



Dowden pledges support for Digital Britain p28

ICT Investment Forum sets agenda for growth businesses p34



VOL 23 ISSUE 7 DECEMBER 2018 www.comms-dealer.com

record | report | integrate

oak.co.uk

comms dealer

oak.co.uk/integration

paymentassist
PCI DSS payment automation

record | report | integrate

ADVERTISEMENT

ADVERTISEMENT

THE HEARTBEAT OF THE UK COMMS INDUSTRY

powering your potential
The experts in telecom billing & provisioning solutions

020 8614 9090
unionstreet.uk.com

channeltelecom.com

simwood.com

introducing our latest carrier

A Sky Ethernet Wholesale Partner

Comms Dealer December 2018

Click to open Full fibre sparks comms gold rush

THE UK Government's digital strategy has swung an unprecedented level of comms industry focus onto one critical point – the race to Digital Britain.

SPECIAL REPORT

The Government's Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review published in July fired the starting gun on the race to Digital Britain, and according to influential industry leaders speaking at the Comms Vision Convention last month if resellers do not push off from the starting blocks quickly they will be left behind.

"We're in the race of a lifetime," stated TalkTalk Business MD Kristine Olson-Chapman

in her Comms Vision interview. "Once a customer has full fibre they are unlikely to move. The key is to be there first."

CityFibre Commercial Director Rob Hamlin said the Government has 'woken up' to the fact that the UK economy needs a digital infrastructure.

"There will be a gold rush, a bow wave of enthusiasm and opportunity if the UK gets this model right," he stated. "There is plenty of room for investors and infrastructure builders, but it's important that the country

emerges from this upgrade with a competitive landscape."

The regulatory environment is 'critical', believes Olson-Chapman. "The consultations are important and the channel needs to speak out," she said. "It would be great to have a united channel front on the issues."

BT Wholesale MD Alex Tempest stated: "Digital Britain is happening, there is no option, and partners will be more successful by starting the journey sooner rather than later."

Full report starts on page 43

3-20
Industry News
Catch up with events in comms

22
Business Profile
Lodge's recurring revenue trick

24
Interview
Macri on AI and ecosystems

26
Business Profile
Docker realises early IP vision

32
Market Review
Why more cities make smart moves

40
Comms People
This month's movers and shakers

ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS WITH 9

NTA had a cracker of a year



**NTA are proud to have WON this years
CNA Best Hosted Telephony Platform 2018**



If you want to partner with the best and compete to be in with a chance to win a holiday incentive trip to  contact NTA sales via the details below.



Call us on 01708 320000 or Email us at sales@nta.co.uk



Dowden pledges support for Digital Britain p28

ICT Investment Forum sets agenda for growth businesses p34



VOL 23 ISSUE 7 DECEMBER 2018 www.comms-dealer.com

record | report | integrate

oak.co.uk

comms dealer

oak.co.uk/integration

paymentassist
PCI DSS payment automation

record | report | integrate

ADVERTISEMENT

ADVERTISEMENT

THE HEARTBEAT OF THE UK COMMS INDUSTRY

powering your potential
The experts in telecom billing & provisioning solutions

020 8614 9090
unionstreet.uk.com

channeltelecom.com



3-20
Industry News
Catch up with events in comms

22
Business Profile
Lodge's recurring revenue trick

24
Interview
Macri on AI and ecosystems

26
Business Profile
Docker realises early IP vision

32
Market Review
Why more cities make smart moves

40
Comms People
This month's movers and shakers

simwood.com

Full fibre sparks comms gold rush

THE UK Government's digital strategy has swung an unprecedented level of comms industry focus onto one critical point – the race to Digital Britain.

SPECIAL REPORT

The Government's Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review published in July fired the starting gun on the race to Digital Britain, and according to influential industry leaders speaking at the Comms Vision Convention last month if resellers do not push off from the starting blocks quickly they will be left behind.

"We're in the race of a lifetime," stated TalkTalk Business MD Kristine Olson-Chapman

in her Comms Vision interview. "Once a customer has full fibre they are unlikely to move. The key is to be there first."

CityFibre Commercial Director Rob Hamlin said the Government has 'woken up' to the fact that the UK economy needs a digital infrastructure.

"There will be a gold rush, a bow wave of enthusiasm and opportunity if the UK gets this model right," he stated. "There is plenty of room for investors and infrastructure builders, but it's important that the country

emerges from this upgrade with a competitive landscape."

The regulatory environment is 'critical', believes Olson-Chapman. "The consultations are important and the channel needs to speak out," she said. "It would be great to have a united channel front on the issues."

BT Wholesale MD Alex Tempest stated: "Digital Britain is happening, there is no option, and partners will be more successful by starting the journey sooner rather than later."

Full report starts on page 43

introducing our latest carrier

A Sky Ethernet Wholesale Partner

ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS WITH 9



A Champion strategy

Join us to discover how you can capitalise on our strategy to champion full fibre for Great Britain...

The race to fibre-up British businesses represents a huge opportunity for success-hungry channel partners! We've created the right environment for your own success by unlocking access to our Gigabit cities across the UK and by aggregating partner demand to make the business case for new ones. In fact we're building the UK's most intelligent wholesale network to bring full fibre to 5 million premises by 2025.

We're passionately excited about the UK's full fibre future - see how your business can thrive by sharing in our strategy.

Let's talk full fibre
www.enta.net

EDITOR'S COMMENT



Stuart Gilroy

KNOWING which technologies to invest in is a challenge for even the biggest comms companies, and a wrong decision could literally bring the walls down. Thankfully, there is more clarity in the direction of the market than ever in the wake of the Government's

decision to catalyse a full fibre and 5G only infrastructure for the UK. Right now, all eyes are on Digital Britain as extraordinary levels of investment in full fibre providers continue to grease the wheels of the Government's digital campaign convoy.

It was a subject that topped the agenda at last month's Comms Vision Convention at Gleneagles Hotel. The event aimed to unravel the challenges and opportunities that face the channel in the midst of this unprecedented connectivity upgrade.

But what is glaring is that the industry needs an all-encompassing collective forum in which challenges and hindrances to the progress of Digital Britain can be discussed and resolved, and a level playing field guaranteed for all providers with an interest in advancing the nation's digital status beyond embarrassing.

With a taint of irony, there is now a unified vision for the UK's future comms infrastructure, yet the comms landscape could fragment further into a land of competing fibre providers at a time when the Government, Ofcom and industry must combine to work on the key practical issues. Any idea that the full potential of Digital Britain can be realised by the channel and the wider population without cross sector collaboration is poppycock.

The question was succinctly posed by TalkTalk Business Managing Director Kristine Olson-Chapman in her Comms Vision interview when she urged the channel to speak up on future consultations and to form a 'united channel front' on the issues. The full Comms Vision report starts on page 43.

Stuart Gilroy, Editor

Simetric pocketed by Tango Networks

GLOBAL mobile comms provider Tango Networks has burst into the UK market with the acquisition of Simetric Telecom and a brace of supporting technology partner deals.

Yorkshire-based Simetric is now operating as a subsidiary of US headquartered Tango Networks and has a greater capacity to target large businesses, hosted comms providers and telecoms resellers with an enhanced portfolio of enterprise mobility services. The financials of the deal were not disclosed.

Simetric Telecom began its commercial life in 2009 and was founded by MD Gavin Sweet and Director John Murray. The company's Mobile-X service delivers converged mobile comms with an enterprise telephony feature set.

"Joining forces with Tango Networks will raise our service offerings and market reach to a new level," stated Sweet.

In September Tango Networks launched a cloud-based enterprise mobile comms service, called Kinetic Cloud, offering Mobile UC, mobile communications recording compliance, automated enterprise application mobile integration and enterprise text messaging.



Gavin Sweet

Tango Networks CEO Doug Bartek added: "The Simetric and Tango Networks combination creates a stronger portfolio of solutions for enterprise mobile communications.

"The combined offerings will integrate mobile native voice, text and data communications with enterprise telephony and applications. That innovation will give enterprise customers a ubiquitous, global communications fabric, covering all employees in any location."

A link-up with Gamma enables Tango to provide integrated radio access into the Simetric and Tango platforms, and offer fixed-to-mobile converged services to wholesale interconnect and platform partners.

Mike Mills, Head of Sales for the Cloud & Infrastructure Channel at Gamma, said: "The

combined service portfolio in conjunction with our wholesale radio access delivers a mobile integrated service capability to our network of wholesale interconnect customers, who have been asking for this service since we invested in our own mobile network four years ago."

