



Meet Focus Group  
Chief Executive  
Neil Hall p6

Incoming CCUK  
Chair talks top  
priorities p20



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## THE HEARTBEAT OF THE UK ICT INDUSTRY



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# Wavenet enters new growth era

MACQUARIE-backed Wavenet's acquisition of Daisy Corporate Services (DCS) in May last year marked a gear shift in the MSP's growth ambitions, and this month CEO Philip Grannum sends out another clear message to the channel – 'we're targeting £1 billion and aim to lead in the MSSP space'.

### SPECIAL REPORT

The latest step in Grannum's expansion campaign was the rebrand of DCS to Wavenet on 1st February, a move that reflects the progress made in aligning operations and solutions portfolios.

"Long-term, our strategy revolves around scaling operations, driving innovation and maintaining our customer-first approach as we continue our

journey towards becoming a £1 billion revenue business and a leader in the MSSP space," stated Grannum.

He confirmed that M&A remains central to Wavenet's growth strategy and expects the £1 billion goal to be realised within three to five years.

"We'll continue to look for opportunities that align with our vision, and focus on businesses that enhance our capabilities, expand market reach

or add expertise to Wavenet's portfolio," he added.

"Achieving our goals will require continued investment in innovation, talent development and acquisitions, all while staying true to our customer-first ethos. I wholeheartedly believe we can get there."

The DCS deal boosted turnover to £420 million, increased headcount to 2,000-plus and Wavenet now has more than 22,000 customers. **See page 12**

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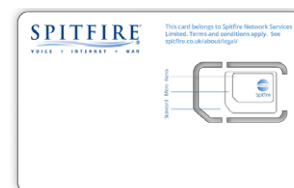
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## Welcome comment



Stuart Gilroy

FAIR to say that the lunatics are running the asylum in big parts of the world, and our own leaders aren't making much sense on key economic issues – ie, how the tax on jobs and another runway at Heathrow airport is going to drive the kind of growth the country needs. Certain politicians seem to be out of touch with reality.

No surprise there. And it's likely the UK Government's big bet on AI is based on no solid plan, just hype and a rush of blood. We saw last month that one simple app can rip the rug from under the AI tech giants, which is food for thought for those ploughing long-term investments into this technology, including the UK Government. It's a dynamic environment, and I doubt there's a Plan B.

But what can we do? We can be certain that profit is sanity. And that in the hands of the right people – the UK's MSPs and ICT resellers – AI is certain to be a boost to growth. Customers understand the potential of AI and want a piece of it. Which is great news in an industry that gets tongue-tied by jargon to the point that new tech can take years to gain traction. But we must not be sucked in by hype, and instead build business cases with real solutions to real world problems. The signs are that channel firms are addressing the AI opportunity proactively, responsibly and strategically.

In their quest for operational efficiency, many businesses may also consider easing the impact of tax rises through measures that lower the cost of running offices, perhaps driving a resurgence in home and hybrid working. It's a proven strategy that makes real sense – and would be another boost for tech providers – for whom profit is sanity.

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

# Quick switch in broadband

## Editor's picks



Damian Saunders (left) with Dale Parkinson

A BROADBAND solution launched by Giacom and Sky Business Wholesale is set to reduce migration downtime and lower costs for resellers through 'easy switching'.

Remote router authentication means there is no need for reconfiguration or new equipment, and trials achieved transition times of 30 seconds to three minutes.

The solution is initially available exclusively to Giacom's partner network via its Cloud Market portal.

Sky Business Wholesale Managing Director Damian Saunders stated: "We've created a solution that simplifies mass migrations and reduces costs for partners."

Dale Parkinson, Managing Director for Connectivity, Giacom, commented: "By simplifying the migration of legacy assets we're enabling end users to embrace digital services and repositioning fibre as the key digital enabler for small businesses."

Parkinson claims that the proposition is a differentiator for resellers when competing for new business. This, he says, is also down to a more streamlined product set that's managed end-to-end by Sky Business Wholesale, including routing and IP addressing – while Giacom's managed service provides partners with migration plans, base analysis and order management.

HG CAPITAL-owned Focus Group has made a trio of top level appointments with former President of Computacenter North America Neil Hall joining as CEO. Also in the frame is Peter Sweetbaum who rocks up as Chairman (he was previously CEO of Content and Cloud), and Chris Morris who comes in as Non-Executive Director (he's also CEO of Citation). Hall stated: "Focus Group has built an impressive foundation and I see tremendous opportunities to accelerate our growth while deepening the value we deliver to customers." See page 6

LDC-backed Onecom's acquisition campaign has been supercharged by a £100 million-plus war chest following a refinancing of its loan facility through Ares Capital. According to Onecom CEO Martin Flick the move underscores the tripartite relationship between Onecom, LDC and Ares as being fundamental to Onecom's growth trajectory. "We forged a relationship with LDC and Ares in 2019 which has fuelled our growth ambitions through a combination of M&A and organic expansion," he stated. "With this support we are well equipped to deliver on our growth ambitions."

# FullFibre-Zzoomm merger creates altnet big gun

THE merger of FullFibre and Zzoomm has created one of the UK's largest altnets with 600,000 ready-to-serve properties and over 65,000 customers. The deal includes the merger of FullFibre's in-house ISP retail company, BeFibre.

Zzoomm CEO Matthew Hare is Executive Chairman of the enlarged group and James Warner, CEO of FullFibre, becomes Group Chief Exec.

They say the merger positions the group for further M&A and an acceleration of



Matthew Hare (left) seals the deal with James Warner

growth along with improved operational efficiency and enhanced wholesale services. Hare commented: "As an

enlarged business benefiting from economies of scale, and with our operational and financial infrastructure, we

have a platform to combine with other altnets in the near future as well as drive organic growth faster."

Warner added: "Following our recent integration with Digital Infrastructure and BeFibre, this latest merger significantly accelerates our ambitions. It strengthens our collective ability to grow faster and seize new market opportunities across a larger footprint, secure funding for new builds and future mergers, and achieve greater

operational and financial efficiencies through economies of scale."

Megabyte Chief Analyst Philip Carse observed: "This is the first meaningful UK FTTP consolidation for several months, creating the fourth largest altnet.

"Geographically, the networks have almost no overlap and both networks are a mixture of classic build and PIA built on a PON framework, making integration more manageable."



## Editor's picks

ADVANTECH Network Solutions co-founder Dave O'Connell is to single handedly lead the business following the departure of his brother Steve. The Follingsby Park-based MSP was established in 2002 and operates as an integrator of IT, communications and IP security solutions. The company doubled revenues in 2024 having made significant gains in the manufacturing, hospitality and education sectors. "The growth we've achieved, particularly over the last 18 months, demonstrates the strength of our business model and the capabilities of our team," stated O'Connell. "We're in a prime position to accelerate our growth plans with a robust pipeline, strong financial performance and talented people."

FLUIDONE has swooped on Graham Dickie who joins the firm as CFO, bringing over 20 years financial leadership experience. He's worked across a number of industries as a CFO since 2006 and is a dab hand at leading projects around raising finance, improving profitability, leading large scale restructuring and refinancing, and supporting sales teams. His experience also includes spells in private equity backed and multi-billion dollar listed global organisations. FluidOne CEO Russell Horton commented: "Graham brings financial experience in buy-and-build strategies, combined with an immediate cultural fit, making him the ideal person to take us to the next level."

GAMMA'S play in the European cloud comms market continues to ramp up having confirmed plans to acquire Germany-based Starface Group from Maxburg. The move is part of Gamma's plan to become the leading challenger to incumbent telecom providers in the German cloud communications market.

CLOUD comms firm Firstcom Europe has fired up its acquisition engine with a new financing package from backer Kartesia. The PE firm made its initial investment in 2020 and this latest loan extension has already seen the acquisition of a UK customer base with a turnover of more than 1.2 million euros. Firstcom has completed 14 acquisitions over the past 10 years and generates over 48 million euros in revenue. The company currently operates in the UK, Germany, Sweden and Denmark where it will pursue additional acquisition targets. CEO Christian Bleakley stated: "With Kartesia's support we are accelerating our new business model which includes a broader range of products and enhanced cross-selling."

# Wright takes CCUK's Chair

INCOMING Comms Council UK (CCUK) Chair Tracey Wright has pledged to ensure that the industry body remains a 'leading voice in the sector' as she doubles down on matters of great import.

She succeeds Eli Katz who stepped down as Chair in early January.

Wright is also Managing Director of long-time CCUK member Magrathea. And she is credited with driving positive change as leader of the Industry Developments Working Group and co-founder of the Women in Telecoms Group (which now supports 188 members).

Wright, who will act as Chair in a voluntary capacity, stated: "I've been involved in the association from the beginning and we've gone from strength to strength."

"There's a whole lot more to come in 2025: Alongside some celebrations and reminiscing, I will ensure that CCUK remains a leading voice in the sector as the UK moves to all-IP communications, and I'll remain laser focused on key issues such as fraud, the upcoming Fixed Voice Telecoms Market Review and



Tracey Wright

will continue to champion women in telecoms."

See page 20 for an in-depth interview with Tracey Wright.

## CEO news

BABBLE CEO Matthew Parker is stepping away from the £100 million revenue business he started building in 2016 when he joined a London-based telecoms reseller with 16 people, £6 million revenue and 200 customers. Today, Babble has circa 15,000 customers and a 500 headcount – its growth spurred by 34 acquisitions and two management buy-outs. "Last year was about consolidation," commented Parker. "Babble is now in a strong position to help businesses exploit the opportunities and challenges they face in today's fast changing technology landscape. It's time for a change – for me and the business."

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# Meet incoming Focus Gro

**Former President of Computacenter North America, Neil Hall, grasped the Focus Group helm as CEO last month with a mission to drive growth and customer value to the next level. Here, we get to know the man himself, his leadership approach and strategic priorities.**

**How did you get into the tech sector?**

With fairly average A-level results, Business Information Technology was one of the few university courses I qualified for. It turned out to be a perfect fit. My career started in networking and voice, then over the last couple of decades primarily within infrastructure services, helping customers procure, implement and support technology. Over the past 28 years I've had the privilege of working with exceptional teams, learning from brilliant leaders and leading teams of my own – something I find rewarding and energising. I firmly believe that the more energy and support you give to people, the more you get in return.

**What attracted you to the Focus Group CEO role?**

Much of my career has been in the large enterprise segment across Europe and North America. The

opportunity to expand my expertise into new market segments and technologies was appealing. Moving from a publicly traded company to a private equity backed business also presented a valuable learning curve, particularly in understanding different ownership structures. When I met with the co-founders, Chris and Ralph, along with our investors and the Focus Group leadership team, it was clear this was the right place for me. The company's history and future vision were truly inspiring.

**What does your appointment signal about the company's future?**

My appointment doesn't signify a major shift. We remain committed to becoming the go-to ICT provider in our market segment. While Focus Group has traditionally grown through the communications sector, we've been expanding rapidly into IT services and



Neil Hall

**We see opportunities to enhance our capabilities by automating the customer journey and integrating products to deliver easy to consume and manage solutions**

that momentum is something I look forward to helping scale further. My focus is on driving the next phase of growth and realising the company's full potential.

**What are your long-term priorities?**

Following our acquisition by HG Capital we've entered a

new value creation phase. This means aligning with our growth strategy, expanding our customer base, broadening our services and scaling operations efficiently. A key priority is keeping our people motivated and engaged so that they can continue delivering customer success while helping us

expand our market presence. Our strategy will naturally evolve in response to market demands but the overarching goal remains the same – to build a stronger, larger business by leveraging new technologies, talent, processes and infrastructure to drive meaningful outcomes for our expanding base of



# Group Chief Exec Neil Hall

customers. For example, we've recently approved an expansion of our ServiceNow platform which will enhance our ability to scale efficiently.

**Are we likely to see more acquisitions?**

We remain active in M&A and in 2024 completed 13 acquisitions of companies and customer bases, of which the majority are fully integrated. We now have over 1,300 employees

**I firmly believe that the more energy and support you give to people, the more you get in return**

with a strong leadership representation from the acquired businesses across the UK. And we've just finished our financial year which has performed well with contracted growth continuing to be strong double digit. Organic IT, cyber and cloud continue to outpace growth in the rest of the group (and the market), again with strong double digit growth.

