altnet connectivity procurement."

**Service approach**

Vaioni was originally created on the back of a fibre carrier market where NTL, Telewest, Cable&Wireless, Neos, Fibrenet, BT and Opal Telecom dominated with broadband and Ethernet services. "We decided to aggregate these carriers and provide a service wrap," stated Vaish. "Today, Vaioni specialises in everything connectivity with 10-plus

carriers/operators in the UK, seven technologies including satellite and FTTP, along with unified communications, contact centre and cybersecurity – including EPP, MDR, vulnerability scanning and a Pen Testing as a Service – all supporting critical applications and infrastructure for some of the most forward thinking businesses in the world."

Therefore it is no surprise that Vaish has a heightened focus on the agile delivery of these products and services and sees execution as a critical



# expansion plans

priority. "Like many other leaders in smaller businesses especially, speed of execution is arguably one of the most important skills to have in the organisation," he stated. "If you can do something faster and more efficiently than the competition you always have a head start. People, service and speed is what I continue to prioritise and push."

Vaish's character and personal experiences are also valuable assets when undergoing business model change and long-term strategic planning. He brings a go-getter energy to the table that was clear to see when he put his rent money towards a computer and formed an IT company at the age of 20. "Vaioni started from a back bedroom as an IT business which quickly turned into a connectivity specialist at a time when Ethernet became the new kid on the block, besides copper broadband," stated Vaish. "A big moment was hitting £1 million in revenue. Another turning point was in 2013 when we decided to borrow money for the first time. The financial governance was incredible and we knew we'd built a sound and credible business."

Vaish noted that the company's long-term strategy is based on the values and goals associated with four 'pillars' – EBITDA growth, business transformation, a people first and 'love our customer approach'. "These won't change for some time, but the focus areas within them can evolve," said Vaish. "Our proposition remains connectivity-led and we help partners solve the challenges a business typically faces with their connectivity, voice and cyber, bringing it all into a single managed service." ■

## Just a minute with Sachin Vaish...

**Role models:** My parents. My dad is hard working, honest and a family man. My mum is soft and nurturing and supportive of my dad. I'd like to think I have a little bit of both.

**Your main strength and what could you work on?** My strengths are tenacity, creativity and curiosity; but I could work on my patience, relationships and worrying less about what others think.

**Three ideal dinner guests:** Robert De Niro, he's an ace actor; Steve Jobs because he revolutionised how we communicate and was incredibly creative; and Hitler to try and understand how someone can hate people so much.

**If you weren't in ICT what would you be doing?** I'd be a food critic. I love food and restaurants.

**Your favourite comedian or comedienne?** Lee Evans: His persona, voice, jokes and how he'd sweat buckets was too funny.

**One thing that motivates you?** Fear of failure.

**What talent do you wish you had?** An ability to learn something in a short space of time.

**The biggest risk you have taken:** Starting a business when I had nothing. But you could argue that I had nothing to risk.

**Tell us something about yourself we don't know:** I once saved a man's life from a burning car.

**Your biggest career achievement:** What we have created at Vaioni. It's an incredible business with some amazing people working in it. Business leaders rarely take a step back to appreciate what has been created and achieved – from time to time we should do this.

**What couldn't you do without in your job?** Resilience.

**One example of something you have overcome:** Fear and anxiety. No matter who you are and what you do, we all experience one or both. In business I experienced both many times and had to pull myself together.

**In hindsight:** I'd have spent more time working for someone else. That would have accelerated my experience rather than learn lessons the hard way when I started my own business.

**How do you relax?** Family, films and cooking. The latter allows me to remain creative but in my own little space.

**Best piece of advice you've had:** Get a good accountant.

**Top tip for resellers:** Don't compromise on the connectivity.

## Editor's comment...



**IN THIS** interview Vaioni Group Managing Director Sachin Vaish shows great awareness of strategic agility as being a competitive advantage. But while a Comms Dealer survey of channel leaders shows that agility is valued by most respondents, with nearly all acknowledging that the need to act quickly and decisively is more important than ever before, few have made the link between smarter recruitment and agility. Download the free Leadership report here: <https://www.comms-dealer.com/whitepaper/gain-advantage-through-leadership>

# PXC

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# Meet a man guided by strategy

**You can't put a price on the increasing value of long-term and collaborative vendor partnerships underpinned by a knack for strategic foresight, according to Future Voice Director Tom Shirley.**

**What got you into ICT?**  
As a teenager I knew I wanted

to run my own business, and I also knew I needed the right experience before going it alone. Acting on this combination of foresight and strategy I started in kitchen sales and with my first win under my belt promised myself I would never go more than 24 hours without a sale, and kept it. I moved to B2B telecoms in a telesales role and later into field sales for a couple of resellers before being headhunted by Central Telecom. Not long into the job I decided to set up Future Voice from a spare bedroom in January 2005. After the first 18 months and with six staff we moved to a standalone office. Future Voice felt established and I knew I'd made the right choice to be my own boss.

**Which markets do you focus on?**

Future Voice has a strong track record in the education sector. Charities, NGOs and other public sector verticals like healthcare have also become high growth areas. Our experience in education

helps us to extend further and make a big impact in budget conscious operations.

**Is Future Voice in growth mode?**

Twenty years since being established Future Voice is still growing and our customers include big high street names like Purple Bricks, Triton Showers, Bravissimo and Blackburn Rovers. They show that we can compete against the big guys and beat them even when some may, incorrectly, see us as the underdogs.

**What impact did Covid-19 have on the business?**

Since the pandemic our turnover has risen circa 30-35 per cent even through the transition from standalone purchases to SaaS. With a consistent, reliable MRR and SPIFFs in place, Future Voice has established the foundations for effortless growth in the future, as long as we continue down the path we're already on. We're making sure Future Voice continues to work with the right vendors to deliver the best experience for our customers, while keeping the business agile with a



Tom Shirley

## Future Voice has established the foundations for effortless growth in the future, as long as we continue down the path we're already on

range of solutions so we can remain vendor agnostic.

**How has your gift for strategic foresight played into your growth?**

We saw the move to the cloud and UC way before Covid. While many perceived the proposition as a luxury solution, we understood the business benefits and quickly pivoted the company. Having gone through that learning curve years before we were in the perfect position to help businesses react when

the lockdown prompted so many companies to panic. We're acting early on AI too. It's on everyone's radar so we'd be missing a trick if we weren't investing time and resources into finding intelligent methods and platforms to integrate AI seamlessly, so that customers can link everything to everything else and enjoy the benefits of de-silo'd systems and information. But our immediate priorities are future proofing customers for PSTN and working with

them to continually evolve and optimise their solutions.

**How are you leveraging vendor partnerships for a competitive advantage?**

As long as we continue to put trust in our vendors to deliver the technology businesses need, and we remain laser focused on the customer experience, we'll push further into enterprise level customers, as we're already doing, and expand our specialisms in the education, public sector and



# Strategic foresight

not-for-profit industries into new areas. We've already started working more closely with our vendors to target enterprise customers and smaller operations with larger capital, for example VC firms that demand the highest levels of product functionality, reliability, usability and support. Through making the vendor and customer relationship simple and enjoyable for both parties we will continue on the trajectory we're on, disrupting more established brands and giving them a run for their money.

## What's the key to providing a sublime customer experience?

People don't remember what they spent on a phone system, they remember the experience. So Future Voice aims to be the best possible go between for vendors and customers. The vendors will take care of the tech, and we take care of our customers, consulting from a neutral perspective to ensure both parties have all the information they need while we design, deploy and continue to support services that deliver an unbeatable experience.

## Your role model:

Unai Emery, Aston Villa's manager. He pulled the team out of relegation by just goal difference to Champions League football within two years. His never give up spirit and positivity is something I try and mirror every day.

## What talent do you wish you had?

To cook. I may be great at BBQ, but I could be better in the kitchen.

## Industry bugbear:

As with any industry, there are always big egos and a

Wolf of Wall Street mentality within some people and cultures. I would get rid of that, and the desire to close deals at any cost.

## What could you not do without in your job?

Mark Darby and Justin Goodchild have brought a phenomenal level of engineering and sales expertise respectively. Without them, Future Voice wouldn't be where it is today.

## What do you fear the most?

Not living up to expectations.

## Tell us something about yourself we don't know:

I'm a martial arts instructor.

## What do you want Future Voice to be known for?

As the best Zoom delivery partner in the channel.

## Three ideal dinner guests:

George Washington, JFK and Margaret Thatcher: I'd be interested to see what they think about the current state of politics and the world.

## What are your main strengths and what could you improve on?

My strong point is determination, being moral driven and

devoted to my family. My weaknesses are chocolate and not turning off.

## Your favourite comedian or comedienne?

Jimmy Carr: I make an effort to see a handful of comedians every year but I keep on coming back to Jimmy because he's consistently the funniest.

## Best piece of advice you have been given?

Focus on what you can control and let go of what you can't.

## The biggest risk you have taken?

Setting up Future Voice at the age of 24. I believed in myself and was a sponge for six years, learning everything I could. It was the best decision I ever made.

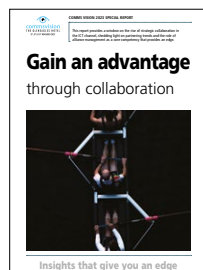
## How do you relax?

Spending time with my family, playing squash, martial arts training and BBQs. I recently got my own meat smoker and am experimenting as much as I can to perfect various different cuts and proteins.

## Top tip:

If you look after your people and teams they will look after your customers. ■

## Editor's comment...



**IN THIS interview Future Voice Director Tom Shirley underscores how the complexity of today's business technology environment is placing a strategic premium on a company's ability to collaborate closely with vendor partners and react in agile ways to a transforming comms market. But in a survey of channel business leaders conducted by Comms Dealer two thirds of respondents said**

**upstream suppliers in general do not collaborate enough with partners. To find out how to close this gap download the free Industry Collaboration report here: <https://www.comms-dealer.com/whitepaper/gain-advantage-through-collaboration>**

# PXC

## PXC's three-pronged partner programme

PXC's Partner Programme has been operating for around a year and a half, offering resellers the inside track to success. Here, CSO Paul Smith discusses the three core pillars of the programme helping partners realise their growth potential.



Paul Smith

### Commercial

"We offer partners a range of incentives and rebates which are incredibly meaningful as they aim to grow," said Smith. PXC's incentives are based on involvement in various aspects of the partner programme such as the training functions and variety of products taken. "Partners can use these incentives to unlock rewards and take their teams to participate in an experience, which is really good for the relationship," added Smith.

PXC also offers a percentage rebate on spend as partners grow through the programme. "If you look at Gradwell Communications, they are a great example," added Smith. "For each of the quarterly phases they have been a partner for, Gradwell Communications has managed to get a rebate back as part of their growth journey."

### Innovation

PXC invites its partners to regular sessions to gain insights on some of the new products, services and portal developments it is working on to help them

stay ahead of the game. "This is crucial to us as it creates a dialogue around new developments, and we can gain instant feedback alongside providing more bespoke educational pieces," said Smith. PXC hosted its first event exclusive for Partner Programme members before its Future Connect event this year and will be running a second session at Comms Vision.

### Growth acceleration

"A lot of the partners we work with range in size," said Smith. "Some are global carriers that are vastly bigger than us, and some are relatively small." PXC recognises the differing needs of organisations of differing scale and works to give smaller organisations more in-depth help in terms of marketing collateral, training programmes, informative webinars and white papers. "That helps some of our smaller partners tap into some of our activities and ideas, as opposed to reinventing the wheel themselves, and hopefully that works to accelerate their growth," finished Smith.



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# Unified voice key to driving

**D&I thought leaders speaking at last month's Comms Dealer Channel Forecast insight session have called for an industry-wide collaborative and unified approach towards accelerating the women in technology agenda.**

**A**ccording to Zest4 CEO Mandy Fazelynia the time has come for a more collaborative and cross-industry approach to increasing the number of women in tech. "Every individual and every business has their own ideas, but we need to pull together to bring positive change," she said. "A centralised group all pulling in the same direction is going to be more effective than individual efforts."



**Mandy Fazelynia**

## We need a more joined up approach to how we promote technology as a career path for women

Zest4 is broadcasting this message through a women in technology initiative. Wildix is also driving the women in tech agenda having hosted a networking event – and the company has a blog to showcase female role models in the industry. Kellie Barrett, Office Manager and HR Admin Assistant at Wildix, commented: "We know the importance of creating more visibility and networking opportunities for women in technology and the broader industry. More discussions between organisations needs to be happening."

Aphra Brooks-Barnes, CPO at PXC, highlighted that (in the main) efforts to promote women in technology have generally been female-led. She stressed the importance of bringing more male advocates into the discussion. "As a sector, we need to understand that if the conversation about driving the women in tech agenda is being

vocalised predominantly by women, then there is still a lot of work to be done to drive change," stated Brooks-Barnes. "PXC's Women in Tech network has an executive sponsor, Dan Richardson, a strong male ally for women in the world of technology who is helping to support and raise awareness around the work we're doing."

It is also important for the industry to collaborate with those outside of the technology sector, specifically at a grassroots level, believes Fazelynia. "We need a more joined up approach to how we promote technology as a career path for women,"

she added. "We need to collectively ask how we can promote technology in the education sector and how we can get schools and colleges more involved. This will help us to attract more female applicants."

### Recruitment matters

The recruitment process is an area that all panellists are working on to increase inclusivity and promote more diverse candidate pools. Lauren Knight, Senior Account Director at Vorboss, shed light on how the current situation can dissuade women. She said: "In a highly technical sector, job adverts often make it seem as though they are

searching for someone who knows absolutely everything from the get-go, which is more likely to put off female applicants than male ones. When recruiting we advertise that certain skill sets or levels of experience aren't necessarily required. We also advertise the robust training that we offer to get new employees up to speed."

As a company rolling out a fibre network across London, Vorboss hires for install tech roles that are typically seen as male dominated. By altering its recruitment strategies Vorboss has achieved a balance of one third females in its install tech team and is aiming for 50 per cent by 2027. Knight added: "Advertising training has been key for us and opened doors, closing gaps when recruiting females into those roles."

According to Barrett, achieving gender parity in technical roles is an area that Wildix is also aiming to address. It has 21 female managers and recently appointed two women to C-Suite roles, but finds

candidates are put off by the more technical roles. She reaffirmed Knight's advice on altering job descriptions. "The percentage of women in technical and engineering positions remains lower than we would like," added Barrett. "That's why we are revisiting our job descriptions to make sure they are inclusive and appeal to a wider, more diverse talent pool."

PXC's approach to recruitment is informed by two key pillars – representation and being more data-driven. The company has compared real-time ONS data in Manchester, close to its headquarters, with its own employee data to curate a demographic snapshot of its business and show how representative it is. Brooks-Barnes added: "We are tracking this demographic data within our candidate application feed to appreciate how attractive we are as an employer to different groups. We're doing this ahead of launching a new employee value proposition and employer brand for the PXC era."

## Editor's comment...

**IN A COMMS Dealer survey of channel business leaders the majority want their firms to be famous for trustworthiness, but the two biggest cornerstones of trust – ESG and D&I – are a strategic priority for just five per cent. Bridging this gap must become a primary goal for the channel, and our panellists' call for greater collaboration and unity in addressing the women in tech challenge serves as a clear pathway forward. Download the free Leadership report here: <https://www.comms-dealer.com/whitepaper/gain-advantage-through-leadership>**



# ing women in tech agenda



Kellie Barrett

## We know the importance of networking opportunities for women. More discussions between organisations needs to happen

Fazelynia noted how prioritising flexibility and tweaking roles can increase candidates across all demographics. "Post-Covid our commitment to offering more hybrid and flexible working solutions has helped our recruitment of both males and females," she explained. "Giving individuals more time back with their families is a clear benefit for anyone looking to join us."

### Overcoming bias

The unconscious biases that can skew roles towards men tend to be stronger in male-dominated industries, observed Knight. She noted that Vorboss has seen this play out in its civil engineering teams, and improved some of the practices that made the day-to-day work a challenge for females. "For women on our civils team digging up the streets and laying fibre, access to toilets is incredibly

important, especially when they are on their period," she stated. "This isn't something most people consider but is clearly obvious once it's pointed out to them."



Aphra Brooks-Barnes

## If the conversation about driving the women in tech agenda is being vocalised predominantly by women, then there is still a lot of work to be done to drive change

Vorboss has designed a portaloos that provides more comfort for women as well as providing work clothes designed specifically for females, as opposed to female staff wearing smaller versions of men's uniforms. Understanding the changes that make work easier and fairer for staff is also key to PCX's D&I strategy. Brookes-Barnes commented: "We're working closely with colleagues and wider networks, asking them what's important in their day-to-day work and getting their opinions on how we can cultivate change that would enhance the employee experience."

Senior leadership level is another area where a greater balance needs to be established. On this point Fazelynia said: "I have been in the industry for nearly 30 years and when I first started I would estimate female representation at senior level to have been around five per cent. It's perhaps



Lauren Knight

## Advertising training has been key for us and opened doors, closing gaps when recruiting females into technical roles

doubled since then, but that's not nearly enough."

The Zest4 board has a 50-50 split of males and females, but generally a lack of flexibility makes it harder for women to build an upward momentum in their careers. Knight commented: "It's a challenge being a female in this industry, and being a parent adds to that. It is so important to have empathic employers who understand the difficulties of parenthood. I have seen a huge difference in the amount of support I received from male mentors with children. That level of understanding can help women to keep their career moving in the right direction."

Barrett also identified imposter syndrome as another key reason that women may struggle to progress to higher leadership positions. She said: "Being

in a male-dominated industry feeds into a lack of visibility of leadership opportunities. To counter this, the most significant tools in my experience have been self-advocacy and continuous learning."

A historic lack of visible female role models in leadership positions has also been a block to progress. "This is where a more collaborative industry effort comes in," added Barrett. "Joining professional networks and learning from other women in the industry can be empowering. I've been lucky enough to have a strong female mentor at Wildix who has helped me build more confidence and advance my career. But if those role models don't exist within your network, then seek them from other industry companies. They'd be more than happy to talk and give advice." ■

# Gamma accelerates chan

**Gamma has leveraged the best of its strategic planning to create an interconnected and expanding channel proposition that enables partners to sell more and stay ahead, according to CEO Andrew Belshaw and Gamma Business Managing Director John Murphy.**

In a business update delivered by Murphy and Belshaw at Gammaverse, the company's annual partner conference (October 10th, QEII Centre, London), the pair lifted the lid on how Gamma has accelerated a set of strategic actions to drive portfolio optimisation through technology partnerships, value added services and acquisitions. Gamma's top leaders also re-affirmed the company's catalytic role in driving growth for partners through bundling new solutions specific to the UK channel, and that these investments underline the imperative for resellers to evolve, especially in key markets, says Murphy.

After being appointed Gamma Business Managing Director in June this year Murphy went to work on solidifying his priorities for the coming two years – and taking precedence are the UCaaS, IoT and security high growth markets. He outlined Gamma's plans to drive the acceleration of these opportunities and elevated

the need for an urgent and comprehensive response from partners. "There's a ticking clock on the traditional comms market and channel partners who ignore this evolution risk being left behind," warned Murphy. "It's important for partners to get into new markets."

A sharp focus on the requirement to develop portfolio propositions dominated the Gammaverse conference. This was especially highlighted by Murphy's emphasis on UCaaS. "There are six million UCaaS seats still up for grabs in the UK, and Gamma now has UCaaS products that cover all parts of the market," added Murphy.

"UCaaS delivers improved margins and stickier customers. It offers flexibility, complete integration and scalability. But this isn't just about upgrading technology, it's about embracing the evolving collaboration landscape. Partners need to push the SIP to UCaaS transition. Sticking just to



John Murphy

## There's a ticking clock on the traditional comms market and channel partners who ignore this evolution risk being left behind

what you know for too long and not adapting to the evolving market could result in a lost foothold."

### UCaaS roadmap

Murphy set out a clear and coherent pathway for partners to become fit for growth in the UCaaS space, and explained how Gamma's partnership with Cisco has entered a new phase with

the mid-September launch of Horizon with Webex across the UK. The move brings together the calling features of Gamma's Horizon product and Cisco's Webex collaboration features. "This launch is significant and enables partners to enter new markets," stated Murphy.

At the time of the Gammaverse conference,

over 3,300 customers were using Horizon with Webex, indicating a clear demand swell. Murphy also noted that Gamma will implement an automated upgrade tool that enables partners selling Horizon Collaborate to move to Webex and continue receiving the full Gamma wrap. The Webex for Gamma Wholesale launch is planned for H1 2025.



# Channel strategy on all fronts

These developments are part of a broader strategy to deliver and support new propositions, not just through important technology partnerships but also through acquisitions that bring additional revenue opportunities – such as Gamma’s acquisition of EnableX in January this year (encompassing Pragma, Techland and Candio) which enables partners to reach all parts of the UCaaS market, according to Murphy.

This is because Pragma distributes Ericsson-LG’s iPECS UC solution which Murphy says has the ‘firepower’ to build out UCaaS portfolios. “iPECS offers something different, enabling companies that want to make a first step to the cloud from traditional PBX features,” he explained. “Delivering iPECS provisioning and support through the Gamma portal is a priority.”

## Key opportunity

Another of Murphy’s priorities, the IoT space, is growing 18 per cent a year according to Analysys Mason, which says there are 32 million IoT devices in the UK today and expects that figure to hit 75 million by 2028. “IoT is one of the fastest growing technology markets,” added Murphy. “It’s a massive opportunity to unlock new revenues based, in large part, on the IoT’s ability to underpin automation and processes and improve the efficiency of business operations. It’s important for partners to be in these markets and think about future growth – and it’s our job to make sure they get there.”

Murphy told delegates that Gamma’s FUSION IoT product

is due to launch in Q1 2025. Gamma on-boarded this capability through the acquisition of German company Epsilon in 2022, which is a leading provider of mobile connectivity in the German market. It introduced FUSION IoT in 2018 and now has circa 30,000 customers. “It’s a mature platform with access to multiple European networks and we’ve transported this product to the UK channel,” confirmed Murphy. “The platform comes with a removable eSIM capability which opens up the eSIM market.”

For channel firms, adapting to market trends today equates to an ability to compete tomorrow, and with this in mind Murphy flagged up that Microsoft Teams is set to dominate a large part of the UCaaS market, and that while it’s not right for every type of business, with Cavell forecasting 24 per cent market growth Teams can’t be ignored. “In response Gamma is launching Service Suite for Microsoft Teams, which provides an opportunity for partners to introduce complementary software and hardware around the Teams platform and add more value,” said Murphy, who also noted that Gamma is kicking off beta trials through the launch of reporting and analytics, call recording and hardware such as handsets and headsets.