Omni-channel recording, quality management and analytics company ASC has also joined Tango and Simetric as a compliance solution partner.

Its CEO Gerald Kromer noted: "More and more essential business communications are taking place on mobile devices that are not in the control of enterprise IT.

"The new Tango Networks and Simetric offerings integrate mobile communications with ASC's recording solutions to ensure compliance."

Grow Your Sales with Chess Partner

Thursday 13th December @ 10am and @ 3pm

Topics we will cover

- Connectivity • Cloud PBX • Mobile Opportunities
- Billing • Chess Partner Programme

Register Now at ChessPartner.co.uk/webinar



A Comms Dealer Webinar in association with Chess Partner



COMMENT: LEGACY LIVES ON



Richard Carter

2018 got off to a pretty bad start for everyone at Nimans following the passing of our founder Julian Niman. The year, however, has proven our resilience and the company remains in great shape – a lasting legacy to Julian and the thousands of customers and suppliers we work with. Julian was undoubtedly a very colourful

character so we felt it would be poignant to erect a suitable monument in his memory outside our headquarters, now renamed Julian Niman House.

The monument is one of 70 giant bee sculptures displayed across Manchester this summer which were recently sold to raise over £1 million for the Lord Mayor of Manchester's 'We Love MCR' charity. We made a successful auction bid and captured a bee to remember Julian by. It's been very well received and acts as a permanent reminder of Julian. He is often in our thoughts and his legacy lives on.

At the time of Julian's death we made a pledge that the company would continue to progress and move forward. I am delighted to say 2018 has seen record revenue and an expanding workforce that is now approaching 400.

We have realistic ambitions to hit the £200 million revenue barrier and remain strong in all areas of the communications industry as we continue to grow and expand. The Worker Bee sculpture acts as a permanent symbol to all our staff and visitors that Nimans will continue to flourish in Julian's memory, based on hard work, enterprise and innovation.

Richard Carter, Channel Sales Director, Nimans

- The rise of Artificial Intelligence has redefined the channel as a facilitator of an ever more intelligent workplace, according to Joe Macri, VP for Commercial Partners at Microsoft UK (p24).
- With felicitous timing in 2004 MPS Networks Managing Director Tim Docker recognised that IP was the future (p26).

Riley poised for ICT Investment Forum

TV AND radio business journalist and presenter Simon Jack has been confirmed as the facilitator for next February's ICT Investment Forum.

Also confirmed is headline interviewee Daisy founder and CEO Matt Riley who will share insights into the qualities and strategies that have come to define him as the undisputed comms sector tour de force.

"Daisy's strategy was to create a scaled reseller by consolidating the market," commented Riley. "This is what we will continue to do. When we do a merger or acquisition we use a simple formula – we price based on growth, cash generation and recurring revenues.

"We also like businesses that keep it simple. If an investor can't understand it the chances are a customer won't either.

"There are four or five larger £1bn-plus players who serve consumers and large enterprises pretty well, but they don't seem to get it right for the circa five million SMBs.

"That's where the reseller community operates and there is still plenty of room in the market for more than one Daisy."

The ICT Investment Forum is organised by Comms Dealer



Simon Jack



Matt Riley

and takes place on February 28th 2019 at BAFTA, 195 Piccadilly, London. Knight CF has taken lead sponsorship. "The Forum will enable delegates to make

critical evaluations of their own business and think more strategically about their future planning," stated Comms Dealer MD Mike O'Brien. **See p34**

comms
dealer

Editor: **Stuart Gilroy**
sgilroy@bpl-business.com 07712 781 102

Publisher: **Nigel Sergent**
nsergent@bpl-business.com 07712 781 106

Managing Director: **Michael O'Brien**
mobrien@bpl-business.com 01895 454 444

Sales Director: **Simon Turton**
sturton@bpl-business.com 01895 454 603

Production: **Frank Voeten**
fvoeten@bpl-business.com

Circulation 01635 588 869

ISSN 1366-5243



Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations ABC total average circulation 15,525 (Jan-Dec 2017, 12,587 print, 2,938 digital)

bpl. A BPL Business Publication

BPL Limited
Highbridge House, 93-96 Oxford Road,
Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB8 1LU, United Kingdom
T: 01895 454542 F: 01895 454413

Subscriptions
Subscription rates for 12 issues:
UK, £65; Overseas: £80 (incl p&p)
Back issues can be obtained:
UK £6 (incl p&p), Overseas £10 each (incl p&p)
For subscriptions please call 01635 588 869

Views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the publishers. No part of this publication may be reproduced without the express written permission of the publishers.

All trademarks acknowledged. Photographs and artwork submitted for publication accepted only on the understanding that the Editor is not liable for their safekeeping.

© 2018 BPL Business Media Limited.
Printed by Pensord Limited

BUILD YOUR MOBILE AND IOT CHANNEL

margin in
mobile

Northampton Marriott Hotel, 21st March 2019

margin-in-mobile.co.uk

for sponsorship opportunities contact

Simon Turton – sturton@bpl-business.com – 07759 731134

NEW MOBILE CHANNEL EVENT FOR 2019!



MOBILE NETWORKS



INTERNET OF THINGS



MOBILE DEVICES



UNIFIED COMMS



WIRELESS

Muller marches in as Timico snares IT firm

FORMER Daisy Group big cheese Neil Muller, who quit the Nelson-based firm in June this year, has rocked up at Timico as chief exec in a move that coincides with the MSP's acquisition of London-HQ'd IT managed services provider 25sevenIT, its first purchase under Horizon ownership.

25sevenIT boasts a blue chip customer base with a particular focus on the hospitality sector. The multi-million-pound deal also boosts Timico's consultancy and cloud capabilities.

Reflecting on the news Timico Chairman Geoff Neville said: "This acquisition marks an exciting development in the evolution of the business."

25sevenIT MD Mark Hanson added: "Technology should be an investment that delivers a significant return to the bottom line of a business, and we've been acquired by a company



Neil Muller

with objectives and priorities that align with ours."

The acquisition and instatement of Muller followed the appointment of John Holt as Timico COO.

Former CEO Ben Marnham held the top exec position since August 2016 when he took over the role from company found-

er Tim Radford who became Executive Chairman.

Timico was set up by Radford in 2004 alongside a small team, some of whom he'd worked with previously at Project Telecom (a firm Radford formed in 1987 which achieved revenues of £330m before being sold to Vodafone in 2003).



SEASONS GREETINGS

Wishing you a wonderful Christmas and New Year from all the team at

virtual1.com/software-defined-network



CITYFIBRE has kicked off work to transform Stirling's connected future with the roll out of a next-generation full fibre broadband network. The first homes and businesses will see their full fibre services go live next spring with construction work expected to continue into 2020. Elaine Doherty, CityFibre's City Development Manager for Stirling, said: "For people across Stirling, their digital future is just around the corner. Full fibre enables Stirling to be more innovative and productive, ultimately giving businesses the platform they need to realise their growth ambitions."

NEWS ROUNDUP

PRIME Minister Theresa May welcomed Equinix's £90m investment in a new data centre at its London Slough campus. The move takes Equinix's total investment in UK digital infrastructure to £295m. "This investment reflects the demand for digital financial services in the City of London and is a vote of confidence in its future as the world's premier financial hub," said the Prime Minister.

VAPOUR Cloud is working with network provide Virtual1 as a data partner for the north of England. Virtual1 operates business-only fibre infrastructure connecting over 180 towns and cities. "The extended reach, bandwidth speed and scalability will really take our client offering to a new level," said Vapour's CEO Tim Mercer.

To advertise in **comms** dealer
contact The Sales Team on 01895 454411

COMMENT: CHANNEL MATTERS



Nick Powell

THE fact that legacy systems and infrastructure can stifle a reseller's growth ambitions is illustrated clearly in the Ethernet market. From corporates to SMEs, end users demand and depend on the reliability and security that Ethernet connectivity delivers. While Ethernet features in most resellers'

digital strategies, it is key for partners not to be shackled to legacy technology. Instead, being part of a nationwide network that's unencumbered by legacy and offers high coverage is now a key differentiator. Suppliers that have adopted a forward thinking proactive approach are more likely to help resellers increase their own on-net footprint.

This is perhaps more important than ever as resellers witness a decline in their core voice market, prompting them to seek alternative revenue streams from in-demand digital solutions that underpin end user requirements for rapid communications and robust connectivity. At this juncture in their strategic journey, resellers have an opportunity to rebuild their market position, revisit business systems and create innovative offerings. There is more than meets the eye in this 'digital transformation' period as the imperative to evolve also reflects an instinct to survive.

