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Jones: 'Enablement more vital than ever'

ENABLING comms resellers to evolve as MSPs and stay the course is a priority that cannot be ignored. Why the imperative to transform? Greg Jones, Senior VP of MSP Enablement, EMEA, Kaseya, has the answers.

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This month's movers and shakers

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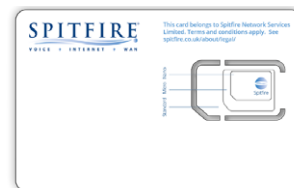
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Welcome comment



Stuart Gilroy

LAST month's Editor's comment kicked off with a line about lunatics running the asylum on the world's political stage. That turned out to be an understatement with Trump, by the day, acting more like an off-script comic book baddie in a far-fetched Marvel movie. We're all, including

Putin, pinching ourselves. But recent events also shine a light on aspects of strategic advantage and disadvantage.

Trump's actions have thrown a number of issues into sharp relief. Notably, his attack on diversity underlines NATO's big advantage. Regardless of which side America wants to be on, the key NATO strength is its diverse nature with many strategic minds sitting around the table, supported by specialised and unique capabilities according to geography and background, versus Russia's inflexible, homogeneous cohort. NATO has a deep pool of multifaceted ideas and viewpoints, strategies and innovation potential. On the other hand, Russia, like Trump's administration, thinks one way.

Channel leaders will understand the strategic advantage enjoyed by NATO, therefore cannot argue against the benefits of a more diverse boardroom that drives strategy through fresh perspectives, ideas, innovation and disruptive thinking, catalysed by diverse minds and inputs. Trump's activities also bring into focus that deals and agreements should be about win-win relationships, not cold hearted transactions. There's no long-term sustainability in that approach to 'doing deals'.

Empathy, diversity and partnership are strategic strengths, and their absence is the Achilles heel of Trump's America, Putin's Russia, and any business that does not prioritise people, diversity and unity. That is Europe's, and your, Trump card.

Stuart Gilroy, Editor

To keep up to date with the latest channel news, as it happens, visit www.comms-dealer.com daily

Aequitas Network advances inclusion

New community initiative champions and drives gender equality in the ICT industry.

BPL Business Media has launched the Aequitas Network, a community that aims to drive and support gender equality in the ICT industry. The first Aequitas Network event (invitation only) will take place at The Sheraton Grand (Piccadilly, London, May 15th 2025) with a focus on fostering allyship and developing inclusive workplaces while celebrating female leaders and talent.

The Aequitas Network will bring together female leaders in the ICT partner community and provides an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of women in our industry, forge connections with female D&I champions, and gain new perspectives through shared experiences and special guest speakers. "A key way to accelerate gender equality in the channel is to celebrate female leaders while supporting



Thea Szejka

women's advancement in the channel," said BPL MD Michael O'Brien. "The launch of the Aequitas Network also underlines the importance of networking and collaboration between female D&I champions in driving the equality agenda forwards."

Thea Szejka, MD of event sponsor BT Wholesale, added: "The Aequitas Network is a fitting initiative for an inspiring community of diversity champions who lead by example and advocate for workplace inclusion, so that all people can be their authentic selves, have equal opportunities and a brighter future. The Aequitas



Kathryn Platt

Network also emphasises the need to support these goals through collaboration and celebration."

Kathryn Platt, Head of Indirect, Vodafone UK (event sponsor), commented: "Connecting and networking with like-minded leaders in the ICT industry can only increase the momentum of gender equity in the workplace. The focus on removing barriers to gender equality, combined with a celebration of women leaders and female talent, is what makes the Aequitas Network an impactful community of industry role models."

Visit: www.aequitas.network

April Channel Forecast

Accelerating mobile-first revenues through partnerships

Cellular-led services have long been an essential technology trend for businesses that's now reaching market maturity, offering channel partners a range of opportunities to drive growth from 4G, 5G and IoT developments and deployments.

In this Comms Dealer Channel Forecast Insight session, we assess how far the channel is leveraging its prime position to take a lead in the burgeoning cellular, mobile data and IoT marketplace, where trends are moving fastest, how to identify lucrative sales opportunities within existing customer bases, which products and services hold the most revenue potential and how to unlock ongoing mobile-first value through supportive partnerships.

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A history of evolution

Embracing industry change with a reinvention mindset is key to lasting the course, according to Nimans Managing Director Paul Burn who spoke to Comms Dealer ahead of the distributor's 40th anniversary this month.

Having the agility to evolve constantly and remain relevant to the market has enabled Nimans to stay ahead of the curve for four decades, says Burn. He noted that the Manchester-based company's next reinvention will be its most significant yet, driven by changing consumption models, emerging technologies and volatile world events. "Not all of our competitors have survived the last 40 years," he stated. "They stayed in their lane and did not embrace change. Our strength has always been evolution."

The business was founded by Julian Niman who led the firm until his untimely passing in January 2018. The distributor primarily supplied phone systems and everything that sits around them to dealers but went on to evolve into a full solution provider. Today it operates under the Midwich umbrella following its acquisition in February 2022. Burn noted that the distributor's next step is to become a long-term partner for forward-thinking MSPs. "The biggest

change we are going through is an acceleration of how customers can do business with us while embracing the world of recurring billing," he added, "This will also enable us to embrace emerging technologies."

Burn contrasted these developments with Nimans' previous modus operandi based just on products, and he noted that changing the portfolio proposition set can be a relatively quick process but evolving the back end takes more time, citing the evolution of how Nimans interacts with customers from an implementation perspective as an example. Burn also pointed to the need for more pre-support than post-support as software investments outpace hardware demand. "In 2015 tech support would have been seen as a key value add," he said. "We are shifting so that the majority of support comes prior to the sale, meaning engineers spend less time on site."

Diversification remains key to Nimans' transformation strategy. Burns explained. "We have walked the



Paul Burn

We can be more aggressive when stepping into new spheres with a lot more market share to go after

tightrope between broadline distribution and specialist distribution. You don't want to become a big warehouse, but if you are too niche then you are vulnerable."

He described how this balanced approach has ensured steady growth for Nimans. "Splitting resources across markets leaves less room for explosive expansion if one area takes off," he

said. "But by looking at trends and being deliberate about where we put our resources we can ride different growth waves."

Challenger approach

Burn stated that Nimans' reputation helps it to diversify and step into new markets and believes that the company benefits most from being in new segments where it can act

as a challenger. "Sometimes it's fun being the non-dominant operator," he commented. "When we were top for phone systems everyone was taking a chunk out of us so we went into defensive mode. We can be more aggressive when stepping into new spheres with a lot more market share to go after."

Today, Nimans is seeing the most growth in its video businesses, driven by the need for meeting room quality experiences as staff return to work, and the expansion of its cybersecurity division. The shrinking market is analogue telephony, which is to be expected. Burn also noted that Nimans' biggest investment areas will be across software and services.

The accelerated rate of change is also being influenced by global factors, observed Burn: "The market used to evolve steadily and you had a chance to move with it. Now it's a case of 'what's happening this week'." In this context he highlighted events such as the major chip shortage and the blocking of the Suez Canal, with the most evident example being the pandemic. "Because of home working and return to work trends we have evolved more in the last ten years than we ever expected," he added.

Burn identified two characteristics in particular that have enabled Nimans to effectively adapt to change as it happens – calmness and perspective. "Both ensure that no knee jerk reactions are being made," he stated. "We have been around for 40 years, seen a lot and know we have the ability to continue evolving." ■



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Forensic listening is key

A determined questioning approach to gathering strategic information is critical to empowering the right decisions, according to Larato CEO Dr Lucy Green. Here, she explores the relationship between multifaceted consultancy and forensic listening, and how the essential tenets of both can deliver the most impactful outcomes.

A good consultant, like an analyst, will adopt a granular response to what's in front of them and not take anything at face value. They will question everything, uncover motives and read between the lines until confident they're seeing things as they really are – before deciding on a line of action. For a data analyst, that means reviewing in minute detail the strongest and most pertinent insights. For an ICT consultant, it also means landing on, and highlighting, the customers' primary motivations that are likely to strike the right chords and trigger a sale, followed by the delivery of a perfect-fit solution based on the right technology and service wrap.

There are reasons for everything, and making sure you understand those fundamental sources is

crucial. It's a skill that involves eyes, ears and instinct – and how these are leveraged can be good or bad for business, according to Green, who elevates 'forensic listening' as being key to unlocking growth potential. "Forensic customer listening is a must," she commented. "When you seek out and act on customer feedback you gain a competitive edge by refining your products, improving service delivery and strengthening customer relationships.

"For that reason, spend enough time with customers to truly understand their needs and really think about the questions you are asking. If you can, use someone who is experienced in customer listening to manage the project. It's a skill."

Green underscored the critical importance of MSP consultants surfacing



Dr Lucy Green

Clarity through consultation validates your strategy

customers' topmost priorities and turning those requirements into solutions that resonate with buyers. "Clarity through consultation validates your strategy," she added. "But doing it incorrectly could cost you money, time and even your brand reputation."

Holistic data gathering

A multifaceted approach also applies to how customer data is gathered more broadly, because it is a mistake to rely on the testimony of a single data source, noted Green. Instead, she says that

decision making is more informed by a combination of qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (surveys) data. "Our experience of running customer listening projects for the last ten years tells us that there is always something to be gleaned from asking closed questions to a large volume of people, in addition to open, fluid, one-on-one questions with a small group," she explained.

"Both of these formats have the capacity to give you helpful data, but I don't recommend putting your

hand in your pocket until you have both qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative often tells you the 'what' while qualitative tells you the 'why'. So don't make costly assumptions and take more than one path to knowledge."

Developing transformational solutions of course hinges on the success of a multifaceted strategy when it comes to listening to customers with open ears. That includes current and former clients that have churned. After all, how can MSP leaders expect their decision making to be fully informed unless they have the full picture?

"Look at the strategic value of asking customers at every point of the retention/churn cycle, big spenders and small spenders, new and old," stated Green. "This will allow you to understand patterns and spot potential gaps in your offering which may start out as only a small molehill but eventually grow into a mountain for some customers. It will also help to understand how you are attracting new prospects, how you are losing old customers and how you could upsell and cross-sell."

Like a forensic scientist, ICT consultants should leave no stone unturned. And channel business leaders engaged in any kind of planning would be wise to listen intently to all customers and sources, not a selected subset with the most positive story to tell. "Transparency and acting on both negative and positive feedback are a must," added Green. "And prioritising forensic listening will ensure that the right building blocks will be in place to enable your growth story." ■

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Going security-first

In response to the growing security imperative Espria has centralised cyber as a core component of every solution it provides, according to Greg Hawthorn, Managing Director – MSP.

The UK security market is fast-moving and with cyber threats constantly evolving and regulations tightening businesses are more security-conscious than ever, observed Hawthorn. “However, many organisations are still playing catch-up, especially SMEs that may lack the in-house expertise to manage security effectively,” he stated. “For MSPs, this presents a great opportunity to offer security-first managed services that don’t just tick compliance boxes but actively reduce risk and protect business continuity.”