There’s more: The UK’s cyber market is worth circa £11 billion and growing 12 per cent annually. And Gamma’s acquisition of Pragma also brings forward Candio’s SafeWeb product which protects company data from the dark web and is said to be straightforward to deploy. “This is an easy

way for partners to get into the cyber market and drive high recurring margins,” stated Murphy. “There are 30,000 customers on the platform which shows strong demand for the service.”

Establishing the right technology portfolio is one thing, forging a strong link between enablement and outcomes – in other words, capabilities and generating value – is another. Gamma has taken these together and is investing millions in its portal, while helping partners to address all of these market

opportunities with greater speed and agility through the launch of white labelled managed services as a new channel proposition. “This will help partners become more streamlined, simplify their business model, lower overheads and get to market quicker,” stated Murphy.

## One stop shop

Just like channel firms, end user organisations are also under pressure to steal a march in their chosen markets, and ICT buyers are aware that they can go further and faster through

single supplier technology relationships that drive outcomes versus simple deliverables. Customers are now the change-catalysts, and to remain relevant channel partners must be in a position to respond with a broad scope of customer solutions. This puts more pressure on resellers and MSPs to evolve their tech stacks and overall portfolios, which for Gamma (as a catalytic intermediary) means increased engagement with technology giants and the channel to accelerate growth. **Continued on page 24**



Andrew Belshaw

**Big global tech companies want to sell their products to the UK SME market and they can only do that through the channel**

Continued from page 23

Even a casual observer can see that Gamma's core strength resides in strategic partnerships that give resellers a competitive edge. And developing relationships with tech giants in ways that reshape enterprise products for general consumption by the channel and smaller businesses is currently a priority for Gamma CEO Andrew Belshaw. "These partnerships will get broader, deeper and stronger," he told Gammaverse delegates. "Big global tech companies want to sell their products to the UK SME market and they can only do that through the channel."

As well as collaborating with the likes of Cisco and Ericsson-LG, Belshaw is immersed in an ongoing dialogue with Microsoft around how it can work with Gamma to support the UK channel more effectively. In similar vein, Gamma works closely with regulatory bodies behind the scenes, Ofcom especially. "Why? Because we are too often the only people in the room standing up for small businesses and the UK channel," stated Belshaw. "It is vitally important they are represented when new legislation is under consideration. We see acting on behalf of the channel as our job, especially as the regulatory landscape becomes more complicated."

Gamma is far more ambitious these days and the company's growth plans

are accelerating, which is evidenced by five acquisitions within a year and the work Belshaw is doing to build Gamma in Europe. For the record, Gamma now has more than 3,000 channel partners across Europe and enabling all of them to be more competitive is a key driver behind Gamma's acquisition strategy.

In addition to the acquisitions already covered in this report, consider the purchase of Dublin-based Coolwave Communications in February this year: It enables Gamma to support customers in Ireland – and routing international inbound calls through the Coolwave platform means Gamma can ensure end-to-end service quality. "This also allows us to provide voice enablement in many countries from a channel-first perspective," added Belshaw. "This is typical of our acquisition strategy, bringing technology and skills we can share with partners."

It's worth pointing out as a footnote that Belshaw emphatically quelled rumours about possible changes to Horizon, which has 850,000 users. "We are building on what we started with Horizon," he explained. "Horizon doesn't suit every end user therefore we're working with Cisco, Ericsson-LG and Microsoft to create solutions that enable partners to bid for any size customer, in any industry and virtually any location." ■

### Editor's comment...

**CRITICAL to long-term revenue creation is having the right technology and service proposition portfolio, an equation that has driven Gamma to execute a number of successful acquisitions that deliver complementary capabilities and bring new market opportunities that build value for partners and their customers. The speed and depth at which Gamma is evolving its portfolio and go-to-market strategy highlights how responsive channel partners need to be to stay ahead of the curve and create a sustainable competitive advantage. These aren't new themes – successful organisations have always adapted to change – but the laser focus and strategic clarity displayed by Gamma's leaders alongside the acceleration of their intent feels like a step change that should not be ignored.**

# Big Goal at the House of Lords

Founding ICT industry members of The Big Goal attended a reception at The House of Lords last month hosted by Lord Shaun Bailey, now Chair of Trustees for the Street Soccer Foundation (SSF).

Lord Bailey co-founded My Generation, a charity addressing the social problems that affect struggling young people and their families, such as anti-social behaviour, drug abuse and crime. His support of The Big Goal came about after he was introduced to SSF CEO Keith Mabbutt. "It was clear from the outset that Keith and his team are determined to help end youth homelessness, which chimes perfectly with my goals and I'm delighted that so many companies from the ICT industry have got behind him to support The Big Goal," he said.

Lord Bailey also echoed the sentiments of Dave McGinn, Managing Director of founding member Daisy Communications, who spoke candidly about the need for companies to reverse engineer their commitment to The Big Goal by identifying roles within their businesses that could be filled by graduates from the SSF academies they support at football clubs across the UK.

"The young people who The Big Goal supports to play football at the Street Soccer Academies also get valuable training on life skills and the value of work," he said. "That's brilliant, but we, as



Pictured at the House of Lords reception (l-r): Andrew Greenwood (SSF), Jenny Lee Holt (LANtern Tech), Keith Mabbutt (SSF), Lord Bailey, Ellie Allseybrook (Inform Billing), Kevin Tewis-Allen (SSF).

founder members, can go much further. In advance of our academy at Sheffield Wednesday FC we had jobs already lined up for graduates to fill. If other companies followed our lead it would genuinely change the lives of young people. Meaningful employment is the first step on the pathway out of homelessness and despair."

Two SSF graduates, Mohammed and Ebenezer, spoke eloquently at the event, explaining how the Street Soccer Foundation had changed their lives. Ebenezer said his life since arriving in the UK from Ghana had been so traumatic he was ready to take his own life. "I attended a Street Soccer Foundation Academy at Wycombe Wanderers

FC and found my family," he said. Ebenezer is now coaching full time at the club.

The Big Goal, sponsored by Giacom and supported by Comms Dealer and Sky Business has now helped over 450 young people across the country and aims to double that number next year.

ICT companies wishing to participate in next year's tournament and secure a tailor-made ESG programme that will team them up with Street Soccer Academies running at their local professional football club should visit: [www.thebiggoal.co.uk](http://www.thebiggoal.co.uk) to register. ■





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# Evolve with the times

**According to Onecom Sales Director Roan Pratt MSP leaders must act now to mitigate today's and tomorrow's challenges and plan for the long-term with confidence.**

**W**hile MSPs can strengthen their prospects (and the confidence their customers have in them) by dynamically addressing the requirement to stay ahead of technology trends and fully understanding evolving customer needs, a barrier to progress is the variety of buying behaviours across different generations and business types, believes Pratt. "Evolution in the channel is inevitable but the pace at which different buyers adapt varies," he commented. "To overcome this challenge ongoing education is crucial. If you fail to meet the evolving needs of all buyers competitors will step in to fulfil those requirements."

An MSP's approach to challenges such as these will shape the pace of their own evolution and the value of their business, therefore the way MSPs develop their technology propositions and go to market strategies is pivotal, pointed out Pratt. "We're seeing channel businesses increasingly expand their product portfolios to maximise monthly recurring revenue through cross-selling and upselling," he added. "Furthermore, many partners

are diversifying their offerings which means acquiring new skill sets and suppliers to support additional products and services. This will also minimise churn, especially at the lower end of the customer base, by either selling more within the existing portfolio or expanding it to keep pace with technological advancements."

It goes without saying that MSPs at the forefront of industry change have a strong understanding of the issues and market trends reshaping ICT buying preferences. And MSPs that most confidently set the stage for their long-term success will also likely have a strong partnering strategy. "Resellers should partner with the right suppliers who can support their growth and simplify business interactions for both them and their customers," added Pratt.

"This alignment opens up access to lucrative revenue streams and ensures efficient operations. It's a constant learning journey and down to suppliers and partners to keep providing key information through events, webinars and communications, making



Roan Pratt

## Integrating Net Zero planning with the supply chain and the increasing complexity of the ICT market means the channel needs new ecosystems

sure all information filters through the whole business and not just the top line."

### Net Zero planning

Another big education piece facing all channel businesses is the need to link Net Zero planning with the supply chain at a time when the ICT market is growing in complexity. It's a challenge that raises the question

of whether the channel needs new future-focused ecosystems. "The need to

integrate Net Zero planning with the supply chain and the increasing complexity of the ICT market means that the channel needs new ecosystems," affirmed Pratt. "Everyone is eager to embrace this change but we are still in the early stages of figuring out how it will work. Conversations with suppliers and customers are crucial to determine the best fit for all parties. While it's too early to define exactly what these ecosystems will look like we must stay ahead of any emerging complexities."

This challenge is perhaps made easier to address given the growing number of companies seeking to consolidate their products with a single supplier to streamline their supply chain operations. "This approach allows them to focus on growth with one supplier," commented Pratt. "We are supporting several partners who are looking to expand and experiencing the benefits of working with us through organic growth and acquisitions. But the primary challenge is the need for rapid adaptation to market evolution and demand.

"Those who can get ahead of the curve will maximise market opportunities. Success depends on not only winning business but also delivering on promises. While many are good at discovering potential, some struggle with actual implementation." ■

### Pratt's four point action plan

- 1. Choose the right supplier: Partnering with a supplier that aligns with your growth ambitions is crucial.**
- 2. Education and understanding: Both internal and external education are essential for staying informed and competitive.**
- 3. Delivering on promises: Deliver on what you commit to.**
- 4. Strategic partnerships: Working with partners who share the same growth goals and are willing to invest in them is vital.**



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## Don't Just Be a 'Generalist' But A Specialist Too!

In today's increasingly competitive comms arena how to stand out from the crowd can often be the difference between success and failure.

The job we're all doing selling collaboration services into businesses is changing. The focus was all about the journey from an on-premise PBX into the cloud. At Evolve IP we have been doing that successfully for many years now where hosted VoIP solutions are almost at saturation point in certain sections of the market.

“Everyone is moving to hosted, so partners that can specialise in a certain vertical and build credibility are seeing more success.”

We are now at a tipping point where there will be just as many migrations from hosted-to-hosted as PBX-to hosted. So, the story and a reseller's strategy needs to change.

Everyone is moving to hosted, so partners that can specialise in a certain vertical and build credibility are seeing more success. They are creating a reputation within a more defined target base. To be seen as a specialist provides a big advantage.

It's why Evolve IP is currently focusing on verticals and delivering educational content around the technologies we provide to support our current partners and specialists rather than just generalists.

We recognise keeping communication simple can be a constant challenge in an increasingly diverse and complex 'always on' world.

Multiple platforms, video calls, mobile devices and even traditional deskphones all have a role to play in keeping businesses and their

people connected wherever they are. Driving customer engagement is crucial too.

Choice is good. B businesses need to be able to engage via every available channel – from one centralised, all-in-one-place communications platform - to maximise efficiency and performance.

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As a global collaboration service provider, Evolve IP offers a white-label, cloud-based telephony and

collaboration platform which has the power to bring everything together in a simple and effective way.

Take retail for example. We believe it should be all about making things as easy as possible for the partner to engage; pre and post-sale. Today, that means ensuring they can do so via whatever channel the customer prefers, integrating all of those channels into a powerful Communications Platform as a Service (CPaaS) or Contact Centre as a Service (CCaaS) solution.

Regardless of industry sector, location or seat size, user experience and customer experience are now mainstream concepts that are at the centre of every modern business.

Evolve IP recognises that one size doesn't fit all. Every business has different needs, so it's important to offer tailored solutions that provide maximum value and has a positive long term impact.

To find out more visit:  
[www.evolveip.uk](http://www.evolveip.uk)

## INCLUSION MATTERS

# Optimise staff inclusion skills

**Neurodiversity (ND) champion and Train to Win CEO Julie Mills discusses how a practical, people-centric ND learning approach for all staff drives improved neuro-inclusion support.**

**A**chieving neurodiversity in your workplace takes more than being good people who hate prejudice. Only by equipping the whole team with a personal neuro-inclusion skillset can businesses create value and accrue their own neurodiversity dividend. Corporate ownership of DEI initiatives is just the start. You need individual employees to develop the skills and confidence to create an inclusive environment. This is especially true of neurodiversity where, without adaptable skills to manage a diverse range of people, being aware and accepting of ND people won't optimise their full potential. These skills have to be trained and developed, mostly by deepening existing principles and practices.

### Great line managers

Take line management: Line managing neurodiverse colleagues can be a daunting prospect and a waste of human capital when managers get it wrong. Fixing this means building on good line management skills, the ability to adjust to each individual, and how you coach, motivate and relate to them. My point is that ND inclusion demands practical know-how, rather than positive intentions that remain unfulfilled.



Julie Mills

Business leaders will likely see the injustices of ND in the workplace and want to do their bit. They may even want to advertise their organisation as a good place for ND talent. But the best thing businesses can do is target skills, ensuring their employees know exactly how to incorporate ND-inclusive values, behaviours and processes into their everyday work.

For example, communication techniques that focus on clarity and consistency can make a huge difference to interactions with neurodiverse colleagues. Other simple adjustments like offering flexible work, creating quiet zones or breaking down tasks into smaller, manageable steps can significantly reduce barriers. But it's not the same for everyone. In terms of ND-inclusive

recruitment, onboarding and CPD processes, your people need the skills to create and operate them. This applies to writing job descriptions, running interviews, building continuous feedback loops, offering peer mentoring and much more. When it comes to neuro-inclusion, employees at all levels must play their part. Therefore the importance of personal professional development cannot be overstated. Training in areas like emotional intelligence, active listening and conflict resolution can directly enhance a person's ability to navigate the diverse needs of ND colleagues.

### Qualifications

Recognised qualifications in neuro-inclusion and DEI are becoming increasingly valuable in the workplace too, not only for line managers but for all staff. These qualifications signal a commitment to fostering inclusive spaces and provide employees with transferable skills that can be applied across different roles, employers and even industries. By investing in neuro-inclusion skillsets, businesses can create a workplace where diverse minds can thrive. Employees feel empowered and valued, and teams become far stronger, more creative and more productive. ■



# Cavell's Battle for Good Data on the Channel

The channel still represents one of the biggest growing opportunities for service providers and vendors alike to get their products to market. Cavell's latest research shows that 47% of providers said that they are increasing the percentage of sales that go through channel partners in 2024.



Dom Black & Finbarr Begley

The challenge that all those companies selling through the channel face is identifying the right partners. With over 5000 active partners in the UK, it is difficult to find data on individual channel partners that is not outdated or incorrect.

Cavell frequently received requests from companies looking to identify new channel partners and undertake partner audits from vendors, distributors and service providers. After a particularly challenging audit involving over 1000 channel partners across Europe, Dom Black, Director of Growth at Cavell, recognised the need for a more efficient solution.

"Our clients look to us for these vital insights into what their channel is doing, like what vendors they are selling, or what services they are offering. We need to provide these insights, but the manual process was eating up far too much of our time, energy, and sanity.

In many of our audits, we found multiple partners no longer existed and many of them didn't have any mention of the vendor or supplier on their website or were selling a competitor's

solution. This highlighted to us that not only was there no publicly available data out there, but also many suppliers were acting on incorrect or out of date data for one of their core GTM functions"

Cavell looked for a solution to this bad data in the market, but any company that we attempted to get this data from failed to deliver. We waded through a mire of outdated lists, event attendee lists, and databases of outdated contact information before we realised nothing in the market would properly meet our needs.

This challenge sparked the idea of leveraging new techniques using AI and web harvesting to automate the process, pulling live information from multiple online sources into one dashboard. The result is a fully automated platform that employs advanced data scraping and large language models to analyse channel partner websites and generate valuable insights.

The streamlined platform is an invaluable tool for prospecting new channel partners or expanding channel programs into new markets. Subscribers can search and filter channel

partners by location, size, supported vendors, services offered, and more. This eliminates the need for manual website reviews or outdated lists, allowing channel managers and growth directors to find new opportunities, focus on relevant companies and optimise their efforts.

Finbarr Begley, Senior Analyst at Cavell, stated, "We are entering an era where intense manual research is becoming obsolete. As an analyst company, Cavell must lead this transformation. It is not enough to discuss AI and advanced data analysis; we must implement these tools ourselves. With this new database, customers can access regularly updated insights into key markets, evaluate vendor offerings, and assess a channel's readiness to sell new products."

Cavell drives fascinating insights from the data highlighting the state of the channel at the moment and opportunities that can be leveraged. Cavell's latest enterprise study of 500 IT leaders in the UK showed that improving customer experiences was a key priority for businesses of all sizes, including the SME. Our Channel Insights service

identified only 885 partners in the UK selling both UCaaS and CCaaS services. However, breaking this down further, 97% of CCaaS partners also sell UCaaS but only 26% of UCaaS partners sell CCaaS – representing a huge opportunity for partners specialising in UCaaS to move into the CCaaS space.

One customer using the tool realised that a large majority of their channel base was selling security products and leveraged that information to begin offering security integrations within their portfolio as their channel was equipped to sell them.

These sorts of insights are valuable to Cavell as an analyst company, but also help customers gain useful insights into the shape of the channel. This can help them determine how their channel targets overlap and what areas might make viable targets for expansion.

Ryan Tollofson, Director, Marketing & Emerging Services at TELUS states:

"Cavell has been an important partner for TELUS Partner Solutions, helping us to define and refine our go-to-market and portfolio strategies. Their Channel

Insights tool has proven to be highly effective, enabling us to quickly identify and quantify specific market segments based on various relevant criteria. The support and responsiveness to feature requests from Cavell have significantly enhanced our trust in both the tool and the data it provides."

Cavell's Channel Insights tool is also a great platform for monitoring your own channel. By saving a list of your own channel partners you can review who is selling your competitors solutions, who is offering services that you don't offer, or who might be good targets for new products you plan to release.

Dom Black is enthusiastic about the future of this tool. "We are just beginning this journey. Many AI techniques for research and data analysis are in their infancy, and our platform has an exciting roadmap that we eagerly anticipate sharing with our customers.

With many potential features such as translation, alerting, live-analysis and more in the pipeline, this new platform represents the start of Cavell's journey into providing deep insights into the channel to its customers.

To learn more about the Cavell Channel Insights platform and schedule a demo, please contact **Dom Black** at [Dom.Black@cavell.com](mailto:Dom.Black@cavell.com)

# CallTower boosts high ris

Now is the time for channel partners to develop a strong BYOC (Bring Your Own Carrier) proposition based on a single global calling platform and the integration of household name solutions, according to CallTower CRO William Rubio and VP EMEA Sales Paul Holden. Here, they share insights into the US-based company's BYOC expansion strategy across the UK and EMEA.

**B**YOC is fast emerging as a key proposition component for resellers and MSPs, claims Holden. He says the model is working well because the functionality of Microsoft Teams, Cisco Webex and Zoom Phone has developed in a way that removes the need for a third party phone system (premise or cloud-based). "BYOC enables the features in collaboration UC platforms to come to life as a single global platform for calling internal and external," he commented. "BYOC also extends the back office into the CCaaS space. And where an end user might choose a CCaaS provider that has no UCaaS offering, integration with UC vendors is provided."



William Rubio

By owning and controlling the numbers and calling platform, Rubio says that CallTower is able to offer a single global cloud solution regardless of the technology. And boosted by a fresh private equity investment the company is accelerating into an 'aggressive growth phase', noted Rubio. He calls this new chapter CallTower 3.0 – the follow on from CallTower 2.0 which signified an early move to embrace cloud-based communication solutions and give customers more choice. This third iteration of the

**We are closely monitoring developments in AI-driven analytics and machine learning, and have only scratched the surface of their potential for driving the efficiency and effectiveness of communication solutions**

company's strategy, explained Holden, involves a three tier channel-first approach in the UK and EMEA markets, via wholesale, agency and channel re-biller models. "These will enable us to scale fast and utilise the

networks of established VARs, MSPs and new entrants to start selling voice in the UCaaS space," stated Holden. "Wholesale is the place most VARs go to buy their licenses of Microsoft, Cisco and Zoom. Enabling

wholesalers with a voice bolt-on means that BYOC gives CallTower access to thousands of VARs already in the wholesaler ecosystem." Holden also noted that the agency model gives

CallTower access to the top MSPs specialising in the desktop and AV, who pass on opportunities for voice and value added services to the likes of CallTower to create more value for end users by enabling global BYOC access. "Due to the world economy, many UK-based organisations will have entities abroad and CallTower helps deliver a single solution global calling platform and on-net cloud," he added.

**Strong pedigree**

US-based CallTower was established in 2002 and entered the UC space with a proprietary phone system before partnering with Cisco, Microsoft and more recently Zoom. The CallTower team, particularly in EMEA, has grown to support expanded operations, partner opportunities and customer demands. "CallTower's journey began with a vision to deliver seamless unified communication solutions," he said.

"We've introduced tools like the integration of PSTN numbers into eSIMs and provisioning them within the Webex Control Hub. With the launch of Webex Go, we've enhanced mobile connectivity and provided enterprise-grade features. "Our customer base continues to grow and encompasses businesses



# se BYOC market

across varied industries worldwide, from fast growing tech start-ups to established multinational enterprises. This expansion not only underscores the effectiveness of our strategic initiatives but also sets a solid foundation for sustained progress in regions across the globe."

According to Holden, the determining factors that particularly influence the evolution of CallTower in terms of market approach, portfolio development and partner engagement include scale, time to market, being easy to deal with, channel collaboration and opening new ecosystems that enable an all-integrated communications environment piggybacking off major market players. Rubio pointed out that CallTower's ability to

work with major platforms like Microsoft Teams, Cisco Webex and Zoom Phone in a native environment has been a key growth driver, enabling the company to serve a diverse range of customers and industries.

### Future growth

"Looking ahead, we anticipate future growth will stem from advancements in AI-driven cloud communications and the continued expansion of our global footprint," added Rubio. "These areas also present opportunities for innovation so we are closely monitoring developments in AI-driven analytics and machine learning, and have only scratched the surface of their potential for driving the efficiency and effectiveness of communication solutions.

These must deliver intelligence that is meaningful to assist customers in streamlining processes, becoming more efficient and supporting employees. Cybersecurity in unified communications is another area we want to enhance."

Holden believes that CallTower's holistic and future-focused approach will enable channel partners to capture big opportunities that reside in these emerging and growing markets as well as the integration of solutions from Microsoft, Cisco and Zoom. He added: "Our vision is for CallTower to be the largest provider of BYOC and layered value added services into and through wholesale, with access to thousands of channels and millions of end users."