Key to long-term survival is business agility, achievable through the development of inter-company fluidity which in turn enables businesses to move forward, unrestricted by legacy systems and old ways of thinking that may also ultimately characterise their existing supplier relationships.

Resellers who are hamstrung by their connection to legacy infrastructure will of course be outpaced by rivals with the freedom to compete more nimbly. With some providers trapped in time, their lack of agility may also hinder their scope to deliver what's required of them. Resellers therefore need to review all areas of their strategy and align themselves to the digital future rather than the glory days of old.

Nick Powell, Sales Director, Sky Business Communications

Mitel pulls in Paul Riordan



Paul Riordan

MITEL has pulled in Paul Riordan as VP Channels, International, with a remit to grow the Canadian vendor's market share across its EMEA and APAC regions of operation.

Riordan reports to Jeremy Butt, Senior Vice President of International, and will play a lead role in driving Mitel's integrated Global Partner Programme which consolidates schemes across regions.

In his career Riordan has held several positions internationally in US and European markets. As VP Worldwide Strategy UCC at Atos he oversaw the development of the go-to-market approach, pricing, margin quality improvement programme and customer quality and satisfaction initiatives.

His 25 year career in communications technology also

includes a number of leadership positions at Avaya, Juniper Networks and Cisco.

"Whether they need a UC solution for greater control or are taking their first steps towards cloud, businesses rely on the channel in making these strategic decisions," said Butt.

"With his experience in managing channel relationships, Paul will be instrumental in ensuring partners are equipped to solve end customers' communications challenges."

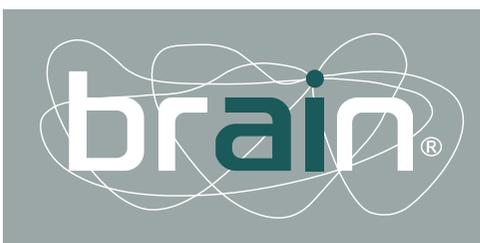
Riordan added: "Our aim is to work alongside the channel to help organisations leverage innovative communications and collaboration tools, to become more productive and deliver better customer experiences."

Got a news story? email: sgilroy@bpl-business.com

NEWS ROUNDUP

8X8's acquisition of technologies and talent from Jitsi provides a boost to its video collaboration capabilities. The financials of the deal were not disclosed. "8x8 has already developed a meetings solution for enterprises," said Dejan Deklich, Chief Product Officer at 8x8. "Incorporating Jitsi's open technology into our video platform and having its engineering team play a role in leading our development of conferencing applications and WebRTC will open up new paths for our customers and enhance our meetings solution."

PANGEA has opened a new London HQ located in Kingston-Upon-Thames town centre. According to MD Dan Cunliffe the relocation is a neat fit as the Borough of Kingston is pushing ahead with digital development projects such as the Digital Kingston: Smart Borough programme that aims to create a 'digital by default' culture. "We have worked closely with Kingston University over the years recruiting and supporting its students," commented Cunliffe. "We also see the tech innovation and 5G story developing across Surrey as a key part of our growth within the IoT market."



By 2020:



there will be 7 billion consumer devices with AI-powered digital assistants

85% of customer interactions will be automated



Join the AI Revolution

brain[®] Artificial Intelligence Symposium
24th January 2019 | 13:00-17:00 | Natural History Museum

Artificial Intelligence is evolving, and with it customer engagement. Join industry-leading speakers to explore the fascinating world of AI and how it is set to revolutionise customer experiences.



Prof Jim Al-Khalili OBE

President of the British Science Association and Presenter of the BBC4 Programme, 'The Joy of AI'



Alan Coad

Managing Director, UK & Ireland, Google Cloud at Google and technology entrepreneur



Dr Peter Cochrane OBE

Former CTO at BT, futurist, entrepreneur and business & engineering advisor



Inma Martinez

CIO at Right Brain Future and independent technology advisor to the EU Technology Commission

Reserve your seat at the **brain** Artificial Intelligence Symposium:
www.contentguru.com/evolve/register

JOIN THE COLLABORATION



UNIFY
atos collaboration solutions

**Is it possible to create the
perfect workplace?**

Discover how to improve communication, collaborate effectively and ultimately create a happy workplace through some simple practises and leading innovations.

DISCOVER YOUR WORKUTOPIA
Call or email us to find out how you can grow your business and profit from WORKUTOPIA

www.workutopia.net

nimans

**For more information
0161 925 1980
dealersales@nimans.net
nimans.net**

£22m invested into NGA network build

NEXTGENACCESS (NGA) has secured a £22m investment boost from the National Digital Infrastructure Fund (NDIF) to back its UK 10Gb fibre network. NDIF, a commercial fund established in 2017 by Amber Infrastructure Group, has acquired a significant minority shareholding in NGA.

The funding will help finance a major expansion of the network with plans to deploy over 1,000km of new high capacity fibre routes across the UK by the end of 2020.

The first link will open up ultrafast connectivity to over 4,000 underserved small firms along the route from south Wales to southwest England.

As part of its plan the wholesale fibre broadband infrastructure provider has partnered with Newport-based data centre operator Next Generation Data (NGD) to enable a new 80km high capacity fibre route which will connect Bristol directly to NGD's facility. The initiative, which includes a 4km fibre section spanning the Severn Bridge, will make the new ultrafast service available to businesses from early next year.

Nextgenaccess MD Mark Weller said: "NDIF's invest-



Mark Weller

ment will allow us to accelerate scale deployment of our independent ultrafast network across the UK, particularly to underserved areas where we can provide small businesses with access to next generation full fibre broadband."

Simon Bearne, NGD Commercial Director, commented: "Working with NGA complements the many fibre routes we already have, but what's particularly significant is the way we are doing it as the new fibre route will also allow local businesses to have greater choice when it comes to ultrafast network connectivity."

Amber Infrastructure Senior Investment Director Khalid Naqib added: "Widescale FTTP and 5G rollout will increase demands on the capacity of the existing network infrastructure. Deploying wholesale access fibre quickly and effectively is key to bringing forward the next generation of connectivity for homes and businesses.

"With the backing of NDIF, NGA will help to future-proof the UK's fibre infrastructure and accelerate the ambitious transition to a gigabit future."

Got a news story? email: sgilroy@bpl-business.com

Distie aims to lift cloud skills

IN A BID to close the cloud skills gap Exclusive Group has joined forces with Arcitura Education as a provider of its Cloud Certified Professional accreditation programme.

The move will enable thousands more partners to develop cloud transformation skills, claimed Exclusive Group.

"Channel partners can't afford to lose their market edge through a lack of cloud competency, they need new skills to complement their experience and technology knowledge so that customers carry on seeing them as relevant to their future," said Andre Dieball, Global Director for Services.

"70-80% of enterprises are experiencing cloud skills crises



Andre Dieball

that risk transformation projects going over time and over budget. These projects, collectively worth billions of dollars every year, need independent, vendor-neutral cloud skills that do not favour one cloud platform or vendor over another."

COMMUNITY projects are climbing up ACS's agenda with the completion of its latest initiative – an *Education in the Digital Age* event held at Mayfield Girl's School and designed to inspire young women into considering careers in STEM. In other CSR activities ACS staff helped Mill View Care Home to regenerate its garden, they also donated blood, started a skill share initiative with local charity Little Hiccups, and in association with the Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation compiled Christmas comfort boxes for local cancer patients. ACS MD Mike Hussain stated: "Whether it's landscaping a care home garden, training our apprentices or committing to other fundraising initiatives the team at ACS continue to put 100% into it."