According to Hawthorn, security was considered ‘important’ three years ago, but now it’s the priority. “We’ve moved from offering security as an add-on to making it an integral part of every service we deliver,” he added. “We’re replacing the core of our internal toolsets and we’ve standardised the way we deliver solutions and services, such as Zero Trust, MDR (Managed Detection & Response) and automation, ensuring our clients stay ahead of threats. Looking towards the end of 2025, our goal is to continue to offer complementary services while embedding

AI into our delivery model, helping us make services more accessible to smaller businesses through scalable, cost-effective models.”

Automation matters

Espria’s R&D is centred on automation and the company has invested in a new automation team while aligning its services to the Cloud Adoption Framework. “Automation is key because managing security incidents manually is unsustainable,” said Hawthorn, who noted that partners investing in automation, and shifting their mindset from selling security to delivering resilience are scaling faster.

“We’re also investing in more intelligent MDR solutions through our partnership with Sophos, giving us the ability to proactively monitor and neutralise threats before they become critical issues,” he added. “This means better efficiency, fewer false positives and more value for channel partners, helping them deliver enterprise grade security without the hefty price tag.”

The fastest moving security market trends include AI-driven threats, supply chain vulnerabilities and



Greg Hawthorn

the rise of sophisticated ransomware-as-a-service (RaaS), observed Hawthorn. “Bad actors can now literally outsource their attacks,” he added. “The solutions we offer, particularly around Zero Trust with products like Microsoft’s GA solution and proactive threat intelligence, are aligning with these emerging risks. For MSPs, this shift is creating new revenue streams as clients increasingly look for managed security services that are predictive and adaptive rather than just reactive.”

Demand centres

In terms of the most profitable security services and those with the most future potential, Hawthorn reports ‘great demand’ for Espria’s MDR and Secure Access Service Edge (SASE) offerings, vulnerability management and compliance-driven security solutions. “With regulations tightening (such as GDPR, NIS2, Cyber Essentials+)

businesses are willing to invest in security-as-a-service models that ensure continuous compliance,” added Hawthorn. “Looking ahead, the biggest growth potential for MSPs lies in cloud security, AI-driven threat response and managed identity & access management (IAM).”

According to Hawthorn, AI and automation are going to be game changers. “This is where we are spending our development time,” he added. “Beyond that, we’re focusing on driving our SASE, MDR and passwordless authentication. As hybrid working becomes the norm, secure cloud access and endpoint security are areas where MSPs can truly differentiate themselves.”

But to make the most of these opportunities MSPs need to bridge the knowledge gap, which Hawthorn says is a ‘major challenge’. “Many still

view security as a complex, standalone discipline rather than something that should be baked into all IT services, taking a ‘secure by design’ approach,” he commented. “Vendor complexity is also a barrier. Security stacks can be overwhelming and MSPs need solutions that are scalable, simple and integrate seamlessly.”

Education

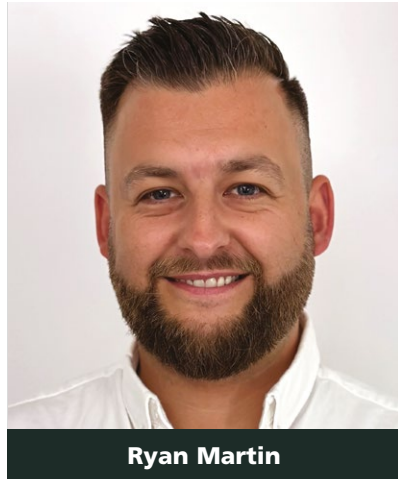
Hawthorn also noted that the SME market can be a challenge to navigate, and that Espria’s clients rely on the business as a partner to help them manage these challenges. “More education is needed,” added Hawthorn. “The top MSPs stay ahead by upskilling their teams and educating clients on the evolving threat landscape. Continuous education wins, and security is not optional. The best partners don’t sell security as an add-on, they embed it in every service. Moreover, close vendor ties help bridge knowledge gaps and craft great solutions.”

As well as calling for greater vendor collaboration Hawthorn pointed out the benefits of more standardisation in the UK security channel market. “Too many security solutions operate in silos, creating complexity for MSPs,” he stated. “The industry needs to make interoperability and simplicity a priority so resellers can focus on delivering value rather than wrestling with fragmented toolsets. Businesses don’t just want firewalls and antivirus software, they need a trusted partner who keeps them safe, compliant and operational in an ever-changing threat landscape. Position yourself as that partner and you’ll win the security-first game.” ■

Security in partnerships

ICT resellers and MSPs who double down on security and quickly decide their approach to this high growth opportunity have much to gain, according to Ryan Martin, Head of Indirect, ANS. "Security is at the forefront of customer technology decisions and accounts for a significant part of IT budgets for both channel partners and their customers," he stated.

Martin also noted that the key consideration for resellers and MSPs when deciding their strategy is whether to build a practice or leverage partnerships. "If opting to build a practice then understanding the costs is critical", he stated, adding that partnering offers significant benefits, including reduced costs and faster time to market. "More importantly, finding a partner with credibility, accreditations and certifications provides peace of mind and confidence," he said.



Ryan Martin

Martin observed that security strategies have evolved to become more proactive and integrated, focusing on threat prevention and response. And that the most successful partners have taken a proactive approach to leveraging partnerships that also remove barriers. The biggest challenges preventing resellers and MSPs from

maximising the security opportunity include a lack of expertise, complex security landscapes and resource constraints, noted Martin. "Channel suppliers can help by providing training, simplifying security solutions and offering support to build security capabilities," he added. "Cost and recruitment are still a significant factor for MSPs looking to 'build their own'. More MSPs are opting to partner as the barriers to entry are simply too great to run themselves."

To enable channel partners to address emerging security challenges ANS's current focus of R&D includes developing advanced threat detection and response solutions, AI-driven security tools and cloud security services. "Our objectives for 2025 and beyond include adopting advanced technologies, expanding security services to meet evolving threats and an enhanced security posture," added Martin. "AI is

always part of the conversation and channel partners need to make sure their security offerings are protected from the increased threat this poses – while capitalising on the opportunity it presents."

Martin says the fastest changes in security trends are seen in AI and ML, zero trust security models and cloud security. "These trends are creating new revenue opportunities by enabling more effective threat detection and response, as well as offering scalable security solutions," he added. "Currently, the most profitable elements of security solutions include managed security services, endpoint protection and cloud security. Future security products and services with the greatest potential include AI-driven tools, zero trust solutions and advanced threat intelligence. These trends are driving innovation and providing new opportunities." ■

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World Cup for Big Goal victor

The winning team in this year's The Big Goal five-a-side football tournament will go on to represent England at the 7th World Corporate Champions Cup to be staged in Morocco this coming October.

This year's Big Goal winners will raise the bar further as they set their sights on beating fellow business teams from 15 countries in Fez, Morocco (October 22nd-26th). "This is fantastic news and takes competing in the tournament to an entirely new level," enthused Nigel Sergent, Comms Dealer Editor at Large and co-founder of The Big Goal. "It means the team from our industry that triumphs at The Big Goal National Finals at St George's Park in September will go on to wear the Three Lions shirt in Morocco. What an incredible honour and a once-in-a-lifetime experience that will be for those players."

The Street Soccer Foundation, which organises The Big Goal competition (again sponsored by Giacom), is a football-led initiative tackling youth homelessness. Last year, 44 ICT teams took part in The Big Goal tournament and their entry fees helped more than 400 disadvantaged young people.

Giacom CEO Terry O'Brien commented: "We are incredibly proud of how the channel has come together in support of this initiative, creating positive impacts



Terry O'Brien (left) and Keith Mabbutt

in communities and young lives across the nation. Every year, thousands of young people in the UK face homelessness and lack opportunities to break free from cycles of poverty. The Big Goal was created to change that, and we hope to double the number of young people helped in 2024 and make a real impact on youth homelessness."

Dates and venues

The Big Goal 2025 competition will see companies competing in regional tournaments:
Southern Finals: Friday April 11TH 2025 – hosted by Brentford FC
Northern Finals: Friday April 25TH 2025 – hosted by Sheffield Wednesday FC
Midlands Finals: Friday May 9TH 2025 – hosted by Derby County FC.

The National Finals will take place at The Home of England Football, St George's Park, inside the famous Sir Alf Ramsay Arena.

Street Soccer Foundation CEO, Keith Mabbutt, added: "By joining The Big Goal, businesses not only make a tangible difference in supporting vulnerable young people nationwide, but they also gain the opportunity to take part in the biggest national five-a-side football tournament – supported by Sky Sports – that could lead to an unforgettable experience representing England in Morocco."

To support The Big Goal and find out how to enter visit www.thebiggoal.co.uk



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The way to innovation

Accelerating growth through disruptive and innovative thinking is an ever-pressing priority for all channel business leaders, according to CloudInteract CEO Simon Leyland. But what does this mean in practice?

How channel organisations ramp up their capacity to marry disruptive thinking with technology evolution and market opportunity is a big question that this article aims to address. First and foremost, noted Leyland, disruption without direction 'is just noise'. "Innovation only matters when it solves problems, and the key to bridging that gap is deep customer understanding, rapid iteration and a focus on real business impact," he stated. "Right now, the challenge is less about technology and more about mindset, helping businesses recognise that what worked for the last 10-15 years isn't necessarily what will drive success in the next ten."

That said, traditional channel companies face challenges in adapting to new technologies like AI, noted Leyland. "Some are hesitant, unsure of how to integrate AI effectively, while others jump on the hype without truly understanding its relevance," he added. "The most effective channel partners will be those who embrace AI

with a clear focus on solving real customer challenges rather than just following trends. We ensure innovation moves from concept to reality by embedding AI into existing workflows, testing fast and adapting quickly, and always keeping people at the centre. That's how we make AI practical, actionable and ready for the real world."

Challenge culture

Leyland says that a precondition for this approach is to have people who believe in change and leaders who set the challenge and create excitement around innovation goals. "In an established business it can be harder to break from routine, but with the right culture you can maintain the same energy and belief as a start-up," stated Leyland. "By fostering a culture of challenge, ownership and bold thinking, we ensure that innovation isn't just a buzzword, it's how we operate every day. Our business changes roughly every six months, and we'll continue driving forward, deploying new technology, refining services and challenging the status quo."



Simon Leyland

This agile and disruptive approach ensures CloudInteract is in a strong position to make the most of what Leyland calls the 'huge AI opportunity', and he reiterated that success comes from cutting through the noise and applying innovation where it delivers value. "Successful innovations aren't just disruptive – they're practical, scalable, solve immediate business challenges and are fuelled by a start-up mentality," he reaffirmed.

"We keep things lean, productive and free from unnecessary bureaucracy. Time is valuable, so we focus on efficiency, meaningful work and fast execution rather than endless meetings. At the same time, we strike a balance between structure and flexibility – having enough process to drive

results, but not so much that it stifles creativity."

Innovation also thrives when influenced by diverse perspectives rather than people who think the same way, observed Leyland. He says diverse thinking challenges conventional approaches and creates an environment where disruptive ideas aren't just encouraged, they're expected. "To achieve this we build teams with different backgrounds, perspectives and ways of thinking," he explained.