Paul Holden

**Our vision is for CallTower to be the largest provider of BYOC and layered value added services into and through wholesale**

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## Channel Corner with James Drake



### Delivering Results, Achieving Success

In the telecommunications industry's result-driven business landscape, the ability to consistently deliver is crucial for all businesses competing. Whether it's meeting sales targets, growing your base or delivering creative campaigns, achieving results is at the core of sustainable growth and long-term success. As Eclipse Wholesale reaches our 20th year in business, following a record-breaking financial year, it's the perfect time to reflect on what has driven our success over the past two decades.

Over the past 20 years, we've evolved our strategy to become a channel-only telecoms provider. This shift has allowed us to better serve our partners by refining our offerings and processes to align with our customer's needs. More recently, the upcoming switch-off has once again challenged our adaptability but our ability to pivot quickly has enabled us to continue achieving results and maintain our growth.

Our customer-first approach is at the heart of everything we do. Whether it's updating processes, onboarding new suppliers and services or making key business decisions, we always ask "How can this benefit the customer?" This commitment to our customers is what has led us to build strong, long-lasting relationships with our partners. We listen to their needs and tailor solutions that meet their business goals and help them succeed.

As a graduate of two degrees myself, I've always valued the importance of developing our team both professionally and personally. Currently, at Eclipse Wholesale we have two apprentices and one team

member pursuing a bachelor's degree. By encouraging continuous development and investing in our team's knowledge and skills, we give them the tools and confidence to perform at their best, which ultimately benefits the business.

At the core of Eclipse Wholesale are the values that guide our actions: trust, teamwork, expertise and results. These principles have allowed us to build a strong foundation over the past two decades, allowing us to stay true to our goals whilst being the driving forces behind providing the best support and value to our channel partners as possible.

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 In an industry that is constantly evolving, the ability to adapt is key to long-term success.
- ✔ **Customer-First Approach**  
 A customer-first philosophy has enabled us to build strong, trusting relationships over the past two decades.
- ✔ **Developing our Team**  
 Prioritising growth at every level creates better service and expertise for our partners.
- ✔ **Core Values**  
 Trust, teamwork, expertise, and results are the core values guiding everything we do, ensuring the best outcomes for our partners.

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# COTU names CEO



**Trevor Lovelock**

THE appointment of Trevor Lovelock as COTU's CEO signifies the cloud services provider's commitment to an acceleration of its channel-only UK and international partner growth strategy. Lovelock brings 20 years industry experience to the role including a notable stint at BT where he held various senior leadership positions before moving to Sycurio where he spearheaded product innovation and business transformation.

His move to COTU strengthens the company's plans for expanding its portfolio of SaaS services as it seeks to build on its presence in the high growth UC and contact centre markets. To achieve these aims Lovelock said he will draw on his experience in developing strategic partnerships, driving operational excellence and shaping tailored solutions optimised for channel partners. "I join COTU at a key point in its growth journey," stated Lovelock. "By leveraging my experience in SaaS and channel-based solutions I aim to expand our presence and accelerate greater value for partners."

## Also on the move...

FIDELITY Energy's Sean Dixon has been promoted to the Chief Revenue Officer role following impressive revenue growth results achieved during his tenure as Sales Director. He joined the company in 2016 as Partner Account Manager before taking the Head of Channel role in 2017. As Sales Director he is credited with driving 225 per cent revenue growth, from £3.6 million in 2018 to £11.7 million in 2023. "When I joined Fidelity Energy nine years ago we were a team of five with a handful of channel partners," stated Dixon. "We now have more than 50 members of staff and over 700 partners and I am proud to have been a part of this growth journey."



**Sean Dixon**

**HYPEROPTIC has pulled in Geoff Heddle as Director of Product. He brings over 15 years industry experience to the role and is tasked with leading the altnet's product management and design with an emphasis on CX.**

**LOUISE Purdie has joined Abzorb as Head of Indirect, bringing a strong track record of industry experience which includes leadership roles at Vodafone and most recently Three. COO Matt Dykes stated: "Louise will head up the sales team, work with vendors to identify growth opportunities and enhance our ecosystem. She will also be responsible for devising and executing channel strategies that simplify doing business and demystify the complexities of selling mobile."**



**Anton Green**

EVE Wholesale's product development roadmap is to be spearheaded by incoming Product Manager Anton Green who joins the business following a brief spell away from the comms industry. His return marks a ramping up of eve Wholesale's channel expansion campaign and the evolution of its cloud-based phone system (called eve), UC and connectivity solutions. "Anton is a well respected figure across the channel and has known eve since its inception," commented Managing Director Steve Barclay. "His product knowledge, industry experience and understanding of reseller businesses will play a crucial role in driving eve Wholesale's growth and innovation."



**Louise Purdie**

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# The factors that make strate

Partnerships are key to the success of all channel businesses but in times of change the nature of alliances evolve. Here, channel leaders discuss what it takes to ensure the long-term success of vendor relationships and the factors that make a positive difference.



**PETE TOMLINSON**  
CEO  
WINDSOR TELECOM

WE look to build a close relationship typically with two to four vendors across each portfolio area. This hits a sweet spot where we can meet our customers' differing needs while still being focused enough to be expert in each of their offerings from a sales and support perspective. The partners we work with evolve over time as some vendors rise and fall in their technical and commercial innovation. We conduct a quarterly sweep of the market and a detailed annual review with the aim to build meaningful long-term relationships. We always look to work with great people who share our values and where we can be as strategically important to them as they are to us.



**SEBASTIAN PATERNOSTER**  
GROUP SALES DIRECTOR  
DATAQUEST GROUP

AS we evolve into a mature MSP our relationships with vendors become essential to delivering both our company's goals and those of our clients. When managing our portfolio of vendors we are constantly trying to align our core values. The most significant area is our belief in young talent. Dataquest has been running graduate and apprenticeship schemes for several years and our preferred partners will play a key role in each candidate's development. The vendors that provide the most support in developing our young talent contribute to their success and put their business at the forefront of everything we do. Over the past 24 months, our aim has been to reduce the number of vendors we work with to improve quality and bottom line numbers.



**PAUL HOOPER**  
MD  
UPLANDS ONETELCO

WE value vendor partnerships that align with our vision to drive real change. Trust and transparency are non-negotiable, and a strong market presence is essential. Over the past three years we've seen our vendor relationships evolve into more meaningful, collaborative partnerships. We don't just want vendors, we want teammates who work alongside us. We'd love to see vendors take an even more proactive approach, helping us stay ahead by co-creating solutions. We continuously review our tech stack and partnerships with an eye on future-proofing our business. In the coming year we're likely to explore new partnerships driven by innovation and sustainability.



**IAN WALKER**  
DIRECTOR  
FIFTEEN GROUP

PEOPLE do business with people. Knowledgeable account managers who are on your side with a personality are great. Reliability and uptime of the provider is also key with support and responsiveness when you need it, backed up with a robust transparent SLA. The standard 9-5 Monday to Friday from vendors isn't good enough because we offer seven day support from 8am to midnight. Vendors could also provide more proactive support, monitoring and alerting on standard DSL products with clear and transparent SLAs. It's a big decision to move providers, and it would have to be a large failing or falling out to sack one of our suppliers off.



**RICHARD BEESTON**  
CTO  
DIGITAL SPACE

STRONG vendor relationships are forged from open and honest working relationships at all levels. The best vendors understand our business and help support MSPs with new products, bringing them to market as soon as possible. Simple partner programmes are a must – we would like to see continued simplification, achievable rebate or investment opportunities, and support for high-performing partners. Over the past three years we have benefitted from co-investment initiatives, and we are forming closer ties with the vendors and their distributors. We continuously assess alternative vendors in the market and review our strategic vendors yearly. We are likely to seek some new partnerships in the AI sector in the next year.

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# Strategic partnerships successful



**SOHIN RAITHATHA**  
CEO  
REDSQUID

INDUSTRY partnerships are evolving and we value trust, flexibility and innovation. We regularly review our tech portfolio and supplier partnerships to keep us ready to explore new opportunities, especially as we expand into new sectors and services. Customer needs continue to evolve, and a positive partnership helps us stay at the forefront of trends like cloud migration and AI, ensuring our partners benefit from upgraded technology and increased productivity.



**JACK MICHALSKI**  
DIRECTOR  
OF CHANNEL  
PARTNERSHIPS  
TSI

RELATIONSHIPS with resellers are evolving as we see partners and end users move away from physical products to cloud UCaaS platforms. Partners require help with strategically important deals and they also want to be able to self-serve for support. We've seen channel partnerships fail because resellers demand UCaaS platforms that are truly reliable, scalable and flexible. If they don't receive these benefits, they move to a different provider. Within the channel, both the reseller and provider must benefit from the partnership through shared visions and objectives. The partnership will be successful if the provider continuously innovates to move with the market and changing end user needs. It is also important for the provider to be a true partner and bridge any gaps in the reseller's capabilities.



**JAY BALL**  
CEO  
FLOTEK

WE value vendor partners that are channel-focused, listen and act on feedback for innovation, and prioritise training for our team. We've prioritised winning more business over vendor loyalty by focusing on vendors who deliver better products and commercials. Vendors could add more support by listening to partners who engage with end users daily, supporting them to achieve greater success together. We regularly address market gaps or underperforming vendors. Vendor relationships drive our success, therefore average products and slow adaptation to demand is no longer enough for the growth we need.



**GRAEME GORDON**  
CEO  
IFB

HAVING a responsive partner who understands that we work in days not weeks or months is critical. It's good for business, reputation, trust and confidence for all involved. The key providers we use are all the same, there is little differentiation in terms of services and service. This is because the technology and platforms used to support us are all about the same, cloud-based ERP/CRM customer-facing portals and APIs and applications have levelled the playing field. Vendors should train and retain staff in the art and profession of selling and relationship building. Reviewing vendors is a constant for us because we seek better ways of doing what we need to do, and learning from the supply chain is a great way of breaking out of our own echo chamber.



**RICHARD SCOTT**  
SALES DIRECTOR  
START  
COMMUNICATION

HONESTY, transparency, quality and alignment with our core values are what we value most with vendor partnerships. Often feature set and price are equal across most products within the industry, and therefore it is the added value that vendors bring that we find most important to our business. This helps us differentiate. Engagement with other stakeholders within our business is very important to us; and being part of our team helps drive positive momentum and pushes our business forwards. Our portfolio and suppliers are under constant monthly review and if something is presented that brings value to ourselves and our clients, we would move quickly to onboard and adopt new relationships.



**GREG EASTON,**  
HEAD OF BUSINESS  
DEVELOPMENT  
TOLLRING

PARTNERS require assistance in training sales and pre-sales staff to identify customer opportunities and then help customers to realise the full value of these solutions. Resellers should partner with vendors who stay current on technology and align with them on market opportunities and strategy. It is then a vendor's responsibility to provide strong sales enablement to motivate and inform sales teams.

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# Planning for growth

**This month's industry leading Comms Vision Convention (6th-8th November, Gleneagles Hotel) charts the Road to Future Growth and brings into sharp focus the priority areas MSPs need to consider in their long-term strategic planning.**

ICT buyers in the private and public sector are more tech savvy than ever before and more likely to rethink how they engage with MSPs. This means that an MSP's approach to the technology forces reshaping the future not only requires a sharp eye when reading the market, it demands a deep dive into the tech factors transforming businesses and how these drivers will play out in terms of IT buyer decision-making.

A sales and marketing model that supports these goals is also vital – and where these two conference tracks (technology evolution and GTM strategies) successfully converge leads us onto the Road to Future Growth.

Key points to be addressed include what's topping the CEO's technology agenda, the extent to which business transformation is being driven by emerging technologies rather than more mature products and services, and what a successful skills and tech partnering strategy will look like in five years time.

The conference will also bring into focus evolving

cloud models and how far data, AI, analytics, security and intelligent applications will impact channel and end user businesses; and how these trends underscore the growing role of a channel partner as technology educator, enabler and problem solver. Furthermore, last year's Comms Vision Convention highlighted the technology and market knowledge gap that can exist between suppliers and their partners. Given that bridging this gap and enabling MSPs

to succeed as educators and problem solvers in this evolving world is vital, what more can vendors do to help MSPs get closer to customers and maximise growth opportunities?

### Remodelling GTM and revenue creation strategies

The question of how to achieve better results through a fit-for-purpose sales and marketing model has also taken on greater urgency. But what strategies should MSPs focus on as they transition their GTM towards the evolving business transformation and CX demands of end users? This question becomes



**The world famous Gleneagles Hotel is a fitting venue for the channel's premier conference.**

more pressing when considered in the context of a shift from transactional technology upgrades towards organisations requiring business transformation with tangible outcomes, which closes the gap between the customer's technology and business strategy.

Understanding the market's changing dynamics and how they impact marketing and selling is crucial and will be fully explored at this year's Comms Vision conference, alongside how MSP sales and marketing leaders could most propitiously target their resources and planning.

More broadly, the conference agenda will also consider the biggest challenges facing MSP sales/commercial and marketing leaders, while spotlighting their golden opportunities and how to meet opportunities with confidence. Comms Vision will also ask whether MSPs who are focused inwardly on a cross-selling strategy are perhaps missing new

organic customer acquisition opportunities. And gauge whether there is a strong case for the channel to recharge new organic customer acquisition as a primary growth driver. Furthermore, given the need to fully understand the end customer business and get closer to ICT buyers, Comms Vision will explore how MSPs' commercial resources are evolving, including pre-sales, and whether these functions need to be re-engineered.

To help MSPs stay ahead of the GTM curve and ensure a competitive advantage our intention is to underscore the priority areas that MSP sales and marketing leaders would be wise to consider in order to make the right long-term commercial choices when setting out on their growth journey. This may involve tough decisions when remodelling sales teams for a brighter future, and will certainly involve an assessment of the impact of growing end user demand for tangible outcomes and value versus deliverables.

As well as commercial topics such as these... the emerging technologies requiring most attention will also be under the spotlight during an MSP-led insight panel where high profile MSP business leaders will provide first hand perspectives on navigating challenges and addressing market opportunities through the right technology, value propositions, GTM and revenue creation strategies. ■

### Comms Vision sponsor insights...

**THE following pages (37-88) carry the insights, market views and key messages put forward by this year's Comms Vision sponsors. And to find out more about the conference and its agenda please visit [www.commsvision.com](http://www.commsvision.com)**





# COMMS VISION CONVENTION 2024

THE NETWORK SUMMIT FOR ICT CHANNEL LEADERS

**CONFERENCE UPDATE**  
**Pages 37-88**



## **Remodelling technology and GTM planning**

This year's gold standard Comms Vision Convention (6th-8th November, Gleneagles Hotel) doubles down on the technology drivers transforming the channel's portfolios alongside how go-to-market (GTM) and revenue models are evolving – and what this all means for MSPs' strategic planning. In the following pages conference sponsors outline their strategic positioning amid a backdrop of industry change and share insights into their channel approaches and agendas.



# From telco to techco: How partners can gain a competitive edge

As the technology landscape evolves, many channel partners are evolving with it. Transforming themselves from telecommunications companies (telcos) into more dynamic, tech-centric organisations (techcos), they're unlocking enhanced competitiveness, better alignment with customer needs and long-term growth.

But that doesn't mean abandoning connectivity fundamentals in favour of emerging technologies like AI. Instead, channel partners must develop robust solutions combining forward-thinking technology with solid, sustainable network infrastructure.

## Connectivity in the AI age

Nearly two years since the launch of ChatGPT, AI is still generating buzz and shows no signs of slowing down. Our research shows that 61% of IT decision-makers plan to invest in AI this year.

However, the appetite for AI has to be backed by rock-solid infrastructure, especially as applications become more advanced. Whether it's for AI-driven customer service, predictive analytics or real-time data processing, organisations need networks that can support the increasingly demanding systems this technology depends on.

Channel partners play a vital role here, matching a variety of connectivity options to customer needs. Broadband is affordable and accessible, making it ideal for smaller businesses that use basic AI applications like chatbots, while Ethernet offers higher bandwidth, suitable for larger enterprises with heavier AI workloads. Ethernet also provides greater stability, which is critical for businesses that handle sensitive data or where downtime will have a detrimental impact.

The shift to all-IP networks must also be front of mind. As the industry phases out older systems, businesses must adapt to digital solutions that offer greater scalability, flexibility and efficiency. With all-IP infrastructure, businesses can seamlessly integrate AI technologies into their operations without worrying about network bottlenecks or connectivity failures.



**Gavin Jones**

Channel Director, BT Wholesale

## Sustainable infrastructure

Businesses are increasingly being judged not just on their profitability or technical skills but on their environmental impact too. Customers and stakeholders expect businesses to reduce their carbon footprints and offer more sustainable products. Channel companies that don't do this will inevitably lose out to more environmentally conscious competitors.

That means it's vital to invest in greener solutions. All-IP networks, for example, are generally more energy-efficient than legacy networks, reducing maintenance and engineering call-outs. Cloud-based solutions lessen the need for energy-hungry on-premises hardware too. This, in turn, appeals to eco-conscious customers and helps to boost revenue and promote loyalty.



## Investing in all-IP and 5G

Channel partners need to invest not only in all-IP but also in 5G networks to maximise the strength and reliability of their connections. As the 5G rollout continues at pace – with **EE now reaching more than 75% of the population<sup>1</sup>** – most resellers (**78%<sup>2</sup>**) say their customers are asking about 5G connectivity.



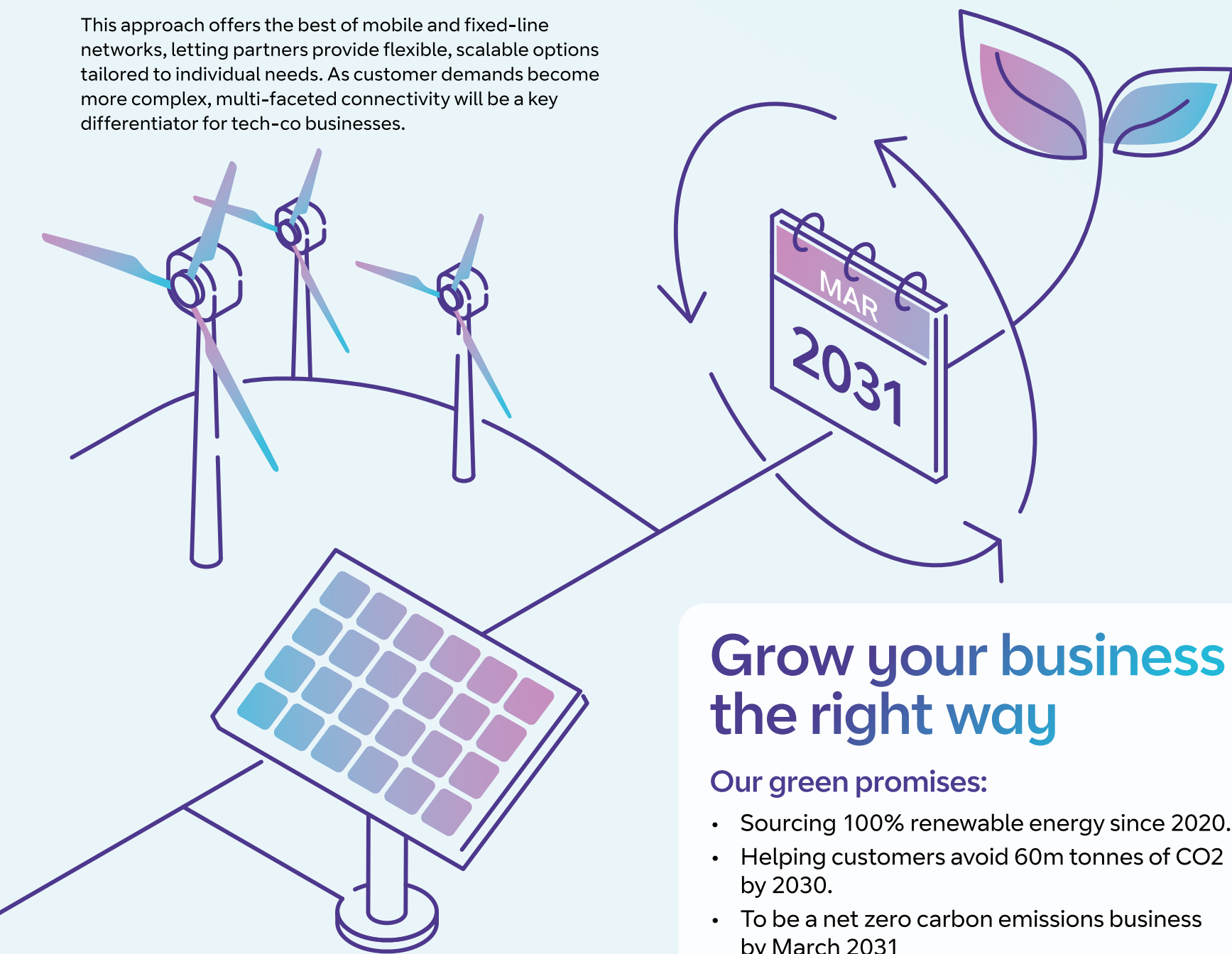
This presents a huge opportunity. Channel partners can enhance their portfolios while giving customers low-latency, high-bandwidth connections – ideal for advanced AI applications, the Internet of Things (IoT) and other emerging technologies.

Those who invest in a 5G proposition early will be well positioned to capture new market opportunities and offer customers future-proof connectivity. Moreover, integrating all-IP and 5G technologies enables them to deliver more comprehensive solutions.

This approach offers the best of mobile and fixed-line networks, letting partners provide flexible, scalable options tailored to individual needs. As customer demands become more complex, multi-faceted connectivity will be a key differentiator for tech-co businesses.

5G mobile networks are crucial in this new era of mobile connectivity. With ultra-low latency, high-speed data transfers and support for a growing number of connected devices, 5G can revolutionise how businesses operate.

The move from telco to techco is more than just a shift in services – it's a chance to embrace the future of connectivity, innovation and sustainability. Partners who align themselves with this evolution can look forward not only to new market opportunities, but also to stronger, longer-lasting customer relationships.



## Mobile matters

Providing mobile connectivity can be a good move for channel partners, particularly as remote and hybrid working grow in popularity, and businesses focus more on flexibility and on-the-go connectivity. This shift means channel partners can play a crucial role in enabling the future workplace, offering tools and infrastructure for seamless communication and productivity.

Mobile connectivity is also becoming increasingly intertwined with AI. Mobile devices are now capable of handling AI-driven applications, from advanced security features like biometric authentication to productivity-enhancing tools like intelligent assistants.

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# CityFibre shares vision for the future

It has been a whirlwind 12 months for CityFibre as we've made huge strides in expanding our national network, strengthening relationships with our partners and setting ourselves up for the future, to serve and strengthen businesses across the UK.