**How is your go-to-market approach evolving?**

We work closely with key technology partners such as Gamma, Microsoft, Giacom, Cisco and all the major mobile networks. Partner engagement is evolving with greater emphasis on collaborative, long-term partnerships that drive mutual success. Our go-to-market strategy is also evolving to focus on customer-

centric solutions. We are investing in simplifying the customer journey, enhancing digital engagement and expanding our managed services portfolio to meet the growing demand for end-to-end IT solutions.

The primary driver of our evolution is convergence. The boundaries between IT, telecoms and managed services are becoming increasingly blurred and businesses expect seamless, unified solutions. This trend is shaping our portfolio development, pushing us to integrate technologies and provide holistic services.

**In what areas are you seeing the greatest success?**

We are seeing significant success in our existing customer base with businesses increasingly adopting additional IT services. Future growth will come from doing more of the same, leveraging the increasing convergence of IT and telecoms and addressing new customer needs in areas like cybersecurity and cloud services. Digital transformation initiatives are enabling us to increase automation and a seamless customer experience.

**Which new technology areas are on your radar screen?**

New and high growth technology areas such as cybersecurity and IoT are firmly on our radar. These technologies are becoming extremely important for UK SMEs, particularly the cybersecurity portfolio as business awareness and cybercrime continues to rise. While our portfolio is robust, we see opportunities

to enhance our capabilities by automating our customer journey and integrating products to deliver solutions which are easy to consume and manage.

**Which market trends interest you most?**

The key trends we are tracking include the PSTN switch off, the increasing importance of cybersecurity and demand for cloud-based solutions. These trends are shaping how we steer the business by prioritising investments in cloud services, enhancing our security offerings and focusing on solutions that enable flexibility and scalability for businesses.

**What is Focus Group's biggest opportunity?**

Becoming the go-to partner for UK SMEs navigating the complexities of digital transformation and convergence. By delivering integrated, future-ready solutions we can position ourselves as an indispensable ally for companies looking to thrive in an increasingly digital and interconnected world. We aim to be recognised as a leader in enabling seamless communication and IT solutions that drive business productivity.

**What are today's most important leadership priorities?**

I'm a big believer in the Harvard Service Profit chain where if you drive employee engagement, you can improve customer satisfaction which will lead to greater profits that you can re-invest back into the business. The cycle will then perpetuate. As we continue to scale, protecting the culture here is our number one priority. ■

**Just a minute with Neil Hall...**

**Role model:** Computacenter CEO Mike Norris. I've learned so much about culture and leadership from him. He's also helped me grow so that I know I'm ready for this CEO role.

**What talent do you wish you had?** To be a magician.

**Your main strength and what could you work on?** I give and get a lot of energy by being around people, but I can easily be distracted when people are around me.

**Your favourite comedian or comedienne:** Jim Jeffries.

**Three ideal dinner guests:** For a learning night, Churchill, Socrates and Einstein. And for a night of fun, Jim Jeffries for comedy, music by Sting and a good host like Ant and Dec (they're inseparable).

**If you weren't working in the ICT sector what would you be doing?** I'd be a failing actor.

**Best advice you have been given:** People you work with typically need to learn, earn and have fun. If they have those three things they will stay with you and be highly engaged.

**The biggest risk you have taken:** In my previous employment I moved with my family to Germany to help the local team there become a stronger part of the wider group. Not knowing the culture, language or the business was a steep learning curve, but I ended up loving everything about the country and the people.

**Your biggest career achievement:** Staying relevant.

**Tell us something about yourself we don't know:** I appeared on Supermarket Sweep.

**One example of something you have overcome?** After winning a customer 10 years previously, I lost sight of what the client needed and they found another partner. Mentally I found it difficult knowing many of our people would be leaving to join the winning bidder. I worked on my mental health (including becoming a UK first aider for mental health) and now have good tools that have made me stronger. I'm happy to share if anyone wants to connect.

**What do you fear most?** Boredom.

**What more do you want to see from vendor partners?** Skin in the game. A long-term partnership mindset with commercial innovation and shared risk and rewards.

**How do you relax when not working?** I play golf.

**Top tip for resellers:** Keep your customers happy and the P&L will look after itself.

**Editor's comment...**



A COMMS Dealer survey of channel leaders underlined a critical point made by Neil Hall in this interview – that protecting a company's culture is a top priority. But in our study, 47 per cent of respondents conceded that they could do better at developing their culture. The report also highlighted that if leaders establish an inclusive culture they can encourage open discussions that help them make the right decisions. To find out more download the free Leadership report here: <https://www.comms-dealer.com/whitepaper/gain-advantage-through-leadership>


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Jack Michalski - Director of Channel Partnerships

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# Auxilion gears up for growth

Auxilion has green-lighted an ambitious three year growth plan following leadership changes and a big investment in its portfolio, people and technology.

**A**uxilion CEO Philip Maguire has taken the Executive Chairperson role, vacating the Chief Executive position which is now filled by Patrick Jordan. The moves coincide with a 10 million euros investment into the MSP's three year growth strategy and follow the roll out of Auxilion's new service management capabilities in 2024. The investment will be used to bolster the company's managed services and consultancy portfolio, especially in the areas of modern workplace, process modernisation, AI, data management and automation.

"These new proactive and predictive, value-based services will enable customers to overcome the challenges they face, from unlocking the value of data and leveraging AI to modernising company processes and accessing the right skills or talent," stated Maguire, who is now focusing on Auxilion's strategic direction and acquisition strategy.

Meanwhile, Jordan is responsible for the direction and leadership of the business, including operations, driving profitability, ensuring customer service excellence and steering Auxilion's



Patrick Jordan

employee talent strategy. He noted that Auxilion is currently expanding its wider team across Ireland and the UK, and said there will be up to 30 new jobs over the course of this year. "These positions will predominantly be across the operations and sales teams, with senior hires to include a Head of Sales and Head of Commercial and Bid Management," stated Jordan. "They will also include roles to support Auxilion's enhanced modern workplace and AI offering."

### Upskilling

Jordan also noted that Auxilion will be investing in its professional development and upskilling opportunities for existing staff, with plans to strengthen its graduate and apprenticeship

programmes across Ireland and the UK. "It's an exciting time for Auxilion," he added. "The company enjoyed significant growth and transformation under Philip's leadership, and we see more potential in the market and have a clear focus on where we are taking the company."

Maguire added: "Patrick and I will take Auxilion to the next level. That means focusing on what we have always done and unlocking more value through technology. It also means taking opportunities and future proofing the business by bringing in fresh talent, expanding operations and driving growth. This strategic shift will build on our strengths while generating new ideas to drive the organisation forward." ■

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# Partnerships key to IoT

**The IoT opportunity must be fully maximised if channel partners are to keep pace with market changes and digital transformation, better serve their customer base and drive profitable growth, according to Fidelity Group Head of Operations Donovan Labuschagne.**

**T**here are clear signs that the slow burning UK IoT channel market is about to hot up with more vendors entering the space and market changes set to intensify competition. Labuschagne is especially mindful of the upcoming SGP.32 standard (introduced in 2023 to simplify remote provisioning and management for IoT devices) and how it could transform the competitive landscape. "These new standards will drive broader IoT adoption across industries and make IoT scalable beyond single source connectivity providers," he stated. "This will have a significant impact on remote IoT solutions where it is not feasible to access and swap the physical SIM card due to the cost. Newer SIM cards will soon conform to this standard, making it possible to transfer the ownership of the SIM to another vendor once the contract term has ended."

Labuschagne is also keeping a close eye on

AIoT implementations that improve the day-to-day management of larger SIM estates, and provide a boost to monitoring, data predictions and reporting using AI technologies. These developments are happening now and Labuschagne urges partners not to delay entry into this burgeoning and fast moving market as they risk missing out. He also noted that embracing closer relationships with supplier partners is key addressing not just tomorrow's IoT opportunities, but the market growth that's happening today.

For example, in the run up to the 2027 PSTN switch-off Fidelity Group is seeing more IoT solutions replace traditional PSTN services. "These include lift and alarm lines along with low data broadband," commented Labuschagne. "While IoT is not a one size fits all solution partners are able to upgrade and future proof these connections by working with the right suppliers. Furthermore, as connectivity



**Donovan Labuschagne**

challenges continue to be solved by IoT the demand for these solutions will become widespread. That's not all, with affordable data pricing and enablement for resellers to manage unforeseen usage costs, large data IoT solutions such as CCTV streaming over 5G are more feasible."

## Partnerships

Despite the challenge of choosing the right supplier and finding the optimal solution for end customers, Labuschagne reports that many more resellers are exploring and adopting IoT as an additional revenue stream through supportive, and timely partnerships. "With growing demand for IoT solutions and changes being introduced to the market, there's no better time for resellers to incorporate IoT into their offering and

gain an advantage over competitors," he stated. "Not to do so leaves the door open for rival providers."

Labuschagne acknowledged that IoT can be confusing for a number of reasons, including industry jargon and mixed messages, but he says filtering out the noise and focusing on what really matters breaks down barriers. "There's a lot of misunderstanding surrounding the use of iSIMs, eSIMs and traditional consumer mobile broadband SIMs for IoT applications," explained Labuschagne. "With a growing number of vendors and providers entering the space the terminology may become even more confusing, especially as buzzwords like AI and eSIMs are used with limited implementation

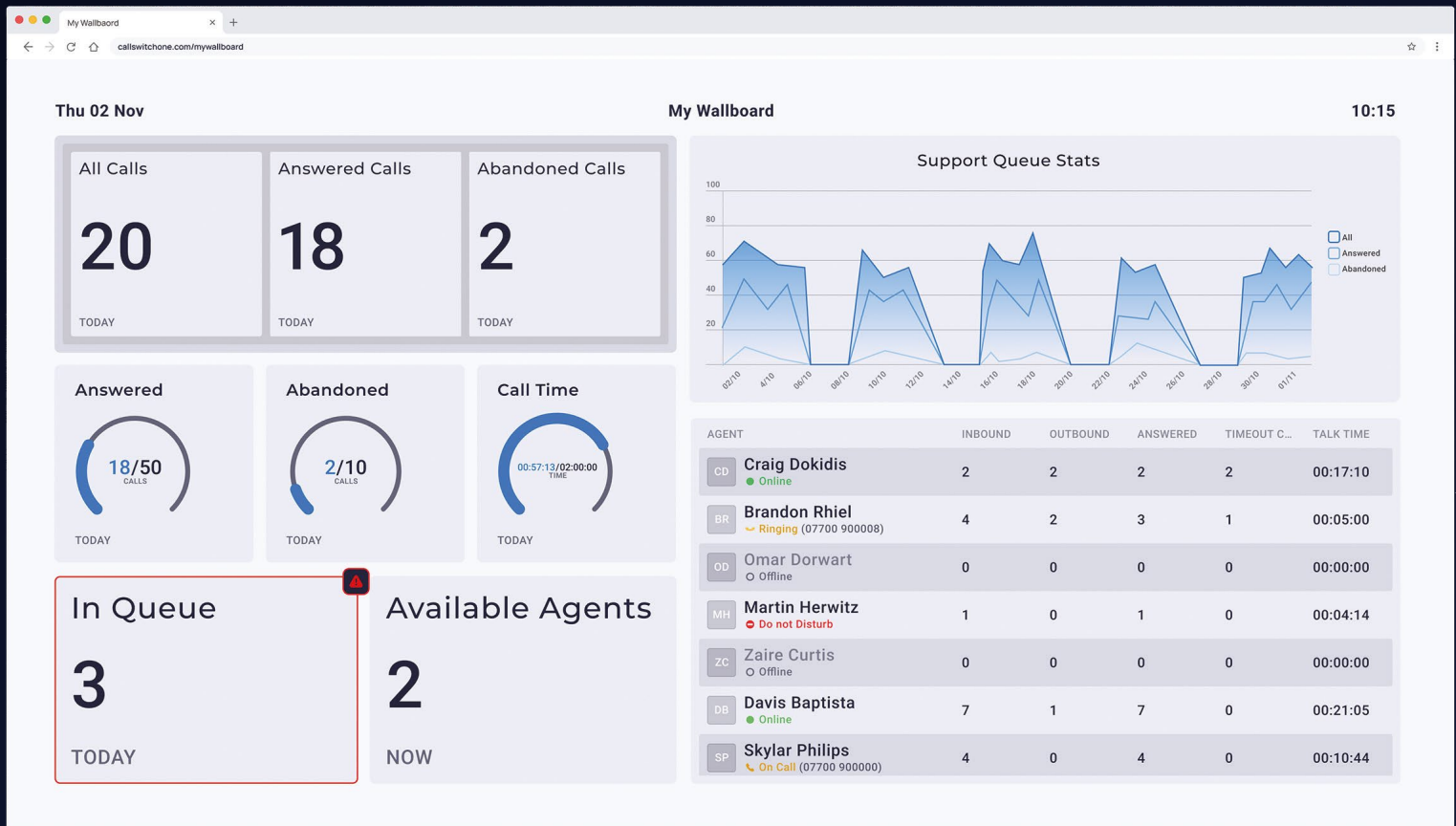
in real-world scenarios. For resellers entering the market it is important to focus on where IoT addresses customers' real needs rather than get caught up in buzzwords."