"This diversity ensures we see problems from all angles and develop solutions that truly make an impact. By ensuring a diverse mix of backgrounds, demographics and viewpoints – including an even balance of male and female perspectives – we're not just shaping stronger decisions

we're ensuring we truly understand our customers."

Leyland also believes that diverse representation at the top is critical. "Our female leaders have just as much share of voice and influence in the business as anyone else, and it sends a clear message that talent has no ceiling," he stated. "That's the kind of culture that fuels disruptive thinking, attracts bold ideas and ultimately drives real innovation. Furthermore, by building a culture of openness, flexibility and trust we've naturally attracted the best people."

Key opportunity

According to Leyland, this line of action will better enable resellers and MSPs to maximise opportunities in the AI-driven contact centre space. "The biggest opportunity isn't just selling AI – it's helping businesses manage, optimise and evolve with AI, embedding resellers and MSPs as strategic partners rather than just technology providers," he stated. "The days of making money from long-term three year licence deals are coming to an end, but for those who embrace change the opportunity is even greater.

"The future is in AI-driven services, automation and ongoing optimisation. This means embedding yourself as a trusted business partner rather than just a supplier. Organisations don't just need new technology, they need partners who can help them deploy, refine and continuously improve AI-driven customer interactions. So shift your focus from one-time transactions to innovation, disruptive thinking and long-term value creation." ■



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Platform for growth

MSPs aiming to ride the digital transformation wave, address new markets and expand through mergers and acquisitions have reached a watershed moment, claims Strategic Imperatives Managing Director Wail Sabbagh, who says innovations in billing platforms will be key to ensuring their success.

MSPs entering scale-up mode can be significantly held back by friction from legacy billing platforms, according to Sabbagh, who says Strategic Imperatives has prioritised the removal of operational complexities for growth-focused MSPs using its Elevate billing solution. "Now is the right time to double down on MSPs because they have reached a pivotal moment," he said. "Through conversations with our growing customer base we've identified several MSP-specific enhancements that we will be heavily investing in."

One investment area will be the creation of automated recurring billing for complex service bundles. "We aim to ensure Elevate adapts to evolving business models, from subscription-based services to usage-based pricing," explained Sabbagh. "Legacy billing systems are impeding billing

transformations due to their rigid nature, inflexibility and integration challenges."

He also highlights the need for innovation and flexibility as emerging technologies generate hybrid billing preferences. "We've positioned Elevate to help MSPs monetise IoT, 5G and AI," added Sabbagh. "It's built to handle the complexity and flexibility that these innovations demand."

He explained that each of these technologies is afforded different billing options within Elevate. Across IoT, Elevate supports subscriptions, pay-as-you-go pricing and tiered usage plans. For 5G, it enables dynamic pricing and instant invoicing, and for AI, options include charging per API call, subscription tiers based on model complexity and outcome-based pricing. "These capabilities empower MSPs to be truly creative with their bundling, pricing,



Wail Sabbagh

Now is the right time to double down on MSPs because they have reached a pivotal moment

and service propositions," added Sabbagh.

Key insights

A second investment area is delivering actionable insights through enhanced analytics. "By turning the vast amounts of data within billing systems into actionable, automated insights, we're empowering our customers to make smarter, faster decisions," commented Sabbagh. "In a market where agility and intelligence are key, this will give them a significant competitive edge."

He noted that the solution is aimed at boosting pricing strategies and improving customer retention. The third priority Sabbagh highlighted was a focus on smarter integration and automation. He said: "We're focused on enabling smoother integrations with third party systems and popular MSP tools, reducing operational friction and enabling service providers to effortlessly scale."

He also highlighted that automating complex

processes and reducing manual work lowers costs, minimises errors and frees up resources for strategic initiatives. "We see billing as not just a back-office function but a strategic tool, and the financial heartbeat that impacts customer satisfaction, cash flow and scalability," he said.

This supports growth for customers looking to expand through acquisitions, pointed out Sabbagh. "A common scenario for our customers pursuing growth through mergers and acquisitions is the resulting fragmented IT estate," he said.

"Maintaining acquired brands for strategic reasons often leads to disparate systems."

This challenge will be overcome by Elevate's multi-brand capabilities which provide a unified platform enabling streamlined operations across all brands. Strategic Imperatives' priorities have also been informed by customer demand, which continues to inform its consultative approach and heritage within the MSP sector. "Having worked closely with MSPs for many years we've developed a deep understanding of their business models and the unique challenges they face. This insight has shaped Elevate," commented Sabbagh.

Strategic Imperatives launched Elevate for ISPs in September last year to create a bespoke experience for wholesale and retail ISPs looking to scale. The company is planning to announce several new integrations that will connect Elevate to CRM systems, providing a more unified view of customer relationships. ■

Closer alliances bolster channel

Channel ecosystems are in a constant state of flux, and as the industry continues to evolve MSPs and vendors must align more closely to maximise the value of partnerships, writes Loucerna Director Louise Grant.

The relationship between MSPs and technology vendors has changed significantly over the last few years. Today's MSPs were yesterday's resellers – evolving from reselling vendor products and providing support services to end users, to the vendor often being one part of the MSP's overall solution offering. This change in dynamic has required an evolution of the channel model to be a more collaborative, service-oriented partnership, where MSP and vendor provide equal value to each other.

One of the key drivers of this transformation is the shift from transactional, product-centric sales to recurring revenue models. Subscription-based SaaS, cloud services and Anything-as-a-Service (XaaS) offerings have reshaped how MSPs interact with vendors. Rather than simply reselling licenses, MSPs are now expected to deliver holistic solutions that integrate multiple vendor technologies into customised, high value services.

Vendors have had to change their approach to partner programmes to support this new relationship dynamic. Programmes need to be more flexible, allowing



Louise Grant

for specialisation and a mixture of partner types and badges. There should also be a focus on enablement, co-managed services, and shared success models, rather than traditional volume requirements. Vendors should invest in their partner ecosystem by offering white-label solutions, better margins, and strategic co-marketing opportunities to build the partnership.

Trust in partnerships

Trust and transparency have become crucial elements in MSP-vendor relationships. And MSPs expect more flexibility in pricing, better support structures and reduced channel conflicts. Vendors that previously sold directly to end customers are now reconsidering

their go-to-market strategies to strengthen partnerships, rather than compete with them.

Channel ecosystems never stand still, and as the dynamics of the ICT industry continue to rapidly evolve, MSPs and vendors must solidifying their competitive position through closer, more strategic partnerships. They need to demonstrate their joint value to their customers, with the vendor accepting that they may not have the upper hand in the relationship anymore. The joint focus must be customer success, and the customer experience. Vendors who get this right will build a truly collaborative, service-driven – and, most importantly, successful channel. ■

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Cherie Howlett, CMO, Jola

“Suppliers that can help resellers target opportunities they can win are crucial. Solutions need to be easy to sell, roll out and manage.”

Quick-win Opportunities

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The NHS has rolled out iPads to ambulance crews all over the UK. The iPads will help them access medical records to help inform their course of action. MSPs have found that partnering with aggregators offering multi-network services and a management portal gives them so much more control and removes the headache of dealing with multiple carriers and manual requests for changes.

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Suppliers that can help resellers target opportunities they can win are crucial. Solutions need to be easy to sell, roll out and manage. Jola has a tried and tested six-step process called the Mobile-data Revenue Generator™ to help partners win their first deal. To find out more visit <https://www.jola.co.uk/partners/>.

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Driving MSP growth thro

The smooth transition from comms reseller to MSP is critical for long-term success as technology demand drivers continue to evolve, the imperative for operational efficiency deepens, and the requirement to deliver more for less intensifies, according to Greg Jones, Senior Vice President of MSP Enablement, EMEA, Kaseya.



Greg Jones

The direction of travel for comms resellers is now clear with many transitioning into the MSP space – and requiring a leg up. Enter Kaseya... its role as an enabler to thousands of MSPs across the globe offers key insights into the factors that empower partners to stay ahead of technology trends and the demands of the market – while maximising business opportunities. Jones' experience also tells him that the current level of MSP enablement delivered by vendors 'falls short of the mark', and he argues that more comprehensive support initiatives are needed to ensure MSPs can leverage the skills and resources required to spur growth and better outcomes for customers. "Vendors like to talk about being strategic partners but fail to deliver on what MSPs

need to drive results," he claimed. "They don't offer MSPs enough help with how to operate a better business or how to scale. There is a lot still to be done."

Kaseya's raison d'être is to empower MSPs across the globe so they can run a more efficient, successful and scalable business, primarily through the provision of enterprise-grade tools and technologies, giving them all they need in one place. And according to Jones, Kaseya's UK partners performed strongly last year, especially in security, automation and compliance.

"In 2025, we are expecting bigger strides towards security-first models, co-managed offerings and Compliance-aaS," he stated. "Our three year objective in the UK channel is to drive

We see more and more comms resellers looking to join the MSP playing field – but this is a different business model so they need help to get established

deeper partner enablement, more strategic relationships and expand our EMEA TruPeer sales and marketing platform for MSPs, especially in the comms sector. We see more and more comms resellers looking to join the MSP playing field – but this is a different business model so they need help to get

established. We want to help more MSPs transition and evolve their services."

Strong pedigree

Kaseya's TruPeer programme has a track record of boosting members' profitability, with net profits said to be among the top 10 per cent in the industry. "Additionally,

participating MSPs command higher prices, securing an average seat price 20-30 per cent higher than the market standard," added Jones.

Enabling MSPs to drive their businesses forward with confidence is a high priority, noted Jones, as they are coming under increasing

ough full scale enablement



delivery and operations. They need support in those areas through channel growth programmes like Kaseya's TruPeer and Powered Services Pro, as well as deeper technology and business support."

Jones says it's inevitable for most MSPs to hit a wall at some point, and Kaseya aims to help partners break through those walls. Chief among the challenges resellers face when shifting their operations up the specialism ladder include pricing, packaging and the positioning of services. "The key is to identify higher value customers and understand what the ideal target customer profile looks like," said Jones. "Then, we can support with playbooks, coaching and automations that speed up ticket handling and resolution, as well as other repetitive workflows. Automating the more mundane and laborious tasks frees up time for technicians to focus on more important matters."

Jones also pointed out that enablement is not just about tools, it includes helping MSPs shift their mindset and improve leadership on their journey to operational maturity. "With insights from our partner network we can demonstrate what excellence in each area looks like," he said. "We do this not just through our TruPeer programme but also via sharing best practices by running webinars and events, for example, or providing tips and tricks for sales and marketing."

MSP enablement for Kaseya is also about building a strong community, emphasised Jones. And as an

executive within the 50 Club, Jones has first-hand insights into what's top of mind among MSP members right now – and how that might influence the trajectory of the ICT channel. "Peer groups share real-world strategies for improving sales, boosting profit and scaling faster," he added. "There are so many different topics front of mind

MSPs can't stay in the break-fix lane, they need to look at what the market requires to build the right services

for MSPs, including security, operational efficiency, talent retention and GTM strategies. Everyone is looking to do more with less to stay ahead of the curve. We try to make that transition easy."