Andrew Wilson

**A**llowing MSPs to expand their business and grow, is something we'll address when at Comms Vision this year. See below for an inside scoop of what the team will be discussing this year, writes **Andrew Wilson**, Wholesale Sales Director at CityFibre.

We'll be letting attendees of our boardroom sessions know about our commitment to growing our network and continuing to innovate the product landscape. As the UK's largest independent full fibre provider, CityFibre is all about laying the groundwork for what's next in digital connectivity and Permission to Work (PTW) is something we're proud of. It's a process which allows for cost savings and an average 50% reduction in delivery times, by gaining approval at the point of order instead of putting it into a wayleave process by default, meaning our partners can reduce the time between

an order being placed and an invoice being raised.

Our network is designed to be future-proof, enabling our partners, businesses, and communities to thrive in a more connected world and our product roadmap plays a huge role in this. We're constantly evolving our offerings to stay ahead of market needs and help our partners deliver the services their customers want, now and in the future. At Comms Vision, we'll talk about how our roadmap aligns with emerging tech trends that are driving transformation across the communications industry. By helping our partners stay ahead of the curve, we're enabling them to tap into new growth opportunities and deliver innovative, data-driven solutions.

CityFibre's participation in Comms Vision is all about sharing our vision for the future of connectivity and supporting our partners

as they navigate a fast-evolving industry. We're excited to engage in meaningful conversations about how we can all succeed together, through innovation, collaboration, and putting customers first.

We look forward to sharing our experiences, learning from others, and building on the momentum of the past year as we continue to grow and drive industry change. We're excited to talk about what's to come for CityFibre, but we're proud of the journey that got us to where we are today. We'll reflect on how much we have achieved last year, pulling out key highlights such as the launch of FTTP Multi Gig and how we've expanding our business networks, as we said we would do.

It's been an incredible year for CityFibre and our partners, and our commitment to partnership is something we'll discuss during our

boardrooms too. We will go into detail on how we've continued to expand our footprint, introduced new products and improved our service levels, all driving better outcomes for our partners. We believe in going the extra mile, deepening our partnerships and working closely with our partners to help them scale and succeed.

At this year's Comms Vision, we'll share how our partnerships have been key to this growth in 2024. We're proud of the strong relationships, and we have invited some of our partners to join us during this session. Collaboration with our partners, vendors, and local authorities has allowed us to drive better outcomes for businesses and communities. Moving forward, we're focused on continuing to collaborate with our partners to make full-fibre connectivity a reality for everyone, and work to meet our target of 800,000 businesses served.

CityFibre exists to bring the benefits of infrastructure competition to homes and businesses across the UK. With our sights firmly set on addressing a third of the UK market, our determination to deliver better prices, better products and better service not only benefits those premises we pass, but also those we don't, forcing our competitors to invest and improve their own services. This is something we're proud of and is a reason we believe it is critical for a third national infrastructure platform to emerge.

As we fast approach our four million premises milestone, halfway to our eight million target, growing through our own organic build as well as network acquisition, we are cementing ourselves at the core of that third platform. We are maximising the scale and impact of our networks for partners. After all, CityFibre will only win if you, our customers, win. ■



# A NETWORK FIT FOR THE FUTURE. A PARTNERSHIP FIT FOR GROWTH.

## **We're leading the charge in the UK's digital revolution**

CityFibre's XGSPON infrastructure enables a lightning-fast 10Gbps service, designed to support the demands of modern digital life and future-proof UK connectivity.

## **We're fast-tracking change**

CityFibre are cutting through the red tape with our streamlined Permission to Work (PTW) process, accelerating the delivery of ultra-fast fibre to more businesses across the country.

## **We're challenging the status quo**

Here at CityFibre, we're pushing the boundaries of what's possible in UK connectivity by expanding our next-generation full fibre network, built to power the future.

# Gamma's drive for innovation and growth

This year marks an exciting evolution in Gamma's journey, as we continue to embrace new technologies and forge meaningful partnerships.



John Murphy

**A**t the core of this year's strategy is a commitment to innovation and collaboration, not just with our long-term partners but also with new acquisitions like Pragma and Candio, both of which bring their own unique strengths to the table, writes **John Murphy**, MD at Gamma.

#### **Fibre Rollout: The Foundation for Growth**

The telecoms industry is undergoing a massive shift from copper-based systems to fibre networks. As businesses transition to high-speed fibre connections across the UK and Europe, Gamma is well-positioned to lead the way. With a range of fibre providers joining our portfolio in the coming months, we're ensuring that our channel partners and their customers can fully leverage the power of faster, more reliable connections. This shift opens new opportunities to support modern businesses that depend on speed and consistency in their communications.

#### **5G and IoT: A New Era of Connectivity**

5G and IoT are transforming how businesses operate, with the promise of faster mobile connectivity and the ability to connect more devices than ever before. Gamma is actively exploring these technologies, with plans to roll out innovative mobile solutions that cater to businesses on the move. This is a critical area of focus for us, as businesses increasingly rely on seamless mobile and device connectivity to support their operations.

#### **Pragma and the iPECS Advantage**

One of the most exciting developments this year is Gamma's acquisition of Pragma, a leading provider of iPECS solutions. iPECS, a powerful UC platform, is designed to meet the needs of businesses of all sizes by offering advanced features such as integration with CRM systems, webchat, and AI-powered transcription services. iPECS is a versatile solution that empowers businesses to stay connected, collaborate effectively, and enhance customer

interactions. With Pragma now part of the Gamma family, we're thrilled to offer this cutting-edge solution to our partners and customers, further strengthening our position in the market.

#### **Candio: Elevating Cybersecurity Solutions**

In addition to Pragma, Candio, another recent acquisition, brings expertise in cybersecurity to the Gamma portfolio. In an era where cyber threats are becoming more sophisticated, Candio's suite of security products is designed to protect businesses from a wide range of risks. From network security to data protection and threat monitoring, Candio's solutions ensure that businesses can operate safely and securely in today's digital landscape. As part of Gamma, Candio will help us offer comprehensive cybersecurity solutions, enabling businesses to focus on growth without worrying about the security of their networks and data.

#### **Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning: Smarter**

#### **Solutions for a Better Future**

Another area where Gamma is investing heavily is in AI and ML. In partnership with Cisco, we are developing AI-driven solutions that will enhance customer experiences, streamline operations, and reduce costs. These technologies are reshaping how businesses operate by automating routine tasks and providing insights that allow for more informed decision-making. For Gamma, AI and ML are critical tools that help us continue delivering innovative solutions that meet the evolving needs of businesses.

#### **Collaborating for Success**

Collaboration has always been a key part of Gamma's success, and this year is no different. We are expanding our partnerships with Cisco to include cutting-edge collaboration tools and integrating these into our existing communication platforms, including the newly launched Horizon with Webex solution. Additionally, Pragma's iPECS and Candio's security offerings enhance our portfolio, giving our partners

more opportunities to grow their businesses and offer value to their customers.

As the market evolves, Gamma remains committed to helping our partners succeed by providing advanced technologies, training, and resources to adopt and implement these solutions effectively. By combining our strengths in fibre, 5G, AI, and UC, we're positioning ourselves, and our partner, to thrive in the years to come.

#### **Looking Ahead**

Gamma's focus on innovation, collaboration, and partnerships sets us apart in the telecommunications industry. Whether it's rolling out faster fibre connections, embracing 5G and IoT, or offering advanced solutions through Pragma and Candio, we're committed to helping businesses unlock their full potential. Together with our partners, we're not just surviving in a competitive marketplace, we're thriving. Gamma is leading the way to a brighter future for business communications. ■





# A different breed of communications provider

#GoodTogether



At Gamma, we know the power of building strong, meaningful relationships. Our customers and partners agree. They tell us what makes us stand out isn't just our technology, but the way we nurture and value the partnerships that drive business success.

**True connection runs deeper than technology.**

We power the businesses that support you through the everyday and the extraordinary days. From local businesses to critical blue light services.

To find out more visit [gammagroup.co](https://gammagroup.co)





# Seize new opportunities: imagine what we can do together

**As the IT and communications sectors continue to evolve and converge, SMBs are increasingly looking for one strategic partner capable of delivering integrated solutions and managed services across cloud, connectivity, communications, and cybersecurity, writes Terry O'Brien, CEO of Giacom.**



Terry O'Brien

By making the previously complex mobile and connectivity segments simple to access, we are helping MSPs seize the untapped opportunity to build profitable revenue streams in the mobile and connectivity services that underpin SMB cloud services.

Additionally, we are helping experienced connectivity and UC partners capitalise on the transition to all-IP with our All-IP Managed Service (AIMS). This simplifies the switch from legacy PSTN systems to IP-based networks, enabling partners to deliver reliable, future-proof connectivity while securing new revenue streams as businesses make the shift.

#### What to Expect from Giacom at Comms Vision 2024

A this year's Comms Vision, where we'll explore these and other initiatives while diving deeper into the vast SMB opportunity during our boardroom sessions and 1:1 meetings. Our partner strategy is designed to empower partners to thrive in their target markets, and our executive team will share insights into how partners can monetise new opportunities and win business in the SMB space.

In collaboration with Sky and CityFibre, we'll also unveil some of our upcoming initiatives.

We look forward to connecting with you at the event and raising a glass as we collectively celebrate the bright future of the channel.

This shift presents a major opportunity for the channel to broaden its scope and become trusted advisors, offering strategic guidance, monitoring, and ongoing optimisation to ensure customers leverage maximum value from their technology investments.

SMBs collectively invest upwards of £40bn annually in technology, yet much of this completely bypasses the channel. Our mission is for every small business to buy their ICT from a local expert technology provider. We empower our partners to embrace and capitalise on these changes, helping them become the strategic partners SMBs are searching for. With our curated services, innovative software tools, Cloud Market platform, and extensive expertise, we enable our partners to expand their portfolios and create recurring, predictable revenue streams, while delivering exceptional value to their customers.

#### Delivering Continuous Value

The increasing complexity of technology management,

particularly around cybersecurity and cloud infrastructure, means SMBs need more than just one-off solutions. They require a strategic partner who offers holistic, managed services to support their entire technology ecosystem, including reliable comms and connectivity solutions that underpin emerging technologies.

It's also about ensuring these solutions are fully integrated into SMBs' operations. By continuously monitoring licence usage, security posture, and system performance, MSPs can provide proactive recommendations, transforming relationships from transactional to strategic. This approach strengthens client loyalty while securing sustainable, recurring revenue with predictable monthly income.

#### Accelerating Partner Growth

Embracing new technologies and expanding service offerings can be a complex journey, so we've developed our Growth Accelerator packages to support partner's every step of the way. These

packages are designed to help partners adopt new products and services and seize emerging opportunities.

From commercial calculators that identify the most lucrative opportunities to tailored onboarding and training, we ensure that partners have the tools and knowledge. Growth Accelerator is particularly focused on high-demand areas like cybersecurity and AI-powered threat detection, helping partners integrate advanced solutions into their portfolios.

#### Everything in one Place: Cloud Market

Cloud Market, launched last year, is already delivering a wide range of benefits to our 6,000+ local expert technology providers. It provides a unified platform experience, where partners can seamlessly access and manage a comprehensive array of comms, cloud, connectivity, and hardware products from the world's leading vendors and service providers.

Earlier this year, we introduced a major update to

Cloud Market, making it more efficient for partners. Now, with a showcase of over 1,500 detailed product pages and an upgraded user experience, it enables partners to streamline procurement, management, and billing. It serves as a one-stop shop, simplifying complex processes and allowing partners to easily expand their service portfolios.

A new mega-menu makes it simple for partners to navigate our full range of offerings, ensuring they can respond quickly to customer needs and deliver a seamless experience. This enables our partners to go broader and deeper, offering a comprehensive range of solutions.

#### Supporting Partners with Expertise and New Opportunities

Our recent acquisition of intY, a leading Microsoft Cloud Service Provider, further strengthens our ability to support partners as they move into the cloud, security and IT markets. It allows us to offer deeper expertise in cloud, cybersecurity, and Microsoft services.





# Imagine

what we can  
do together

Giacom is a specialist cloud marketplace where a community of over 6,000 MSPs and Resellers access Cloud, Comms and Hardware products and services from the world's leading vendors and carriers. We provide integrations and tools to streamline your business (with sales, order management, billing and self-service solutions, APIs and more), as well as enablement, training and marketing resources to help you build broader and deeper skills.

With Giacom, you're backed by a team of the best people dedicated to supporting you.

**Imagine growing your business faster.  
You can, with Giacom.**



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**GIACOM.**



# Seize every opportunity for growth with PXC

**On a mission to become the UK's wholesale platform of choice, it's crucial that PlatformX Communications (PXC) is at the forefront of the technological forces reshaping the Channel's future – a key theme at this year's Comms Vision.**

**T**hat's why, for the first time ever, we're able to attend this flagship industry event as PXC, born out of TalkTalk Wholesale Services and Virtual1 to disrupt, innovate and drive opportunities for the Channel. We're excited to share the strategy that will help our partners reimagine what's possible in future, writes **James Smith** who will be appearing as CEO for the first time at the event.

At this year's event, experts from different parts of the business will take part in panel discussions, Q&As and boardroom sessions centred on topics we believe are pivotal in the Channel moving forwards.

James will be first to the stage from PXC, taking part in a Platinum Sponsor fireside chat led by event hosts, giving his views on current market conditions, where the growth opportunities lie and PXC's strategy on future fibre supply. He'll be setting PXC's objectives for the coming years and answering the

questions on everyone's lips – as a new brand how are PXC 'doing things differently'? What are his priorities in his new role? And, how are PXC enabling partners to seize new opportunities? James will also be taking part in a boardroom session dedicated to an open Q&A and is looking forward to meeting and answering the questions of all in attendance.

Next, PXC has been hyper-focused on providing the market with FTTP connectivity and has recently ramped up work in this area aggregating the UK's leading altnets. At this year's event, Chief Product and Marketing Officer Neil Wilson, will lead a boardroom delving into where the UK is on this journey and what products the Channel can consume now and in future with PXC. He will also bring to the stage the connectivity incumbents, alongside experts from some of the UK's altnets in a panel to explore why PXC works with all types of fibre builder and

the opportunities it brings to the sector.

For delegates wanting to learn more about PXC's transformation journey and the products and trends to look out for in the industry, Neil will also be taking part in a panel session examining the technology transformations that will accelerate channel growth, and helping partners make the best strategic choices for their target markets.

At last year's Comms Vision, we launched our partnership with Zoom. Since then, we've been making great progress with our trial partners behind the scenes which Graham Kedzlie, our Director of Voice Sales, is excited to share. Joined by experts from Zoom, Graham will showcase what we've already achieved and set our intentions for the coming year. He will discuss which components we'll be rolling out and provide a sneak peek of the automation we've built into our portal, that channel partners can benefit from as we strive to become the most



**James Smith**

innovatively automated Service Provider into the Zoom ecosystem.

Next, while the cloud space is ever evolving, the opportunities it brings channel partners are vast, with businesses tackling tough decisions like whether to handle their own on-premise hardware or to outsource. Couple this with the growing complexity of cybersecurity and the market has a task on its hands to enable the businesses our partners serve to operate effectively. An expert in this area, our Head of Cloud and Security Sales Lee Walker, will speak to both cloud and security markets, discussing the trends in each area, how to get the most out of cloud

investments, and the best overlay services to ensure your solutions stay resilient. Through our relationships with industry-leading security specialists, Lee will explain why our suite of security services is the one you should go-to-market with.

PXC's goal is to help channel partners seize every opportunity for growth. At this year's Comms Vision, we're excited to meet both new and familiar faces to discuss your development strategies in the one-to-one meetings across the event—led by Chief Sales Officer Paul Smith—and in the future. We've got the solutions you need, powered by next-level automation and personalised support. ■



# Take on tomorrow.



**Whatever growth means for you,  
we've got the solutions to support  
it, backed by next-level automation  
and personalised support.**



# Leading the way in channel partnerships

Since its establishment in 2018, Sky Business Wholesale has been making significant strides to enhance its presence in the channel, driven by a clear vision and purposeful strategic partnerships.

**W**ith exciting new collaborations and a commitment to transforming the channel, we want to create a lasting and positive impact on the industry, writes Damien Saunders, Managing Director; Sky Business Hospitality, Mid-Market & Wholesale.

Last year, we unveiled our new brand, marking our formal introduction to the wholesale market and signalling our intent to become a key player. From that point on, we have pursued exciting new partnerships, invested into existing relationships and evolved our offering to meet the needs of the industry. We've also been engaging in dialogue with customers and suppliers as to how we can enhance our service model to deliver a best-in-class proposition.

Sky Business Wholesale's proactive approach to digital transformation is another

key factor in its success. By investing in technical innovation and market-leading partnerships, we ensure that our partners are always one step ahead.

We announced a strategic partnership with leading channel provider Giacom, aiming to deliver better solutions for the channel. Our purpose as a business is to provide better solutions to keep businesses moving forward, and working in partnership with Giacom allows us to offer a better choice of connectivity to our customers. Drawing on their breadth of partners and expertise, we are developing a roadmap of products that will help shape the future for our partners and their customers. By working closely with Giacom's teams, Sky Business Wholesale has gained a deeper understanding of what resellers and MSPs need from their providers. This collaborative feedback loop has enabled us to



Damian Saunders

adapt, invest in our roadmap, and improve our service and operational models.

We recently announced a new long-term agreement with ITS to deliver robust, high-capacity Ethernet connectivity to businesses across the UK. The agreement builds on the success of our existing relationship with ITS and brings the best of our two networks together, using an innovative combination of ITS's fibre and Sky Business's core network to deliver high quality, ultrafast business-grade services. This deal allows Sky Business to continue offering to the sector and offer flexibility and choice, whilst partners will receive an excellent service experience managed by Sky Business's UK-led operational centre.

Sky Business Wholesale is driven by a commitment to making a positive impact, not just in the channel, but

in the broader community as well. This year we had the opportunity to take part in the Big Goal initiative, part of the Street Soccer Foundation, which uses football to tackle youth homelessness and foster community integration. Sky Business Wholesale is proud to support this project, and we hope other businesses in the channel will join in making a difference.

Sky Business is part of Sky's broader social impact programme, Sky Up, designed to help people realise their potential by creating opportunities and advancing digital equity. Our Sky Up Hub programme helps to bridge the digital divide in our most underserved communities across the UK, Ireland, and Italy. We support this by providing access to free reliable internet connections in our Digital Hubs, alongside tech equipment, digital training and bespoke events. By supporting this

initiative, Sky Business is playing an active role in improving digital access for those who need it most.

Looking ahead, we remain focused on building strong relationships with partners and evolving the channel for the better. With our high-capacity, fibre-first network, that has 100Gb capability and 99.99% reliability uptime, Sky Business Wholesale is well-positioned to support businesses now and in the future. Our connectivity solutions are designed to help partners strengthen their portfolios and deliver the best possible experiences to their customers.

As a platinum sponsor for this year's Comms Vision, we are excited to connect with industry leaders and demonstrate our dedication to transforming the connectivity landscape. We're looking forward to sharing the latest updates with partners in our boardroom sessions, including innovative new products, systems and capabilities heading into 2025.

By embracing innovation, fostering collaboration, and driving positive change, Sky Business Wholesale is setting a new standard for the future of wholesale connectivity. ■






## Shaping the future of connectivity

We're excited to share our latest innovations, partnerships, and how we're driving positive change in the channel.



Discover Sky Business Wholesale

Proud Platinum sponsor at  **commsvision**

All products and services are subject to terms and conditions and location.

# Future-Proofing Connectivity: Our Commitment to Innovation and Partnership

**With the technology landscape in constant flux, businesses are under increasing pressure to keep up. Shifting macroeconomic forces and rapid advances in technology are transforming the way we work and operate.**

**B**usiness applications are evolving, in turn demanding more sophisticated and agile IT infrastructure to support them. This chain reaction of factors is pushing companies to rethink how they build and future-proof their organisations and the services they provide, writes **John Chester**, Director of Wholesale, Fixed, Virgin Media O2 Business.

For many in the connectivity sector, this has meant assessing whether they're set up for long-term success or if they need to restructure to keep up.

Earlier this year, I participated in a panel where I spoke about the de-layering of the telecommunications industry and how many companies are restructuring to better serve their customers. After years of convergence and service aggregation, we're seeing the market shift towards disaggregation, allowing companies to focus on core business areas and better serve the needs of an increasingly complex connectivity ecosystem.

**Evolving our network and wholesale business**

In line with this industry-wide shift, earlier this year Virgin Media O2, together with its shareholders Liberty Global and Telefónica, announced its intention to create a distinct national fixed network company (NetCo). Aligned with Virgin Media O2's current network strategy, NetCo will focus on completing the company's ongoing fibre upgrade programme which sees the existing cable network overlaid with full fibre.

The transition to FTTP represents the replacement of legacy technology with a future-proof solution that will serve businesses and communities for decades to come. It's not just about replacing old copper networks; it's about building a robust, high-capacity system that can handle the data demands of the future at a competitive cost.

The NetCo will offer clear wholesale choice at scale for other providers as a major alternative to BT's Openreach. I believe establishing a wholesale-focused NetCo is our strategy for future-proofing our organisation and setting ourselves up to serve the needs of our wholesale partners.

This investment is more than just about scale; it's about choice. We are committed to offering our MSPs and channel partners a clear and competitive wholesale connectivity portfolio that helps them meet their own customers' evolving needs.

#### **Future-Proofing Connectivity for Emerging Technologies**

The future of connectivity is not just about replacing legacy infrastructure; it's about preparing networks for the digital future. Emerging technologies like AI, edge computing, extended reality, distributed ledger technology, the metaverse, and quantum computing are all poised to have a profound impact on societies, businesses and the connectivity demands on the channel.

We recently launched our 'Ready for Impact' report, which concluded that all these innovations demand bandwidth, low latency, and symmetrical access connections to operate at their full potential. The question is not whether these changes are coming (they undoubtedly are), but whether networks are ready for their impact.

At Virgin Media Business



**John Chester**

Wholesale, we recognised the need to future-proof both our network and our wholesale offering to handle these new demands. That's why we set upon Project Spark, a programme of investment to upgrade our infrastructure to ensure it's geared-up to support the next generation of wholesale connectivity requirements.

This project began in December 2022, when we launched a new core network for high-capacity services, initially spanning 10 core sites and four data centres in a figure-of-eight from London to Bristol, and through the Midlands to Manchester and Leeds. In early 2024, we extended the network to four additional key data centres—four in London and Equinix MA5 in Manchester. This pre-built, low-latency, and scalable network can light up services instantly across the country once connected to a customer site.