It is a fact that confusion about the IoT market has led to a lack of solution sellers, which signifies a big opportunity for partners to work more closely with vendors and suppliers with the right expertise to simplify and fully support resellers with targeted propositions.

"Resellers working with Fidelity Group are generating greater value by building specific solutions in sectors such as healthcare, fleet management and retail where IoT provides remote connectivity, improves operational efficiencies and remote monitoring capabilities, and better enables tracking and predictive maintenance," added Labuschagne. "Resellers are also improving revenues by working with distributors to deliver IoT solutions under a service wrap which could include consulting, ongoing support and system integrations."

Labuschagne believes that future growth in the UK IoT space will come from home automation solutions, telemedicine and industrial IoT (including logistics, equipment monitoring and improving supply chain efficiency). "The industrial sector benefits greatly from IoT in terms of automation and data analysis which is used to improve processes," he stated. "The adoption of 5G in IoT in recent months is further accelerating this growth with faster, more reliable connectivity." ■

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# Wavenet CEO targets the

**Wavenet CEO Phil Grannum is upbeat about the Macquarie-backed MSP's mega-expansion prospects, and says the rebrand of major acquisition target Daisy Corporate Services (DCS) to Wavenet marks the start of a new era in the MSP's journey towards becoming a £1 billion business.**



Phil Grannum

**A**s one of the biggest and most ambitious MSPs, Wavenet has taken actions that show what's possible in the ICT channel and continues to expand, scale and create opportunities – and lead by example. The Solihull headquartered firm began life in 2000 and today provides telecoms, cybersecurity, IT and technology solutions to circa 22,000 customers across the UK through a number of regional offices. And the landmark DCS merger propelled annual turnover to £420 million. Now, Grannum is forecasting revenues of circa £1 billion within three to five years.

“Long-term, our strategy revolves around scaling operations, driving innovation and maintaining our customer-first approach as we continue the journey towards becoming a £1 billion revenue business

and a leader in the MSSP space,” stated Grannum. “Achieving our goals will require continued investment in innovation, talent development and strategic acquisitions, all while staying true to our customer-first ethos. I wholeheartedly believe we can get there.”

Key to realising the £1 billion revenue target will be Wavenet's approach to maximising the potential of integrated solutions. It's a strategy that received a major boost following the DCS deal. “DCS brings enterprise grade expertise and a strong foothold in key sectors like health, education, retail, manufacturing and financial services, which complements Wavenet's capabilities in UC, cybersecurity and cloud services,” explained Grannum. “The acquisition also expands our geographic reach and allows us to serve a larger customer base with tailored solutions.

**Achieving our goals will require continued investment in innovation, talent development and strategic acquisitions, all while staying true to our customer-first ethos. I wholeheartedly believe we can get there**

The scale and potential of this deal positions us for unprecedented growth.”

**Future-focused**

Grannum also noted that the increasing complexity of digital transformation and growing cybersecurity threats are shaping his future-focused approach. “We're responding by developing innovative solutions, strengthening vendor relationships and

ensuring a seamless customer experience,” he added. “We're also leveraging data and insights to better understand customer needs and refine our offerings, keeping us agile in a competitive market.”

The quest for operational excellence is also a priority, which, says Grannum, starts with seamless integration. “Structured teams are working across the business

to align operations, unify our solutions portfolio and maintain customer satisfaction,” he added. “The DCS rebrand to Wavenet this month is reflective of a unified identity. Optimisation also involves leveraging the combined expertise and resources of both businesses. This means creating value through efficiency, innovation and scalability. So we're implementing new platforms

# next level

like ServiceNow to streamline processes and enhance customer service."

### Success factors

According to Grannum, one of Wavenet's big success factors resides in its ability to deliver tailored, scalable solutions that address the particular needs of customers and sectors, while operating as an extension of their IT teams as a trusted partner. Grannum aims to leverage this growth platform as he seeks to build on trends like hybrid working, advanced cloud and AI adoption, and maximise the opportunity represented by increasing demand for robust cybersecurity measures.

"We are creating a new class of managed service provider, setting a higher benchmark for excellence in our industry, offering cutting-edge solutions while maintaining a customer-first ethos," he claimed. "The DCS acquisition aligns perfectly with this strategy, adding scale, expertise and breadth to our operations. It enables us to meet the evolving needs of businesses while continuing to innovate and lead in UC, cybersecurity and cloud services."

Of course, M&A remains a core part of Wavenet's growth strategy. The company will continue looking for opportunities as closely as it keeps an eye on the market and technology trends that matter most, according to Grannum. He's especially interested in hybrid working

trends, the acceleration of cloud adoption and the growing importance of advanced cybersecurity technologies, along with the rise of AI, machine learning and automation.

"These trends are central to our strategy, guiding our investment in R&D and shaping our portfolio," he stated. "Another trend is how ESG is becoming an important thread within most businesses, and how that impacts customers, employees and stakeholders. At Wavenet, our ESG strategy is centred on achieving Net Zero Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2030. We're also advancing diversity and inclusion and maintaining robust governance standards."

Leading Wavenet through its growth trajectory is a natural progression for Grannum that builds on his foundational career experiences. He started out at Xerox in a graduate accounting role but soon became captivated by the telecoms industry during its period of rapid growth in the 1990s. "I've always been drawn to dynamic and transformative industries," said Grannum. "Moving to companies like Energis, MDNX and Easynet gave me invaluable experience in sales leadership, international team management and navigating acquisitions. These experiences shaped my understanding of how to drive growth and transformation – skills that are crucial in my current role as Wavenet CEO."

### Phil Grannum on leadership priorities

**LEADERSHIP is about fostering a culture of innovation, collaboration and accountability. And success comes from empowering teams, maintaining transparency and staying agile.**

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## Building value through awards

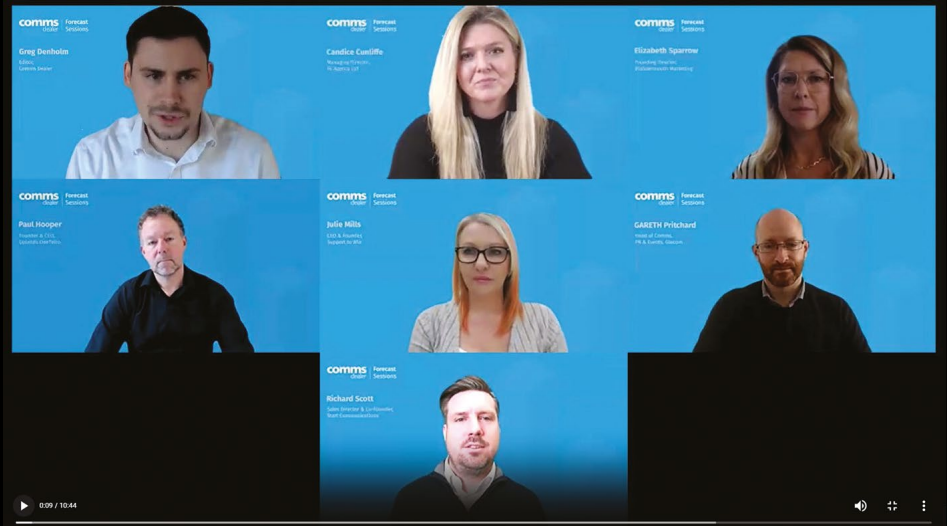
A successful awards campaign reaches beyond winning on the night, according to thought leaders speaking at Comms Dealer's latest Channel Forecast insight session, who highlighted the far-reaching benefits for individual organisations, and the industry as a whole.

The most widely noted benefit is the reputation boost which fuels trust and engagement with existing or potential partners. Elizabeth Sparrow, Founding Director of Blabbermouth Marketing, noted: "Effective PR campaigns can apex around an awards win or nomination. This provides a stand-out talking point with customers." Being an award winner or nominee can

organisations and put our name out there in the industry."

This alludes to the networking benefits provided by the awards process. Julie Mills, CEO at Support to Win added: "Awards are a way of feeling part of the wider industry and community whilst showcasing your own brand." She added that awards events provide an opportunity to stop and see what peers in the industry are doing. According to Gareth Pritchard, Head of Comms, PR and Events at Giacom: "This raises industry standards as you are seeing the great work done by your competitors."

An often-neglected benefit is the structured internal assessment that



also act as a key differentiator in a highly competitive market. Candice Cunliffe, MD at F6 Agency, added: "Building credibility is fundamental, and can be achieved by showcasing expertise and differentiating in a very competitive sector." This same mechanism means that smaller organisations can raise their profile and be seen in the same categories as established industry veterans. Richard Scott, Sales Director at Start Communications, added: "In our first year it was crucial for us to rub shoulders with other channel

crafting award entries can provide, according to Paul Hooper, CEO at Uplands OneTelco, which won Reseller of the Year at the most recent Comms National Awards. He said: "The process is the most valuable part of an awards event as it will make you ask questions about your own business. You will check in with your clients to gain testimonials, talk to your employees about their role in the business and think about your numbers and how you can communicate them to others. Enjoy the journey and utilise it!"

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# Circularity in the round

**n2s is ramping up efforts to help organisations (including resellers and MSPs) succeed in all aspects of technology lifecycle management. Here, incoming CEO Rob Bolton (formerly Operations Director) lifts the lid on the firm's evolution as a one-stop solution for achieving circularity goals.**



**Rob Bolton**

**B**olton claims that n2s is revolutionising how organisations dispose of end-of-life technology, by recovering, refurbishing and redeploying IT equipment to extend its useful life and support the circular economy. "For devices that cannot be reused or are beyond economic repair we employ sustainable recycling processes," explained Bolton. "By pioneering urban mining techniques we are developing methods to safely refine precious and critical materials from e-waste so they can be redeployed into manufacturing streams."

Bolton assumed the CEO role last December aiming to maximise the firm's core services of technical sales, data centre decommissioning and copper cabling granulation – while overseeing consumer IT device re-use and re-marketing operations. He's no stranger to dealing with ICT modernisation programmes having

joined n2s in 2019 from multinational automotive engineering group Delphi Technologies (where he spent over 25 years) and was Head of Engineering – an experience that aligns well with n2s' mission to sustainably process the growing volume and array of ICT equipment, devices and cabling coming out of businesses.

**Holistic approach**

Furthermore, Bolton says that n2s' all-embracing approach to technology lifecycle management has created a one-stop partner for organisations wanting to securely, compliantly and ethically maximise returns from decommissioned hardware, and prove their contribution to circularity. These include corporate enterprise firms, local and central government, ICT equipment manufacturers, integrators and resellers.

n2s began its commercial life over 20 years ago and has flexed with the

requirements of its customers while keeping a focus on its core competencies which also include data centre decommissioning. "The data centre sector, and therefore n2s' addressable market, is growing exponentially driven by demand for cloud, HPC and AI-based computing," stated Bolton.