Vendor rationalisation

Vendor strategies are also pivotal and Jones believes that rationalisation should be driving MSP business decisions on vendor partnering. "Most MSPs are dealing with over 17 different vendors," he said. "That's too many account managers, bills, products and updates to deal with. Consolidation where possible is key as it can add value and profitability back into the MSP's business. Focusing on one vendor can also help MSPs become more of a specialist in the technology they use, which helps operational delivery."

According to Jones, adopting a streamlined vendor strategy will enable MSPs to more

effectively address what he sees as the three hottest areas for MSPs this year and beyond – security and compliance, AI, productivity and operational efficiency. "We're putting more money than ever into R&D based on customer needs and market demand," he added. "More regulation and compliance in the market is driving demand for MSP services, along with the evolving threat landscape. Compliance is a big opportunity for MSPs. Also, there's a huge appetite from MSPs to improve their business and take it to the next level."

To give customers the digital

transformation, productivity and cost efficiencies they seek it is also vitally important for MSPs to be forward looking and proactive, pointed out Jones. "MSPs can't stay in the break-fix lane, they need to look at what the market requires to build the right services," he commented. "For example, AI and automation are going to dominate in the near future and there is increasing demand for Compliance-as-a-Service and Business Process Automation, so MSPs

must ensure they offer the solutions their customers require. They will also need to keep evolving and bringing new services to market."

Approaching AI

In terms of AI, Jones acknowledges that there is much hype in the air and that AI's current impact in the market is falling short of what's possible. "MSPs should think carefully about what the business benefit and value add is versus the cost of implementation," he said. "Consider the outcome you want to achieve – is it operational efficiency or better delivery to the customer? Once the market has reset its high expectations we will see more real-world examples of what AI can actually do."

Raising the digital IQ of end users is also central to MSP success, particularly in terms of enabling customers to maximise their technology investment and realise RoI. "It is absolutely key for MSPs to empower their clients through education, whether that's around cybersecurity, the changing threat landscape or resilience," stated Jones. "When clients understand where the gaps are and what they need they're willing to invest in the right tools." ■

pressure to up their game in the market. "Competition is fierce and customers are demanding more than ever before, requiring solutions and services to achieve compliance, defend against security threats and master their digital transformation," commented Jones. "More than ever, MSPs' customers expect fully integrated solutions and real-world support at the same time. Alongside these demands, many MSPs are still figuring out how to juggle sales, marketing and communications, service

Editor's comment...



A COMMS Dealer survey of channel leaders underlined a critical point made by Greg Jones in this interview – that total support for MSPs is vital. And because an MSP's technology, vendor and GTM strategy cannot be separated from its ability to secure a competitive advantage, they face a critical issue – how to ensure they are fully enabled. It's a question that Jones says Kaseya has fully addressed through its multifaceted alliance ecosystem. To find out more download the free Technology report here: <https://www.comms-dealer.com/whitepaper/gain-advantage-through-technology>

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Resellers urged to plug co

How channel firms take ring-fencing customer bases from a defensive strategy to a high margin growth opportunity – by plugging portfolio gaps – will have far reaching consequences for their future success, according to industry thinkers at last month’s Comms Dealer Channel Forecast insight session.

Ring-fencing customer bases with a competitive advantage mindset – rather than just a defensive tact – will position resellers and MSPs for a stronger future, especially in the context of an ever-more rivalrous market environment, believes Simon Horton, VP Sales – Europe, Sangoma. He warns that a high number of new entrants threaten to muscle in on traditional revenues, but predicts big rewards for resellers who fend off rivals through the expansion of their portfolio offerings. “Traditional resellers face a growing risk from rival businesses pivoting out of IT or print backgrounds or from vendors favouring a direct or agent model,” he stated. “The solution is for resellers to add unique selling points while leveraging existing expertise to maximise loyalty and value.”

Jamie Hughes, Sales Director, Evolve IP, says that if resellers don’t have seven or eight different solutions in their portfolio they should consider what they might be missing. “Every gap represents an open door for someone else to sell into your customers,” he warned.

According to Ralph Mora, VP & General Manager, EMEA, NUSO, it’s never been more important for the channel to identify gaps in their service



Simon Horton

The solution is for resellers to add unique selling points while leveraging existing expertise to maximise loyalty and value

offers and remain relevant. “However, differentiation is becoming more difficult due to increased democratisation and commoditisation, and the only way to build an alternative revenue stream is to cross-sell products and service offers,” he said.

Plugging portfolio gaps provides resellers with a springboard for high margin revenue growth while increasing customer stickiness, agrees Jason Uslan, VP of Sales, Wildix. “There’s significant growth for resellers who get this right,” he stated. “Chasing and acquiring new customers can be an expensive venture, so first look at your own

and he highlighted that traditional resellers have an edge in this market due to their voice expertise. “Bringing enterprise technology down to the SME market by leveraging UC expertise is a high growth opportunity, especially while other providers chase and fight over larger deals,” he added. “The SMB market provides opportunities for impactful solutions and strong relationships.”

Horton also pointed up the informal contact centre opportunity as being key to growth. “One person sitting in an office is an informal contact centre, and as soon as they receive an external call they must deal with it in the best way,” he said. “The onus is on the channel to educate small SMBs, and traditional resellers have an edge with their voice expertise.”

Mora also observed that AI in the contact centre is a major opportunity if approached in the right way. “AI chatbots can take the informal customer experience to another level while reducing costs to serve,” he added. “There will be different consumption models to be considered, but the resellers that get this right will drive the fastest value.”

A cautious approach to onboarding new services was urged by our panellists, who advised resellers to ensure that any new solution can scale and be repeated, and is not a passing fad in terms of customer demand. In this context, Uslan posited a key question for resellers to consider: “Is this something that’s going to just impact a small deal, or will I be able to take it forward and be empowered by my vendor partner to go out and sell?”

Raising ambition

Uslan also noted that partners would be wise to differentiate not only to protect their base but to be more ambitious. Mora echoed this advice, stating: “The challenge is not only to retain customers but provide them with additional value added applications and services that keep them loyal and push up ARPU.”

Mora identified the informal contact centre opportunity as a way for UC providers to add a high growth solution;



Jamie Hughes

Every gap is an open door for someone to sell into your customers

Competitive gaps



Ralph Mora

The challenge is not only to retain customers but provide value added applications and services that keep them loyal and push up ARPU

Horton noted that vendor selection is one of the most important decisions a reseller can make. And Hughes urged resellers to seek market insights from vendor partners and fully understand the portfolio benefits of their product pipelines. "Also, be proactive and look at how you are transacting," added Hughes. "Cultivate a more bespoke relationship and take the things you need. Don't just buy siloed solutions or you will be offering the same stack as every other one of their partners."

Vendor support

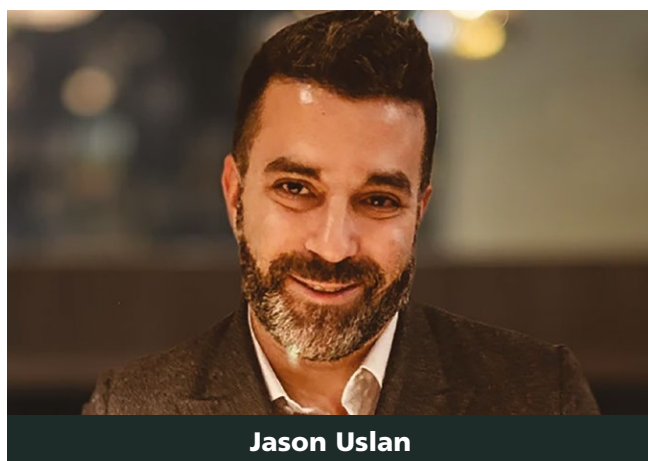
Uslan observed that end users don't just want a relationship with a local trusted advisor, they want to see a respected vendor supporting them. "The optics are stronger when a reseller has a vendor that will stand behind and support them with additional resources," he added, also stating that these relationships should empower resellers to widen their scope and explore different types of partners and new verticals.

According to Mora, a more collaborative channel ecosystem could help resellers add depth and breadth to their offering, including people related developments. "Gaps can also exist around skill sets and education," he said. "We're going to see more of that collaboration even in the face of additional competition. We want to act as a matchmaker for MSPs

who can mutually benefit from closer relationships."

Filling gaps also enables resellers to craft personalised solutions, which is important as end users increasingly value consultancy-led relationships. "Ask open ended questions around the end users' experience and find out how you can provide an impact on their day-to-day operations," added Uslan. "This will lead to a more tailored product which is where you start to make a real difference."

The provision of bespoke products and services will go a long way in helping resellers gain trusted advisor status, noted Hughes, who also advocates a dual-vendor strategy. "You can't be a trusted advisor if you can only offer one platform," he added. "And SMBs take more solutions from providers they trust which in turn reduces churn. Successful MSPs will focus on building value-driven and service-led approaches that prioritise customers' needs over product sales."



Jason Uslan

The optics are stronger when a reseller has a vendor that will stand behind and support them with additional resources



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Demand drivers elevate

The drivers of demand for Managed Security Service Providers (MSSPs) with deep expertise continue to strengthen and those that align with the findings of Westcon-Comstor's latest research will emerge as market leaders, according to Geert Busse, Solution Architect Director, Westcon EMEA.



Geert Busse

To say that end users see greater value in the MSSPs able to remove complexity from their IT security footprints is an understatement, and proof-points of the scale of the opportunity for channel firms to drive compelling security-focused managed services demand are clear as day in research undertaken by Westcon-Comstor, says Busse. The study shows that UK enterprise security leaders are planning to ramp up spending on cloud security in 2025 and want channel partners to help them maximise their ROI. "Demand for the services delivered by MSSPs is strong and growing, especially given the skill shortages within security and the challenges many end users, from enterprises to SMBs, face in accessing expertise," stated Busse. "This represents a big opportunity."

He noted that as the cloud security market continues to evolve, Westcon-Comstor is seeing CNAPP (Cloud-Native Application Protection Platform) become the go-to solution for securing cloud workloads. "CNAPP offers a holistic approach to securing cloud infrastructure, bringing together various security functions and capabilities in a single, unified platform to provide comprehensive security across the entire software development lifecycle, from code to cloud," explained Busse.

When Westcon-Comstor asked UK enterprise security leaders about the main drivers of CNAPP adoption they emphasised the need to consolidate capabilities into a single unified platform because it reduces the complexity and blind spots that come from using multiple cybersecurity vendors and tools. "Other

This is a major revenue opportunity for partners who establish themselves in this high growth area

factors include the need to seamlessly integrate security and compliance testing, and a desire to unify risk visibility across cloud environments and the application development lifecycle," added Busse.

Westcon-Comstor's market study also found that 84 per cent of security leaders in the UK intend to invest in CNAPP and other cloud security technologies over the next 12 months, with the big majority (95 per cent) saying they

already engage with channel partners when procuring and deploying such solutions. "This is a major revenue opportunity for partners who establish themselves in this high growth area," commented Busse.

cloud security

Security Posture Management solutions that address cloud infrastructure and applications (evolving to Generative AI) emerged as the top priority area for investment among CISOs and enterprise security leaders. In the UK, there is also a strong desire to invest in Software Supply Chain Security, with 45 per cent of respondents

Demand for MSSPs is growing and a partner's biggest asset is its own expertise and knowledge

highlighting this as an investment priority – higher than in any of the other countries in the research.