We're also extending this technology into nearly all of our metro hub sites across

the UK. By the end of 2024, over half of our network will be upgraded, enabling rapid deployment of 10GB services with the same ease as our current 1GB offerings. We're expecting this to reduce delivery times by up to 40 days and allow us to create more success stories as our partners and their customers shift to higher bandwidth connections.

#### **Looking Forward**

At Virgin Media Business Wholesale, we're continuously evolving to meet the demands of a changing industry. With the announcement of our new fixed network company, supercharging our network through Project Spark, and equipping our workforce with cutting-edge skills, we're building a future-ready business that offers growth for our partners in a rapidly evolving digital world.

Want to know more? You can find us at Comms Vision this year – reach out to set up a meeting. [www.virginmediabusiness.co.uk/wholesale](http://www.virginmediabusiness.co.uk/wholesale)



Scan this QR code for more information



# Take your business to another level

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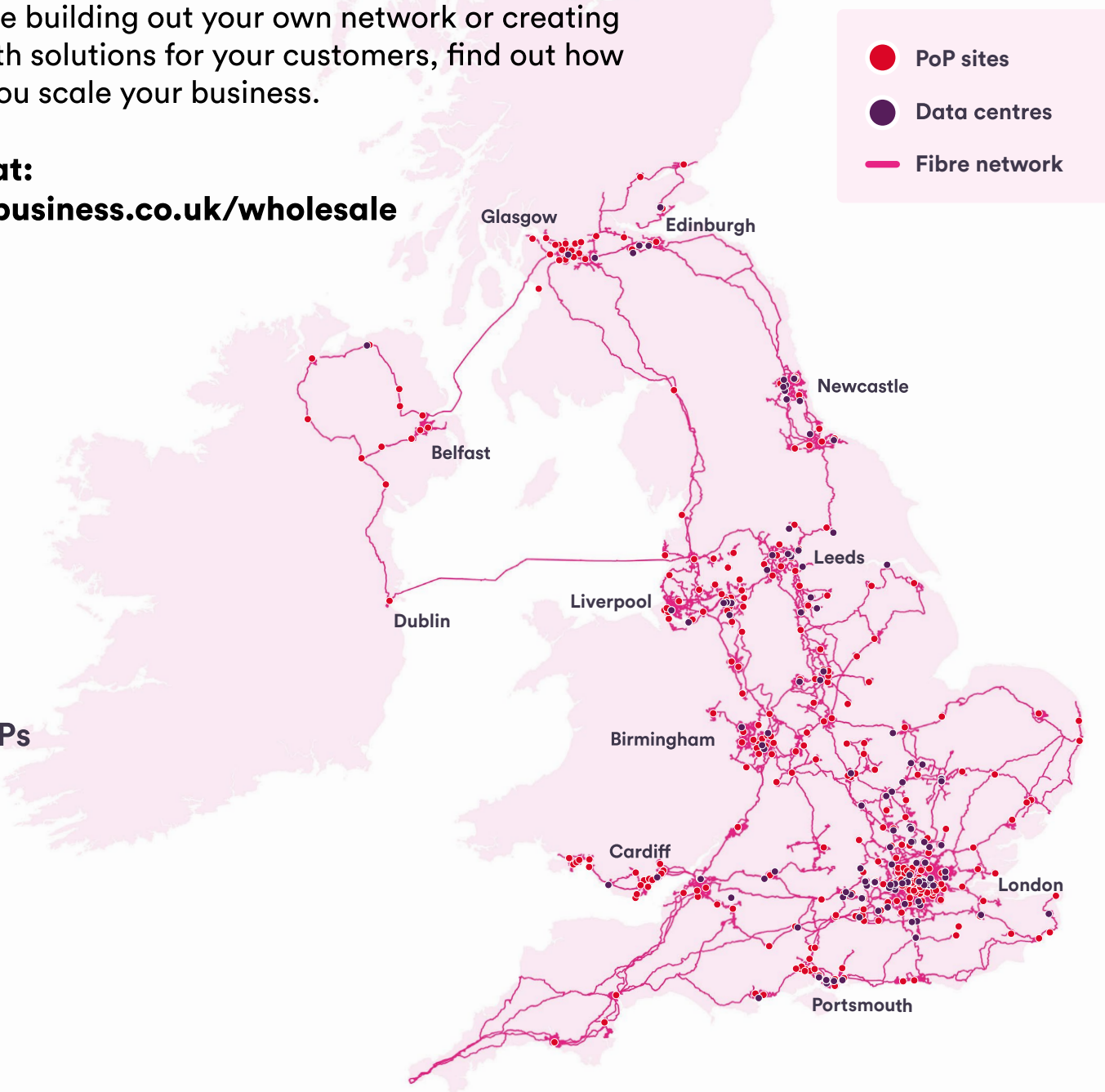
Whether you're building out your own network or creating high bandwidth solutions for your customers, find out how we can help you scale your business.

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**2<sup>nd</sup>**  
largest fibre network in the UK

  
**336 Virgin Media O2 PoPs**  
covering most UK businesses

  
**160+**  
connected data centres



# More than just buzzword bingo

The discussion around emerging technology such as AI, 5G, and IoT) is shifting the priorities of businesses and changing the shape of the channel, writes Kathryn Platt, Head of Indirect Business, Vodafone UK.



Kathryn Platt

To help us give our partners the best support possible, Vodafone has commissioned new research into the future of the channel. The findings show that it is much more than buzzword bingo - 81% of end users said business interest in emerging technologies has increased in the past six months and 96% said that emerging technology would be part of their company's vision of the future.

To make this a reality, partners have a fundamental role to play in supporting more businesses on their digital transformation journey. Their task is to help customers understand emerging technology and demonstrate how it can be leveraged to deliver real impact, from driving efficiencies to improving customer service.

This presents a significant opportunity, and our partners are already doing a brilliant job to maximise this. However, with emerging technology becoming

increasingly important, partners must build on their unrivalled understanding of the market and customer needs to work with the right vendors and help bridge the knowledge gap for customers, effectively turning tech into tangible business benefits and return on investment.

#### It is about more than just the next big thing

While AI might be the hot topic, it's important to remember that a portfolio of technologies is required for businesses to meet their objectives.

While the future might be centred around emerging technology, there is still space for mature solutions such as mobile security and software applications. In fact, 68% of end users see mature solutions forming part of their future vision. For businesses, the focus is more on the benefits rather than the specific technology used to achieve them. According to our research, end users are focused on efficiency, productivity, and data

security, and will be looking for a mix of new and tried-and-tested technology to meet their objectives.

For example, businesses that have employees in multiple locations or on the road may want to increase workforce collaboration, enable remote working, and boost productivity. Therefore, the best solution would be a flexible unified cloud communications platform with team messaging, video meetings, and cloud phone system, that provides an optimised experience on any device, for anyone, anywhere.

On the factory floor, connecting an autonomous production line would require a high upload speed to feed information into the cloud, but also high download speeds and ultra-low latency to make any corrections. 5G would be the best option for this use case.

However, if you are a car manufacturer and want to protect customers and keep them reassured that their car is fitted with the highest

standards of security, this would require constant connectivity, and IoT would, therefore, be the best solution.

Consequently, the objective for partners is to work with vendors to pair the right technology with the right use case. This remains a challenge for today's channel, different technologies have different requirements, so cost and logistical challenges might undermine the benefits of the use case itself. To ensure it is commercially viable to customers, we need to collaborate to offer the right technology for the end-user's needs. Which is why at Vodafone we have a built a partner portfolio that allows us to take a technology-agnostic approach to problem solving.

#### The opportunity

So, what can channel partners do now to ensure they remain ahead of the competition? Quite simply: they should draw on their vendor partnerships and start looking to build

revenue streams with emerging technology, now. And to do that, they should be educating and inspiring customers of the technology's many benefits.

The growing complexity of technology underscores the vital role channel partners play as educators, enablers, and problem solvers. Yet, with a rapidly shifting market and competition coming from resellers and vendors, evolution is inevitable: 70% of partners expect to have to remodel what they are traditionally known for to remain competitive.

With the promise of transformative and innovative applications, emerging technology presents a tremendous opportunity to re-engage existing customers and break into new areas. Ultimately, it will be those channel partners who are fastest to embrace emerging technology and adapt to the change in demand that will gain the competitive advantage in 2025 and beyond. ■





Supporting our Partners  
to drive growth on



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# M&A outlook brightens

**As I write this, we are two weeks away from the first Budget under the new Labour Government, but as you are reading this, we are likely to be almost two weeks the other side of the Budget, making this editorial slightly trickier, writes Knight Corporate Finance Director Adam Zoldan.**



**Adam Zoldan**

**T**hings would be more predictable if this was very much a "New Labour"

Government (who introduced the original £10m of Entrepreneurs' Relief to business owners), but sadly this "new Labour" Government has proven to be less business friendly in its short time in office.

What we have seen in 2024 to date is renewed impetus for M&A across the ICT sector, even though this has yet to translate into completed transactions (see below), but we sense, and our own activity validates, that transaction volumes will start to increase again very soon.

From a sellers' perspective, this is partly driven by fears over Capital Gains Tax ("CGT") rises, and so exiting now will reduce the risk of being on the wrong side of any potential increases. From a buyer's perspective, acquisitions are still the surest way of growing

significantly in the sector, and so demand remains high.

Sector analysts Megabuyte have highlighted that transaction volumes in "ICT & Digital" in the first 9 months of 2024 are down by 22% compared to the same period in 2023. "ICT & Digital" covers Business Process Outsourcers, IT Consulting, IT Managed Services, Telecoms Services and Value-Added Resellers. If you narrow that down to just Telecoms Services and IT Managed Services, deal volumes over the same period are down 27%.

There are several reasons why volumes have fallen. From a macro perspective, higher interest rates have meant that debt funded acquisitions are more expensive, and debt being more difficult to obtain. There has also been a level of economic uncertainty that has created caution across the market. M&A has also had a very good run since

the initial shock of the pandemic, so we are comparing against some above average trends.

From a sector perspective, volumes have been affected by general trading performance in some targets who were perhaps selling on forecasts that were not achieved during due diligence, and from the fact that many the regular consolidators were pre-occupied with their own re-financing in H2 of 2023 and H1 of 2024. That meant that several of the regular consolidators stopped acquiring.

Our optimistic outlook for M&A is driven by a number of things. As we stated earlier, a push from sellers to beat potential CGT rises in the Budget is having an impact, although very few would have been able to start a process following the General Election in July and complete by the end of October. Some however will want to ensure that if they

miss the Autumn Budget, they hit the Spring one next year.

What is probably having more of an impact is the view that interest rates have peaked, and the next move is likely to be downwards, giving renewed confidence for some of the more prolific consolidators. Focus Group have already acquired 10 businesses in 2024, with no doubt more to come, and SCG recently announced its 3rd, 4th and 5th deals of the year. 2024 has also seen private equity investment or reinvestment

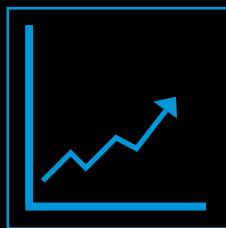
in Kick ICT, Kerv, Smart Numbers, Equity Networks, Focus Group, Quorum Cyber, Communicate Technology, TSG, Creative ICT, Evolve Managed Network Solutions and Transparency. That's 11 likely acquirers armed with more funding for M&A.

From a Knight perspective, we are as busy as ever, and 3 recent recruits is testament to how we feel about M&A activity moving forwards. Like many, we will be watching the Budget on 30th October with interest. ■

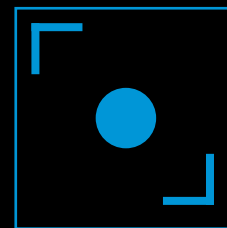


# The Art of the Possible

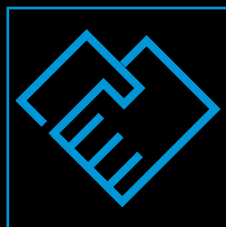
Knight Corporate Finance is a corporate finance boutique providing advice to business owners in the Technology sector.



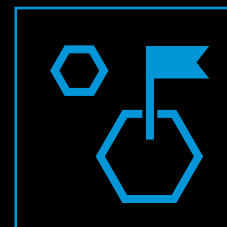
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# Beyond Connectivity in the Channel

**As we gather at the stunning Gleneagles again for Comms Vision 2024, it's clear that the landscape of the channel is shaping up for a seismic shift. The days when connectivity alone could drive growth and profitability are behind us, writes Ryan Martin, Head of Indirect at ANS Group**

**T**oday, the channel is brimming with opportunities that extend far beyond traditional connectivity services. For channel partners, the imperative to adapt and harness new technologies has never been more urgent. At ANS, we've been working closely with our partners to highlight and unlock the vast potential that lies ahead in their customer base, across Cloud, Security, Digital and AI services.

#### **The Expanding Horizon: AI and Co-pilot Technologies**

AI is no longer a futuristic concept; it is a present-day reality transforming industries across the board. There is barely a call or meeting that goes by where it isn't mentioned or a tech article where it isn't referenced. AI represents a goldmine of opportunities for the channel. Technologies like Microsoft's Co-pilot are revolutionising how businesses operate, offering advanced capabilities in data

analysis, customer service, and operational efficiency.

At ANS, our Partner Programme helps our partners build specific use cases for AI with their customers utilising our industry leading Navigators, but we also encourage our partners to look beyond just selling a licence and using AI as a driver to unlock more opportunities across the Microsoft Stack.

#### **Tapping into the Booming Business Applications Market**

The Business Applications market, particularly platforms like Microsoft Dynamics and Power Apps, is experiencing explosive growth. These tools empower businesses to streamline operations, enhance productivity, and drive innovation. For channel partners, this presents an opportunity to expand their service portfolio and build deeper, stickier relationships with their customers.

Knitting it all together is



**Rysan Martin**

Microsoft Dynamics which offers comprehensive solutions for CRM and ERP, enabling businesses to manage their operations more effectively. By offering these solutions, channel partners can help their clients achieve greater operational efficiency and agility.

The demand for Business Applications is not limited to large enterprises. SMEs, a larger cohort of channel customers, are increasingly recognising the value of these tools. Our Partner Programme has a low touch, unique proposition for our partners who cater to this segment allowing them to gain significantly. We will launch some exciting new propositions at Comms Vision this year, including an innovative approach to delivering Microsoft Dynamics via the channel community. Delivering a solution catalogue-led approach with vertical Dynamics 365 templates and low-code applications

for popular industries and functions, offering as unmanaged solutions to managed service customers who can purchase additional professional services to accelerate deployment. This differentiated strategy will open doors for channel partners to accelerate Dynamics 365 and low-code opportunities at scale.

#### **The Power of Partnerships**

The channel has always been built on partnerships and in this rapidly evolving landscape, partnerships are more critical than ever to unlocking opportunities and reducing go-to-market costs.

Our Partner Programme takes all the elements that made us Microsoft UK Services Partner of the Year 2024 and enable our partners to leverage the expertise and resources of our team, reducing the time and cost associated with developing new solutions. Our partnerships also facilitate knowledge sharing and innovation. By joining

our Partner Programme, partners can stay up to date with the latest trends and developments, ensuring they remain competitive in a rapidly changing market. Our white label campaign toolkits and Partner Navigators can help partners identify new opportunities and develop innovative solutions to address their clients' evolving needs.

#### **Adapting to the New Normal**

The channel is at a crossroads. To thrive in this new era, partners must embrace change and adapt to the evolving landscape. This requires a shift in mindset, from viewing connectivity as the primary driver of growth to recognising the vast potential of new technologies and business applications.

Investing in these new technologies is not just about staying competitive; it's about driving growth, innovation and having a dramatic impact on market valuation. Taking advantage of this opportunity doesn't need to be a significant investment, utilising and working with strategic partners with the relevant expertise will help the channel accelerate identifying, delivering and benefitting from these technologies.

As we navigate this transformative period, the message is clear the channel lies beyond connectivity. By embracing new technologies like AI and business applications, and by forging strategic partnerships, partners can unlock unprecedented opportunities and drive growth in this dynamic market. ■



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Elevating Partnerships | Empowering Possibilities

# Why sell mobile data?

**Your customers are working on mobile data projects right now and demand is predicted to increase dramatically over the next few years. If you get it right with M2M and IoT, you will quickly generate high-margin recurring revenue and, due to higher EBITDA multiples, increase the value of your company, writes Adrian Sunderland, CEO at Jola**



Adrian Sunderland

**A**ccording to McKinsey, mobile data revenues are set to increase dramatically over the next five years. Factors driving growth are the availability, speed and reliability of 4G, 5G and IoT. Statista says the number of IoT devices worldwide is forecast to grow to more than 25.4 billion IoT devices in 2030. Fortune Business Insights predict this market will be worth £1085bn by 2027.

People think IoT is very low revenue and you've got to win hundreds of thousands. You don't. You can often get a decent ARPU of £10 to £15 on thousands of devices and sometimes margins in excess of 40%, so it's a really attractive line of business to pivot into.

Your mobile data partner must give you the tools to win deals, usually competing with the direct sales arms of the mobile networks. Your supplier will need to be an aggregator with

access to all the networks and ideally, they will also be an independent MVNO. Everything must be automated, with real-time APIs offering zero-touch provisioning and management through a single self-service portal.

They will need to be innovative, with a constant stream of relevant mobile data and IoT products that the networks would take years to develop and launch. When you partner with the right channel supplier, mobile data is easy to sell, support and bill.

The opportunity for the channel is significant. ICT resellers already have strong relationships with business customers for IT infrastructure, asset tracking, digital signage, mobile WiFi, monitoring and utilities.

Mobile data is an easy product to sell and provision and needs very little support. Jola took on just over 150 new partners in 2023 and

now has over 1400. We give partners solutions they can't buy from any other supplier such as global roaming SIMs which roam over four networks in the UK and hundreds globally for voice, data and SMS activating thousands of SIMs from a single QR code and secure pre-configured plug-and-play solutions for digital signage. We give partners mobile data solutions for every customer in any market globally.

Scale - Our partners don't have to add any more people in billing or accounts to support these deals. SIMs provision immediately using our Mobile Manager platform, so you don't have to wait to start generating recurring margins. As soon as customers put that SIM into their device, you're billing for it.

Getting started - speak to your existing customers, understand their requirements, and then partner with an aggregator that can provide innovative

solutions, unavailable elsewhere. Find out about their current projects and challenges. Once you have established your customers' requirements, start building your solution. Jola has developed The Mobile-data Revenue Generator™. It is a six-step process to do just this.

#### Jola

Jola is a mobile data aggregator and MVNO, part of the Wireless Logic Group, but channel-only and independent, which means that we offer services from all the major UK networks and hundreds of networks globally. We have been selling mobile data to the channel since 2014 and we understand the pain points of our partners and the needs of their end-users in each vertical market. We have developed a unique portal that gives you the control and visibility you need to manage global SIM estates. Control you can even extend to your customers. We have also

developed unique hardware solutions that save our partners time, helping them create a great customer experience, maximise their margin and minimise costs for their customers. We have partners who have doubled the value of their business, increased their ARPU and reduced churn by focusing on mobile data.

#### Our network

The Jola network is built on technology from AWS, Cloudflare and Cisco and underpins our Fixed IP and Private APN services. We are the first MVNO in the world to partner with Cloudflare to ensure secure, fast delivery across our network. Cloudflare gives Jola partners protection against DDOS attacks and peace of mind that we are using world-class suppliers to prevent emerging threats.

Jola is a Gold Sponsor at Comms Vision again this year. To find out more about how to get into M2M or IoT, come and see us there. ■

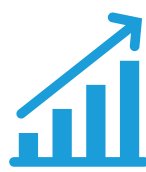


# Channel-only Mobile-data aggregator

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Grow profitable revenue streams



Increase the value of your business



Win new 'sticky' customers



Build innovative propositions  
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**Mobile Manager**<sup>®</sup>

Manage your global SIM  
estate in real-time in our  
automated white label portal



**Mobile-data Revenue Generator**<sup>™</sup>

6 step process to uncover  
mobile-data opportunities

For more info visit...

[www.jola.co.uk](http://www.jola.co.uk)

# Monetising Hybrid Observability with LogicMonitor

Modern IT environments are beyond complex. Layers of applications, platforms, tools and infrastructure make up a disjointed ecosystem that is hard to see, let alone manage. However, businesses cannot afford to stop, and do not think they need to with the expectations of fast-paced, downtime-free networks and flawless app performances quickly becoming the norm. With the right hybrid observability capabilities on their side, business can continue as normal.

Enter MSPs tasked with coordinating, monitoring, and overseeing a wilderness of fragmented data and turning it into a compliant, harmonious, fault-free system, writes **Rob Huckin**, Regional VP, EMEA at LogicMonitor. With the right tools, an MSP can defy logic, with the ability see, manage and understand entire systems from one place.

**The evolution of managed services: From reactive to proactive and predictive**  
**Transforming from reactive to proactive:** In the initial stages, MSPs rely on basic monitoring tools, often reacting to issues only after they have already disrupted client operations. Systems crash, performance degrades, and downtime occurs, leaving the MSP scrambling to resolve the issue. This approach results in unplanned work and dissatisfied clients.

By adopting LogicMonitor, MSPs gain complete real-time visibility across

on-premises, cloud, and hybrid environments. No longer are they blind to potential issues—but can detect warning signs early on and prevent disruptions. LogicMonitor's proactive alerting capabilities notify the MSP of emerging risks before they cause significant harm, allowing for intervention long before a system failure occurs.

The transition from firefighting to scheduled maintenance becomes easier, as LogicMonitor provides actionable insights derived from monitoring data. This allows the MSP to carry out routine updates and optimisations, minimising the risk of downtime and improving overall client satisfaction.

At this stage, MSPs can begin offering clients:

- Proactive issue detection powered by LogicMonitor, allowing problems to be resolved before they escalate
- Scheduled maintenance to keep systems

running smoothly

- Improved client communication through detailed updates and performance insights into their IT health

#### The Future with LogicMonitor: From Proactive to Predictive:

Once proactive monitoring is established, an MSP can anticipate potential issues and perform regular maintenance to prevent disruptions. This approach is far better than reactive monitoring, but still relies on historical data and manual analysis.

The next evolution is moving into predictive monitoring, where LogicMonitor's advanced analytics and machine learning capabilities take centre stage. By analysing historical data patterns, LogicMonitor can help an MSP to forecast potential problems, allowing for predictive maintenance.

Through these predictive insights, MSPs can act before issues even begin to surface. Automated insights and



Rob Huckin

#### Move the needle with Hybrid Observability

With AI-powered Hybrid Observability from LogicMonitor, clients benefit from improved systems, and MSPs benefit from stronger business relationships.