N2s currently has 100-plus employees and generates over £12 million revenue. The company refurbishes, re-markets and recycles around 250,000 IT devices and components a year with none of the equipment processed being wasted. During the past 12 months the firm has securely sanitised 30,000 data bearing devices, refurbished and resold 4,500 servers and recovered 200 tonnes of copper from telecoms infrastructure.

The business is headquartered in Bury St Edmunds and has several facilities including those in Reading and the Midlands. Its solutions enable customers to meet

and exceed environmental regulation and data security requirements, including major banks, retail and telecom companies, and the NHS which rely on n2s to help meet their decarbonisation objectives, net zero targets and overall environmental sustainability goals.

"A big turning point for the business was achieving coverage across the whole of the UK, including the acquisition of a 50,000 square foot facility in the Midlands and setting up a team of engineers in Scotland," commented Bolton.

"We are increasing our focus on data centre decommissioning, data erasure and copper cabling granulation as well as device reuse and remarketing, therefore it is vital that we invest in boosting our capacity to meet growing demand through state of the art processing equipment and facilities, and an expanding team." ■

**Just a minute with Rob Bolton...**

**Role model:** Bobby Moore OBE: A great leader who got the best out of his team and achieved the ambitions of the country.

**Tell us something about yourself we don't know:** I completed the London Marathon in 2022.

**If you weren't in ICT what would you be doing?** I'd be a maths and physics lecturer.

**Best advice you have been given:** Treat everybody as you would like them to treat you.

**Three ideal dinner guests:** Charles Dickens to hear how he created characters and storylines; Queen Elizabeth I, a great leader who would offer a unique historical perspective; and Winston Churchill for insights into the key decisions he made during WW2.

**Your main strength and what could you work on?** My strength is attention to detail but I can spend too much time focusing on detail.

**Industry wish:** To work with equipment designers on creating products that are easily recyclable.

**The biggest risk you have taken:** Signing up to the London Marathon and the training commitment.

**Your favourite comedian or comedienne:** Frank Skinner.

**What talent do you wish you had?** To fluently speak a large number of languages.

**Your leadership priorities:** Effective coaching and mentoring is key to helping my team make better decisions for the business. If this is happening at every level it can only be a good thing.

**Biggest career achievement:** Being able to interact at all levels of a business and getting the best out of teams.

**Top tip for resellers:** Be honest with customers.

# The Zest4 Formula for Success

**A**s with previous years, 2024 marked another year of impressive growth for Zest4 IoT and our Channel Partners.

We saw continued increases in connected SIMs, revenue, and the addition of new partners, extending our growth streak to five consecutive years.

Our SIM estate expanded further across the EU, USA, and South Africa, with key customer deployments driving this progress.

We introduced cutting-edge features to our Multi-Network Solution, including Multi-IMSI, Geo-Redundancy, and 5G capabilities on all UK networks positioning it as a best-in-class offering.

## Partner Success Across Diverse Verticals

Zest4 Partners achieved notable success across a variety of IoT applications. Over the past 12 months, our resellers secured major contracts, including council smart solutions, vehicle tracking, payment terminals, and nationwide security projects. This diverse portfolio showcases the growing confidence and capability of our channel in embracing IoT opportunities.

At Zest4, our multi-faceted approach to Partner support is the foundation of our success. Education and enablement are at the core of what we do:

### 1. Training and Insights

We deliver tailored face-to-face and online training sessions to educate partners on IoT opportunities, growth trends, and real-world success stories.

### 2. Marketing Support

We work closely with partners to craft impactful marketing campaigns that stimulate interest within their customer base and drive new conversations.

### 3. Solution Confidence

By collaborating on pre-sales and deployments, we ensure our resellers have the tools and knowledge they need to succeed.

### 4. Onboarding Excellence

Every solution includes an onboarding session that empowers partners and their customers to maximize the value of our IoT portals for SIM management.

## Building Confidence for 2025 and Beyond

The buzz within our channel is undeniable. Partners are brimming with innovative ideas and the confidence to explore new opportunities. With a strong start to 2025 already underway, we're excited to support partners in leveraging our 5G, non-steered, Multi-Network eSIM technology to fuel their next wave of success. ■

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- UK, Ireland & EU Coverage
- Aggregated Data
- Private Static IP
- Add Public IP
- Private APNs

The graphic features a dark background with a glowing globe and network lines. At the bottom, logos for O2 business, EE, and 3 are visible.

**Ian Davis steps into IoT role as Zest4 strengthens growth.**

Having worked at Zest4 for over eight years now, Ian gained valuable experience helping Mobile Partners make the move into the IoT space and building a successful IoT team and customer database.

Ian will be leading partner enablement and taking responsibility for helping our partners to identify the opportunities they have in the IoT space. He will work alongside Zest4 resident IoT specialist Anton Le Saux, to give Zest4 partners the leading edge over their competitors.

"I've been collaborating with Ian and the team on IoT projects for the past few years. We initially started with single network UK SIMs for a customer's tablet, and now we're deploying international SIMs with multiple profiles. The experience has been fantastic, and the team has supported Wintercomms and our customers at every step."

**Stuart Radcliffe**  
Director

**wintercomms**

"Zest4 has been invaluable in helping me turn IoT from an unknown into a thriving part of my business. Their expertise, tailored solutions, and guidance ensure my customers receive reliable, effective connectivity. With their support, I've confidently embraced IoT opportunities and made specialist data SIMs a core offering."

**Neil Roberts**  
Director

**just telecom**



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# Bridging the channel's IoT

**Operators and MVNOs are racing ahead with big ambitions to capitalise on the burgeoning IoT market but resellers and MSPs are still slow out of the blocks, and the gap between flag wavers and followers remains generally wide. Here, IoT advocates put forward unassailable arguments in favour of the channel adopting an equally strong IoT growth mindset.**

It's fair to say that despite the hullabaloo around IoT, most resellers are either taking their time when assessing potential growth opportunities, thinking outright that it's not for them, or not considering it all. As a result, noted Jola CEO Adrian Sunderland, the IoT sector is underserved by comms resellers, so much so that he has witnessed many cases where customers go directly to mobile operators and pay more for inferior services. Furthermore, Sunderland is convinced that almost every reseller and MSP has significant IoT opportunities in their existing customer base. "They just haven't yet developed the experience or confidence to find and win in the IoT space," he stated. "We're observing a range of possibilities from simple connectivity for existing applications like payment processing, vehicle tracking and digital signage to complete end-to-end solutions such as smart cities and connected healthcare."

According to Sunderland, resellers should think more seriously about nailing their flag to the IoT mast and elevate IoT as a core portfolio component. "Resellers and MSPs working with a trusted supplier can describe themselves as having an IoT practice, much like how they



**Adrian Sunderland**

## Although IoT is complex, if you're partnering with the right supplier it isn't difficult

might have a cybersecurity practice," added Sunderland. "Although IoT is complex, if you're partnering with the right supplier it isn't difficult. And instead of thinking of IoT as a product, consider it a toolkit that can solve many customer problems."

Validating new market opportunities around IoT is a challenge for resellers, but this gap can easily be bridged, says Sunderland. "If you're new to IoT, your choice of IoT provider could be the difference between success and failure," he added. "And the more IoT is part of your business, the more valuable it will

be. This is evidenced by comparing the values of traditional businesses to those of IoT specialists."

### Market growth

Sunderland also flagged up that market research points to a huge increase in the number of IoT devices, which will double between now and 2030. This, along with the improving performance of mobile connectivity and decreasing prices means that more applications are becoming economically viable for IoT.

"The best opportunities are always those where a compelling event

affects a large number of organisations," added Sunderland. "The PSTN and 3G switch-offs are great examples of such events happening right now. You'd be surprised how many things are connected to PSTN lines that don't need broadband. We've replaced PSTN lines with IoT solutions in applications as diverse as remote wind farms, lift shafts and sheltered housing developments."

Sunderland also pointed out that the 3G switch-off is causing users of payment terminals, ATMs, vehicle tracker and door entry systems to search for new devices, new SIM cards and new solutions. And in terms of the market's macro-trends he is particularly taken by two significant areas – climate change and the quality and productivity of public services. "IoT is being used extensively in both areas in exciting ways, which is, of course, an opportunity for the channel," he stated.

Zest4's IoT Business Development Manager, Ian Davis, is also optimistic and reports a significant year-on-year increase in IoT sales. "While it still represents a small portion of sales for some resellers, more partners are now engaging in IoT discussions with their customers knowing that

Zest4 is on-hand to support them through the process if they need assistance," stated Davis. "Partners who have made the shift and realised the IoT opportunity are seeing genuine benefits. Not only does it bring in new customers with cross sell and upsell opportunities along with instant new long-term revenue, the multipliers it adds to the value of a business can increase by between eight and 10 per cent."

### Encouraging signs

Davis noted that, on the whole, take up is similar to what he expects whenever a new solution is offered, assuming the 80/20 rule, which Zest4 is close to. "With a supportive IoT MVNO, training and insight, resellers can be confident in their ability to sell more complicated solutions," he commented. "We see resellers of all sizes with dedicated sales roles to drive conversations with customers about the benefits of IoT. Their key competitors will be doing the same, and customers will be looking for suppliers that can offer this type of solution. It always pays to be on the front foot and offer a service proactively instead of waiting for it to come to you."

Davis emphasised that the channel is not under-

# IoT opportunity gap



Ian Davis

## Channel partners experiencing the best results in IoT are the ones that have allowed us to work closely with them

supported, the issue is a lack of take up from partners which is holding IoT back. And the only way to bridge this gap is for channel partners to work closely with their provider and become part of their IoT sales function. "The channel partners experiencing the best results in IoT are the ones that have allowed us to work closely with them," commented Davis. "Working with the C-suite and sales teams, and being part of the qualification and quote stage through interaction (in conjunction with the partner) with the end customer to ensure a smooth well pitched proposal is followed up with a smooth roll out."

### Key sectors

In terms of evolving and emerging market opportunities, Zest4 has pinpointed a number of growth sectors. "Smart healthcare will prove to be a massive growth area with the NHS, outpatient support and care in the community

continuing to push forward with technology like remote diabetes management," observed Davis. "Support teams will need secure connectivity and resilient coverage to access records and monitor patients.

"We will also see a fresh wave of hardware change in the coming 18 months as the networks make changes to 3G support. Existing SIMs and hardware have the potential to be swapped out with SIMs that support multi-IMSI technology. Asset optimisation will also be significant in the next few years. We are seeing more and more businesses optimise manufacturing equipment, plant, workforce wearables and tablets etc. Furthermore, operations performance is expected to witness significant growth in the coming two to three years."

The IoT trends of most interest to Davis include the evolution of the multi-network SIM which over

the past two years has seen the profiles change from two to four networks as standard, with the options to steer or un-steer as required. "But it's absolutely key to recognise that not all multi-network SIMs are the same," said Davis. "The range in capabilities available is extensive so partners need to be making the right choices for their supply."

Kushal Shah, Business Development Director, BT Wholesale, is hoping for a spike in IoT interest among resellers, especially considering the shift to newer networks like 4G and 5G. "Now is the perfect time to embrace low-power IoT networks," he stated. "The transition to future-proofed connectivity creates demand for IoT solutions that can keep devices supported into the future. The current lack of focus suggests either an underestimation of IoT's potential or hesitation around the investment needed to enter the space."

He also noted that the IoT market is expanding with a range of solutions being developed across different

sectors – from smart homes through to smart cities. For example, earlier this year, BT Wholesale worked with Yorkshire Water to install IoT monitors on water courses that made it possible to track water quality remotely. "Wider solutions can range from IoT cameras that keep communities safe, fall detection for hospitals and care homes, and smart industrial robots," he added. "What IoT solutions look like is varied, and the breadth will only continue to increase as technology advances."

### Bandwidth matters

Resellers should think seriously about elevating IoT within their portfolio, but to do so they will need to invest in higher bandwidth solutions, advises Shah. "Ultimately, you can't have IoT without rock solid connectivity," he added. "IoT customers need coverage and reliability to ensure that the 'things' in IoT can always be connected and the data can reach its destination without fail."