Market shift

But what fascinates Busse most is the 'shift left' trend that's seeing operational security responsibilities transition toward developers and cloud architects. "We found that 81 per cent of UK security leaders agree on the need to adopt a DevSecOps approach to align with this trend – that's a higher proportion than anywhere else and is set against an international average of 75 per cent," he added.

Training and enablement emerged as the most valued benefit from channel partners in the eyes of security leaders as they embrace CNAPP, especially in the UK where over half of respondents singled this out as their main requirement against an international average of 40 per cent – suggesting strong and ongoing demand

for knowledge-building support to maximise cloud security capabilities.

Consultancy matters

"Just under a third highlighted cost-effective access to new solutions as the primary reason for engaging with channel partners, while 20 per cent said what they value from partners above all else is assistance when navigating the cloud security market and identifying the best solutions," added Busse. "If enablement is what end users value the most, then a partner's biggest asset is its own expertise and knowledge. On the flip side, a lack of technical

expertise is a barrier to growth. As a distributor a big part of our role is to support partners in their own training and knowledge building."

Busse believes that Westcon-Comstor's data-driven, programmatic approach to training and enablement is one of its key value add offerings. Indeed, the company hopes to embed a learning culture across the whole channel. "We've placed greater emphasis on

knowledge sharing through initiatives such as Tech Xpert, our peer-to-peer community for technical security professionals working in the channel," explained Busse.

Tech Xpert was launched across EMEA in 2022 to bring experts together in a tech-to-tech setting and recently expanded to APAC. Members become part of a community of like-minded technical professionals and gain access to exclusive training, insights, events, networking and points-based participation rewards. Meanwhile, Westcon-Comstor's interactive platform for peer sharing between Tech Xpert members (called Tech ConneX) now has more than 4,000 users.

"This year we want to establish a new X2C (Everything to Cloud) cybersecurity go-to-market, driving partner and vendor growth across the four pillars of code to cloud, infrastructure to cloud, data to cloud and identity to cloud," said Busse. "Gen-AI is also a huge focus area given its potential to transform how cybercriminals operate and the way organisations respond to threats."

Editor's comment...



A COMMS Dealer survey of channel leaders spotlighted the opportunities and challenges linked to today's business technology environment, and found that just eight per cent of respondents believe that the security market holds the greatest potential. However, in this interview Geert Busse emphasised the premium that end user organisations place on a channel company's ability to plug gaps in their security knowledge and expertise. Busse has called on the channel to establish a niche and develop deep, unparalleled expertise that allows them to go beyond the transactional and become a trusted security advisor. Download the free report here: <https://www.comms-dealer.com/whitepaper/gain-advantage-through-technology>

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Security emerges as eve

Organisations continue to respond positively to security threats and a big opportunity exists for security-savvy MSPs to fill a growing demand gap supported by the right channel partnerships, says CyberLab CTO Ryan Bradbury.

The likelihood of comms channel resellers and MSPs being asked about security issues is growing by the day, because businesses are moving beyond seeing security as just a compliance requirement, they see it as central to their operation and reputation. The key drivers include the shift to cloud-based architectures, the rise in remote working and an increase in ransomware and social engineering attacks. "For channel partners, there is an excellent opportunity to package and deliver security-first services," stated Bradbury.

He says customers are looking for holistic, integrated solutions rather than one-off products; and noted that the trust customers place in resellers and MSPs who understand their security challenges is growing, creating a propitious environment for partners to expand their security portfolio.

These shifts are reflected in the way CyberLab's strategy and proposition has evolved,

pointed out Bradbury. "Over the past three years CyberLab has transitioned from mainly offering standalone services like penetration testing and basic endpoint protection, to delivering comprehensive, integrated security support services leveraging our technical expertise," he explained. "We have broadened our capabilities to include Advanced Threat Detection, Managed Security Services and Zero Trust architecture consulting."

CyberLab's key aim this year are to deepen its managed services offering, especially around AI-driven threat hunting, automated incident response and cloud security posture management. The company also plans to develop more specific solutions for highly regulated industries including healthcare, finance and critical infrastructure.

The main focus area in CyberLab's R&D investment is the continued development of CyberLab Control to include additional integrations and capabilities that help users gain insight



Ryan Bradbury

For channel partners, there is an excellent opportunity to package and deliver security-first services

into their security posture and enable them to self-serve security products. "More broadly, our R&D efforts centre on expanding our capabilities for ongoing breach and attack simulations and integrating security controls directly into cloud environments, which makes it easier to scale as businesses grow," added Bradbury.

He says these developments will translate into new revenue streams for channel partners, allowing them to offer advanced security monitoring and validation services backed

by CyberLab. These include Identity & Access Management, Zero Trust Network Access, advanced endpoint detection and response, and ransomware and supply chain attacks.

Proactive measures

"We want to help our customers and partners move from reactive threat mitigation to proactive risk management," added Bradbury. "For smaller organisations this means helping them to understand what cybersecurity threats are most applicable to them and aiding them in adopting

appropriate countermeasures. For larger businesses, we now emphasise Zero Trust architecture, SASE and advanced threat intelligence to address the complex threats that will become more prevalent as tools like GhostGPT propagate."

In terms of where change is happening fastest in the security environment, Bradbury pinpointed hybrid work and cloud proliferation as key drivers. "The dissolving network perimeter means endpoint and identity security have become paramount," he stated. "Threat actors are

ryday demand

targeting entire ecosystems, heightening demand for end-to-end visibility and threat intelligence services. Meanwhile, regulatory pressure is pushing businesses to regularly assess and upgrade their security postures. These changes are driving demand for robust managed security services, risk assessments

As more data moves to the edge, ensuring robust security controls in distributed networks will be essential

and penetration testing. Resellers and MSPs offering these comprehensive services can unlock lucrative recurring revenue models."

The most profitable elements of current security solutions, observed Bradbury, are Managed Detection & Response which continues to be a strong revenue generator because customers value a 24/7 service that combines technology, expertise and proactive threat hunting. Penetration Testing and Vulnerability Assessments remains both profitable and vital, noted Bradbury, especially when integrated into a broader security lifecycle approach.

"Consulting and professional services are also high margin engagements that address specific, complex problems like cloud migration strategies, compliance audits and incident

response planning," he added. "Looking ahead we anticipate significant growth in SASE and Zero Trust architectures, IoT security and AI-driven analytics."

Of particular note among the technology trends in the security space that interest Bradbury most is machine learning which he

sees moving beyond anomaly detection to contextual threat understanding, identifying not just what happened, but why. "As more data moves to the edge, ensuring robust security controls in distributed networks will be essential," added Bradbury.

"Although still emerging, we're also keeping a close eye on encryption methods resilient against future quantum-computing threats."

Closing the expertise gap

Perhaps chief among the challenges preventing many resellers and MSPs from maximising the security opportunity is that cyber expertise is still scarce. Complex ecosystems are also a barrier because the wide variety of point solutions can make it hard to piece together a cohesive security stack. CyberLab addresses this by providing integrated platforms and reference architectures. To help close the skills gap the company offers training, certification programmes and co-managed options.

Cost is another big issue, noted Bradbury. "While cybersecurity budgets are gradually increasing the cost and complexity of many solutions still represents a

barrier to selling," he added. "To overcome this barrier CyberLab consults with customers to understand the main threats they face and the right counter-measures. We then prioritise and build out business cases to implement on a timescale that allows for advance submissions for budgets.

"Some customers still see security as a cost centre. We support partners with co-marketing materials and thought leadership content to articulate the ROI of robust security measures, and educate customers on why cutting back on outlays today is going to cost more when they are inevitably impacted by a cybersecurity incident."

Adopting a consultative approach is one of the top three lessons that resellers and MSPs could learn from CyberLab's most successful partners, says Bradbury. "Don't just talk to customers about what you want to sell, build trust through honesty and provide options based on their real needs backed by clear metrics and ROI," he said. "The other two key lessons are to leverage the expertise of security-focused vendors and keep teams informed on the latest threats and technologies."

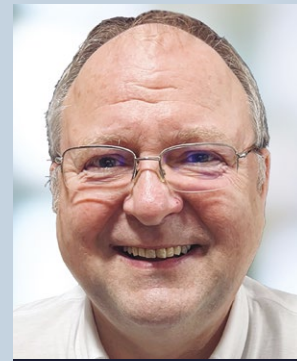
A lesson yet to be learnt by the broader industry, believes Bradbury, is that a more unified and collaborative environment is required where vendors, distributors and partners share threat intelligence, best practices and technology standards more freely. "This approach would reduce fragmentation and complexity, providing customers with stronger, more cohesive solutions," he stated. ■

Reflecting on two years of Cross Connect

It's incredible to think how far we've come with our UCaaS platform, Cross Connect.

The beginning

For over 30 years, TSI has been at the cutting edge of communications, providing telephony, connectivity and network infrastructure, and now unified communications.



Jack Michalski - Director of Channel Partnerships

With Cross Connect, we set out to solve the challenges partners face. To do so, we knew we had to meet the real-world needs of both our partners and their customers.

Fast forward to 2025

Now what do we have? Cross Connect: a next-generation platform designed to meet the diverse needs of businesses of all sizes. It is the most resilient, flexible and adaptable platform in the UCaaS space and integrates seamlessly with hundreds of business applications.

With no long-term contracts or minimum targets, both partners and their customers can scale as needed, backed by TSI's outstanding support team.

Cross Connect from TSI is a game-changer in UCaaS. The innovative, feature-rich and constantly evolving platform can be customised and white labelled, as well as bringing your own SIP trunks, including international termination.

TSI recently launched advanced AI call transcription and sentiment analysis within Cross Connect. By understanding the emotional tone of customer interactions, businesses can tailor their responses to better meet customer needs and resolve issues more effectively, and identify potential problems before they escalate.

Transcribed calls provide a valuable resource for training new employees and ensuring consistent quality in customer interaction, and automatic call transcription ensures that businesses maintain accurate records of customer interactions, which can be crucial for compliance with industry regulations and standards.

The future

We never stop listening to our partners, creating new features and adding new integrations. And we continue to recruit the best minds within the channel, to enhance the capabilities of Cross Connect and provide an unmatched level of support to our partners and their end-users.

TSI's flexible subscription model allows businesses to mix and match subscription types, making it a financially viable option to open up new verticals including hotels, schools, residential as well as SMEs, large enterprises, and much more.

As the UCaaS landscape continues to evolve, TSI's innovative approach ensures that our Partners stay ahead of the curve, delivering exceptional customer experiences and driving growth. Join the revolution and experience Cross Connect for yourself.

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Catalysing innovation

Unlocking the full potential of your organisation through an aligned innovation and business strategy requires robust leadership and a clear view of the breakthrough change drivers. Here, Mirko Voltolini, VP Technology & Innovation, Colt Technology Services, sheds light on the determining factors underpinning the firm's innovation initiatives, and what we can learn from them.