Elevate For next generation billing

- Powerful usage rating
- Highly flexible subscription model
- Multi currency & brand capabilities
- Revenue assurance engine
- Intuitive user experience
- Blazingly fast bill runs



Elevate's modern architecture effortlessly integrates with your business processes to easily bill for any product service or event.
It works with you to achieve your goals.

www.elevateyourbilling.com

+44(0) 333 800 4 800

info@imperatives.co.uk



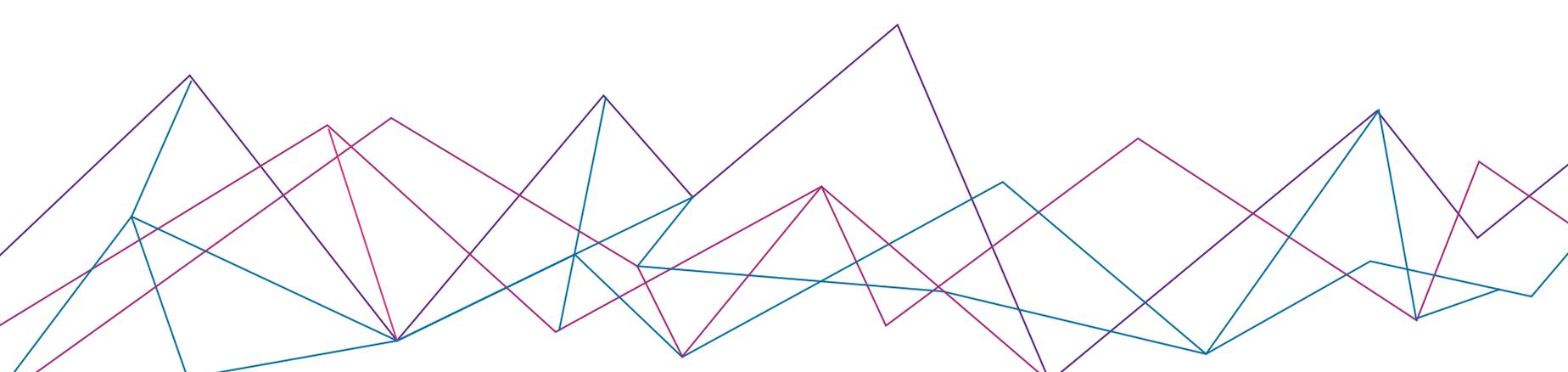


I am eve.
I can help you grow
your business.

“

Future proof
your customers'
technology without
having to upgrade
their hardware.

Find out how I can
help you make the
most of migration
opportunities. ”



EXCEPTIONAL • **VOICE** • EVERYWHERE

hello@iameve.co.uk

0333 222 6667

www.iameve.co.uk

COMMENT: STRATEGIC TALK



Richard Thompson

IF THERE is one thing that I am incredibly passionate about it's how to help our partners win more. From a very early stage in my sales career I learnt that the key to mastering your craft lies in copious amounts of practice. That is why in this month's column I want to share with you my four top tips for a successful sales strategy.

Be true to your values:

When you work for a company that you are

proud to be part of you should aim to live and breathe the values and culture that the business stands by every day. Your passion for the job will naturally shine through in every element of your role. For example, at TalkTalk Business we pride ourselves on being easy to do business with. This proof point shines through in our quarterly CSAT scores that puts us at +70. If you say that you're going to do something, honour it. Your customers will respect you more.

Have the right sales foundations: This could be anything from talent to training programmes and ensuring that you have the right team structure in place. You can only get closer to your customers once you are confident that you have the right team that can help you reach a shared end goal.

Momentum: Make sure the contracts you've won translate into financial benefits and focus on building a strong long-term pipeline throughout the year.

Strategy: It's easy to dismiss 'strategy' as a buzzword on a slide, or a nice piece of prose we can present to customers to give them a warm fuzzy feeling. But strategy should be a key differentiator rather than clever marketing. Part of our strategy involves a range of managed services that make partners a viable option. So have a strategic plan and make sure that you are consistent in sticking to it.

Richard Thompson, Director of Partners, TalkTalk Business

Windsor ramps up channel campaign

A STRATEGIC review undertaken by Windsor Telecom supported by a trio of key hires has put the firm on the pathway to channel expansion while breaking deeper into adjacent markets including hosted comms.

The Camberley-based comms provider, best known as a supplier of inbound services, has already diversified the direct side of the business into hosted telephony and is set to launch a hosted proposition to partners in Q1 2019, and aims to recruit 50 additional resellers next year as it seeks to establish a stronger presence in the UK cloud space.

"We already have over 120 resellers who work with us on our inbound portfolio which is a brilliant base to start from as we extend our offering and penetration into the channel," stated MD Sue Kempton.

Windsor's market sweet-spots are SMEs that require five seats plus as well as integration and bespoke options. "We have taken time to develop our channel proposition to ensure we are not another a 'me-too' provider," added Kempton.

Part of Windsor's service wrap is to take the pressure off partners dealing with networks



Sue Kempton

directly, noted Kempton. "They may not receive the attention and support they need to grow their businesses, especially with bespoke elements," she added.

Kempton is also keen to retain Windsor's inbound position and build on the firm's proposition in related product areas. "With the evolution of SIP trunks alongside hosted telephony, offering a full connectivity solution with the option of SIP or hosted would add to our growing portfolio," she said.

"And the continued development of our white label portal will give partners the scope to offer bespoke solutions to end

users. The portal's ability to integrate with third party platforms and deliver DR options is also important for businesses in today's world."

Windsor's growth plan – which is to double revenues within three years – has been further advanced by the appointments of Darren Brown as Channel Manager, new Head of Marketing Rebecca Fry and former Gamma big gun Richard Bligh as a Non Exec Director.

"Windsor has the vision, expertise and staff to broaden its activities, expand in the channel and realise its growth ambitions," stated Bligh. **See p40**

Panasonic BUSINESS

WHAT DO YOUR CUSTOMERS WANT FROM THEIR TELEPHONY?

- Stylish design and high-class sound?
- Easy operation but flexibility of use?
- High-speed connectivity with secure communications?
- Catch the new IP Handsets...

...Speak to your Panasonic representative to get yours in house ASAP.
business.panasonic.co.uk/communication-solutions

A Better Life, A Better World

Martino's top picks for hot technologies



Tony Martino

SPEECH intelligence and omnichannel analytics will combine to drive one of the biggest future trends in the comms industry, according to Tollring CEO Tony Martino, who, seeking an early mover advantage, is gearing up to preview such technology to partners keen to add value to their propositions.

Having seen the rise of analytics in 2018, even among smaller firms, Martino stressed the vital role of customer experience factors as key differentiators underpinned by customer engagement technologies.

"2018 has been the year of analytics, the year where even the smallest businesses have realised how much latent power lies within customer data," stated Martino.

"In 2019, as analytics services are becoming more accessible to businesses of all types and sizes, the focus is turning towards customer engagement in line with relevant media channels and using analytics to understand interactions and the customer experience across the entire business."

To support his argument Martino cited research by consultancy firm Walker which concluded that the customer experience will outpace price

and product as primary differentiators by 2020. "Investments to date in customer experience have proved difficult to justify even in standard deployments let alone more complex omnichannel customer service environments," noted Martino.

"Next year, however, speech intelligence and omnichannel analytics technologies will make that justification possible.

"All sizes of businesses will have the means to unlock the hidden data that exists within all channels, both verbal and written, and across the whole of the business – not just within a contact centre."

The tight and propitious relationship between speech intelligence and omnichannel integration will 'change the rules for customer experience', claims Martino. "With holistic insight organisations can better manage their customer facing teams and leverage intelligent analytics for more informed decision making," he added.

"It is clear that creating a consistently excellent customer experience is a priority for businesses and a margin rich opportunity for the channel."

Got a news story? email:
sgilroy@bpl-business.com

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

comms
dealer

www.comms-dealer.com

chess®

£50m
Acquisition Fund

Is Now the Time to Sell Your Business and Hit the Beach?

To find out how much it's worth contact Richard Btsh in confidence

0808 301 8334

richardbtsh@chessICT.co.uk

AWARD
WINNING
BUSINESS



Horton talks up SD-WANs Knight CF charts ten years of doing deals



Russell Horton

FLUIDONE's newly launched SD-WAN solution – which follows a link up with cyber security business Fortinet – integrates multiple technologies with next-generation security and network functions.

FluidOne CEO Russell Horton says the solution has gained early traction among organisations with distributed branches.

“In discussing SD-WAN requirements with customers and partners it was clear that the key use case is a site or branch office with at least two forms of connectivity being able to proactively load balance and prioritise traffic on an application by application basis,” he said.

Horton noted that the solution provides increased granu-

larity and sophistication over a standard SD-WAN and offers real-time threat intelligence and intrusion prevention, protecting businesses against advanced threats, malicious websites and hacking attempts.

“Secure SD-WAN combines public Internet access, dedicated private connectivity and secure cloud interconnects into one seamless network solution,” he commented.

“As businesses embrace digital transformation the need for alignment across network topology and mitigation against viruses and cyber attacks is of vital importance.

“Businesses require the highest level of protection and strict security policies at all times.”

CORPORATE finance boutique Knight CF has marked its tenth year in business by turning up the volume on its message to the channel – ‘things can only get better despite economic uncertainty’ – as founding Directors Adam Zoldan and Paul Billingham seek to build on a decade of doing deals and the 100-plus completed transactions firmly under their belts.