He believes the investment to be worthwhile as the future of low-power IoT is

'incredibly exciting'. "Service providers and MVNOs must capitalise on lower power networks (LPWAN) to compete in an increasingly saturated market," he added. "Not only can low power networks allow channel businesses to differentiate their portfolios and offer specialised services, they can enhance brand value with a more sustainable network. Additionally, customers will get cost and efficiency benefits such as reduced maintenance costs and extended battery life on IoT powered devices."

But, noted Shah, there's a common misconception that IoT is only about connectivity, often simplified to eSIM or basic device communication. In reality, he says, IoT requires a layered approach which includes device management, data processing and AI/ML to produce meaningful insights. "This lack of nuance leads some businesses to invest in connected devices without the infrastructure to leverage data or enable automation," he added. "An opportunity therefore exists to educate the channel on IoT as a comprehensive ecosystem, emphasising holistic solutions that cover security, data management and automation – all underpinned by reliable connectivity."

According to Shah, bandwidth efficiency will be a key differentiator as the surge in network traffic and demand for data-intensive IoT applications intensifies. He commented: "With the number of IoT devices globally set to grow to 40 billion by 2030, resellers that invest in bandwidth efficiency and 5G early will be well positioned to lead in this rapidly expanding market." ■



Kushal Shah

## An opportunity exists to educate the channel on IoT as a comprehensive ecosystem



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# Incoming CCUK Chair talk

**Understanding and making the most of industry change calls for clarity of vision and strategic direction on all the key issues, emphasises incoming Comms Council UK (CCUK) Chair Tracey Wright (and Managing Director of Magrathea). In her first major interview as CCUK leader she provides a clear view of the organisation's priorities and action areas, and how she aims to continue making a positive impact.**



Tracey Wright

**W**right succeeded Eli Katz who stepped down in early January following 20 years as Chair. And with Magrathea being a founding CCUK member Wright hit the ground running on all the vital issues – including getting to grips with telecoms fraud while advancing the women in comms agenda.

She says most providers want to take positive action but confusion on the matter is rife. “Due to the increasingly elusive and evasive methods of modern scammers it will take a truly collaborative effort to make an impact,” she added. “We are ensuring a strong start with a recently launched initiative in partnership with National Trading Standards to facilitate information sharing.

“This year our top priority is fraud and scams, which is also top of the Government’s agenda,” commented Wright. “To protect the reputation of the comms industry and restore trust in phone calls it is vital that we are proactive in our efforts to stamp out fraud that uses telecoms as a conduit.”

“Alongside this we are preparing our largest event to date, a Fraud Summit in March that will bring together the industry, Government, regulators and law enforcement. Making a positive impact in an area that impacts us all will be a positive start to my tenure.”

## Creating a fair and transparent regulatory framework for members remains at the heart of why we exist

Wright also noted that CCUK’s Industry Developments Working Group will continue to engage with Ofcom on the upcoming Fixed Voice Telecoms Market Review, having already had preliminary information gathering sessions on the key topics to be covered. “Once the consultation is out we can tackle any

subjects that might impact our members for the five year period and ensure that our collective voice is heard,” she added. “Creating a fair and transparent regulatory framework for members remains at the heart of why we exist.”

### Resource-ready

Another of Wright’s immediate tasks is to

ensure the organisation is properly resourced to tackle the challenges afoot while encouraging greater member engagement. “I hope that highlighting all the great work we do behind the scenes will motivate more members to get involved and be part of a knowledgeable group of people,” she stated. “Together we have a stronger voice when negotiating with

# ks top priorities

Ofcom or the Government. Furthermore, through our various working groups and events we aim to provide information that helps members grow and be prepared for regulatory changes. Our association also produces member guidance and briefings on various issues from Calling Line Identification rules to cybercrime, which offers valuable knowledge."

## Women in comms

Wright co-founded the Women in Telecoms Group in 2022 to give females in the industry a safe space to talk about their personal and professional issues, and help with their career growth and retention through mentorship and group support. "This initiative is gaining strength with a number of subgroups now tackling key topics such as early education, coaching, mentoring and recruitment," explained Wright. "As well as adding value through outcomes and supporting members in achieving their DEI goals, this group is a wonderful space for members to learn, develop and support each other."

"Members will be hosting and speaking on panels at a number of conferences and workshops plus hosting webinars to share career advice, showcase different roles and highlight key challenges facing women specifically. To witness the growing skills and confidence within the group is satisfying and we hope over time to replicate some of these successes to all members, regardless of gender."

This year marks the 20th anniversary of Comms Council UK, which was established in 2005 as the

Internet Telephony Services Providers' Association by 12 founding members. "CCUK is now 100 companies strong," added Wright. "Our sector is no longer niche but the mainstream backbone of the UK's communications infrastructure. The telecoms industry has seen significant progress over CCUK's lifetime, from cloud and collaboration communications to the PSTN switch-off."

Its membership largely consists of small to medium sized providers, often with limited resources to tackle the industry's biggest challenges. "CCUK can collate member views and represent them through parliamentary consultation responses, lobbying activity and press campaigns," added Wright. "The reverse is equally important, with the CCUK team filtering key information that members need to be aware of and delivering it in a digestible way."

## Leading the charge

Wright also cited the CCUK's positive work on nuisance calls, the UK Wireless Infrastructure strategy, the European Electronic Communications Code, IP migration, telecommunications security regulations and the National Security and Investment Act. "We led the way in creating PSTN switch off guidance for both our members and their customers, and provided a valuable knowledge hub supporting our members during DDoS attacks," commented Wright. "It is important to join forces in fighting important issues that our industry is facing. We want to be heard by regulators, Government and other trade associations that cross into the voice space." ■

## Just a minute with Tracey Wright...

### How did you get into comms?

My first job at 16 was for a fax repair company and that sparked a love of all things tech and comms.

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

I love to ride a motorbike on country roads and in the woods getting muddy!

**If you weren't in ICT what would you be doing?** A dog trainer. Working with dogs is one of my greatest pleasures.

### What do you fear most?

A lack of energy and motivation. Working in a dynamic industry with diverse responsibilities I need plenty of energy and motivation to keep the plates spinning. Losing my mojo would be a disaster.

**Your main strength and what could you work on?** I'm extremely organised and have a list for everything, but I could work on being a little less controlling because I like to get involved in everything.

**Best piece of advice you have been given:** The best way to predict the future is to create it.

**Biggest risk you have taken:** Leaving a secure job with a good pension to join a start-up that could only guarantee me a month's salary.

**What talent do you wish you had?** To have a reasonable singing voice. Singing is so much fun and good for you, but hearing myself is an unpleasant experience!

**Something you have overcome:** My lack of self-confidence. It's taken many years working with amazing people and a few great coaches and mentors to get me to a place where I would even consider a role like the CCUK Chair.

**The best part of your job:** As Managing Director, watching my team develop and excel in their roles.

# Partnering for cybersecurity success

**A**s the threat landscape continues to evolve, UK businesses are increasingly turning to their MSP partners for cyber security support. If an MSP is unable to provide this, they risk losing their trusted advisor status according to Paul Leybourne, Head of Partnerships at Citation Cyber, who recently sat with Comms Dealer to discuss the cyber security challenges and opportunities that will define 2025.

## Q. What are the trends shaping the cyber security landscape in 2025 and where should the MSP focus be?

AI, supply chain, and insurance should be on your radar this year. I'd say AI especially. We're seeing a rise of AI-assisted attacks that target larger groups in a more personalised way which gives them a greater chance of success.

As an MSP, focus on making sure your clients have robust security by recommending partners like Citation Cyber. We can assess their infrastructure and network through pen testing and automated vulnerability scanning, whilst making sure all employees are up to date with the latest cyber security threats through our training platform.

## Q. How is Citation Cyber leveraging its expertise to help MSPs thrive in this complex landscape?

We've worked with MSPs across the UK for many years, helping them educate their customers on how important it is to have strong cyber security measures. Most of our MSP partners provide alternative cyber security options and have their own technical security people. Our security experts and ethical



"AI, supply chain, and insurance should be on your radar this year."

Paul Leybourne

hackers share information on cyber-crime activities and how they can help keep their customers safe. Our approach is simple and effective – support MSPs as if they were part of our own team.

## Q. What would your advice be for MSPs without a roadmap for including cyber security services?

If you're an MSP without a clear plan for offering cyber security services, you should be considering it. Most MSPs already deliver some security solutions to protect customers from cyber threats. Our partners work with us as trusted advisors for testing, training, and certification. This boosts their credibility and ensures their services are effective and reliable. Partnering with a provider like Citation Cyber adds value, strengthens your service offering, and creates an additional revenue stream. Without this, clients may turn to other MSPs for cyber security and potentially other services too.

For more information on how you can work with Citation Cyber, reach out to Paul Leybourne, via [paul.leybourne@citationcyber.com](mailto:paul.leybourne@citationcyber.com)

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# How Amillan keeps ahead

**Amillan Managing Director Patrick Daly discusses his five year strategy to double the size of the business based on maximising the shift to cloud, extending into new markets, building value creating relationships with new vendor partners and harnessing the power of emerging technologies.**

**D**aly's strategy to leverage emerging technologies is as core to his planning as making the most of current demand for cloud transitions and existing solutions. Hands-on proactivity on all opportunities is the name of his game today – but his first tactical game was on the football pitch where he also showed great promise. Having hung up his boots, and as a young ex-sportsman, Daly met Amillan founder, Phil Jordan, who took him on as an apprentice electrician. The business was established in 1985 under the name Jordan Electrical and in October 2023 Daly, who was Operations Director, acquired the firm (which rebranded to Amillan in 1997) and Jordan became a Non-Executive Director.

The company was originally set up to provide specialised telecoms services to address growing demand for

advanced communication solutions. These initially focused on wired and wireless telecommunications before Amillan expanded into a full-blown MSP across UCaaS, CCaaS, network infrastructure and more recently becoming active in the AI solution sector. Amillan also has a professional services team. "In 1990 we shifted our focus from electrical services to telecommunications and networking infrastructure, marking a pivotal change in our business direction," stated Daly.

He aims to significantly grow the business over the coming five years, driven in large part by expanding the vendor portfolio, entering new verticals and enhancing Amillan's professional services arm. "Our primary investment areas at the moment include expanding the development of our systems infrastructure, growing our headcount and enhancing our marketing



Patrick Daly

**Our customers are increasingly interested in AI. They want to integrate AI into their operations, and leverage it to drive growth and innovation in their businesses**

and sales strategies to support Amillan's growth objectives," he added.

**Market presence**

Amillan operates across the public and private sectors and has a presence in several verticals including hospitality, manufacturing, retail, construction, transport and services. "Our public sector presence includes Government frameworks with Crown Commercial Services where we have a

place on several Lots on Network Services 3 RM6116 and G-Cloud 14, as well as JISC for higher education," explained Daly. "We support many councils and housing associations across the UK as well as universities, colleges and schools."

Key vendor partners include Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Cisco Meraki, Cisco Webex, Microsoft, Cirrus, Evolve IP, Netcall, PolyAI, Alcatel-Lucent and Enghouse

Interactive. "We anticipate evolving our vendor strategy and services in line with industry demands, focusing on UCaaS and CCaaS, cloud solutions, wired and wireless networks, AI, SD WAN and advancements in cybersecurity," added Daly.

Amillan's services are delivered remotely and on-site, and are backed up by continuous support with proactive management of IT environments including



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24/7 monitoring and maintenance. "Our proactive management of IT systems helps reduce downtime and enhance security," added Daly. "Amillan's services also include data backup and recovery, cybersecurity, cloud services and remote tech support. We offer ongoing support and active administration, whether on the customer's premises, in their chosen data centre or a third party data centre."

Daly also intends to double the number of customers Amillan supports over the coming five years. The MSP currently has 150 clients and Daly anticipates year-on-year growth of 15 per cent. He attributes much of Amillan's growth to the ongoing adoption of cloud services and zero-trust networks. "This trend is driven by the decline in on-premise solutions, although there is still a demand for organisations to maximise their existing assets," observed Daly. "However, with the rollout of fibre networks, on-premise deployments are expected to decline further.

"Additionally, there is increasing demand for CCaaS solutions. Initially, the pandemic led to a surge of installations but these are now maturing. As we transition from office-based work to WFH and hybrid models, and now to a return-to-office environment, we are seeing growth in augmenting existing UCaaS and CCaaS with integrations into third party platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Cisco Webex, call recording and analytics."