Leveraging agility for a competitive advantage in the race to innovation success is within the scope of all MSP business leaders. But for bigger competitors, the road to innovation may be harder to navigate. "Driving innovation is particularly challenging for large companies," stated Voltolini. "Complex processes and systems, budget restraints, a lack of leadership support and a company culture slow to adapt to change are barriers faced by innovators when the company grows bigger. Colt has been able to maintain a good level of agility despite our transition from a start-up to a global well established business."

Voltolini explained that a balance of Colt's 'find a better way' and change-

driven mindset, along with a commitment to the customer experience and diversity creates an environment that fuels innovation, new ideas and creative thinking. "Culture and leadership are critically important in creating the right conditions for our innovators to thrive," he stated. "You can present an outstanding innovation strategy to leaders, but if no-one is willing to take the risk to fail now and again, the opportunity isn't there and it's a restrictive environment."

There's definitely a trend for larger businesses to talk about having a start-up approach, according to Voltolini. He also noted that the main disruptive characteristics of start-up firms are an energetic drive for success, creativity,



Mirko Voltolini

collaboration and an agile growth mindset that embraces risk taking, along with a readiness to fail fast without consequences. "It's about approaching a problem with openness and a willingness to listen," added Voltolini. "All of these traits can be developed with the right culture and leadership."

Adopting an open innovation approach has enabled Colt to pursue a top to bottom initiative that is paying dividends across the business, including how it operates internally, according to Voltolini. "Innovation starts from within a company," he stated. "We've tasked

every one of our 6,500 Colties with a mission to flag up complex processes that slow them down so we can simplify, innovate and accelerate against our goals."

Bridging the innovation gap

To bridge the gap between disruptive thinking, innovation and the delivery of new real-world customer-ready solutions, MSPs would be wise to also instate strategies and processes with customer listening and acting on feedback at their core, believes Voltolini. "Ask questions that bring to the surface what's not working for customers, find out their strategic goals and objectives,

uncover the problems they need solving – and consider how to make it effortless for them to do business with you," he stated.

"Adopting this approach creates a solid basis for innovation – and combined with a 360 degree view of all the key factors to be taken into consideration, innovators gain a full understanding of the macro environment, real-world influences, the role of new technologies and how organisations are responding. This bridges the gap between innovation and practicality."

One important outcome to emerge from this course of action reported by Colt is that sustainability is top of mind for its customers, so the business is exploring a number of ways to support its clients' sustainability goals. This includes trialling technologies that reduce power consumption and improve network performance. An open and diverse organisational culture that encourages new ideas and disruptive thinking is also fundamental to the success of Colt's innovation strategy, noted Voltolini. "As a global business, we know from first-hand experience that diverse teams drive a more dynamic, innovative and successful work environment," he commented.

"Different perspectives, alternative approaches to evaluation, problem solving and decision making are critical across all business functions, in particular an innovation team. Deloitte found that companies with diverse and inclusive cultures are six times more innovative and agile than those without. That's something we see at Colt time and again." ■

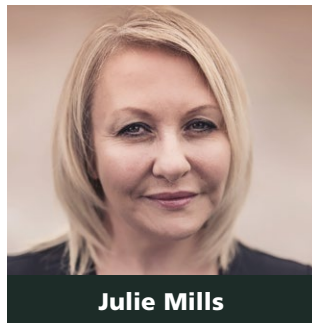
Inclusion drive must accelerate says ND champ

Neurodiversity (ND) champion and Train to Win CEO Julie Mills has urged channel leaders to accelerate the DEI imperative and leave President Trump's reversal on diversity receding in the rear view mirror.

The White House's rollback of diversity, equality and inclusion (DEI) is reflected in the undertakings of major global tech firms including Google, Meta, Amazon and Intel, that have pared back certain inclusion activities this year, such as removing targets or references to DEI in their investor communications and annual reports. The extent to which this cultural shift in corporate America will impact attitudes to inclusion among UK firms is open to question, and requires attention.

Another key consideration is that Trump's backward move on DEI, ironically, throws into sharper relief the many benefits of inclusion strategies – particularly in the case of neurodiversity.

Regardless of trends and so-called norms, I don't see businesses losing sight of what's in their best interests. First and foremost, that means not shooting yourself in the foot by limiting the size of your talent pool or making your business an unattractive place to work. In any case, whether firms



Julie Mills

are turning the volume up on your DEI credentials or brushing them under the carpet, we're all bound by the same employment laws that aren't going to be rolled back any time soon.

Choice matters

Neurodiversity is a little different. Unlike other groups typically sitting under the DEI banner (race, religion, sex, gender, sexuality etc), the neurodivergent aren't protected by equality legislation. So benefiting from neurodivergent minds is a choice rather than a legal compulsion. Those who choose wisely and adopt an ND-friendly approach to their recruitment, management and working practices are setting themselves up for long-term success.

Businesses are always competing for talent, and no-one can afford to put themselves at a competitive disadvantage when it comes to embracing the brightest and best. That's the definition of employee inclusivity. So if you are planning to cut back on DEI programmes, think twice before sidelining ND inclusivity. Neurodivergent individuals bring unique problem solving abilities, innovative perspectives and creativity – all traits that are increasingly vital in today's competitive, fast-changing tech business environment.

Ensuring that you include the neurodiverse in your future planning will also unlock skills that already exist in your organisation, while opening the doors to amazing talents that will fuel your growth.

To help you push your ND agenda forwards there are numerous low cost, high impact strategies that can foster neurodiverse workplaces, such as flexible hiring practices, tailored support systems and leadership training.



Partner of the Future

Now, more than ever, businesses face a complex commercial terrain. Navigating today's partner landscape requires a mix of emerging and mature technologies, yet identifying the correct mix of future-ready solutions can often prove demanding.

That's one of the reasons why we commissioned our Partner of the Future research study, to listen to and understand the challenges facing partners and end users.



Channel partners can future-proof their businesses by educating and enabling their customers and combining new and mature technologies to address core needs.

Kathryn Platt,
Head of Indirect Business
Vodafone UK

Through this research, we've identified the key trends reshaping the market, the future of partner-client relationships, and the steps partners need to take to stay competitive.

Our research shows that partners are already delivering strong results, but the future belongs to the channel partners who can evolve their customer relationships further. It's time to get ahead of the new channel shift.

With more than 30 years of experience, our team at Vodafone are uniquely equipped to support partners during this change. Our converged infrastructure, broad product portfolio, and knowledgeable partner managers offer the expertise that

channel partners need to navigate and thrive during the technology transformations ahead.

Channel partners can future-proof their businesses by educating and enabling their customers and combining new and mature technologies to address core needs. And that's where Vodafone can take you.

Ready to get ahead of the new channel shift?

Visit our Vodafone Partner of the Future webpage to make the most of the key trends reshaping the market.



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How Sabio takes an innov

Matching emerging technology and new ideas to market opportunity is the vital work of the channel's innovation leaders. One such change-driver is Sabio Group Chief Innovation Officer Stuart Dorman who takes a decisive lead in the company's, and its clients', transformation journeys.

Sabio is fuelling its growth agenda in large part through initiatives overseen by its internal innovation board, which evaluates and progresses new ideas via the Disrupt conference programme which is expanding across Europe. "Disrupt brings together industry thought leaders and our collaborative relationships with forward thinking customers who are willing to partner with us in developing and testing new solutions," stated Dorman. "This multi-faceted approach ensures we're consistently pushing boundaries while maintaining a practical focus on customer needs."

It is universally accepted that innovation is a major growth driver, but the biggest challenge to unlocking innovation's full growth potential is that major technology vendors often oversimplify their solutions, observed Dorman. "While they focus on license sales,

there's less emphasis on helping organisations fully utilise the technology's capabilities," he added. "We're seeing numerous instances of minimum viable contact centre deployments, AI implementations and data utilisation that barely scratch the surface of what's possible.

"The technology we have access to today is incredibly sophisticated, but many organisations are only using a fraction of its potential. This represents both a challenge and an opportunity for MSPs such as Sabio to help customers maximise their technology investments by tapping into our expert services, skills and capability. It's what makes us unique because regardless of tech we can find the solution."

Bridging the gap between disruptive thinking, innovation and the delivery of real-world solutions with impact hinges on maintaining a sharp focus on the specific



Stuart Dorman

A mentor once told me that innovation is about turning ideas into invoices – that resonates in the CX technology space

problems MSPs are trying to solve and collaborating with customers willing to partner in development, reiterated Dorman. "A recent example is our team's development of

an innovative email handling solution for contact centres that takes advantage of generative AI," he explained. "Email remains the second largest channel after voice,

with tens of millions of emails processed daily in contact centres. Our approach leverages multiple language models to handle different aspects of email processing,

novation lead

significantly reducing response times and enabling complete automation. This platform-agnostic solution works independently of underlying contact centre platforms, CRM solutions or AI models, delivering superior results compared to traditional vendor offerings. We've seen some success already in our customer base,

Getting maximum value from AI in CX requires technical expertise, creative thinking and artistry

and the impact on customer productivity and quality has been remarkable."

Key focus areas

Dorman noted that Sabio is focused on three primary areas... developing innovative ways to harness AI capabilities in customer service, identifying and filling gaps in partner technologies, and accelerating time-to-value for customers. "We're particularly excited about pushing the boundaries of what's possible with AI in the CX space while ensuring practical, implementable solutions that deliver measurable business value," he added.

"Our teams are doing groundbreaking work in this space but it's crucial to understand that AI isn't simply a feature you switch on. Getting maximum value from AI in CX requires a combination of

technical expertise, creative thinking and artistry. We're focusing on developing practical applications that enhance customer service operations while ensuring the technology serves both business objectives and customer needs."

Key aspects of Dorman's work experience and skills mark him out as being the prime candidate for his position as an innovation leader. "My technical foundation, combined with an ability to think creatively outside the box around applying these capabilities to solving real-world problems has been advantageous," he explained. "In the customer experience ecosystem it's vital to understand not just

how technology works, but how it can be leveraged to create better customer experiences and operational efficiencies, sometimes in complex, nuanced use cases.

"A mentor also once told me that innovation is about turning ideas into invoices – that resonates in the CX technology space. Success requires a laser focus on three key elements – clearly identifying the problem you're solving, demonstrating tangible ROI to potential customers and executing effective sales and marketing strategies.

"In regards to customer service technology, this means ensuring innovations directly address operational pain points while delivering measurable business value. The biggest challenge isn't just about coming up with novel ideas, it's successfully bringing them to market." ■



NetSapiens Presents: US Channel Trends with Peter Radizeski

Fool's Gold? Why Enterprise Isn't the Jackpot You Think



Peter Radizeski Biography

Peter Radizeski is a veteran of the US Telecoms Channel based in the Sunshine State of Florida. He has assisted numerous prominent service providers across the United States in growing their businesses by offering guidance on sales training, marketing, channel development, and business strategy. He is a reliable source of knowledge about the telecom industry. His candid and straightforward Channel Playbook Blog is essential reading for industry insiders, and he is a sought-after speaker and moderator at industry events.

can fix problems fast. Providers investing in real customer support—not AI apologies—are winning loyalty, referrals, and upsells.