To say that the company began its commercial life in uncertain times would be to greatly understate the depth of the recession in 2008. But despite the dire outlook at the time Zoldan and Billingham had spotted an opportunity that has so far created circa £500m value for their clients.

“We realised that a wave of consolidation lay ahead and there was a lack of good advice for business owners and entrepreneurs,” stated Billingham.

“From the outset call expenditure was in decline, lease approvals were at an all-time low and growth hit the buffers.

“However, it was also a time of opportunity for many companies with lower valuations driving opportunistic deals.”

Zoldan observed that the emergence of high bandwidth



Adam Zoldan (left) and Paul Billingham

connectivity at accessible prices catalysed a ‘dramatic change’ in the market, while the rise of hosted voice, the recurring revenue model and ‘as a service’ products ate into traditional hardware and software sales.

“Over the last 10 years the communications industry has continuously evolved and remained one step ahead of those predicting a market in decline,” said Zoldan.

“As the financial crisis receded funding became available to the channel.

“This increased the number of buyers and investors in the sector and we saw acquisitions become more strategic.

“It is an incredibly dynamic, entrepreneurial and successful industry that continues to innovate. We believe that the channel will continue to adapt to market dynamics.”

In reflecting the changing market Knight CF has expanded and evolved its own business and operations by investing in the Knight R&D tax credit company, as well as establishing investment vehicle fund:tmt.

“We enjoy the fact that every deal is unique and every day is different,” said Billingham. “And investing in our people continues to drive true value in our business.”

More Knight CF news on p34

“We are THE training company for the telecoms channel.”

The latest addition to our portfolio is our brand-new Sales Academy; launched at Channel Live 2018!

- Does your Sales team have the best techniques to source and close deals?
- Are you nervous about hiring a generalist trainer for your Telecoms business?

Ask our seasoned industry training professionals how we can help you to change behaviours, improve efficiencies and get better results in your business development teams.

Speak to the team 0333 006 9999 or email courses@traintowin.tv



train to win .tv

5 GREAT REASONS TO WORK WITH DAISY IN 2019



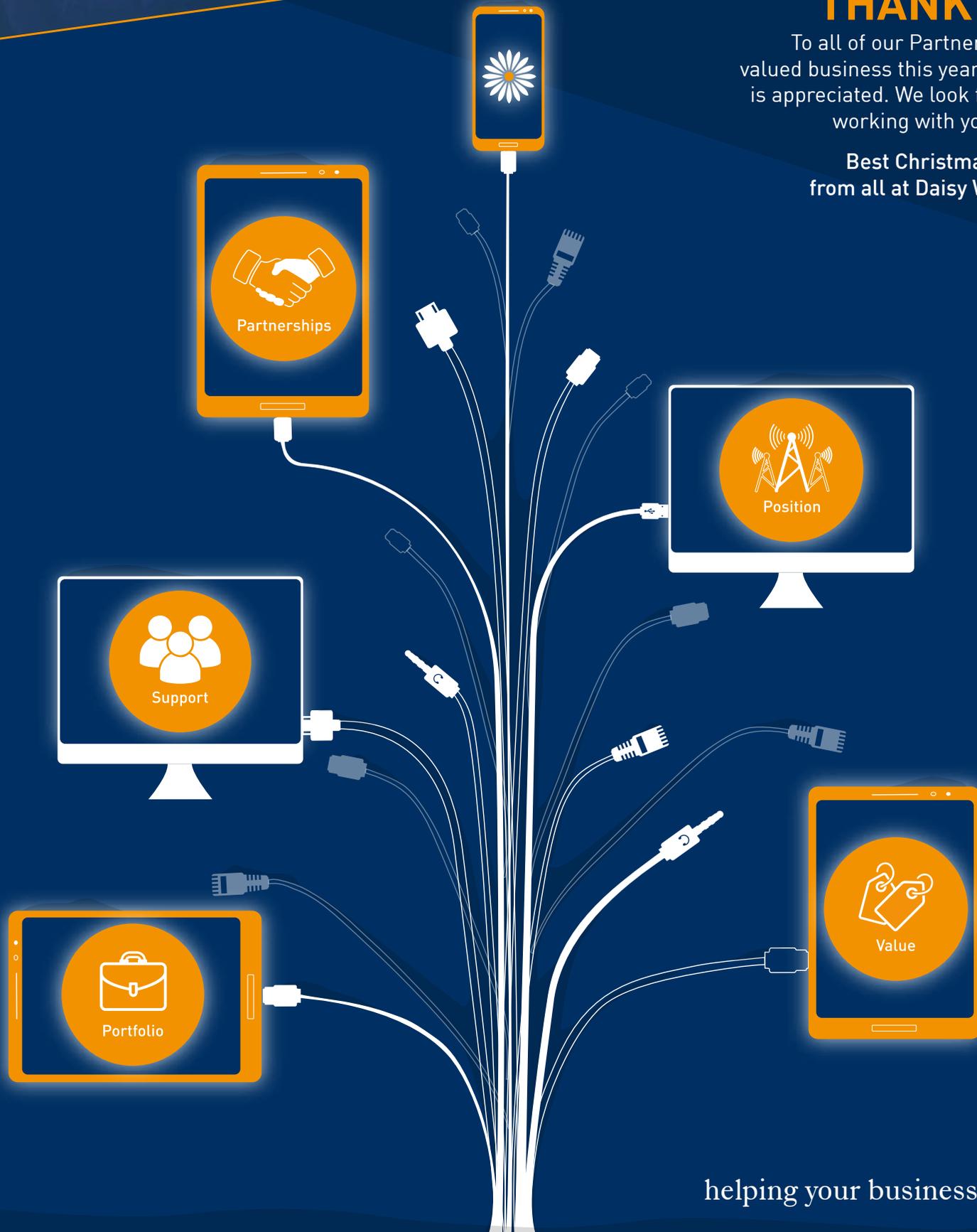
daisy.

WHOLESALE

THANK YOU

To all of our Partners for your valued business this year – it really is appreciated. We look forward to working with you in 2019.

Best Christmas wishes,
from all at Daisy Wholesale



helping your business **grow** ●

Contact us today

T: 0330 100 1233 | W: www.daisywholesale.com | E: sales.wholesale@daisygroup.com

© Daisy Wholesale Limited (CRN: 4211657)

NEWS ROUNDUP

LONDON-focused full fibre local access connectivity provider G.Network is poised for an accelerated phase of FTTP roll out following the closure of new financing with Cube. The £60m funding boost enables G.Network to provide FTTP connectivity to more than 120,000 premises across London and shared access for all telecommunication operators including mobile network operators. G.Network co-founders Sasho Veselinski and David Sangster said: "Cube has experience in investing in FTTP projects and a like-minded approach to the development of communication infrastructure. This investment will ensure that we can roll out our network more quickly."

CAE Technology Services CEO Justin Harling and COO Richard Behan have acquired the business via their holding company Caerus Assets. The acquisition was funded through CAE's existing banking facilities and comes soon after the business smashed the £100m revenue barrier. "Richard and I believe that CAE has the potential to be one of the most influential suppliers of IT Infrastructure solutions," stated Harling. "This acquisition will enable CAE to move forward with purpose, pace and agility."

CISCO'S strategy to simplify service provider networks through automation and programmability has been boosted by the intended acquisition of Harpenden-based software business Ensoft. The acquisition is expected to complete in Q2 2019. "Cisco's networking software strategy is centered on enabling simplified, scalable, trusted and automatable IP network infrastructure," said a Cisco spokesperson in a statement. "Ensoft brings a strong talent pipeline, augmenting Cisco's innovation in networking software."

Agilitas's sales tick up profit



Shaun Lynn

NEW business wins and strategic fine tuning helped Agilitas to drive 53% year-on-year profit growth on a 23% increase in turnover to £9.5m in FY18, generating an EBITDA consolidated group profit of £2m.

A growing network of UK and worldwide channel partners contributed to the figures as Agilitas now trades in over 60 countries, with global coverage up 80% in the past 12 months.

"Agilitas is continuously delivering fantastic year-on-year results and we are confident we can continue this upwards momentum in FY19," commented CEO Shaun Lynn.

"This growth is the result of Agilitas delivering services solutions for customers on both a UK and global scale."

Keytech's snared by PTG move

PURE Technology Group's (PTG) acquisition of IT services business Keytech Managed Solutions boosts group turnover to over £30m and increases the headcount to more than 120.