Daly also spotlighted the AI opportunity and how

Amillan is responding by partnering with key vendors and upskilling its team. "AI is beginning to transform various aspects of technology deployment and management and we are partnering with vendors to develop our capabilities in this area," he added. "This includes skilling up our team for AI deployments. Our customers are increasingly interested in AI. They understand it and want to integrate AI into their operations, and leverage it to drive growth and innovation in their businesses.

#### Robust solutions

"Furthermore, cybersecurity remains a critical concern for all organisations. As cyber threats become more sophisticated there is a heightened need for robust security solutions. These include not only traditional cybersecurity measures but advanced solutions that can protect data in increasingly complex IT environments. By focusing on these areas we aim to stay ahead of industry trends."

Daly is exploring other emerging technologies like machine learning, RPA (Robotic Process Automation) and the most advanced cybersecurity solutions. "These technologies can complement our existing offerings," he added. "We recognise the importance of staying ahead of technological trends, and we want Amillan to be continually known for its expertise and skilled approach to technology deployment and the management of infrastructure. Our goal is to be the go-to partner for businesses seeking reliable, forward thinking managed technology solutions." ■

#### Just a minute with Patrick Daly...

**Role model:** My dad: His incredible work ethic and down to earth nature have always inspired me. As a builder, he demonstrated dedication and commitment to his craft, but what truly stands out is his unwavering focus on our family.

**Tell us something about yourself we don't know:** I'm a foster dad. My wife and I, along with our two children, have been fostering for a decade and it's been one of the most rewarding experiences of our lives. Each child has taught us something new and enriched our lives in countless ways.

**If you weren't in ICT what would you be doing?** Sports. The teamwork, discipline and strategic thinking required in sports have greatly influenced my approach to business.

**One example of something you've overcome:** Dyslexia. You never truly 'recover' from it, but you develop conscious and unconscious coping strategies that help manage and overcome the challenges. That said, dyslexia has given me abilities I wouldn't otherwise have.

**Best piece of advice you have been given:** The harder you work the luckier you get.

**Biggest risk you have taken:** Buying a business! I jest, but it has been the most exhilarating experience and I wouldn't trade it for anything.

**Today's leadership priorities:** Maintaining customer-centricity, driving business transformation and adopting an innovative mindset.

**What talent do you wish had?** I've always loved football and competed at a high level. I would have liked to reach the professional leagues.

**Top tip:** Trust in your capabilities and the unique value you bring to the table.

# PXC

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# Rydal hails Big Goal trophy win

The Rydal Group is celebrating after its sponsored Peterborough United Street Soccer Academy team, part of The Big Goal campaign, triumphed at the National Street Soccer Academy Champions Trophy event held at the iconic London Stadium.

The winning team, composed of vulnerable young people supported by Rydal's sponsorship of the Academy through the Posh Foundation (Peterborough United's community organisation), displayed determination and teamwork to take home the prestigious trophy. "We were thrilled the Posh Street Soccer Academy team emerged victorious," said Rydal Managing Director Steffan Dancy. "Witnessing their dedication was deeply inspiring, and having Rydal staff there to cheer them on made the victory more special."

The transformative initiative uses the power of football to help tackle youth homelessness, inspiring lives and strengthening communities. And as one of the founding members of The Big Goal, Rydal Group has set the standard for corporate leadership in social impact. Its sponsorship in 2024 enabled the Street Soccer Foundation to deliver its acclaimed Academy programme in Peterborough, offering life-changing opportunities to disadvantaged young people. Through regular football training, participants developed



The triumphant Posh Foundation team with Lord Shaun Bailey, SSF Chairman of Trustees

confidence, teamwork and essential life skills.

Providing more than just financial support, Rydal's involvement saw staff engaging directly with the programme, witnessing the transformation of young lives firsthand. "Our partnership with The Big Goal has been a grounding and rewarding experience," shared Dancy. "It's reminded us of the incredible impact businesses can have when they collaborate with initiatives that uplift communities."

Rydal Group's journey with The Big Goal demonstrates how businesses can leverage their resources to create meaningful change while fostering a stronger sense of purpose within their teams. Now, The Big Goal is calling on businesses across the UK

to step up by joining the 2025 campaign and sponsor a Street Soccer Academy in their area. Support will fund life-changing programmes for vulnerable young people and give organisations entry into the National Five-a-Side Tournament, culminating in the finals at St. George's Park, the Home of England Football. "This is your chance to create a lasting impact," enthused Keith Mabbutt, CEO of the Street Soccer Foundation. "Transform lives, energise your team and align your organisation with a powerful mission. Together, we can harness the unifying power of football to fight youth homelessness."

To support The Big Goal, go to [www.thebiggoal.co.uk](http://www.thebiggoal.co.uk)

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# Marketers get resource boost

Strategic marketing specialist Blabbermouth has extended its resources to all channel marketing teams via an on-demand subscription-based portal that provides an asset and capability boost on tap.

The portal, called Bfusion, allows users to augment their in-house marketing expertise with additional skills and resources when required, according to Blabbermouth founder Elizabeth Sparrow. She says Bfusion enables marketers to establish – with self-direction and flexibility – a readymade strategy for current and future demands while also addressing the shortage of marketing talent.

Sparrow believes that Bfusion's subscription model helps to ensure that the marketing function remains a fundamental driver of growth at a time when many businesses are feeling the pinch. And she noted that the predictable nature of subscriptions is key to maximising grant-based marketing.

Bfusion sits alongside Blabbermouth's traditional end-to-end strategic and guidance services, but is differentiated by its self-managed approach versus the agency's full-service offering. "Bfusion is designed to give businesses hands-on control over their marketing operations," explained Sparrow. "The portal makes marketing support readily accessible, especially for



Elizabeth Sparrow

## The portal gives businesses a flexible, self-service marketing resource they can tap into at any time

organisations planning to take their marketing in-house or enhance existing teams. Bfusion is also suitable for start-ups."

### Resources on tap

The marketing tools and resources available include support for on-demand campaigns, the customisation of white label material, tailored content for partner

programmes, design for social media graphics along with content creation and a range of additional services. Sparrow added: "The portal gives businesses a flexible, self-service marketing resource they can tap into at any time, with all the tools necessary to support in-house teams or add extra capacity without the usual overheads."

# PXC

## Maximising your relationship with PXC

PXC's Partner Programme is helping partners to realise their growth potential by offering the inside track to success. Here, CSO Paul Smith discusses how resellers can best engage with the programme to drive maximum value.



Paul Smith

"The key is to just get involved in it," he said. "There are no tricks, and you don't have to pay to get involved. There are no catches! We encourage partners to see which bits they like and drive our energy into helping them maximise value from them. For example, if a company is laser-focused on strong commercials we will help them benefit from our incentive schemes and rebates.

"The partners that flourish with us are the ones that invest in the relationship. Through the Partner Programme we offer members access to our senior leadership team and strongly suggest they make the most of this access to sector experts.

"I can guarantee you that gets a better outcome than typical transactional partnerships because partners can tap into anyone within our organisation that they think can help them with a problem. And it works both ways! We have learned plenty from resellers about how they see the market and

emerging technologies."

This is substantiated by Darren Standing, CPO at Gradwell Communications, a partner that has been leveraging the Programme to grow since its inception a year and a half ago. He said: "The offers from the PXC team are all genuine. They're accessible and open to creating a mutual two-way relationship that is mutually beneficial.

"There have been many times we have taken opportunity to engage with the senior team. They genuinely respond positively, take on the feedback, and are not scared to change the programme for the benefit of the partner community. That's what we want to see, suppliers that will support the way that we want to go to market, to help us get the best out of our own businesses and to help us serve our customers in the best way we can."



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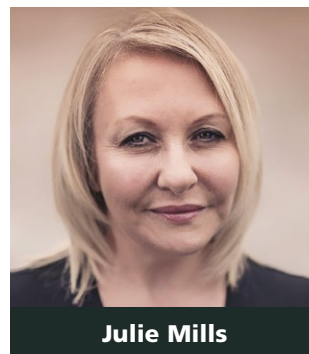
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# Lessons learnt by an ND leader

**Neurodiversity (ND) champion and Train to Win CEO Julie Mills, who leads by example, has a clear mission – to encourage neuroinclusion in the workplace and celebrate diversity. Here, she shares the learnings, perspectives and insights gained through her experiences as a high profile inclusion campaigner in the comms industry.**

Since last year, I've been earning my Level 3 Certificate in Neurodiversity & Inclusion (Train the Trainer) – possibly the most important qualification I've ever gone for. The learning journey behind it has deeply affected how I see the world of work and my role in trying to make it better. Going back to study at my age while juggling full-time work wasn't easy, but it's been worth it. Meeting others on the course – many of whom are neurodiverse themselves – was inspiring. As someone who isn't neurodiverse, I learned a lot from their experiences, hearing their stories and seeing their determination to make a difference.



Julie Mills

It's why openness and authenticity are so important, even without an official label. I also realised that academic knowledge alone isn't enough. It's one thing to understand ND in theory, but what really matters is how it's applied in the workplace.

**Theory into practice**

Traditional interviews, rigid job descriptions, and 'one size fits all' workplace designs have failed to exploit this rich seam of talent and should all be challenged and improved. We need to rethink how we hire, develop and manage people to create environments where everyone can thrive. Getting my certificate will be a proud moment, but it's just the start. The real challenge is turning what I've learned into action.

The course also helped me explore areas of neurodiversity I'd never thought about before. Confronting the ethical questions was eye-opening, as was recognising traits in myself and others that align with neurodiverse characteristics. It reminded me that neurodiversity isn't a separate category, it's part of what makes us all unique.

**Change overdue**

What hit me hardest was how much still needs to change. Despite rising ND awareness, kids and parents are still struggling, schools lack resources and getting a diagnosis is nearly impossible for many. This creates barriers for ND people who can't disclose their challenges when in the workplace.

**Ethics and opportunities**

During my years working in the comms sector I've seen talented ND people struggle because workplaces aren't designed to accommodate different ways of thinking and working. This isn't just unfair, it's bad for business. Companies and individuals both lose out when neurodiversity isn't understood and valued.