5. Flexibility beats branding. SMBs don't care if their provider is a household name. They care about cost, usability, and actual customer service. Big brands ignoring this are losing to customer-obsessed challengers. Don't give up margin for a tech brand, nobody cares.

Stop Chasing Enterprise Clout Enterprise obsession is vanity. SMBs offer predictable, scalable, **profitable** revenue—if you execute correctly. Most providers? They don't have the mindset, model, or efficiency to make it work. The winners in 2025 won't be those posting a 5,000-seat win on LinkedIn. It will be those stacking hundreds of 12-seat deals, as that's where the real money lies.

Let's get this out of the way: yes, our political leaders are a circus, our version of Football is not the "beautiful game" that yours is, and yes, our tipping culture is bonkers (my favourite English word). However, America still dominates tech innovation, especially AI, and software. Sales and product innovation thrive in the United States. We have many faults as a nation, but complacency is not one of them. There is still truth to the saying "America is where innovation ignites, pioneers lead, and the future is seen first". My job here is to share my insights on the trends and activities creating value in the Channel Stateside.

It's February as I write this column; it's conference season, which means analysts are spewing the same jargon about cloud comms. Last year was all about AI. This year? Customer experience. There is still significant chatter about AI, but no killer use cases have yet emerged (more on that in future posts). So, when there's no intelligence to sell, pivot to "experience." High on the agenda for many is the re-emergence of the SMB and its importance to the channel.

The conference floors are buzzing, and one phrase echoes: "How do we maintain margins and improve ARPU?" The usual answers are vertical integration, value-added, and niche markets. The telecom equivalent of telling a struggling restaurant owner to "just go viral on TikTok."

Enterprise becomes less appealing

Enterprise telecom wins headlines. A 1,000-seat deal gets a press release, LinkedIn chest-thumping, and TCV (Total Contract Value) talk.

Reality check: most of that revenue is mythical. Delayed deployments, churn, and operational chaos eat away at the fairy tale.

Meanwhile, SMBs—companies with fewer than 500 employees—make up 90% of businesses globally. The U.S. average payroll? 12 employees. The UK? Closer to 6. That means the real money isn't in 500-seat deals. It's in **6-12 seat deals at scale.**

SMB Reality Check

Most providers screw up by applying enterprise playbooks to SMB. Here's why that's a disaster:

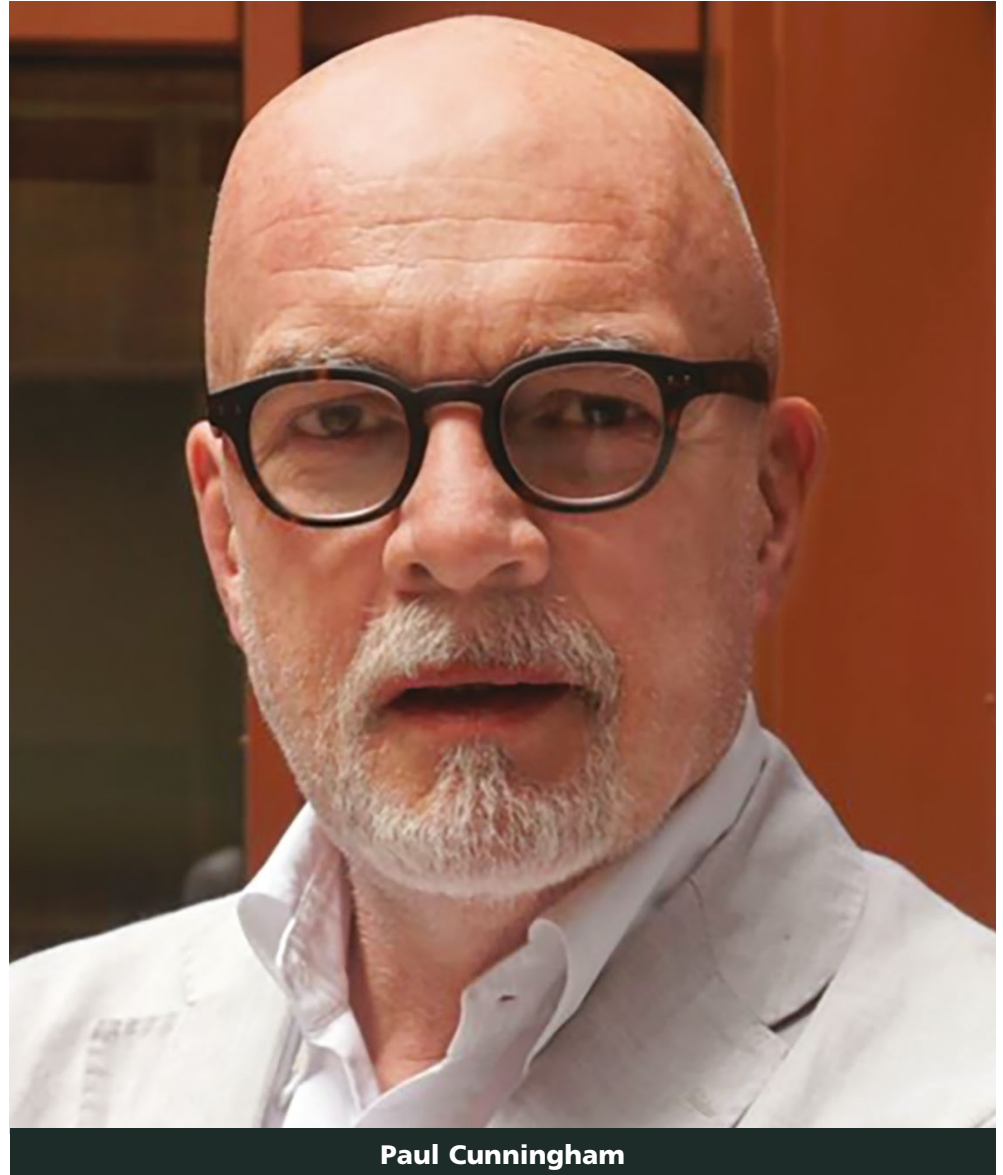
- 1. Friction kills.** SMBs aren't running tech projects—they need plug-and-play solutions that deliver ROI now. No patience for long sales cycles or integrations. If it's not simple, it's not selling.
- 2. No IT department, no DevOps.** An enterprise throws a squad of engineers at CRM-VoIP integration. SMBs? They cross their fingers. Providers (or partners) need to do the heavy lifting: professional services, automation, and actual support.
- 3. Margin is simple math.** Cloud services are complex, but the business model is not. Pour volume in at the top, control costs, automate like hell, and print cash. The best operators remove friction everywhere—templated deployments, APIs that actually work, and zero manual processes.
- 4. Support makes or breaks deals.** A chatbot that loops customers into oblivion? That's how you lose business. SMBs want a human who

The UK's No.1 magazine for voice and data solution providers



UKPW25: Build it and the

One of our key themes at UK Partner Week Summit 2025 (9th July, Convene, London) will be how channel partners of all types can create greater value by investing in the creation of intellectual property in their services and brand. Here, Event Director Paul Cunningham explores key strategies and measures for improvement in this vital area.



Paul Cunningham

In today's crowded technology marketplace, MSPs and VARs face a critical inflection point. The traditional model of simply reselling vendor products with minimal customisation is rapidly losing its competitive edge. Forward-thinking technology partners are discovering a powerful truth – developing proprietary intellectual property (IP) not only differentiates their offerings but transforms their entire business model and customer experience.

Beyond reselling: The IP imperative

For decades, the technology channel has operated on a straightforward premise – vendors create products and partners distribute them. This arrangement worked well when technology was novel and implementation expertise scarce. Today, however,

commoditisation threatens margins, and customers increasingly view technology partners as interchangeable. The answer to this challenge lies in developing your own intellectual property based around a unique set of capabilities.

Whether it's custom software solutions, proprietary methodologies or unique integration frameworks, your intellectual property creates tangible value that customers can't find elsewhere. This shift represents more than just a new revenue stream – it fundamentally alters how your customers will perceive your business.

The branding journey: From awareness to renewal

The development of IP and the cultivation of a strong brand are inextricably linked throughout the customer journey...

The channel landscape is rapidly dividing into two tiers – commodity resellers competing primarily on price, and strategic partners offering unique intellectual property

Awareness stage

Generic technology resellers and MSPs struggle to stand out in a crowded marketplace. In contrast, MSPs and VARs with proprietary IP can articulate a unique value proposition that captures attention. Your brand storytelling shifts from 'We implement vendor X's solutions' to 'We've

developed an approach that solves your specific industry challenges and have already done this for companies A, B and C'. This distinction is crucial for cutting through market noise. Rather than competing with similar partners, you're positioning your business as a thought leader with exclusive capabilities.

Consideration and purchase

During the evaluation process, proprietary IP transforms sales conversations. Instead of comparing price quotes and SLAs, prospects evaluate the unique value your intellectual property brings to their specific challenges. Your brand now represents

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y will come

not just service quality but exclusive capabilities. This shift dramatically alters price sensitivity - customers will pay premium prices for solutions they can't get elsewhere. Your sales team transitions from price defenders to value consultants, explaining the unique benefits only your IP can deliver.

Adoption and onboarding

The customer experience fundamentally changes when proprietary IP enters the equation. Rather than following standard vendor implementation playbooks, customers engage with your

During the evaluation process, proprietary IP transforms sales conversations

unique methodologies and solutions. This is where brand consistency becomes critical. Every customer touchpoint – from implementation specialists to documentation – must reinforce the distinct value your IP brings. Custom dashboards, proprietary terminology and unique workflows all serve to remind customers they've purchased something special they can't get elsewhere.

Retention and renewal

Perhaps the most transformative impact of proprietary IP occurs in the retention phase. Vendor-only solutions create minimal switching barriers – customers can easily transition to another certified partner. Proprietary IP, however, creates significant dependency that dramatically improves retention rates.

Your brand now represents a unique ecosystem that customers have invested time learning and integrating into their operations. Switching costs increase substantially, not just in financial terms but in operational disruption. This can transform renewal conversations from price negotiations to strategic planning sessions about enhancing value with future capability.

Building your IP strategy

Developing intellectual property doesn't necessarily mean creating complex software from scratch.

- Consider these practical approaches:
- Industry-specific workflows: Develop templated solutions that address the unique needs of specific verticals you serve.
 - Integration

frameworks: Create proprietary connectors between common platforms in your customers' technology stacks.

- Methodology IP: Formalise your well-honed approach to implementation, support, or customer success into branded methodologies.
- Data analytics tools: Build dashboards or reporting tools that provide unique insights from existing systems.
- Training and enablement: Develop proprietary programmes that help customers maximise technology investments.

The ROI of IP

The investment in developing IP delivers returns across multiple dimensions:

- Higher margins: Proprietary solutions command premium pricing.
- Improved valuations:

Companies with IP assets receive significantly higher multiples during acquisition.

- Recurring revenue: The 'whole' solutions you design typically lend themselves to subscription charging models rather than one-time project fees.
- Customer retention: Solutions integrated into customer operations significantly reduce churn.
- Market differentiation: Unique capabilities attract prospects tired of commodity offerings.