MSPs can make the most out of automated workflows, seamless data integrations, proactive insights, and enhanced resource optimisation within one, streamlined dashboard. All of which boost operational efficiency, and deliver exceptional service quality, while allowing the upsell of services to the client.

LogicMonitor helps MSPs with 100, 1000, or 10,000 employees reach their business goals and grow their revenue. Whether it's innovation, improving the quality of existing services, or finding a way to differentiate business from competition, our goal is to help you monetise the potential of Hybrid Observability powered by AI.

In simple terms, it can help you make more money, save more money, and reduce risk.

Integrating a comprehensive, hybrid observability platform into existing MSP service offerings can meaningfully enhance bottom lines, enabling businesses to charge more for premium services, become more efficient, and decrease chances for downtime or SLA penalties.

Let us help you craft a more future-ready, profitable business with LogicMonitor's Hybrid Observability platform powered by AI! ■

recommendations provided by LogicMonitor also reduce manual interventions, increasing operational efficiency while ensuring consistent, uninterrupted services for clients.

Key service enhancements at this stage include:

- Predictive analytics that allow MSPs to prevent IT issues before they arise
- Strategic IT planning using data-driven insights to help clients plan ahead
- Custom LogicMonitor dashboards tailored for clients that highlight trends, risks, and actionable insights to keep IT systems optimised

Predictive monitoring with LogicMonitor enables MSPs to significantly reduce downtime, enhance operational efficiency, and deliver unmatched value to their clients. By empowering an MSPs to offer strategic IT planning, AI-driven predictive capabilities, and real-time insights, the LogicMonitor platform sets the MSP apart in an increasingly competitive market.



# LogicMonitor

Hybrid Observability powered by AI

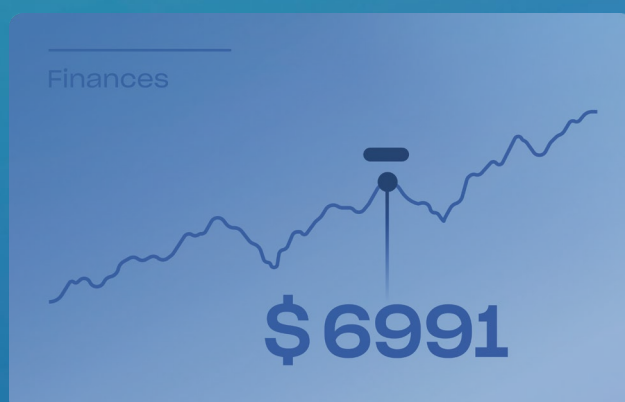
- **Comprehensive visibility** into your IT landscape
- **Predictive insights** and intelligent troubleshooting for all environments
- **GenAI powered** incident summaries, root cause analysis and resolution guidance



Comprehensive visibility



Gen AI powered



Predictive insights

# From Telco to Techco: leading on innovation

**In the ever-evolving communications landscape, innovation is the key to survival. Companies must continually adapt to meet customers' changing needs. Voiceflex's shift from telco to a techco is mainly driven by its desire to create success for its channel partners, writes CCO Paul Taylor.**



Paul Taylor

**O**ur focus is to be the most innovative voice enabler, equipping partners to navigate shifting revenue models, particularly in response to Microsoft's rapid rise as a dominant force in UC with the success of Teams. This year's conference theme, 'Understanding the technological forces reshaping the channel's future,' is more relevant than ever.

The channel has been riding the Microsoft Teams growth curve since it took off during the pandemic, becoming central in the digital workplace for chat, collaboration, and content sharing. Microsoft now reports 320 million Microsoft Teams users globally. You won't get rich selling licences; you need to make margin out of the Microsoft ecosystem and jump on the growth curve. The opportunity is bigger than you may think – Teams is not just a collaboration solution; it can play a much bigger role at the core of an organisation's efforts to improve the employee and customer experience.

Channel partners must seize the opportunities presented by the explosive growth of Microsoft Teams, Cisco Webex and Zoom and the transformative potential of AI-powered applications.

#### Give Teams a voice

Channel partners have multiple ways to give Teams a voice for their customers, including Direct Routing and Operator Connect (for Service Providers), allowing customers to retain their existing lines and minutes provider.

Many platforms will interface with Teams, via API or an App, but a business phone license is required. Voiceflex Flow, our UCaaS platform, is native with Teams, and the Flow Companion app enables businesses to manage their telephony directly within Teams, eliminating the need for separate applications or devices for outbound calling and call management. It simplifies how businesses handle communications, from managing PBX functionality to accessing real-time analytics.

This helps organisations save

money, simplify support, and speed up user onboarding compared to running separate telephony and collaboration platforms. Integrating voice with Teams opens up many possibilities with AI-powered applications that leverage voice as a primary interface for customer or employee interaction.

#### Make Teams a CX powerhouse

With the IT shift to cloud services, the convergence of UCaaS and CCaaS is increasing. Teams, positioned at the heart of enterprise collaboration, is a powerhouse driving this trend. It has some basic in-built contact centre capabilities, but for more demanding contact centre needs, or indeed relatively simple customer interaction needs, Teams can be seamlessly integrated with third-party contact centres, built in Azure.

Tools like AudioCodes Voca CIC and Flow provides the channel with advanced customer interaction and call management solutions. This integration facilitates better collaboration between

contact centre agents and back-office staff, all of whom play a key role in improving the customer experience. Offering contact centre capabilities with Teams "as a service" presents an opportunity for higher margins, recurring revenues and stickier customers.

#### Monetising the Teams ecosystem

As businesses increasingly adopt Microsoft Teams as their primary communication platform, the opportunity to monetise the ecosystem grows significantly. For the channel, the key lies in offering added-value solutions that enhance Teams' native capabilities, making it an all-encompassing tool for communication, collaboration, and customer interaction.

Our partnership with AudioCodes' has enabled us to integrate their advanced voice solutions into our portfolio, extending our voice services within the Teams and Cisco Webex ecosystem. AudioCodes products, such as Live Platform, allow seamless integration of voice

services with Teams, including UCaaS, CCaaS, and AI-powered applications.

Partners can also monetise the Teams ecosystem by offering AI-driven conversational IVR and contact centre solutions, such as Voca, which enable businesses to streamline customer interactions, or AI-powered applications such as Ai Meeting and Meeting Insights that allow automated recording, transcription, minute-taking and analysis of Teams meeting content.

#### The channel opportunity

We want to be the most innovative voice enabler and have powered our shift from Telco to Techco with strategic partnerships. These aren't individual silos; they sit horizontally within our portfolio so that partners can consume them all together.

We've equipped partners to deal with evolving revenue models, particularly around Microsoft. If you're looking to leverage the multi-stream growth within Teams or Webex, come and have a chat with us. ■





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# UCaaS: Increase revenue by increasing simplicity

**I'll start off with something uncontroversial. With the growth of hybrid work and cloud services, modern networks and ICT infrastructure are increasingly complex. End users want simplicity and rely on the channel to provide it, writes Dave Reynolds, MD of Xelion UK.**



Dave Reynolds

**S**o, why do so many resellers and MSPs choose to make things more complex rather than less? What I'm referring to specifically is licences.

#### The state of licensing today

The average set of UCaaS licences is fiendishly complicated. Multiple product lines. Different features for different users. Different licence codes for those different features. It creates confusion for both the customer and for resellers and MSPs who have to juggle these complex licensing models.

It doesn't just make life awkward at the point of quotations and sales. It does the same for provisioning and billing. Meanwhile, what does it say to the end user? It screams "complicated, difficult, and expensive" – the exact opposite of what customers want when they look to the cloud for communication solutions.

#### Why your licences are so confusing

There are two basic reasons

why so many quotes are so elaborate. One is technical. Often, those additional features are developed by third parties and must be licensed separately. It's a basic limitation of any vendor who can't handle product development in-house. It's not the only reason though. A lot of vendors are structured this way by choice because they think it's better for recurring revenue. But I'm here to convince you that this is a miscalculation.

#### The alternative way

Xelion takes a different approach by offering all UCaaS features under a single licence. No upselling individual features. No juggling multiple licence codes. Everything is packaged into one solution, so resellers can present a single, compelling value proposition to their customers.

This doesn't mean features are limited – far from it. Xelion offers omni-channel customer contact and an incredible range of native features. Not only that, but it has an open API with ready-built integration into

Microsoft 365 and over 250 third-party platforms. Xelion can be tailored to an enormous range of use cases, but simple where it matters: it's easy to use, with the most user-friendly licensing possible. And that is driving sales for our partners.

#### Why simplicity drives sales

Simplicity isn't just a nice-to-have – it's a key differentiator that can help drive your bottom line. Here's why:

- **Faster sales cycles:** With a single licence model, you can reduce the back-and-forth with customers. Less time spent on clarifying what's included means more time spent on demonstrating value.
- **Predictable revenue streams:** A unified licence eliminates the need for tracking various add-ons, making revenue streams more predictable and easier to forecast. This enables you to offer flat-rate pricing models, which are attractive to customers.
- **Enhanced customer experience:** When customers don't have to worry about "premium"

or "basic" features, they experience fewer billing surprises and get more value from the platform, leading to higher satisfaction and retention rates.

#### Why Xelion can do this

We develop Xelion in-house. Every single feature is built by us and native to Xelion. This means that we're not farming out new feature development to third parties. In turn, it means we can apply whatever licensing model we want.

The model we want is whatever makes life easier for our end users and partners. By making every feature available on every licence, we guarantee that no customer is under-provisioned.

You can of course deny non-admin users certain rights, such as managing call queues or listening back to call recordings. It's easy. But the point is that you don't need to know who needs what at the point when you send a proposal.

#### What simplicity really means

The job of channel businesses is (or should be) to simplify life for end users. If you're sending proposals that customers don't understand, you will end up achieving the opposite before you've even deployed anything.

Xelion simplifies our partners' lives from quoting to provisioning to billing. It's not just the licence model, though that's a big part of it. It's also the support we offer, from free training to sales assistance. And all of this will help you win more customers.

#### The end result: more revenue

Xelion's approach makes for easier conversations with prospects. It makes quoting simpler and deployments faster. It makes billing more straightforward and transparent. The result is more new business, and improved customer retention.

It's about delivering simplicity where it matters. This is how our partners are winning over the competition.

Book a demo to get started: [xelion.com](https://www.xelion.com)

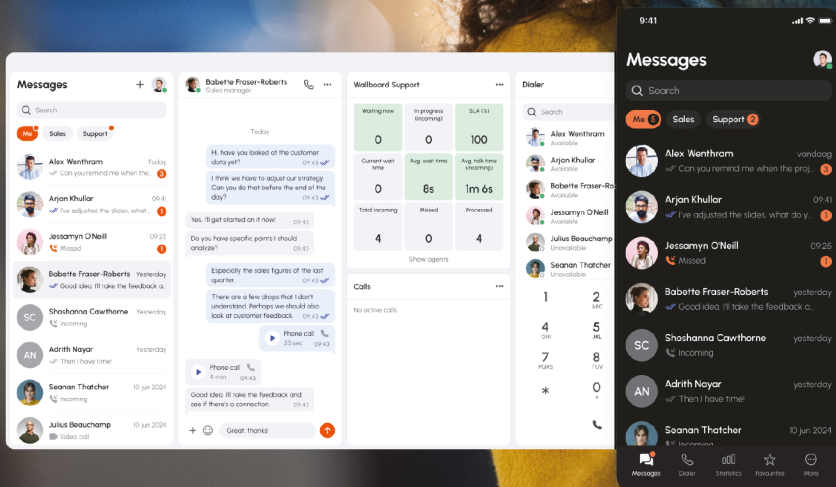


# New look. Same Xelion.



We've had a makeover. But while the branding is new, here's what hasn't changed:

- X** **Omni-channel communication** on any device
- X** **All features included** on every licence
- X** **100% channel-only** sales policy
- X** **A partner-first approach** with all the support you need



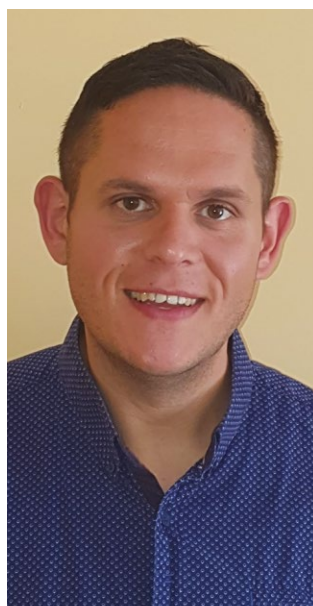
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# One platform for limitless human connection

**Zoom is a well-recognised and market leading vendor in UCaaS, customer experience, business services and employee engagement. Here, Tony McNish, Head of Channel UK&I and Ian Massingham, Channel Sales EMEA, discuss Zoom's differential in this sector.**



Tony McNish



Ian Massingham

interface is very familiar for many users and has easy-to-use features designed to help employees waste less time. Companies that adopt other parts of the Zoom platform can have their employees up and running in no time.

Enhancing the Zoom experience to collaborate, communicate, and get work done more efficiently is Zoom AI Companion. AI Companion helps draft emails and chat messages, summarise meetings and chat threads, improve brainstorming with colleagues and more. AI Companion is included at no additional cost with the paid services in a Zoom user account.

**M**any cloud communications providers are turning to Zoom for their single source supply to meet their customers' ever-changing demands and with recent announcements from Zoomtopia, what better time to explore what Zoom can offer?

Partnering with Zoom opens new revenue opportunities, enabling your customers to migrate to a simple to use, always on platform that just works. Zoom's holistic suite of applications enriches partner's stickiness with customers with just one bill. Zoom's partnering options are designed to suit any partner, of any size, in any location. They range from referral, resell, hybrid, native call plans, BYOC, a mix of either or even one of the growing numbers of global Provider Exchange partners. Partners are selecting Zoom due to the breadth of

portfolio and innovation we are bringing to market. Partners are choosing to adopt Zoom for many reasons, vendor consolidation being a primary rationale, and the technology is being developed at an incredible pace. Zoom invested \$814m in R&D alone last year.

Channel growth is pivotal in Zoom's strategy and is one of our key business drivers. We have seen a paradigm shift in revenue attributed to our Channel, which is great news for our Partners. Zoom has further invested in resources and partner programs making us easy to do business with.

Zoom also recently partnered with Mitel to empower enterprises worldwide with a unique hybrid cloud solution that combines Zoom Workplace and Zoom AI Companion with Mitel's flagship communications platform in a modern, deeply integrated communication

experience. The partnership will address growing enterprise demand for hybrid UC deployments, introducing a Zoom-first experience within Mitel's hybrid portfolio, including access to the full Zoom Workplace platform, which works seamlessly with existing Mitel investments. Zoom Contact Centre (ZCC) was designed from the ground up with two goals in mind: 'customer experience' and 'satisfaction'. Zoom has many diverse customers consuming some or all of the Contact Centre suite of applications and range from small businesses to large scale, global enterprises; demonstrating how ZCC is defining engagement in whatever medium a customer wishes to use, whether it's voice, video, SMS, instant messaging, and more.

Zoom's Virtual Agent further increases customer satisfaction whilst driving down costs by intelligent self-

service and routing providing instant, accurate resolution 24/7 and reducing call volume with a conversational AI chatbot. As you would expect from Zoom's pedigree, it is Video optimised for high-touch engagements helping businesses solve issues faster with screen share, file share and chat. Video Kiosk is another area of growth seeing retail sectors explore new ways to engage and assist customers. Workforce and quality management are other valuable options in maintaining service levels.

ZCC capabilities are just part of Zoom's broader platform: Zoom Workplace, an all-in-one communication and collaboration suite that brings together ZCC, persistent chat, phone, meetings, whiteboard, and other applications, meaning the workforce have everything they need in one place and simplifies how people work. Additionally, the Zoom

Workvivo is another addition to the Zoom family encompassing an all-in-one Employee Experience Platform combining internal communication, engagement, recognition, intranet and measurement. With the announcement from META that Workplace is closing, and naming Workvivo by Zoom as the ONLY preferred migration partner, this further enhances a partner's opportunity to engage more customers. Key workvivo users include Virgin, Ryanair, BUPA and Amazon.

Adding to the Channel drive, Zoom announced a strategic partnership with PlatformX Communications that extends the reach to their existing (and new!) reseller base. Their vision on using API's for automation is fantastic and will again reinforce our Channel first ethos and continue the journey into making Zoom easy to do business with. ■





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# The solutions to staying ahead

It's going to be a great Comms Vision, but can you remember a period when there's been so much change? We seem to be moving from talking about digital transformation to delivering customer experiences - but many companies still haven't moved to the cloud or modernised their systems, and that's before you consider the PSTN delay until 2027.

This is where partners are vital, writes **Ritchie Butters**, 8x8's Director Business Development EMEA. Rarely has such disparity existed amongst organisations: some are advanced in the cloud while others are wondering what to do with the dusty box and cables in the back office.

We can't deny the direction of travel. Demand for Cloud-related SaaS offerings is only going up! This is because less than 50% of the market has moved to the Cloud,



**Ritchie Butters**

so there's a considerable number of organisations who must still

upgrade from legacy platforms. This remains a period of incredible opportunity for resellers which will continue to grow. The unknown factor is which resellers will be here due to considerable consolidation.

With cloud solutions, partners have a huge role. Businesses and companies often can't keep up with every update and new offering - but a channel partner can, especially if they have sector specific knowledge and experience. A partner will know customer's needs on areas like automation, AI, and data analytics to drive efficiency and innovation - fields that are ever-evolving. Cybersecurity, CX and transformation are perpetual projects, so there's continual revenue generation in these areas.

That means putting the hours in to understand your customers' marketplace, their pain points and where there's a need for progress.

That also means knowing the people involved. Relationships and knowledge win the day. You become trusted by turning up when you say you'll turn up and delivering on what you say you'll deliver.

Even in the areas 8x8 works in, change is the constant. That's why we've been bringing out solutions like 8x8 Engage, to give contact centre-levels of technology for the people who need it - like subject matter experts - but don't work in a contact centre. We also accept that it's not just contact centre staff who have needs. That's why we developed Supervisor Workspace - to give managers and administrators fully functional work-from-anywhere options.

But the technology is nothing without people and I'm looking forward to seeing you all at Comms Vision. ■

**8x8** ELEVATE  
PARTNER PROGRAM

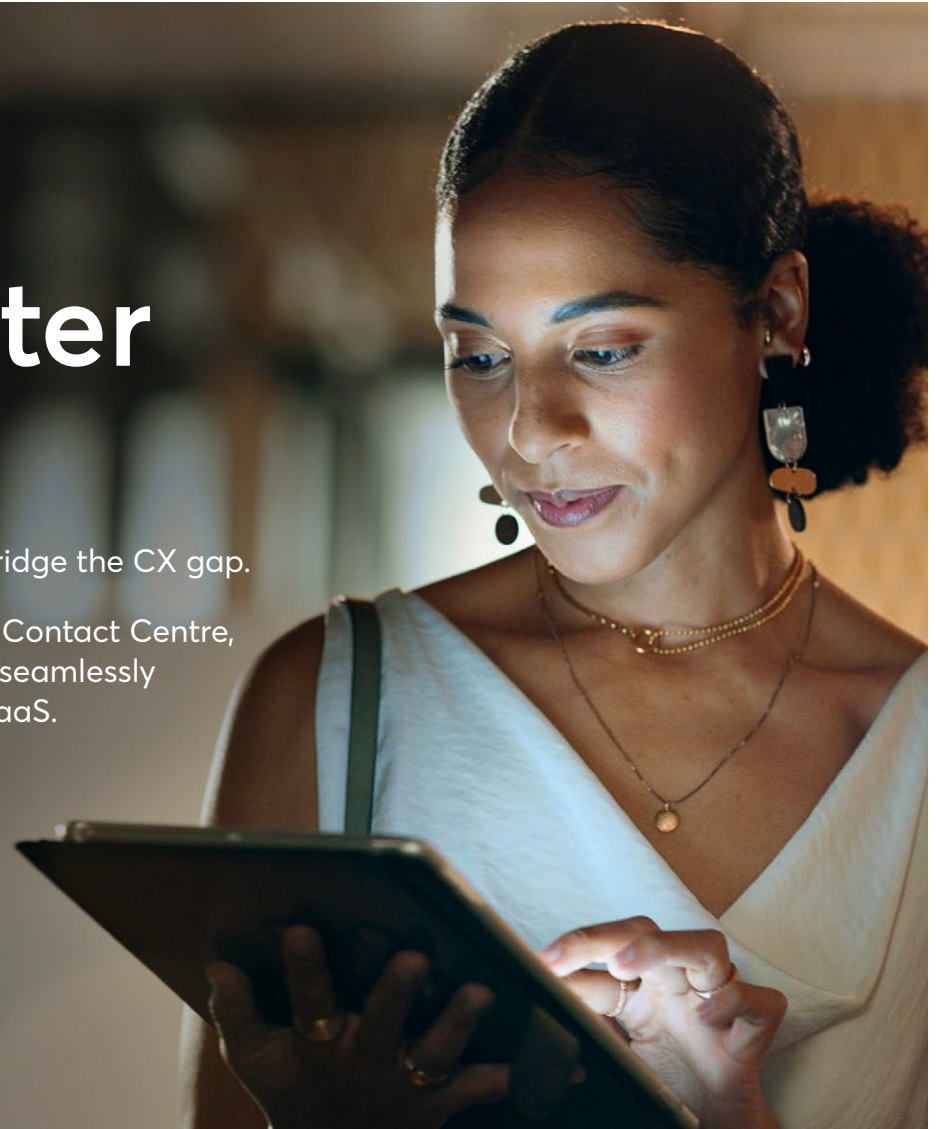
## Partner better with 8x8

8x8 actively empowers your customers to bridge the CX gap.

One unified, globally available platform for Contact Centre, Voice Calls, Video & Chat. Leverage AI and seamlessly combine the power of CCaaS, CPaaS & UCaaS.

Maximise your revenue streams.  
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Find out more here.  
[go.8x8.com/become-elevate-partner.html](https://go.8x8.com/become-elevate-partner.html)





# Empowering businesses to re-model

In today's fast-paced and technology-driven world, businesses rely heavily on efficient IT systems to stay competitive. That's where ConnectWise comes in, writes **Alex Winter**, Partner Sales Director, EMEA and **George Ovenden**, Strategic Sales Executive.

As a leading provider of comprehensive IT software, services, and solutions, ConnectWise empowers businesses of all sizes to streamline their operations, enhance productivity, and achieve long-term success. With a wide range of innovative products and services, ConnectWise is revolutionising the way organisations manage their IT infrastructure.

ConnectWise is a trusted partner that understands the unique challenges faced by businesses in the ever-evolving IT landscape.