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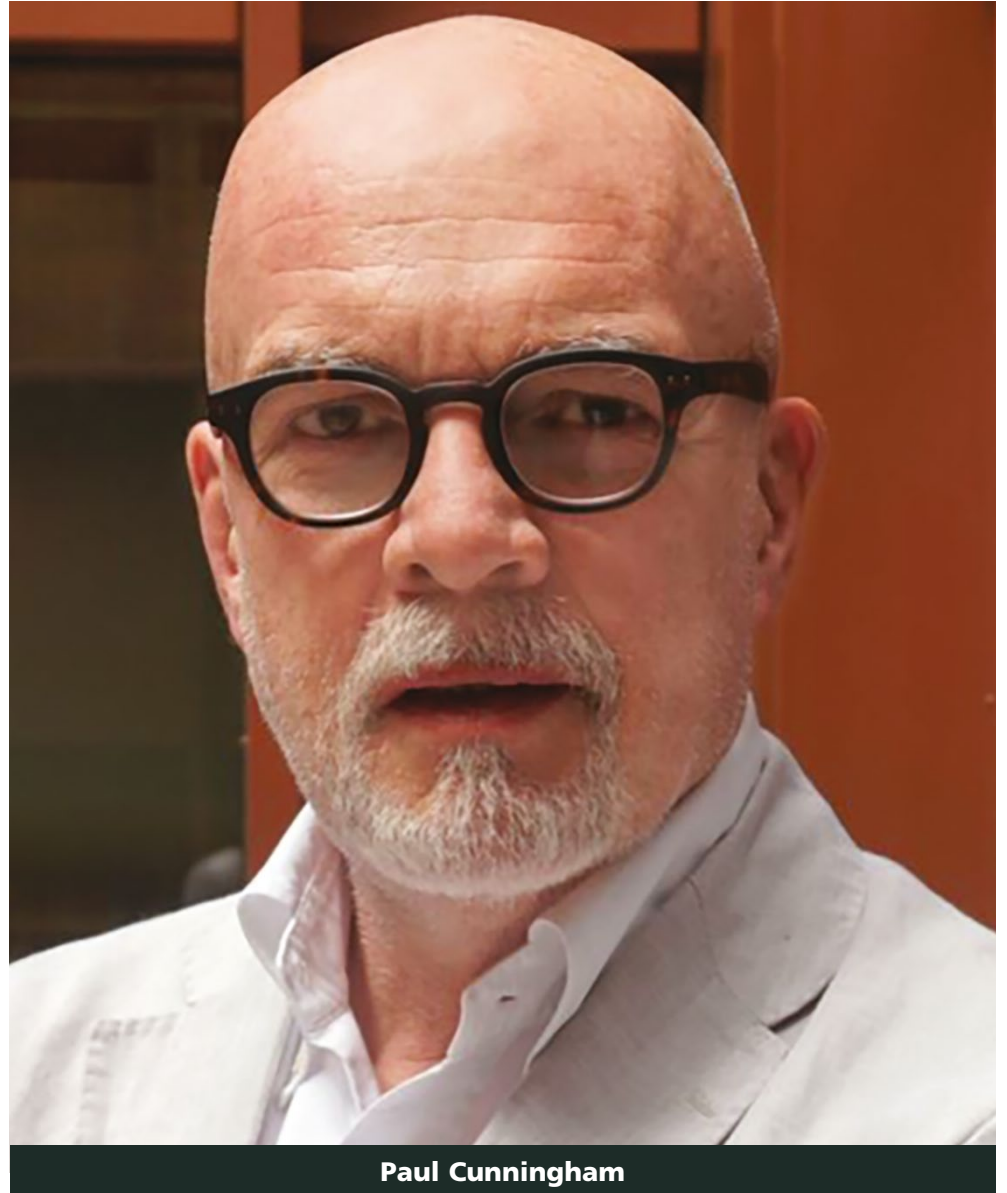
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# UK Partner Week set to un

In today's rapidly evolving ICT landscape, partner-delivered services are growing at over five per cent annually and projected to reach \$250 billion by 2027, leading channel businesses to face unprecedented challenges and opportunities. Responding to these market shifts, UK Partner Week 2025 (July 3rd to July 10th) will address the fundamental issues shaping our sector's future, writes Content Director Paul Cunningham.



Paul Cunningham

## One day of focused learning and networking at UKPW25 could optimise your efforts and resources and set you on a path to even greater growth and profitability

**T**he traditional partner ecosystem is undergoing radical transformation. Recent data shows that only 5-20 per cent of partners drive meaningful revenue in most B2B tech programmes. Partner business teams face constant headwinds – from misaligned partnerships to inadequate market intelligence. When every function of a business today has a dependency on digital technology, new approaches to partnership strategy are needed.

UK Partner Week's Summit (July 9th, London) directly addresses these challenges through focused tracks tailored for different leadership roles. For CEOs

and founders, the event offers strategic sessions on developing future leaders, implementing revenue operations and building collaborative cultures – essential elements for organisations looking to capture their share of the expanding partner-led market.

### Themes and sessions

In a market projected to reach \$250 billion by 2027, our leadership track will help C-suite executives shape winning strategies. From identifying and nurturing future leaders to implementing revenue operations and building collaborative cultures, sessions address critical growth challenges. With

partner-delivered services growing at over five per cent annually, UKPW25 Summit will provide essential insights for executives looking to capitalise on market opportunities and drive innovation.

Our Sales Track is designed for sales leaders driving partner-led growth in the

ICT channel, focusing on building and leading high-performance teams. Sessions explore data-driven growth strategies, cultural alignment and techniques for selling emerging technologies. With partner-delivered technology now representing 70 per cent of the global market, attendees will gain practical skills for capturing market

share and driving revenue in a competitive landscape.

In our Marketing Track, industry professionals will discover strategies for developing compelling value propositions and implementing growth marketing fundamentals. Sessions examine brand building, cultural

UKPW 25  
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UKPW 25

9th July 2025

UK Partner Week Summit  
Convene, 133 Houndsditch, London

partnerweek.uk

# Unlock channel's potential

differentiation and standing out in a crowded technology marketplace. The track aligns with the channel's expanding role in the UK economy, providing tools and insights for effective positioning and communication in the partner-led ecosystem.

Our fourth but equally important Technology Track will offer technology leaders developing partner-led solutions insights into

## In a market where partner-led growth is so evidently the direction of travel, can you afford not to be on the journey?

team leadership, growth enablement and intellectual property development. Sessions address the intersection of technology and business success, focusing on value creation and innovation. With the ICT market's continued expansion, attendees will learn strategies for building and deploying technology that drives competitive advantage and higher business valuation.

### Why UKPW25?

The timing is critical. With partner-delivered technology and services accounting for over 70 per cent of the global market, the ability to effectively manage and optimise partnerships has become a core competitive differentiator. The Summit's emphasis on benchmarking against industry best practices will provide invaluable

insights for leadership teams positioning themselves in this landscape.

### Key insights

For sales and marketing leaders, dedicated tracks offer insights into high-growth team development and data-driven decision making. With multi-partner campaigns and sales bids becoming increasingly crucial for market success, understanding how to orchestrate complex

partner relationships is vital. As highlighted in recent industry analysis, successful partner campaigns require sophisticated go-to-market strategies that potentially align Cloud Hyper Scalers, ISVs, connectivity and delivery partners – exactly the kind of ecosystem

insight and connections the Summit will offer.

UKPW25's focus on culture and developing winning organisations is particularly relevant given current market dynamics. With vendor partner programme leadership turnover occurring frequently, building sustainable organisational cultures that can weather leadership changes while maintaining partner momentum is crucial. Sessions addressing company-wide collaborative culture and its impact on sales performance offer practical frameworks for implementing lasting change.

Beyond the Summit's formal sessions on July 9th, UK Partner Week will embrace the many other networking opportunities available. The ever-popular Channel

Champions Awards (July 3rd) celebrates excellence in people-focused success – a critical element given that partner relationships are fundamentally human connections. We are also encouraging channel businesses to lean into the UKPW25 ethos and use it as an opportunity to co-brand and promote their own events as we celebrate everything the channel has to offer.

If you are still wondering whether UKPW25 is for you, consider this: Companies right across the IT ecosystem invest millions annually in partnerships. One day of focused learning and networking at UKPW25 could optimise your efforts and resources and set you on a path to even greater growth and profitability.

### Strategic clarity

The channel's role in driving UK economic growth has never been more significant. As we contend with increasing market complexity and new forms of competition, the need for strategic clarity and practical insight becomes paramount. UK Partner Week 2025 offers both - a comprehensive perspective on where the market is heading and actionable strategies for capturing the opportunities ahead.

For channel leadership teams serious about optimising their partnerships and accelerating growth, UK Partner Week 2025 isn't just another industry event – it's a key to unlocking your future potential. In a market where partner-led growth is so evidently the direction of travel, can you afford not to be on the journey? ■

UK PW 25 UK Partner Week  
July 3rd to 10th 2025

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- Gain practical insights into revenue growth strategies
- Benchmark your business models against best practice
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# The issues shaping today

Channel leaders yet to establish a long-term growth plan have been urged to organise their thoughts and fully consider the strategic priorities that matter most, according to experts at last month's Comms Dealer Channel Forecast insight session. Especially, they say, at this time of remarkable industry change and opportunity.

**H**ow resellers and MSPs respond today to the speed of technology and market change will be critical to their long-term success, according to Ian Dunstan, Managing Director, Cobalt. He says the decision making process should be future-focused and based largely on strategic outcomes, and he predicts good times ahead for channel firms that make the right moves when addressing the unprecedented growth opportunity within their reach. "2025 is going to be phenomenal," he stated. "I've never seen growth and technology advancements move so quickly. My advice is to focus on the outcomes you're looking for and then decide how emerging innovations can drive them."

Key to this approach is prioritising strategies and solutions that will bring resellers closer to existing customers as their expectations grow, believes Dion O'Byrne, Channel Sales Manager, Rydal Group. This will drive differentiation and facilitate expansion in specialist verticals, he says. "The evolution of the market and the adoption of as-a-service models has increased customer expectations as users now demand integrated, seamless and secure solutions bespoke to the sectors they work in,"

commented O'Byrne. "The resellers and MSPs who are going to excel this year will adopt a consultative selling method and onboard solutions aligned not only with the sector but the personas within those markets. Building a bespoke offering around customer needs will enable resellers to increase their wallet share."

#### Automation

The rise of automation also provides an opportunity for channel firms to enhance their existing operations by increasing productivity with fewer resources. Scott Goodwin, SVP International Market Development,

NetSapiens UK, highlighted that automation is key to creating a platform from which resellers can orchestrate new solutions with the least amount of friction. "This is where the best investments will be made in 2025," he said. "Growing organisations will be looking at their structure and seeking the best ways to improve productivity, while casting their net wider for additional capabilities and driving vertical opportunities."

Dunstan shared his optimism about the pipeline of products expected in 2025, but cautioned resellers

against adopting those that may distract from their core capabilities. "Smaller resellers can move faster and adopt technology as it emerges," he added. "And the products coming out of the pipeline in 2025 are fantastic, incorporating internal development within products around AI and automation.

"This means resellers can deliver on the perennial end user demand of getting more for less, but don't try and be something that you are not for the sake of expanding the portfolio, as these are likely areas you don't have the skills to adopt properly. Strengthen areas where you already

have expertise as opposed to trying to reinvent the wheel by going all in on emerging technology such as AI."

#### Adding value

He also highlighted that Cobalt has added services such as energy and AI voice that complement the company's current offering, and increased ARPU from existing customers. Goodwin agreed with this point, stating: "Make sure the juice is worth the squeeze. If plugging a portfolio gap adds value, then do it, but try and get as much validation as possible that this isn't just a fad in terms of customer adoption."



# y's strategic decisions



Ian Dunstan

## Don't try and be something you are not for the sake of expanding the portfolio

Goodwin cited AI as a prime example of a product being taken out of its real market context due to the buzz it has created. "You've got to understand the difficulty of implementing AI and developing a use case," he added. "This is due to the expertise needed to stitch multiple tools together, and if you are using 30 people to do that you are defeating the object."

He also noted that AI, when used properly, will add value to end users but highlighted a potential issue around monetisation. "There'll be commoditisation when people do create a fantastic opportunity, as others will see what they've done and quickly follow it, sparking a race to the bottom," he said.

Dunstan noted that he has been dabbling with AI for about four or five years but still does not have a full product to go to market, apart from Copilot and other off-the-shelf solutions. He suggests that organisations

look at AI through the lens of creating greater efficiencies within their own business.

Goodwin added: "We're looking at how to take AI into our business to provide better learning management systems for partners and produce a better front end in terms of customer support, allowing us to scale."

Our experts put forward multiple methods for ensuring that potential solutions would be a suitable fit for resellers, including a focus on analytics. O'Byrne commented: "Leveraging data is a great way to better understand customer needs and make business decisions based on anticipated demand."

He suggests resellers take this understanding of their client base and the sectors they operate in to build bespoke solutions before conversations begin. "That way you will be ahead of the pack," he added. "This is a launching point to build

programmes for clients that drive loyalty and create a sticky customer base."

O'Byrne also highlighted the role of vendors in giving strategic advice for capitalising on their own roadmap. "Find a vendor that will give you account management inclusive of a strategic audit on the portfolio," he said, also noting that this includes a look at what they're currently carrying, where it is seeing success and a strategic overview of gaps in a reseller's portfolio which could be filled with products that can increase margins.

"The key message is that partners need to be strategic with wholesalers," he added. "Not only looking at partners that have new-to-market offerings, but those that provide sales enablement for resellers to attack their own base, retain accounts, win new business and increase margins."

### Feedback matters

Customers of course provide the clearest picture of end user demand and Dunstan noted that sales teams



Scott Goodwin

## Make sure the juice is worth the squeeze. If plugging a portfolio gap adds value, then do it



Dion O'Byrne

## Building a bespoke offering around customer needs will enable resellers to increase wallet share

should be empowered to act based on requests from users. "Be open to feedback and elevate your trusted advisor status," he said. "This is important to remaining competitive and ensuring you don't lose business."