The buy also provides PTG with a base in Wigan, adding to its sites in Leeds and Wakefield. The deal follows PTG's record £27.8m revenue for its last financial year which equates to 40% growth over the previous two years. PTG's aim is to close 2019 on £40m revenue.

CEO Stephen O'Brien commented: "Adding Keytech's 25-plus years of experience to our model is an opportunity for us to pool knowledge, resources and capabilities, and realise much bigger joint ambitions."

Keytech MD Steve Critchley added: "Joining PTG gives us access to a larger supply chain and a sales and marketing engine. We can see clearly how we'll fit in from day one without huge change."



Stephen O'Brien

Dowd shifts into Onecom



Ben Dowd

WHITELEY-based Onecom has pulled in Ben Dowd as CEO, replacing founder Darren Ridge who put the business on target for annual turnover of £100m. Ridge now operates in a strategic executive role on the board as Group CEO.

Dowd brings more than 20 years telecoms industry experience and was previously a member of O2 (Telefonica) UK's executive board for 10 years.

Ridge said: "There are significant opportunities for growth, both organically and inorganically, and Ben shares my passion for driving Onecom forward. The acceleration of digital infrastructure in 5G and super-

fast fibre will drive new data and digital services including IoT, all of which will enhance productivity and efficiency for UK businesses.

"Also, the channel for fixed and mobile services continues to consolidate. Given Onecom's size and ambition the opportunity now exists for Onecom to take advantage of this."

Dowd added: "I have known Darren for many years and his ambition is aligned with mine. I am energised by the challenge of taking Onecom on a new journey of ambitious growth."

Got a news story? email: sgilroy@bpl-business.com

Smart tech trends

CX SOLUTIONS firm Sabio is gearing up for a greater emphasis on smart tech next year as AI, Augmented Human Interactions and Voice of the Customer come sharply into focus.

"Whether it's the rise of ethical consumers, more focus on trust or a desire for organisations to be more responsive, it's clear that consumers have more power and influence than ever," said Chief Innovation Officer Stuart Dorman.

"2019 will see an increased focus on smart technologies

such as AI, augmented interactions and Voice of the Customer insights as CX teams work harder to deliver best-in-class customer experiences.

"We're also expecting next year to bring a further merger between digital and customer service teams, particularly as organisations acknowledge that truly joined-up customer journeys now demand seamless and personalised support across all key customer touch points, whether that's digital, contact centre or in physical locations."



SCOTLAND-based Exchange Communications has launched a new initiative to support children's causes around the UK. The company will donate £500 for every new Avaya telephony installation carried out for the remainder of 2018, and Glasgow's Britannia Panopticon charity has been named as the first recipient of a cash boost. The donation will help fund the Trongate music hall's free Funny Bones children's programme in 2019. Featuring clowning, writing and stand-up classes for children aged 7-13, it completed a successful pilot run earlier this year. Exchange Communications MD Tom Sime said: "We wanted to do something to give back to the communities in which we've worked and, in particular, we wanted to support and encourage children to realise their potential. The Funny Bones programme at the Britannia Panopticon is a shining example of the wonderful opportunities that can be made available to our children with a little support."



Slash your Phone Bill by 80%
Use SIP Trunks, WebRTC & Apps

WWW.3CX.COM



©Marvel Studios 2018

'When we work together anything is possible.'

We believe in working together to challenge and pioneer new possibilities. Our aim is to make your goals a reality.

The 'Sky magic' gives you the competitive advantage.



Bespoke pricing for larger or strategic opportunities



Joint marketing campaigns and support from Sky's marketing team



Strongly marketed message in industry

Sky Ethernet
Limitless by design



Partner with Sky today

Call: 08445 403 503

Or visit: ethernet.business.sky.com

Energy sales bear fruit for Orchard

FITZROVIA-based provider of fixed, mobile and data services Orchard Telecom bases its offering on the continual review of UK networks for the best and most reliable business grade solutions, and customers also benefit from its volume purchasing and scale with suppliers. As part of this portfolio review process the company saw that Carphone Warehouse had launched Business Energy Saver through a partnership with Fidelity Energy. It was an area of interest that Orchard's Business Development Director Ben Davies hotly pursued and followed suit with a Fidelity Energy partnership agreement.

"In our experience we have no relationship with our energy provider which just calls once a year to re-sign us otherwise we will fall onto a higher out of contract rate," stated Davies. We imagined it was similar in our customer base, and we were right. Therefore it has been easy to displace current providers due to Fidelity's commercial offering and our relationship."

Having no experience in the energy sector 'was no issue', noted Davies. "Fidelity Energy on-boarded us with full industry training and sales support," he explained. "Fidelity Energy has looked at every opportunity with me and together we have successfully secured some great deals for my customers and commission for Orchard."

"This has been the perfect addition to our portfolio as customers have already seen the value of using Orchard for their telecoms rather than working directly with a network. It is an even better opportunity in energy where the 'big six' have traditionally held a large market share but poorly served their direct business customers. Not surprisingly our customers have welcomed the additional benefits of using Orchard for energy and telecoms. As our entire base uses energy we have targeted every customer. We had a strong start signing energy contracts for a number of customers in our first two months. It's the lowest touch product I have ever sold."

Customers are more than ready to consider the idea of changing their energy supplier, pointed out Davies. "We found them generally open to discussion, mainly due to there being no strong relationship with the current supplier and sometimes there are unresolved billing issues which can be solved quickly. This builds customer good will."

"This is a great opportunity: Through Fidelity Energy there is no additional overhead and it manages all the suppliers as well as Ofgem regulations. Account Manager Ollie Holt's knowledge of the market and supportive attitude has made all the difference in closing deals."



"We had a strong start signing energy contracts for a number of customers in our first two months. It's the lowest touch product I have ever sold"

Ben Davies

Unify questing for perfect workplace

A CAMPAIGN launched by Unify aims to bring into clear view the impact of technology on UK workplaces and employees and then create 'the UK's perfect workspace', claims the Atos business.

Dubbed workUtopia, the initiative intends to challenge current thinking and encourage a greater understanding around how peoples' day-to-day working lives have been changed by new technologies such as AI, the gig economy and Industry 4.0, particularly in the retail and manufacturing sectors.

"As part of the campaign Unify will work with partners to encourage businesses to sign up to one-on-one workshops to understand how digital technology has disrupted their business and find and implement enterprise communications solutions that help them create their own workUtopia," stated Unify CMO Paul Cunningham.

To kick-start the conversation, Unify hosted a filmed discussion with the Chairman of Asos and former MD of



Paul Cunningham

Amazon UK, Brian McBride, and Dave Michels, founder of TalkingPointz, exploring how digital disruption is impacting the retail sector and the challenges this poses to new and traditional retailers.

"Everyone is different when it comes to what they imagine their perfect workplace to look like and this puts pressure on businesses to find the right solution for their employees and customers," said Cunningham.

"Technology has only increased this strain, and with the wide range of collaboration and communication tools

available to businesses it can seem like a never ending task to find a solution that appeals to individuals and customers and makes business sense.

"We've seen first hand how workplaces are becoming increasingly collaborative, agile and connected, but also more difficult to manage.

"This campaign will give us and our partners a deeper insight into current issues impacting manufacturing and retail businesses in the UK, and let us work collaboratively to find a solution that works for them to deliver business change."

Worldpay top dog prepares to succeed Patterson as BT CEO

WORLDPAY exec Philip Jansen is lined up as BT's next big cheese, taking over from current CEO Gavin Patterson early next year. He will be appointed to the Board as an Executive Director on 1st January and after a hand-over period will take over from Patterson as Chief Executive on 1st February 2019.

Jansen joins from Worldpay, the global payments services group, where he will be stepping down as Co-Chief Executive at the end of the year.

He has been Chief Executive of Worldpay since 2013, leading it through its flotation in



Philip Jansen

2015 until its combination with Vantiv in 2018 to create a global leader in eCommerce.

Jansen was previously CEO and Chairman of Brakes Group and has held a variety of senior roles in Sodexo Group, latterly as COO and CEO, Europe, South Africa and India.