**Alex Winter & George Ovenden**

With over 40 years of experience, ConnectWise has built a reputation for delivering cutting-edge solutions that address the complex needs of modern businesses.

Through end-to-end solutions, ConnectWise offers a comprehensive suite designed to meet the diverse requirements of businesses across various industries. By offering and growing managed services practices,

businesses can make a positive move towards more recurring revenue, predictable growth paths, and competitive advantages. Whether it's professional services automation, remote monitoring and management, cybersecurity, or cloud management, ConnectWise provides the expertise and tools needed to drive success. By partnering with ConnectWise, businesses can focus on their core competencies while leaving their IT management in capable hands.

The evolution of marketing and selling is crucial for resellers and those providing Managed Services as they transition their go-to-market (GTM) strategies to meet the business transformation and customer experience demands of end-users.

Key considerations include shifting from product-centric to customer-

centric approaches. Collaborating with technology vendors can provide access to specialised expertise, resources, and market opportunities.

The opportunity for traditional comms businesses to remodel their traditional image and commit their GTM to specific technologies and markets as specialists is significant. By focusing on niche markets or specialised technologies can help differentiate MSPs from competitors and position themselves as experts in those areas. This allows MSPs to develop deep domain knowledge, build strong customer relationships, and deliver exceptional value.

ConnectWise is at the forefront of empowering businesses with comprehensive IT services and solutions. By partnering with ConnectWise, organisations can unlock their full potential and stay ahead in today's digital age. ■

**CONNECTWISE**  
ALL SYSTEMS PROTECTED  
**Cybersecurity and Data Protection**

Build a simplified, MSP-powered cybersecurity stack and lower the costs of 24/7 monitoring support staff. ConnectWise solutions are purpose-built to launch quickly and deliver outstanding client cyber security outcomes. Whether you're starting from scratch or expanding services to an existing cybersecurity practice, we offer all this and more to help you protect all systems.

EDR

MDR

SIEM

SOC

Identity Management

NOC

Incident Response

Risk Assessment

Learn more:  
[connectwise.com/platform/security-management](https://connectwise.com/platform/security-management)

# A fresh approach to partnership

**W**e're arriving to The Highlands fresh from our rebrand to eve Wholesale, and we've got plenty to talk about! Our rebrand isn't just a new name and logo, it's a reflection of our commitment to being more than just a technology supplier, writes MD **Steve Barclay**. We're here to help MSPs and resellers win. We've always been tuned in to our partners' needs, and our rebrand marks the beginning of something bigger - a new chapter focused on helping them make more money, run lean, and connect with customers.

Comms Vision is the perfect opportunity for us to dive deeper into the reasons behind this change and to spark great conversations and hopefully a few new partnerships.

**Make more money with free licences until December 2025**



**Steve Barclay**

One of the things we're most excited to talk about is our simplified licensing model. Our new eve licences, Prime and Base, make offering affordable, flexible cloud phone systems easier than ever. But that's not all - we've launched a bold offer that's turning heads: MSPs and resellers can take advantage of free Prime cloud phone system licences from now until December 2025. Our

partners keep 100% of the margin.

Outside of our free licences offer, we've dropped the price of eve's Prime licence to just £3 and reduced the term to just a month, making eve easier to sell, without the big commitments.

The interest we've seen so far has been phenomenal, and we're sure

this will be a hot topic of conversation at Comms Vision.

## Building Connections

Comms Vision isn't just a chance to talk about what we have to offer - it's about spending valuable time with familiar faces, making new connections, and building better relationships. It's about learning from others and playing our part in shaping the future of our channel. We're excited to sponsor such a prestigious event and can't wait to see the developments that come from this year's Comms Vision. The team and I at eve Wholesale are thrilled to be a proud silver sponsor at the most important and impressive gathering of the year for our channel. For us, this is about more than just sponsoring an event - Comms Vision is about being part of conversations that will shape the future of business communications technology. ■

**your partner for unified communications, cloud and connectivity**

**eve** WHOLESALE

proud silver sponsor of Comms Vision 2024



# However. Whenever. Wherever.

Tapping into new markets easily on an international scale is moving up a reseller's wish list, but how do you get there in an increasingly competitive and dynamic market?

To achieve these international capabilities, Evolve IP tackles the administrative and regulatory complexities, which makes us stand out as a service provider, writes UK Sales Director **Jamie Hughes**.

There are numerous service providers out there that are simply not interested, but we are happy to support with this, whilst offering compelling commercials and providing professional services to support international deployments.

Balancing international presence, contract flexibility and seamless technology integrations is a recipe for success as Evolve IP continues to



**Jamie Hughes**

grow globally. We operate in 57 countries and provide our partners with flexible contracts and native integrations with both Microsoft Teams and Webex by Cisco.

Differentiation is becoming one of the key ingredients for success in a

maturing UCaaS arena where second-generation users are now taking up more and more of the market, and those needs are changing from looking to switch from a competitor rather than introducing them to what cloud technologies are.

Which service provider has the best-of-breed technologies is proving crucial, as the race to win new customers increases in a 'cloud v cloud provider' battle.

There's always a new product, service or system that claims to future-proof cloud infrastructure. So, choosing the right 'integration road' for your UC journey is critical for overall business success and a smoother direction of travel.

Evolve IP carefully selects technologies and advises partners on the decisions they make to help

them succeed.

Evolve IP's UCaaS technologies are integrated with a range of industry-leading collaboration tools for you to offer your customers easy-to-use systems that work. Integration is key to developing specialist services that help you stand out from the crowd and harness those relationships across verticals – all of which will enable you to win business.

Talking to attendees for several years at Comms Vision and understanding what you want to achieve and the customer that you support is what we work hard to develop with our partners at Evolve IP. Offering natively integrated technologies that are flexible that you can offer internationally is the key to winning big business and growing your customer base... so let's have a discussion and see how we can help you. ■

## Grow your business in the channel.



Developing your business requires a service provider that can offer you flexible terms, international capabilities, effective integrations and all provisioned in a matter of minutes. Talk to us to find out how we are supporting our partners to understand and support their business strategies whilst increasing margins and reducing churn.



# Time to act on net zero

Following substantial investment from our PE partner Blixt, I'm proud to announce that Fidelity Energy is now the first port of call for ICT MSPs and resellers keen to offer net zero solutions to customers, writes CEO **John Haw**.

We'll be unveiling more information to delegates at Comms Vision and look forward to detailed conversations with old and new partners about the substantial benefits to be gained from adding sustainability to their portfolios.

Before penning this article, I scanned the list of finalists for this year's Comms National Awards and was not surprised to see a large line up in the Sustainability Award shortlist. The channel has been spurred to act on sustainability because the facts are crystal clear; adding sustainability to their market offerings remains a



**John Haw**

strategic imperative for channel businesses that want to be taken seriously. Customers, consumers, and regulators are demanding it.

According to growth specialist Bain & Company, 36% of B2B customers would change suppliers today if their sustainability needs aren't met. That's a clarion call for companies in the ICT channel to act now, but where do

you start?

By adding a sustainability play to your portfolio, imagine the doors that could open into a plethora of vertical markets.

The first stage of any sustainability journey is to report on a company's greenhouse gas emissions, benchmarked against the Scope 1 and 2 classifications, as set by the Greenhouse Gas Protocol. We can provide the tools needed to report on these in an automated manner, helping your customers fully understand where they are today and how they achieve net zero. We'll also simplify the SECR (Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting Process) by providing timely data for you and your customers using our automated technology platform.

The largest emissions driver is usually a company's gas and electricity usage

and transport fleet. Renewable energy is a key part of any net zero journey, and we can help with matching a specific asset. For example, we can quickly and easily place power purchase agreements with a nominated wind farm, creating the highest level of sustainability, whilst maintaining optimum energy levels. To decarbonise transport, we have a range of EV charging solutions coupled with battery and solar technologies.

We also offer other solutions that will lower a customer's carbon footprint, such as LED lighting, solar panel installations and voltage optimisation.

To understand how Fidelity Energy can help you add highly profitable energy and net zero solutions to your portfolio, visit us in The Craiggellachie Suite – Room 405 during Comms Vision or call us on 08000 484800. ■

## Fidelity Energy

Energising Our Partners

### Sustainable energy solutions to help your customers on their net zero journey



Renewable  
Tariffs



Solar PV  
Panels



Electric Vehicle  
Charging Points



Voltage  
Optimisation



Get in touch to find out how a partnership with Fidelity Energy can help grow your business!

[partners@fidelity-energy.co.uk](mailto:partners@fidelity-energy.co.uk)



# What's New at ICUK

**A**s ICUK returns for its second year as a sponsor at Comms Vision, we're excited to showcase significant platform enhancements and introduce new solutions, including One Touch Switching and Mobile Voice and Data, writes Sales Director **Paul Barnett**. Here's what's new and how we're helping our resellers grow:

## Expanded Connectivity Portfolio

We've broadened our broadband offerings with the addition of CityFibre and Vodafone, with more partnerships planned for 2025. Our enhanced portfolio gives consumers more choices for top performance and resilience. With proactive monitoring tools and fully automated fault handling, our progress is clear, and there's more to come.

## Leased Lines: Growing Demand



**Paul Barnett**

The continued rise in leased line adoption shows how seriously businesses are taking their connectivity needs. To support this, our reseller tools now provide even greater visibility and control. This includes remote management of routers for diagnostics and

assistance at unmanned sites—streamlining operations for our partners

## VoIP: Rapid Growth & Seamless Porting

Our VoIP platform remains one of our fastest-growing solutions, praised for its competitive pricing and ease of use. Built in-house, our SIP Trunks and Hosted VoIP offer resellers reliable, flexible, and cost-effective options. Struggling with porting? Our innovative solution will make the process smoother than ever.

## Web Hosting: Refocused and Growing

We've renewed our focus on hosting and domain management, leading to significant growth in adoption from both new and existing partners. With over two decades of in-house development, our shared and virtual server

platforms provide a straightforward path to recurring revenue—ideal for those looking to expand their service offerings.

## One Touch Switching (OTS): Leading the Way

ICUK is proud to be the largest software supplier as a TOTSCO Managed Access Provider (MAP) since its launch. Our OTS software makes compliance with Ofcom's regulations effortless, no matter which wholesale carrier you use. With business transfers likely to shift toward a Gaining Provider Led Switching process, now's the perfect time to ensure your business is ready.

Meet with Us at Comms Vision in The Snug (near the auditorium) to learn more about what sets ICUK apart. Have questions or want to schedule a meeting? Email us at [sales@icuk.net](mailto:sales@icuk.net).

# Even More Control. Even More Visibility.

**icuk**

# Driving innovation, delivering value

Inform Billing is a UK-based billing specialist offering cutting-edge solutions for telecoms resellers and MSPs selling fixed line, mobile, broadband, IT subscriptions, IoT solutions, and more. We support businesses of all sizes, from start-ups to large enterprises, by helping them drive revenue growth and enhance profitability through innovative technology.

Our flagship product, Eclipse, is at the heart of what we do, writes Business Development Director **Ellie Allseybrook**. It's a multi-award-winning, API-driven platform designed to simplify billing processes, boost efficiency, and improve customer satisfaction. Because it's fully online, businesses can access and manage their billing from anywhere, in real-time.

Inform Billing offers a variety of solutions to meet the needs of



**Ellie Allseybrook**

different businesses. We provide a cost-effective bureau service for companies that prefer to outsource their billing, alongside self-managed options for those who want to maintain full control.

We also offer bespoke solutions for larger enterprises or those with

complex requirements. Our aim is to deliver flexible, scalable services that grow with your business."

A recent innovation we are excited about is Inform Analytics, a powerful service providing business intelligence solutions tailored specifically for telecoms and IT resellers. Inform Analytics helps businesses unlock the potential of their data, providing insights that drive growth and improve profitability.

With Inform Analytics, businesses can access everything from standard dashboards that offer real-time data insights to fully customised analytics services through our Analytics as a Service model.

The platform helps businesses identify key trends, optimise resources, and implement strategic growth plans. We have even introduced a dedicated PSTN dashboard to support businesses

through the PSTN switch-off.

In 2024, Inform Billing's achievements have been widely recognised and we are extremely proud of the five awards we have won, as well as being Highly Commended with Inform Analytics. Being recognised across the industry is an honour.

Looking ahead to Comms Vision, I am enthusiastic about the opportunity to connect with industry leaders. We're excited to explore how we can help businesses achieve their goals. Whether it's through our billing expertise or leveraging data insights with Inform Analytics, we're here to support growth every step of the way.

Our focus is always on pushing boundaries and delivering exceptional value to our customers. We remain committed to providing the best billing solutions and data-driven insights to fuel business success. ■



## Award-winning billing solutions to drive efficiency and business growth

Ready to make a **powerful choice?**

[informbilling.co.uk](http://informbilling.co.uk)  
01332 92 70 70





# A vendor that works for you

Intermedia is delighted to be supporting Comms Vision again this year. We are thrilled to join the conversation as collaboration and hybrid work continue to be critical components of the partner landscape writes **Philippe du Fou**, EMEA Sales Director at Intermedia Cloud Communications.

Awarded "Best CCaaS vendor" at the Comms National Awards in 2023 and 2024, Intermedia services support over 145,000 companies worldwide through our own product developed and backed by our 99.999% uptime SLA. As one of our partners, you can resell our consolidated UC and CC solution under a private-label to separate yourself from the pack, while earning up to 5x more than a traditional agent model. Besides we only sell via indirect channel so we won't compete with you.

As a channel-first organisation, our



**Philippe du Fou**

robust partner program gives you access to our highly competitive pricing, free phones or rebates with every license, and a friendly partner portal to manage all your customers and services (quoting, provisioning, device ordering, number porting, QoS monitoring).

How do you differentiate yourself to customers in a competitive Unified Communications marketplace? Intermedia has been

solving this problem for our partners with our innovative cloud communications and channel friendly programs for years. CRN awarded us the "Partner Program Winner 2024".

Besides being the largest hosted Exchange provider outside Microsoft, we offer Voice, Video, Instant Messaging, Contact Centre, File sharing & Backup all delivered through one highly reliable and secure platform thereby eliminating the need for multiple communications providers.

Due to the breadth of our application portfolio, we can offer comprehensive, integrated solutions to meet our end customers' and partners' communications and collaboration needs, which saves them from the complexity of sourcing, integrating and managing multiple disparate solutions from different vendors.

The market opportunity is for the taking with over 300 million of on-premises seats that have yet to migrate to the cloud – with projections showing that cloud communications adoption is happening at, and will continue to happen at, record rates.

The advantages of being an Intermedia partner include: Private label option (so you can re-brand it), month to month billing (no minimum contract), consolidated client for both UC and CC, whole solution provisioned via a single pane of glass quoting, provisioning, number porting, QoS monitoring, business email, etc...), and free phone/device (no upfront CapEx cost required).

With the Intermedia private-label offer, you can retain top-line revenue & customer ownership through our 100% channel approach. At Intermedia, we work for you.

## WE WORK FOR YOU

Everything You Need to Grow Your Cloud Business, Maximize Profits, and Own Your Customer Relationships.



For more information:  
[www.intermedia.com/uk](http://www.intermedia.com/uk)

# The connections that matter

**O**penreach is the UK's largest wholesale broadband network provider. We have around 700 Communications Provider (CP) customers using our network to deliver broadband, phone and TV packages to people throughout the UK.

We're the people who connect homes, mobile phone masts, schools, shops, banks, hospitals, libraries, broadcasters, governments and businesses, both large and small, to the world. Our purpose is to build the connections that matter and provide the best full fibre future for the UK" writes Head of Client Partnerships, **Matt Dexter**.

"We're building full fibre to 25 million homes and businesses by the end of 2026 and have already built to more than 15 million premises. Our ambition is to get



**Matt Dexter**

to 30 million by the end of the decade, securing the country's digital future for generations to come.

Our Ethernet products are high-bandwidth, permanently connected, national point-to-point connections for businesses and large organisations. They help

you extend your own networks and offer your customers faster, higher capacity products.

We also offer Optical products on a national basis with managed wavelength bandwidths of 10Gbps and 100Gbps, offering a range of popular client interface speeds and

interfaces. These products enable our customers to offer a range of premium services, from cloud applications and next generation data centres to high-speed file transfer and business continuity solutions, such as information storage and retrieval.

We're committed to delivering great products, with innovation and brilliant service at the heart of what we do.

We're pleased to sponsor Comms Vision as it's the gold standard event with regards debate and opportunity that creates a unique environment where channel leaders can understand the factors driving ICT sectors."

**Matt will be at Gleneagles this year alongside Richard Lee, Senior Partnerships Manager, to discuss how they can help enable customer and partner growth, and success.** ■

## Special offers for EAD 1Gbps and EAD 10Gbps now available

**Savings from 50%**

**EAD 1Gbps prices from £161 monthly\***  
**EAD 10Gbps prices from £338 monthly\***



**Don't miss out**

Contact us via your account lead or visit [www.openreach.co.uk/cpportal/home](http://www.openreach.co.uk/cpportal/home)

\* Monthly prices based on amortisation of connection charges and consumption of EAD special offers to March '25

**openreach**



# IoT driving profit and purpose

The IoT market offers resellers unparalleled opportunities to stand out, scale up, and deliver meaningful impact. By 2027, the global IoT market is projected to reach \$1.5 trillion a clear sign of where the future of tech is headed, writes Pangea Connected MD **Dan Cunliffe**.



**Dan Cunliffe**

The best way in? Cellular IoT connectivity — the most resilient, secure, and flexible IoT connectivity option available.

Whether you're upgrading the performance of an IoT set up, optimising the costs of a multi-site deployment, or powering a brand-new solution, cellular is transforming businesses and industries.

For the channel, offering cellular IoT connectivity is a non-negotiable step toward becoming a leader in the evolving tech landscape.

### A new era for the channel

Traditional communications markets are shrinking, with demand for fixed-line services projected to decline by 15% over the next three years, while hardware and mobile services steadily decline. Meanwhile, the IoT market is experiencing a 26.1% CAGR, driven by the explosion of 'things' and the need for adaptable, resilient connectivity across industries.

With the PSTN switch-off and 3G sunset affecting over seven million

connections in the UK alone, there's never been a better time for channel businesses to offer cellular IoT connectivity to modernise services they already provide.

Cellular provides the flexibility needed to power any application, from 24/7 security systems in retail to real-time asset tracking in supply chains. Backed by a custom core network with 100% uptime, our connectivity spans single net to multi-net, LPWAN to 5G, delivering a new standard of resilience and reliability.

For the channel, it unlocks connectivity that drives long-term, predictable revenue through scalable, sticky subscription models, while providing real value to customers.

### Enabling transformational outcomes

The proof is in the projects. From reducing mobile unit cancer screening wait times from 60 days to 10 hours,

to keeping 100,000+ children connected to their education, our partners are delivering measurable impact and capturing seven-figure deals in the process.

And it's all underpinned by our partnership system and partner-only commitment. Here's how it looks:

**Align:** Expert guidance on product positioning, identifying opportunities and integrating our cellular IoT connectivity into your portfolio.

**Market:** 1-on-1 marketing consultancy and access to market playbooks and campaign materials that accelerate your go-to-market strategy.

**Sell:** Extensive sales process training, with a dedicated IoT expert from our team working inside your business, to help you close deals 3x faster.

**Support:** 24/7 support and single-pane SIM management portal, ensuring smooth operations and complete visibility over deployments.



**PANGEA**  
Connecting Everything

CNA 2024 | Best Network Services Provider Winner

Connect smarter.  
Grow faster.  
Do good.

Cellular IoT connectivity partnerships that help ambitious tech companies like yours transform businesses, industries, and the world — for good.

[pangea-group.net](http://pangea-group.net)



**Reducing wait times** for results from mobile cancer screening units from 60 days to just 10 hours.



**Tackling digital poverty** by keeping 100,000+ children connected to their education.



**Preventing injuries** and saving over £100k in maintenance costs from faulty tools.

# Celebrating 25 years of growth

**F**or seven consecutive years, Comms Vision has been a staple in our annual calendar. It's a pivotal event for us, not just for the engaging discussions and insight-sharing, but for the invaluable business relationships we've nurtured over time, writes **Justin Carl**, MD at ProVu Communications.

For us, it's where we connect with like-minded professionals to drive the future of our industry forward. This year, we're particularly excited as ProVu celebrates 25 years in business, marking a significant milestone in our journey of innovation and success.

Over the last two and a half decades, ProVu has evolved alongside the Channel. We were early adopters in the VoIP market, a decision that positioned us at the forefront of the industry's rapid growth and transformation. The VoIP space has



**Justin Carl**

seen tremendous expansion, and we have been fortunate to witness, and

actively contribute to the evolution of this technology and the devices and services which wrap around it. As the adoption of VoIP grew, so did the complexities and opportunities surrounding it.

Today, while the deskphone remains a crucial part of business communication, we're seeing a shift in our reseller base as they diversify their offerings to meet the growing demand for networking, connectivity, and automated services.

This shift has not taken us by surprise. In fact, our deep-rooted experience in the channel has enabled us to anticipate these changes. We have continuously adapted our portfolio to not only address the needs of our partners but also to foresee the demands of the future and our evolving customer-base which include ITSPs, ISPs and MSPs.

Automated services, device configuration, and fulfilment have become increasingly essential as businesses seek efficient, scalable solutions; it's through these services we differentiate ourselves from the standard box-shifters and other distributors in the field. At ProVu, we've made it our mission to stay ahead of these trends, ensuring that our partners have the tools and services they need to thrive.

As we prepare for this year's Comms Vision, we invite delegates to join us. Whether you're looking to diversify your business or need a reliable distribution partner to help you achieve your objectives, ProVu is here to help. We're eager to share our knowledge, understand your requirements, and explore the opportunities that lie ahead. We can't wait to see what the future holds and we can't wait to share it with you at Comms Vision!

**WE ARE 25**

**provu**  
COMMUNICATIONS

Meet with us at Comms Vision as we celebrate 25 years of innovation & success

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**w** www.provu.co.uk

**e** contact@provu.co.uk



# Use finance to drive sales

Statistics show that in the 12 months to August 2024, new asset finance business was 5% higher compared to the previous year, writes **Dan MacKrell**, National Sales Manager at Shire Leasing.

Despite economic uncertainty, demand from UK businesses for finance options remains and continues to grow. That demand exists in the comms channel too, with over £1.2bn invested in IT equipment finance in the 12 months to August 2024.

The thirst to evolve, advance and grow in such a competitive landscape is widespread. Whether that be to pursue expansion, make sustainability improvements or upgrade operations to the latest technologies - through finance, SMEs gain choices.