Conclusion: The imperative for innovation

The channel landscape is rapidly dividing into two tiers – commodity resellers competing primarily on price, and strategic partners offering unique intellectual property that creates substantial value. The latter enjoy stronger customer relationships, higher margins and greater business resilience. The drive to develop proprietary IP isn't simply about creating new products, it's about transforming your entire business model and customer experience. When your brand represents unique capabilities rather than merely efficient implementation, you create a sustainable competitive advantage that defines your place in the market.

Our message at UK Partner Week will be clear – build it, brand it effectively across the entire customer journey, and they will indeed come – not just as customers, but as long-term partners invested in the unique value only you can provide. **Join us at UK Partner Week Summit** (9th July, Convene, London) to be part of the conversation.

UK PW 25 July 3rd to 10th 2025

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A festival of events and initiatives across the UK ICT channel

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- Benchmark your business models against best practice
- Network with the wider partner community
- Have FUN!



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In times of transformation

Here, 10 channel leaders reflect on industry change and reveal the developments and transformations they'd like to see across the wider sector, and their own businesses.



MARK CURTIS-WOOD
NON-EXECUTIVE
CHAIRMAN
BLUE ORANGE

I advocate for increased support from policymakers to accelerate transformative changes. Streamlined licensing, enhanced R&D incentives and competition-encouraging regulations could speed up technology adoption and foster an environment ripe for continuous innovation. Within the channel, there should be a greater emphasis on training and developing talent. This critical area often receives minimal investment yet is essential for maintaining high performance and adaptability in a fast-evolving market. Investing in our people will drive change and efficiency across the board. For our business, a key change is improving access to robust company data to strengthen decision making. The effectiveness of emerging tools, particularly AI, hinges on the quality of data we collect and utilise, impacting every aspect of our operations and ensuring we remain competitive.



JALPA SHARMA
MD
DBSL

FOR too long, businesses have focused on selling technology rather than solving real business challenges. The future belongs to those who deliver business outcomes, not just products, helping customers cut costs, scale and stay secure. In the channel, the days of generic reselling are numbered. Stronger vertical specialisation is the way forward. Tailoring solutions to specific market needs is now a competitive necessity. Partners who deeply understand specific industries are the ones creating real value. For my own business, the focus is on more recurring revenue, subscription-based services and AI-driven automation. Sustainable growth comes from predictable, scalable models that drive efficiency and long-term value.



MARK WILKINSON
CCO
RAZORBLUE

THE comms industry needs to move beyond transactional relationships and focus on true partnerships that deliver long-term value, rather than short-term gains. Too often, businesses receive generic, one-size-fits-all solutions instead of tailored, strategic support that aligns with their growth and operational requirements. There is a real need for greater transparency and accountability. Businesses should have clarity on service levels, pricing and expectations while having confidence that their IT partner is invested in their success, not just in securing a contract. The industry should focus on outcomes and impact rather than just selling products. Internally, we're always looking to refine and strengthen our communication strategy, ensuring that we showcase our expertise, and educate and support our clients.



JULIEN PARVEN
DIRECTOR OF
PARTNER BUSINESS
DAISY
COMMUNICATIONS

THE telecoms industry must shift from connectivity to technology. While networks are faster and more reliable than ever, true differentiation lies in customer-centric innovation, seamless service, transparent pricing and smarter solutions tailored to the intelligent use of data. The channel's biggest challenge is balancing digital transformation with human connection. Automation and self-service are essential but can't replace trust and expertise. The future lies in a hybrid approach, leveraging AI and automation while maintaining high-touch, consultative relationships. For us, agility is key. We are investing in portfolio development, service excellence, data-driven insights and next-gen solutions. Telecoms is now about enabling a new, smarter way of doing business. Those who embrace that shift will lead the future.



“We’ve finally got a full **360** degree view of our business.”

n, what needs to change?



TONY EASINGWOOD
SENIOR ACCOUNT
MANAGER
ADVANTEX NETWORK
SOLUTIONS

IN the broader industry, universally accepted protocols for AI-driven technologies like facial recognition are urgent. As AI evolves faster than regulation, an industry-led initiative must establish ethical standards and technical frameworks to balance innovation with privacy and public trust. Otherwise, we risk fragmented approaches that undermine security and progress. Within the channel, transparency is critical. Clearer pricing structures, commission rates and vendor accountability for system failures are essential for fostering trust and fair competition. Simplified partner programmes would further reduce barriers, making it easier for businesses, especially smaller companies, to access benefits and thrive. For us, staying on top of key developments is vital. Balancing customer projects with the pace of innovation is essential to ensure our portfolio remains cutting-edge.



SARA WILKES
CEO
AGILITAS IT SOLUTIONS

THE industry needs greater representation. There have been significant improvements but there is so much more to be done. Today's leadership priorities are all about alignment, agility and delivering value to customers. We live in an ever-evolving industry and staying ahead of the curve is crucial. The key to continued leadership success is recognising that your people are your biggest asset. It's essential to foster an environment where cognitive diversity is embraced, and different perspectives and experiences drive better decision making and innovation. Bringing together diverse minds and empowering teams to contribute unique ideas strengthens leadership and creates a foundation for sustained success.



MATTHEW CROXFORD
CEO
CITYTALK GROUP

THE industry would benefit from a platform that links clients' services to a specific reseller (from your RID Code) and enables you to discuss migrating accounts with other resellers both in/out – ensuring a saving of time and money in failed ports and wasted time. For the channel, I would like to see enhanced supplier/manufacture technical forums for engineers, enabling them to collaborate better with people having the same challenges. In my business, improvement would come from having a more sales-focused customer lifecycle to upsell and ensure we're not missing opportunities in our existing clients.



RICHARD SWAIN
COMMERCIAL
DIRECTOR
FORCE36

I wouldn't change much about the channel. I've always found it one of the most supportive and welcoming communities in the technology and communications sector. The wholesalers we work with still recognise the value of strong relationships and mutual support, which continues to drive both innovation and growth. As the industry shifts from telco to techco, I see increasing opportunities for collaboration between MSPs and the broader supply ecosystem. Many traditional telcos are realising that MSPs offer many revenue generating services that could complement their portfolios and create new streams of MRR, and that some wholesalers could engage as distribution partners. I'd like to see an end to the five year contract terms that linger in parts of the industry. These stifle competition and leave businesses with solutions that no longer meet their needs.



SIMON GALE
FOUNDER AND MD
THE CLARENDON
GROUP

I would change the transparency of finance in our industry. There are too many businesses with no depth of knowledge or experience in what we do. These businesses intend to sell hardware on finance with no interest in the end users' needs. Their ambition is to gain maximum reward by selling finance on a term that is longer than the expected lifetime of the equipment. Why is any company financing deals on anything more than five years? To leverage as much profit as possible. This creates no longevity in their new client. Clients will soon realise they've agreed to paying way over the respected reselling price and all trust in the relationship will be lost.



SHAUN LEDGERWOOD
CEO
MLL TELECOM

RELIABLE and secure connectivity is more critical than ever to the operations of businesses and public sector bodies. These complexities are not being properly compensated in terms of return on investment for operators. The market seems to reward bog-standard services rather than the complex, customised networks customers demand. I'd like to see improved market recognition of the higher value of complex services. The channel would be stronger if small and mid-scale operators were encouraged by customers to flourish. The market, and especially Government, could encourage disruptive operators by not awarding so much business to lethargic incumbents. Regarding my own business, while remote working has advantages, I would like to see greater physical presence at work. The atmosphere when people are physically together is more enjoyable and productive.

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Parker joins WestSpring



Victoria Parker

BRISTOL-based WestSpring has appointed Victoria Parker as Chief Operating Officer. She joins from a Swindon-based tech recruitment company where she was a director. Executive Chairman James Phipps commented: "We are a high growth business and as we continue to grow the experience and leadership Victoria brings will be indispensable to us. Our shared values and focus on the community is a key reason for her joining us." Parker added: "This was a big move for me. I wanted to push and challenge myself, give myself an opportunity to learn new things in a new industry, within an organisation that supports our local community."

LINDSEY Sutherland has joined Freedom Fibre as COO. He formerly headed up the technology team at Community Fibre where he led the integration of an acquisition. His prior experience also includes a stint as CTO of SaaS VoIP provider Nebula. Earlier in his 30 year career Lindsey established his own data systems business after leaving the military.

Hoggarth named Cellhire Chairman

CELLHIRE'S IoT expertise continues to grow with the appointment of former Arkessa Chair Royston Hoggarth as Chairman. He takes over from Tim Williams who founded Cellhire in 1987 and is now a Non-Executive Director. Hoggarth's background also includes leadership roles at Northgate Public Services and the Innovation Group. Hoggarth was also Chair of England and GB Hockey until the end of 2024. In January last year Cellhire appointed ex-Vodafone IoT Head of Sales Tony Guerion as Group CEO.



Royston Hoggarth

AWARDS SUCCESS





Accuracy and authenticity are key!

A successful awards entry will tell a compelling story supported by strong evidence, according to thought leaders speaking at Comms Dealer's latest Channel Forecast insight session, which discussed the common strengths of stand-out submissions.

The first rule is something hammered into us since our school days. Always read the question! "It is easy to get distracted by the things you want to talk about as opposed to answering the question that is being invited of you," said Gareth Pritchard, Head of Comms, PR and Events at Giacom. "The best entries will relate back to the judges' expectations in every paragraph."

key differentiator, for us this is customer experience. However, you need to align this with testimonial!"

Other participants echoed the critical role of evidence. Julie Mills, CEO at Support to Win said: "When I am judging, proof is a key part of every entry and is critical to bringing a compelling entry to life" Candice Cunliffe, MD at F6 Agency, added: "Success can sometimes be difficult to quantify, but work backwards and consider how you can demonstrate the impact of what you've delivered. Highlight the measurable results that your effort drove and illustrate the impacts the initiative has brought on."



Despite questions being the same for all entrants, a stand-out entry can be crafted by leading with your company's voice. "Make it unique and authentic," said Elizabeth Sparrow, Founding Director of Blabbermouth Marketing. "Don't just reuse content, but show judges you have put effort in, convey the story of your business and showcase the human elements behind your entry." Paul Hooper, CEO at Uplands OneTelco, added: "You are looking to convey your

The third point is to ensure this is presented concisely in a way that judges, who may not have the same depth of technical understanding as you, will understand. Richard Scott, Sales Director at Start Communications, added: "Much of the detail we give can be quite complex and trying to get them within the word count is tough. Remove the jargon, break down the questions into multiple sections and use bullet points to get the key messages across."

To enter the awards go to:
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UK FIBRE AWARDS

5th June 2025
London Marriott
Grosvenor Square



CHANNEL CHAMPIONS

3rd July 2025
Regents Park
London

UK PW 25 UK PW 25 UK PW 25

UK Partner Week Summit
9th July 2025
Convene
133 Houndsditch
London

A background image for the Comms National Awards featuring a night view of the Houses of Parliament in London with fireworks exploding in the sky.

comms national awards

25th September 2025
Park Plaza
Westminster



commsvision THE GLENEAGLES HOTEL

12th – 14th November 2025
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