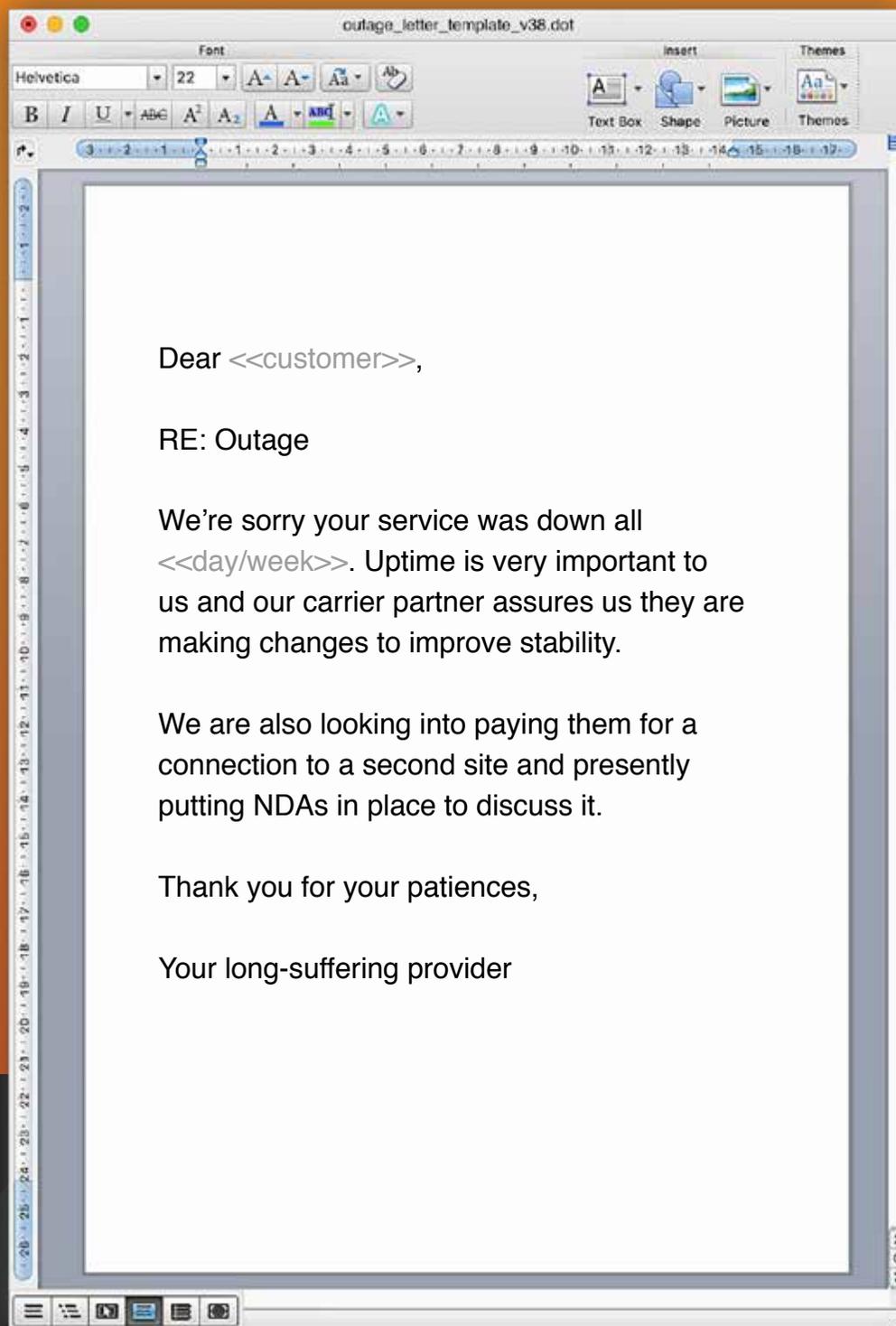
Earlier in his career Jansen was COO of MyTravel and MD of Telewest Communications Consumer Division.

Jan du Plessis, BT Chairman, said: "Philip is a proven leader with experience in managing large complex businesses. His most recent success at Worldpay, which is technology-led, means he is well suited to build on the foundations in place at BT."

Jansen added: "In a competitive market we will need to be absolutely focused on our customers' needs and pursue the right technology investments to help grow the business."

To advertise in **comms** dealer
contact The Sales Team on 01895 454411

ANOTHER OUTAGE?



SIMWOOD

Come to Simwood, where our last total outage was way back in 2010, and where our innovations are truly our own. Connect to multiple 'availability zones' at no cost, benefit from free encryption and industry leading fraud control features. Others can't provide or charge extra for what we consider to be 'essential features'. We don't.

NEWS ROUNDUP

FOLLOWING a link-up with Versa Networks, Virgin Media Business has launched a new managed SD-WAN service targeted at enterprise customers. Virgin Media MD Peter Kelly said: "SD-WAN as a Service transforms legacy infrastructure into an agile, responsive and secure digital platform with the cloud at its heart to help enterprises transform the way they work. By giving customers greater flexibility and control SD-WAN helps businesses to evolve and tailor their networks quickly and easily."

EXERTIS has introduced a new security audit service following its Information Assurance for Small and Medium Enterprises (IASME) Gold qualification and recognition as an accredited certification body of IASME. Four members of its professional services team have qualified as assessors to carry out audits. Exertis will offer a packaged service that delivers three accreditations – Cyber Essentials, Cyber Essentials Plus and IASME Gold. Jason Hill, Exertis Sales Director, Security, said: "It's essential that companies have the right defences in place to protect against today's threats and take steps to mitigate against potential data breaches."

Elevate goes international

STRATEGIC Imperatives aims to springboard its Elevate billing platform deeper into international markets by leveraging its presence in the UK's Innovation Pavilion at MWC19.

According to MD Wail Sabbagh the firm's appearance at MWC19 (25th-28th February, Barcelona) represents a milestone achievement and is reflective of its future direction.

"Being a part of MWC19 and showcasing our innovation alongside the best in Britain has always been a goal of ours," he commented. "With our newly-launched multi-country and currency capabilities we know our SaaS revenue assurance solution is ready for the international market."

MWC19's big theme is Intelligent Connectivity, covering 5G, IoT, AI and Big Data among other areas, all of which signal a move beyond the event's mobile heritage.

"Intelligent Connectivity is pivotal in creating highly contextualised and personalised experiences which consumers are beginning to expect," added Sabbagh. "As a result of connectivity of this level a rich infrastructure is built which houses all of the data and infor-



Wail Sabbagh

mation that is gathered through these smart devices.

"If leveraged, this infrastructure can bring advantages to communication providers in differentiating themselves."

Research by the TMForum indicates that up to 72% of 5G revenue growth will be dependent on the transformation of OSS and BSS systems.

This, said Sabbagh, plays into the hands of Elevate which integrates into OSS and BSS solutions via its API-first capabilities. "Creating a mature ecosystem and being able to monetise expanding these portfolios is key to getting a head start on seizing all Intelligent Connectivity opportunities," added Sabbagh.

SCC snaps up Avsnet stake

SCC's intent to make big strides into the visual communications and collaboration space has been boosted by the acquisition of a significant stake in Avsnet and the formation of SCC AVS.

Mike Swain, SCC Services MD, commented: "With the accelerated convergence of IT and visual communications this acquisition significantly enhances our existing audio-visual capabilities for the integration of VC and collaborative solutions with security, network and cloud services."

Avsnet founder and MD Graham Fry commented: "With SCC's backing we can now enhance our collaborative portfolio and expand the scale of our services."



James Rigby

Fry will continue as MD for the new SCC AVS business while retaining an equity stake in the company.

SCC's Chief Exec' James Rigby added: "SCC AVS is an exciting development in a growing sector."

Xelion rolls out latest upgrades

XELION'S intention to become API-centric has taken leaps forward with the launch of its biggest upgrade in four years.

According to UK MD Dave Reynolds Xelion 7 provides a springboard for future iterations of the firm's hosted comms solution in which improved integration capabilities will also feature strongly.

"Xelion 7 sets the foundation for future releases and enhancements as the platform becomes fully API driven," he stated.

"A major focus for the Xelion development team in 2019 will be the continued integration into Office 365 and other Microsoft applications such as Power BI."

Among Xelion 7's highlights, noted Reynolds, is a new desktop application built on the Universal Windows Platform architecture that forms the foundation for Xelion's ongoing integration within Windows and



Dave Reynolds

the Microsoft ecosystem. Xelion has also enhanced Android and Apple iOS apps.

"Upgraded reporting packs and query tools are included to improve analytics," added Reynolds. "For contact centres wall boards now support formulas and KPI information."

Reynolds also noted that improved call recording storage enables synchronisation with third party storage drives.

Concern over voucher move

GLIDE Business Sales, Marketing and Product Director James Warner has voiced concern following a dip in the funding available through the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme.