Almost anything business-related that



**Dan MacKrell**

would include an upfront cost can be financed, from a single mobile handset and soft costs to millions of pounds worth of kit. Shire offers conventional finance methods, such as Finance Lease agreements, as well as two off-the-shelf managed service agreements tailored to the ICT channel - Technology Lease and Managed Rental Agreement. These refined products allow resellers to deliver a solution for a monthly cost

when the order value mainly consists of 'soft costs'.

For channel vendors offering their solutions on a capex model only, this could result in lost sales. Even if you already have a finance package in place, could it be performing better? At Comms Vision 2024, we're excited to discuss our latest updates and value-added services that can accelerate B2B sales even further.

This includes our Shire Online portal, which enables channel vendors and resellers to revolutionise the way they serve customers with an enhanced ability to deliver immediate, automated decisions for a wide range of trading entities including Sole Traders, Partnerships and new-start Limited Companies where a guarantee is required. The AI technology enables more types of business customer to receive a first-point finance acceptance, improving

decision times and enabling sales teams to increase conversions.

Alongside supporting the cash flow of SMEs, we consider the impact the sale has on vendors. Delivering an exceptional service at all levels is important to us, that's why invoices can be paid and cleared in full within one working day after completion of relevant documentation, ensuring minimal disruption to your own business's cash flow.

By working with a forward-thinking finance provider like Shire, you can gain a competitive advantage and improve your overall sales proposition. When equipped with award-winning tech to quote, propose and receive auto-decisions for customers within seconds, gaining access to your solutions suddenly becomes an attainable choice for customers, maximising sales conversions and enabling SMEs to evolve affordably. ■

## Drive B2B Sales

Shire Leasing are business finance specialists in the ICT & Telecoms sector, having supported the channel for over 30 years.



Award-winning fintech solutions that make offering finance and lease options simple:

**01827 302 066**

**[www.shireleasing.co.uk/commsdealer](http://www.shireleasing.co.uk/commsdealer)**

Finance for business use customers only, subject to credit status, application, terms and conditions. Shire Leasing PLC is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority for certain types of consumer credit lending and credit related activities that are regulated under the Consumer Credit Act 1974 and by the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000.

# Closing the Data Gap

**W**hilst emerging technology is transforming our industry, the basics like data quality and customer service remain paramount. Technology is speeding up processes and improving efficiency, but without reliable data and a customer-first mindset, these innovations fall short, writes **Michelle Livingstone**, CEO of Layer Systems.

**Strengthening Your Foundations**  
At Layer Systems, we understand the unique challenges faced by telecoms and IT resellers and have specifically designed our CRM, The Layer, for your sector. It's not just about technology, it's about laying the groundwork for long-term success. A well-organised CRM automates processes, streamlines workflows, and keeps data clean and accessible across multiple teams.

For telecoms and IT resellers, precision and speed are critical. From provisioning services to managing customer relationships, time is of the essence. AI-driven tools, self-service platforms, and automated workflows save time and reduce errors.

Anthony Lacey, COO of Windsor Telecom, said: "The Layer team's industry-specific knowledge was crucial in delivering the project within our timelines. Without their expertise, it would have taken another year with a generic platform."

However, in the rush to adopt new tech, it's vital not to lose sight of the fundamentals. No matter how advanced tools become, clean data and efficient processes will always be the foundation of success.

Our billing integrations help streamline operations, eliminate billing errors, and enhance data visibility by automating time-consuming billing tasks, benefitting both your employees and your customers.



**Michelle Livingstone**

**Futureproofing with Emerging Technology**

Whilst data remains key, the true power of technologies like AI and ML lies in how they help businesses harness and model that data. The Layer enables teams to uncover insights that drive growth. For instance, service teams can refine quality responses from existing data, using AI to boost efficiency. Auto-categorising data improves decision-making, providing more accurate statistics, leading to smarter choices

and better resource allocation.

**Leveraging Data for Success**

Data isn't just about efficiency, it's about making informed decisions that improve the customer experience. With The Layer, you gain 360-degree visibility into every customer interaction. This helps personalise marketing campaigns, upsell and cross-sell with ease, and know when not to engage if customers are facing issues.

Michael Parkington, Director of Signal Telecom: "Our data insights are now readily available, and we can easily see key performance metrics across the business. One of our biggest wins was renewing around 70% of our IT base in record time."

By focusing on both emerging technology and the fundamentals, The Layer empowers telecoms and IT resellers to work smarter, serve customers better, and grow faster. ■





#1 Telecoms & IT CRM Solution

# Automate, Unite & Grow

Increase efficiency, build better relationships with employees & customers, and grow your pipeline!

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PROSPECT MANAGEMENT

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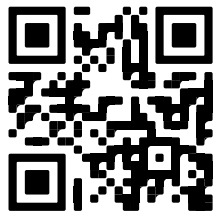
FINANCE & REPORTING

thelayer.com | 03333 222 000





# Doing things differently



paul.gibbs@voip-unlimited.net

This was a social experiment to see if you're open to trying something new! If you made it this far, perhaps you really do want to book a meeting.

All solutions, and fostering real partnership, we're redefining what it means to succeed in telcoms. As we prepare for Comms Vision, we are excited to continue this conversation and explore how, together, we can continue to innovate and create an industry that prioritises simplicity, flexibility, and success.



Mark Pillow

ahead of market demands while maintaining a competitive edge. Telecoms is often seen as a race to keep up with rapid technological advancement. At Voip Unlimited, we're changing the narrative. We believe in doing things differently by making technology work for our partners, giving them the tools to grow their businesses while providing outstanding service to their customers. By simplifying the complex, offering cutting-edge

to focus on what truly matters: delivering value to their customers. But doing things differently is about more than just streamlining operations, it's about creating genuine partnerships. Resellers today need more than just access to products; they need a wholesale provider who supports them at every stage of the journey, from onboarding to ongoing training and technical support. That's why we invest heavily in providing resources that go beyond the transactional, including tailored marketing tools and sales enablement materials that equip our partners to thrive in an increasingly competitive market. Collaboration is at the heart of our ethos, and our goal is to ensure that resellers have the freedom to tailor their offerings to meet the unique needs of their customers. This collaborative approach ensures resellers can stay

n an industry characterised by constant change, Voip Unlimited believes that the key to success lies not only in innovation but in making that innovation easy to access and utilise. As we look ahead to Comms Vision 2024, we are proud to stand among fellow industry leaders, sharing our vision for a telcoms sector that empowers resellers through simplicity and flexibility. For too long, the telcoms space has been defined by complexity, both in technology and in the processes, resellers must navigate to bring services to market. At Voip Unlimited, we've taken a different approach. By creating a seamless experience, where resellers can access and manage a broad portfolio of products through a single, intuitive platform, we remove the friction that often holds back business growth. Our self-service portal ensures resellers can operate 24/7, reducing the need for constant back-and-forth and allowing them

# Doing things differently.



Change it up  
Time for an appointment?

# Our part in growing the UK economy

**M**ore than half of UK fixed businesses experienced an internet outage in the past year, writes **Malcolm Puddefoot**, CRO at Vorboss.

The average downtime – four and half hours. Half a working day. And the cost of that? For each business, it was an average of just over £11,000 in economic output. £18,620 for London-based firms. In total, £17.6 billion lost from the UK economy.

Shocking statistics that go to show just how dependent business is on being connected. And just how serious it is when that service fails.

But I'm an optimist. So, I see something else in those numbers. I see that small improvements in the reliability of the service can make huge economic gains. If that downtime was reduced by even 30 minutes, the total figure drops by a



**Malcolm Puddefoot**

billion pounds.

That should be motivation enough for all of us to want to improve the quality of service given to business internet customers in the UK.

The big question is 'how?' One solution is to improve the

understanding of business internet plans out there. Often, it's just the same product as the ISP sells to their residential customers, but more expensive and bundled with a low-level cyber security product.

It's very easy to call something business broadband. But it's very different to provide internet connectivity that's genuinely suitable for business in 2024.

One of the fundamental features of a reliable internet product for business is a dedicated connection, vs a contended PON connection. Doing more to help customers navigate the options and choose a service that can deliver the reliability that they need, would make a big difference.

Another answer is to follow the lead of consumer internet providers and introduce automatic compensation for business customers.

Consumers have had this benefit since 2019, and the remedy worked. Once automatic compensation was introduced, providers were motivated to engineer a more reliable service. The same outcome for business customers would produce significant productivity gains.

The compensation is never going to make up for the inconvenience or the lost revenue, but it does give a level of assurance to the customer, and it tells them that the provider cares about not wasting their time. It also says that a provider is confident in their network.

A provider that commits to a fix time and backs it up with automatic compensation is serious about getting things right and has the tools to do it.

If that was standard practice, the benefits to UK business – and the UK economy – would be huge. ■

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# Navigating change with Wildix

It seems almost cliché to say that the world is changing, but changing it is, writes **Rob Loakes**, Country Manager for Wildix UK. Ten years ago, we were discussing VoIP as a business tool. Four years ago, we were struggling through a pandemic, yes, it was that long ago. And last year, we were all trying to work out what AI could do for us and whether it was worth the hype.

The current business challenge for those in the UK is to keep up with all this change, and nowhere is it more crucial than unified communications. It's no longer enough to have a simple PBX and be able to accept calls, especially in larger businesses. We're all looking for ways to improve the experience, to get customers through the virtual doors of our contact centres or sales teams.

For MSPs, this means opportunities,



**Rob Loakes**

if you have the right solution. Legacy vendors with hardware-based systems are struggling to survive in this ultra-competitive market. Many

started too late and are heavily reliant on supporting existing infrastructure rather than developing new innovative products. That's where Wildix cuts through.

We're building our partner infrastructure, both here in the UK and Ireland and around the globe. Not only do we offer a great product for businesses, we're channel-only, choosing to prioritise our partners over the direct sales model. After all, we cannot know a customer or support them as well as a channel partner can. As a vendor, it means we can focus heavily on delivering the best support in the business.

This is why our roadshow campaigns have been incredibly successful, showcasing our solutions across the British Isles, and through our partners, we've increased our userbase in the UK by nearly 32% so far in 2024.

So here's where Wildix stands out. We deliver training, sales assistance and advanced planning to ensure success, and our new training programs focus heavily on unified communications sales for even bigger success. We create a great partner experience so that you can sell more.

Our solutions are equally impressive. Like most major vendors, we deliver AI to help businesses enhance their workflows, but we haven't forgotten that we need to be flexible. Our ability to add integrations through our open APIs and TAPI, along with the use of webhooks and iframes, ensure we can work with almost any solution that a business needs. If there's a way, you or our sales engineering team can make it work.

Change is inevitable, but you can weather it with Wildix

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# Enabling differentiation and value creation

**In an increasingly competitive and dynamic market where service providers continue to seek new ways to differentiate and deliver value to their customers, finding partners who can help achieve their goals is critical. With a growing portfolio of innovative products and a channel-only focus; this is where COTU can help, writes CEO Trevor Lovelock.**



Trevor Lovelock

**W**ith many UC and CX vendors delivering an increasingly similar set of products and features into the market, it has become more challenging for service providers to differentiate themselves. Furthermore, end customers' requirements and expectations continue to evolve and mature as the impact of new technologies, including AI, proliferate in the market and the availability of "equivalent" alternatives makes it simpler to switch.

For Channel Providers this creates a concerning set of challenges:

- How do you differentiate and stand out from the crowd?
- How do you create increased value to grow revenue/margin?
- How do you boost customer retention?

COTU have established long-standing relationships with partners, and work closely with them to address these concerns, by delivering services that complement

their core UC and CC offerings. Supporting partners to create enhanced solutions with innovative capabilities, COTU helps to delight their end customers and reduce the risk of churn.

Coming from a background in UC and CX our team works to understand the needs of your customers so we can ensure our product portfolio, and our ongoing sales and product support services, mean you can rely on COTU to work with you. Our expanding portfolio is currently focused on several key products, all optimised for the channel and priced to fit seamlessly alongside the costs of UC licensing, some examples include:

**CXEX** is an innovative AI-powered voice analytics platform that transforms raw call recordings into actionable insights, empowering businesses to enhance customer experiences, boost sales, and optimize operations. Leveraging the latest developments in AI to automatically assess interactions at scale unlocks

incredible value for businesses and offers partners a unique service that helps them differentiate and drive "stickiness". With capabilities including emotion detection, sentiment analysis, compliance and risk adherence, alongside comprehensive reporting and dashboards – CXEX can bring transformative impact to businesses of all shapes and sizes.

**RAMP** offers fully secure cloud call recording archive and retrieval. Agnostic of where the recording originated from, recording files and associated metadata can be added to RAMP allowing for the simple retrieval and playback for all customers from Enterprise to SME businesses. Users can also benefit by using RAMPs powerful call transcription and summarisation service – helping them to review calls more quickly and discover valuable business insights. RAMP offers compliance for FCA requirements on retention duration, GDPR requirements for data removal, and MiFID II requirements on ready and

easy retrieval.

**PayGuard** is a secure payment solution for businesses who handle payments over the telephone, or through digital channels such as Webchat, Email or SMS/WhatsApp. PayGuard integrates seamlessly into the payer/payee experience and enables a frictionless payment process, whilst also significantly reducing the burden of PCI compliance and the risk of data breaches. PayGuard is quick and simple to deploy, generates significant value for partners, and improves customer retention.

**MyWallboards** is designed to provide customisable real-time and historic UC data presentation allowing businesses to keep an eye on their call volumes and productivity. Simple to use and extremely dynamic in development, MyWallboards works alongside the popular UC solutions to add an additional layer of data presentation which an increasing volume of end customers now desire. Customer only pay for

reporting data on those extensions or individuals who they need to see.

MyWallboards is a very cost effective, valuable add-on for UC customers.

**ipSCAPE** is a true cloud omni-channel contact centre solution delivering inbound voice, dialler, chat, email and social media functionality under a single, all-inclusive price. ipSCAPE is a complete offering enabling businesses of any size to benefit from the same market leading level of functionality.

Since the inception of COTU as a pure-channel business we have gone from strength to strength, increasing our global reach, supporting over a hundred partners globally. Our team constantly strives to find and develop solutions for the needs of the UC&C market all with the goal of making our partner's engagements with their customers as fruitful and longstanding as possible.

For further details contact us on **03301249595**, or email [partners@cotu.uk](mailto:partners@cotu.uk)



# Breathing life into legacy systems with AI

**W**e remain laser focused on supporting the legacy systems that underpin UK businesses whilst deploying UCAAS and CCAAS hybrid solutions, writes **Kevin Boyer**, Co-Founder IPNetix, a company that plays a pivotal role in maintaining the operation of critical infrastructure.

This year has been another 12 months of intense change, and a recurring industry theme is the requirement to support legacy systems, particularly across the public sector, where not everybody is on the immediate AI-adoption list. Many IPNetix partners are transitioning their customers from legacy systems, and it's a progressive step that requires skilful technical handling.

As a safe pair of hands, UK IT systems integrators are increasingly relying on IPNetix to get the job done – reliably, on time, and above expectations.



**Kevin Boyer**

With a differentiation-led approach to business growth, it will be inspiring to see how Comms Vision 2024 moves the game even further. Understanding critical pillars for success in the channel is something we're extremely passionate about at IPNetix, and nowhere is this more apparent than in our agnostic service provision.

### Agnostic Technical Services Specialists

As an agnostic technical services specialist, IPNetix specialises in the design, deployment and provision of in-life services for the UK's call centre, UCaaS portfolio and CCaaS. We do not re-sell manufactured product, minutes or lines; instead, our success comes from an acute business focus, and the dedication of our highly skilled employees.

Sitting between the channel sales partner and the end customer and providing reliable service and delivery in either an IPNetix or white label form, has been instrumental to our success in a highly competitive and fragmented market.

We stand strong as one of the UK's biggest service delivery success stories, in the past two years we deployed subscription-based solutions to help customers beat rising inflation and built a diverse and highly

engaged team to support the legacy systems that underpin UK businesses. One of our new products for partners is breathing life into existing Avaya IPOffice customer situations. We allow customers to migrate to subscription-based solutions whilst enjoying advanced technologies and controlling their expenditure.

### Record Growth

Our flexible approach has led to IPNetix provisioning several new service agreements, these have bought us over 200 high profile new customers. Throughout 2024 we have integrated several support teams into our existing family, the flexibility of our leadership and diversity of our people has made this integration a sheer pleasure.

Keep an eye out for IPNetix at upcoming industry events throughout the year, as there are several exciting seasonal ventures on the horizon



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iPNetix provides a vendor agnostic professional services and tech support model for UK systems integrators, supporting clients all day every day. Our professional services have been instrumental in deliveries across the globe. We are noncompetitive and can support your customers on a white label basis



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# The evolving fibre market

The connectivity market has undergone continued and profound transformation since we last met at Comms Vision, writes **Dave Ferry**, Head of Sales – Partner Markets at ITS.

The duopoly has given way to a competitive and dynamic landscape, teeming with multiple players. In turn, customers are moving to alternative fibre options, seeking out connectivity solutions from providers with specialist expertise for their purpose.

The change in government will inevitably signal change, with Ofcom's Telecom Access Review for 2026-2031 underway. We hope that this will bring opportunities, a fair playing field, and fresh perspectives to the challenges of delivering full fibre.

While the market adjusts, consolidation will continue. It's



**Dave Ferry**

inevitable, but it should lead to more streamlined services with customer experience at the core.

#### Scale and purpose

For us, the past year has been about focusing on adding value to our wholesale full fibre proposition. We have invested in improving how our partners can help themselves to our connectivity solutions, allowing them to order, track and manage their end-user portfolios through our self-serve systems.

Scale is key to this. Our network now reaches more than 25% of the UK's commercial premises (with an ambition to hit 40% in the coming years), and we have forged partnerships with key operators to ensure that our partners can access the other 75% through us.

Our scale combined with our focus on B2B has positioned us as an alternative provider to Openreach in the business connectivity marketplace. Our partnership with Sky Business started out with us accessing their network for greater reach and has now evolved into a reciprocal agreement which sees them using our network to deliver high-capacity Ethernet services to their customers.

While our own digital infrastructure continues to grow, we have connected many new business-dense locations. Earlier this year, we celebrated the completion of LCR

Connect, a 214km network covering the Liverpool City Region.

#### Demands and drivers

There are several factors driving full fibre adoption. The PSTN switch off is one, alongside fast-growing markets such as data centres, edge computing, and AI. The increased applications of these technologies is placing growing pressure on data usage, consumption, and storage.

We have designed our product portfolio to support end-users on their digital journey. We are already seeing a shift from demand for 1Gbps connections to 10Gbps, and the signs are here that this is likely to increase to 100Gbps. As early adopters of full fibre technologies, ITS' networks are already XGS-PON enabled.

The next twelve months promise to be just as transformational as the last for our industry. ■

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its.



# Altnet opportunities in the channel

**A**ltnets are opening up an exciting new commercial opportunity for resellers in what has been a race to the bottom in terms of connectivity margins in recent years.

With now close to four in ten premises across the UK having an alternative connectivity option through one of these new networks, increased choice and affordability for businesses is creating significant opportunities for the channel to expand its service offerings and reach new customer bases. Here, **Guy Miller**, CEO of MS3 Networks, explores the full fibre network operator's expansion and award-winning channel partner support.

MS3 was founded in 2012 to provide a fibre alternative to Hull's incumbent network operator, KCOM. Following significant investment in 2022, we have now passed more



**Guy Miller**

than 200,000 premises across Hull and East Yorkshire, North Lincolnshire and South Yorkshire, increasing choice and affordability for homes and businesses by allowing them to choose from our network ISP partners.

The attractiveness of our footprint for the channel is not to be underestimated, with more than 75% of businesses passed in the KCOM licensed area where end customers have historically had little choice and significantly higher prices than the UK average.

Rolling out an alternative network not only benefits customers across the Hull and Humber region, but also makes it easier for channel partners such as retail ISPs to expand into traditionally hard-to-reach areas.

As a wholesale-only provider, our own success depends on that of our partners. Our experienced leadership team spends time with all new partners to understand their business plans, and how MS3 can best support their success — whether that's financial support, strategy consultation, market research insights or the creation of design assets.

We also offer an e-commerce platform where customers can seamlessly compare broadband services from all our ISP partners, enabling informed decision-making.

MS3's extensive ISP support saw us come out ahead of eight other finalists in the Best Partner Support Programme at this year's Comms National Awards, as well as winning Best Altnet for the second year running.

MS3 provides fibre ethernet up to 10Gbps and XGSPON up to 1Gbps. MS3 circuits are now available to the channel via managed and unmanaged options from PXC.

As the connectivity market evolves, altnets, including MS3, are breathing life into the products and margins available to the channel, increasing customer choice and providing new opportunities.

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Now available through



\*Winner CNA Awards 2023/2024



# Rethinking Consumer Purchasing

Consumer purchasing decisions today are increasingly influenced by overall experience rather than just price or quality, writes **Andy Jones**, CRO, TelXL. Unfortunately, many businesses, especially small to medium enterprises (SME's), are struggling to provide the level of customer experience that modern consumers expect. Recognising, understanding and addressing this gap has never been more crucial for these businesses.

## The Challenge for SMEs

In today's market, consumers do not distinguish between large corporations and small businesses; they expect exceptional service from all. The 'contact centre' - whether formal or informal - is pivotal in shaping this experience, yet SMEs face ongoing challenges in balancing the dynamic needs of



**Andy Jones**

their customers with the necessity of optimising operational costs. Access to the right technology is vital for achieving this balance but many SMEs have found it difficult to secure the tools that can genuinely enhance customer interactions.

Often, the technology available to them is either prohibitively

expensive, overly complex or inflexible and does not suit their informal contact centre approach. For those that do invest, a lack of guidance can lead to underutilisation, with many businesses only using a small fraction of the capabilities they've purchased.

## Seizing the Opportunity

The SME sector is the fastest growing in the UK, comprising over 5.5 million businesses. This growth presents an urgent challenge that the industry must address. TelXL has over 20 years of experience in providing reliable, feature-rich telecommunication and contact centre solutions tailored specifically for SMEs. With the right technology at accessible price points, there's a significant opportunity for the industry to support these businesses in enhancing their customer experiences.

## Building a Supportive Network Together

Overcoming these challenges is as much about education as it is about technology. We believe that empowering a customer-focused partner network is key to successfully introducing effective solutions to the market. That's why we operate exclusively through the Channel, offering dedicated support for implementation and enablement. We also emphasise feedback capture, allowing our partners to integrate their local insights and customer knowledge into our ongoing development, ensuring that we meet the real needs of SMEs as they evolve.

Together, we can reshape the customer experience landscape for SMEs, fostering lasting relationships and driving success in an increasingly competitive market. ■

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