This approach highlights the benefit of staying close to customers and Dunstan added that it favours more traditional go-to-market strategies. "I'm always

desperate to use the latest technology and I have spent lots of time and piles of investment trying to work these into new GTM strategies, but so far none have worked," he explained. "For Cobalt, the strategy that has formed the strongest long-term relationships is being an honest supplier, talking to our customers and letting them see what we can offer them. Many of our strongest partnerships come from the client seeking us out."

Goodwin summarised the opportunity for resellers who box smart, saying: "Innovation means a lower barrier for entry with smaller service providers accessing technology more easily. Those who see success will understand their market, shape tailored solutions that are unique to them, plug in the relevant value adds and create some sort of magic for their customer." ■

See next month's magazine for part two of this Channel Forecast insight session.



# Quest for operational excellence

This month we highlight the actions taken by channel leaders as they seek to achieve operational excellence – including the drive for efficiency through automation and AI initiatives. We also bring to the surface what’s top of mind for leaders in 2025 across other critical areas, inclusive of security, ESG and leadership progression.



**CONOR CALLANAN**  
CEO  
CORE TECHNOLOGY  
SYSTEMS

OUR 2025 priority is customer-centric growth. By enhancing service delivery through AI, automation, data insights and an expanded digital services portfolio, we’ll drive higher retention, cross-sell and upsell opportunities while continuing to increase organic revenue growth. Priority two is optimising systems and processes while leveraging AI to enhance customer, employee and partner experience, and improve performance and EBITDA. This ensures we can meet increasing demand, without compromising quality or margins. Priority three is strengthening relationships with key partners like Microsoft and adding new platform and service partners. This will accelerate solution innovation and broaden market reach.



**JULIE BISHOP**  
CEO  
IT NATURALLY

SUSTAINABILITY is our top priority. We already offset our carbon footprint annually, fully recycle and use renewable energy. As a B Corp we have been analysing emissions from our suppliers, shifting spending to carbon-neutral partners. We aim to double our efforts this year. Automation comes next which we use it to streamline processes behind the scenes. Through partnerships this year, we aim to enhance efficiency - without losing our human touch. AI is a space we’re watching and are eager to learn from others. Tools like Microsoft AI are already reducing admin burdens, aligning policies and improving productivity.



**CATHERINE LEAVER**  
CPO  
COLT TECHNOLOGY  
SERVICES

COLT will continue to invest in leadership development, rolling out our new Aspire to Lead programme designed for the next generation of leaders. We’ll also build on the success of our Stepping into Leadership programme for those newly promoted to leadership positions. Advancing our AI capabilities is key as we explore ways to reimagine our customer and partner experience, boost digital infrastructure and enhance accessibility and productivity. As change is a constant in our industry we will invest in upskilling our people in change management.



**CARL HENRIKSEN**  
CEO  
ORYXALIGN

CYBERSECURITY Resilience is our priority, reflecting the evolving threat landscape where ransomware attacks increased 37 per cent in 2024. We’re deepening capabilities in zero-trust architecture, threat hunting and incident response to deliver better protection that adapts to emerging risks. AI Integration ranks second and we’re building knowledge in machine learning operations, predictive analytics and automated incident resolution. This allows us to offer AI-enhanced solutions that improve our effectiveness, accelerating problem/incident resolution through intelligent automation. Addressing the growing imperative for environmentally responsible IT operations rounds out our focus areas. We aim to further embrace sustainable practices and technologies to reduce our environmental impact and empower clients to meet their own sustainability goals.



**PAUL HOOPER**  
CEO  
UPLANDS ONETELCO

FIRST, we’re simplifying processes through automation, making it faster and easier for businesses to get what they need, because efficiency drives progress. Second, we’re embedding sustainability into everything we do, championing the circular economy to help businesses to cut waste and extend the life of their tech. Finally, we’re investing in our people, equipping them with the tools, knowledge and confidence to deliver meaningful support that leaves a lasting impression.

## Saving your business money

**45%** reduction in touches in a typical 'order to bill' cycle

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**0%** billing fees on your first £1m of revenue!

# Intelligence rises up the agenda



**JAY BALL**  
CEO  
FLOTEK GROUP

CYBERSECURITY is our top priority. With more businesses realising the serious impact of cyberattacks, enhancing our skills will help us better protect clients. Second, we're investing in automation with AI. By automating processes with AI technology, we can scale up quickly without needing to hire continuously. Using AI also means we're constantly adding skills and gaining another level of intelligence. Lastly, we're improving our marketing strategies to keep up with trends as customer buying habits change.



**ANTHONY KARIBIAN**  
CEO  
BONLINE

OUR main priorities are building out the partner channel, AI and expanding the features we offer small businesses. For the partner channel, it's about finding experienced channel managers who can build a network of referrers, plus utility and card payment brokers, that want a process to resell VoIP and fibre to their client base. For AI, it's about growing the team that is helping small businesses adopt AI. Lastly, it's about strengthening our UX skills so all new features can be set up and managed by our customers with no human intervention.



**IAN DUNSTAN**  
MD  
COBALT  
COMMUNICATIONS

FIRST, we're using AI tools to automate sales and support, making things run smoother and faster for everyone. This means quicker responses and happier customers. Second, we're closing the gaps in unified communications with mobile converged SIMs. Lastly, we're making compliance a breeze for our customers, helping them stay on top of regulations. Cybersecurity should be in the top three but was and has been a big part of the business for many years – this is ever-evolving.



**JAMIE HUGHES**  
UK SALES DIRECTOR  
EVOLVE IP

EVOLVE IP is enhancing communication with training in presentation skills and concise discussions. This is crucial for building strong relationships with partners, ensuring alignment and avoiding misunderstandings. Effective communication across internal teams and external stakeholders minimises inefficiencies and missed opportunities. Leadership is another priority. This involves inspiring and aligning teams and partners toward shared goals. We include leadership training and progression plans in individual development. Finally, effective project management is vital for coordinating initiatives like product launches and marketing campaigns. Planning, executing and tracking projects ensure they meet timelines, budgets and standards.



**PETE TOMLINSON**  
CEO  
WINDSOR TELECOM

CUSTOMER success teams are at the core of ensuring every customer gets the most out of their investment in technology, so we'll be investing in more specialists. We also believe in making technology accessible to businesses of all sizes so we'll continue to invest in our sales and service teams, but also in the product and proposition experts who tailor our solutions. Finally, automation will be critical as we leverage a significant investment over the past year in our systems stack.



**HARRY BOWLBY**  
MD  
SPITFIRE NETWORK  
SERVICES

NUMBER one is increasing security experience across our team as we believe 2025 is the year businesses will start to take private networks far more seriously. Any connected device can be exposed and compromised so we recommend that customers place connected devices behind a secure private network. IoT remains a focus. Its use cases are endless, however, what is being neglected is the consideration around IoT security, in particular the security of private networks that deliver connections to IoT devices. Another key area for Spitfire is continuing to develop members of our team to deliver an excellent level of service and support.

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# Ferry in CSO move



Dave Ferry

A REVAMP of ITS' sales operation sees Head of Sales for Partner Markets Dave Ferry promoted as Chief Sales Officer (CSO) responsible for sales strategies across partners, public sector and major business clients. The company also appointed Ashley Griffiths as Business Director, Major Business; and Mark Thomas as Business Director, Public Sector. Both report to Ferry. Griffiths brings 20 years industry experience including notable leadership stints at euNetworks, vlingo where he served as Managing Director, The Loop at Gamma Telecom and Ocean Charge, also as Managing Director. Thomas previously served as Managing Director of Datrix and Chief Revenue Officer of Adept. ITS CEO Daren Baythorpe stated: "These appointments mark

a significant step forward as we prepare for an ambitious year ahead. Dave's leadership, coupled with the expertise of Ashley and Mark creates a powerhouse team ready to drive growth in emerging markets and deliver value across our core sectors." ITS also promoted Dan Bruce to Head of Volume Sales in charge of all sales activities for channel partners.

# Maddocks to drive UCaaS

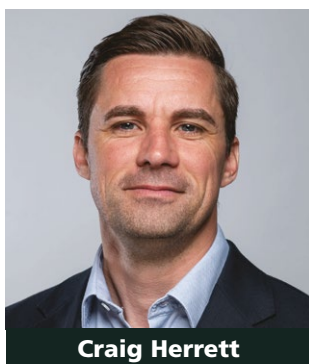


Laura Maddocks

TSI's incoming Senior Partner Manager Laura Maddocks aims to supercharge the UCaaS provider's channel expansion campaign, drawing on her strong track record in partner recruitment and support. She joins following a near ten year stint at audio solutions provider PromptVoice where she played a key role in product development and managing partner relationships from acquisition through to in-life account management. During her tenure she onboarded over 200 channel partners within four years. Maddocks commented: "There's an untapped growth opportunity within UCaaS and I'm confident I can help partners seize it by tapping into new verticals and increasing their revenue streams." Director of Channel Partnerships Jack Michalski added: "Laura's deep knowledge of the communications industry, UCaaS products and the channel landscape makes her a fantastic addition to our team." Maddocks is also a board trustee for The Smith-Magenis Syndrome Foundation, where she supports families impacted by the rare condition.

## Also on the move...

PROVU Director Craig Herrett has moved to sister company Alliot Technologies as Managing Director. He joined ProVu in 2017 and is credited with spearheading a number of initiatives said to have been instrumental in supporting ProVu's growth. Chairman Darren Garland stated: "This change has been a long time coming, forming part of a strategic plan we've been busy implementing over the last 12 months." Herrett, who is a founding member of Alliot Technologies, added: "I am focusing on the opportunities that lie ahead with Alliot and will help drive and accelerate our growth in the IoT market."



Craig Herrett

**XELION'S sales operation has received a boost following the appointment of former NEC Channel Manager UK&I Nick Thompson as UK Partner Manager. He brings 20-plus years sales experience and says he was attracted to the combination of Xelion's agility and proposition. "Xelion is the optimum size for a business comms vendor – large enough to deliver a serious proposition to partners yet agile enough to respond to the ever-changing challenges the channel presents," he stated. Xelion UK Managing Director Dave Reynolds added: "Nick's enthusiasm, knowledge, experience and network are second to none, and I'm confident he'll help us continue to expand our partner base."**

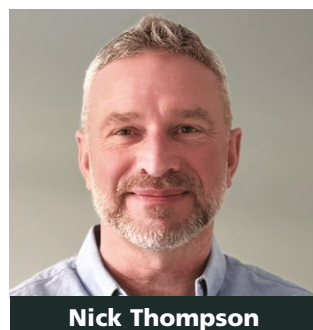
KIRSTY Walker has joined Agilitas IT Solutions as Chief Financial Officer, bringing over 25 years of experience and moving from Wincanton where she was Senior Commercial



Kirsty Walker

Finance Manager responsible for leading the company's largest account across four locations. This involved managing customer budgets, forecasts and financial reporting. Walker's prior experience also includes stints at Exel Logistics and DHL Logistics. Agilitas CEO Sara Wilkes commented: "With extensive

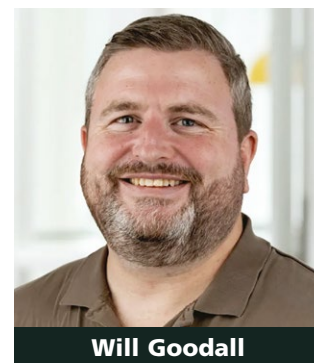
financial and operational expertise within large and complex organisations, Kirsty's leadership, knowledge and drive will play an instrumental role."



Nick Thompson

# Goodall steps up to Director level

WILL Goodall has been appointed Elevate Wholesale Director. He joined Elevate Wholesale, part of Elevate, as Head of Wholesale in March 2023, bringing circa 20 years telecoms industry experience. The company was previously known as Telcom Group, and since launching to the channel has onboarded hundreds of partners, also welcoming 200-plus channel partners through the acquisition of Luminet in 2023. Elevate CRO Andy Tatlock stated: "Will has been instrumental in the initial launch and growth of our wholesale division over the last two years."



Will Goodall





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