"The Government's announcement of a decrease in the maximum value of vouchers available for businesses to claim off the install of gigabit capable services is disappointing," he stated. "While it is an encouraging sign that there is high demand of vouchers, the change to the maximum value of £2,500



James Warner

instead of £3,000 poses a real risk to thousands of companies in need of this incentive."

Through the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme Glide has worked to support over 600

businesses to connect to ultra-fast broadband.

"While we echo Margot James' sentiment that the vouchers give a practical and immediate value, our fear is that this announcement will dilute the importance of full fibre and its roll out," added Warner. "It also puts more pressure on ISPs such as Glide to invest even more in their networks to support the ever growing demand."

Got a news story? email: sgilroy@bpl-business.com



Take Control of Your PBX

Deploy on Windows, Linux or in the Cloud

WWW.3CX.COM

Thank you for another great year!

We couldn't do it without our partners.

Thank you for making 2018 Tollring's best year yet.



4
AWARDS



£800k p/m
FRAUD DAMAGES PREVENTED



DEPLOYED IN
20+ countries

17500+
BUSINESS CUSTOMERS



800+
PARTNERS



41%
INCREASE IN STAFF

www.tollring.com

TOLLRING

brother
at your side

Best practice labelling

Professional Network Infrastructure Label Printer

brother.co.uk/network-infrastructure



When you choose a Brother PT-E550W label printer, you choose the best; with fast printing and wireless connectivity, plus in-built symbols and templates, you're guaranteed to be more productive on-site.

A wide range of durable, laminated tape colours and widths make it perfect for a range of uses including cable identification, patch panels, outlet points and warning signage.

Order today from your preferred Brother supplier

COMTEC

Mills

MGN



Integrates with:

FLUKE networks

LinkWare Live

Via iLink&Label app:



NEWS ROUNDUP

BNS Distribution has partnered with Comms Express as its first UK online sales channel. The distributor for Grandstream Networks products now offers customers an online ordering facility for the Grandstream Wi-Fi product range and a selection of IP phones and network products. Sales Director Less Sinclair said: "Buyers are conducting extensive research online before even speaking to a sales person. They are also making more direct purchases online and via their smartphone. This development will increase our market reach while having minimal impact on our existing channel."

NIMANS acted quickly to spread the message on Unify's new 'workUtopia' campaign (based on the UC and collaboration platform Circuit) with an online seminar designed to offer insights into future working practices and the technologies that will underpin them. John McKindland, Nimans' Head of Solutions, stated: "WorkUtopia is a visionary proposition that looks at many key areas on how modern working practices continue to change, from employee engagement and happiness to character collaboration and job creation through AI."

CLOUD comms provider Inclarity has signed a distribution agreement with Scottish business telecoms and connectivity firm Fibre1 which has offices in Forres, Aberdeen and London. Enzo Viscito, Inclarity's MD, said: "The addition of our hosted communications services will complement Fibre1's existing connectivity services and bring new opportunities to its channels." Stewart Macdonald, MD of Fibre1, added: "We expect our relationship with Inclarity to go from strength to strength over the next few years."

ISDN 'panic' in Germany

THE ISDN shutdown in Germany, planned for December 31st 2018, has sparked panic among many firms that did not prepare early enough for the switch off, observes Axel Klössner, COO and International Business Director at German vendor Auerswald (which also operates the FONtevo brand).

Germany is one of the first countries to switch off traditional analogue and ISDN trunk lines and according to Klössner UK comms players would do themselves a big favour by acting now to offset potential customer issues ahead of the UK's ISDN switch-off in 2025.

"A number of German businesses that were not aware of this change and how it affects them are in a state of panic as they heavily rely on their ISDN service to function," he stated.

"This can drive business owners to make quick decisions about something which could have a long-term costly impact on their sustainability."

In the run up to Germany's shutdown 60,000 telephone lines have been converted each week, pointed out Klössner. "So start now and don't be impacted by the end of service rush that will ensue," he urged.

"Ensure the pathway to the switch-off is clean and simple for your customers. They probably won't know why this change is important to them.

"Retain customers now by introducing attractive pricing and product bundles to help them make the transition earlier, and build relationships with open architecture SIP handset and system providers to lessen the chance of churn further down the line. The SIP market is said to reach over \$10bn by 2020, so get it right first time."

Klössner also urged UK resellers to ensure their custom-



Axel Klössner

ers fully understand the capabilities of their current telephone system, and hammer home the message that the alternative is a SIP-based solution.

"Educate your customers on the flexibility and efficiency of new functions from migrating to a SIP solution," he added.

Auerswald kicked off a UK and Ireland reseller recruitment campaign this summer following an exclusive tie-up with distributor SOS Communications to supply the FONtevo range of PBX and SIP solutions.

ForeScout scoops up acquisition

INTERNET of Things security firm ForeScout Technologies has acquired SecurityMatters – which provides operational technology (OT) network protection – for \$113m in cash.

"The acquisition takes us deeper into a market where we have an established foothold and are seeing explosive customer demand," commented Michael DeCesare, Chief Executive and President, ForeScout Technologies.

He also noted that the convergence of IT and OT is driving interconnectivity and introducing new risks for enterprises as OT networks may no longer be physically segregated from the IT network.

"Cyber attacks such as WannaCry, NotPetya and Triton demonstrate how vulnerable OT networks can be and result in significant business disruption and financial loss," he added.

"According to Forrester research, 79% of organisations with a SCADA/ICS network have suffered a breach in the past 24 months."



HATS off to Cisilion for bagging two Marketing Innovation Partner of the Year awards at the Cisco Partner Summit 2018 for Europe, Middle East, Africa and Russia (EMEAR) and UK & Ireland. Hannah Cunningham, Head of Marketing at Cisilion, said: "All departments across the company came together to ensure Cisilion's success and it's fantastic to see that all their effort and expertise has been recognised on such a high profile stage." Pictured (l-r): Cisco Marketing Director Jackie Nixon, Cisilion Sales Director Nicholas Paul, and Angela Whitty, MD UK&I Partner Organisation at Cisco.

NEWS ROUNDUP

TECH Data has sealed a pan-European distribution agreement for the Cisco Meraki Go wireless product range, which provides Wi-Fi access for businesses with less than 50 employees. Jason Boxall, VP Vendors and Alliances Europe at Tech Data, commented: "This is an opportunity for existing Meraki partners to extend their presence into the SMB space. It also opens the door for resellers who are focused on smaller businesses to take the Meraki brand to market for the first time."

A JUST-launched on-premise UC product developed by Chorleywood-based comms kit maker Splicecom enables partners to target small businesses with up to 20 extensions and 15 SIP trunks. Called SelectVoice 20, the product is available to purchase on a capex or monthly subscription model and comes with voicemail boxes and WebPartner, a browser-based personal productivity app for call control and phone management. Stuart Bell, Head of Sales for the UK and Ireland, commented: "Our cloud sales are growing but we're still seeing strong demand for on-premise solutions."

YORKSHIRE-based Diva Telecom MD Erica Lewis is preparing to write the next chapter in the company's growth story having taken up residence in more spacious offices located in Thorner, Leeds. "Over the last few years Diva Telecom has witnessed ongoing growth, not just in relation to new team members, we've also extended our product portfolio with new launches, most notably gigabit fibre, Diva Cloud and Diva Mobile," commented Lewis. "All we needed was a space with extra growing room, and now we have that we're ready for the next step."

NTA had a cracker of a year



NTA are proud to have WON this years
CNA Best Hosted Telephony Platform 2018

NTA wish you all a



If you want to partner with the best and compete to be in with a chance to win
a holiday incentive trip to  contact NTA sales via the details below.



Call us on 01708 320000 or Email us at sales@nta.co.uk

Lodge repeats recurring

Given the nature of Britain's telecoms landscape the best long-term option for South West Communications has always been to adopt a recurring revenue model where possible to great advantage, according to Managing Director Brian Lodge.

Recurring revenues have for a long time featured palpably in South West

Communications's business interests. As a result of this tactic the company continues to garner annual percentage increases in turnover. "Sales are up considerably and this is being led by cloud," stated Lodge. "We closely monitor our monthly growth in income and some of the figures are remarkable with capital equivalent monthly sales up by 160 per cent in the last 12 months."

A step-change came when the company built its own on-premise data centre. "We invested in a serious facility on our site purposely built to handle a large amount of cabinets with full resilience in power and connectivity," explained Lodge. "This again was a monthly revenue model, so our business gravitated more and more towards recurring revenue. Lines, minutes and connectivity were the next obvious step and, although this is now turning into bandwidth and SIP, it is still growing and adding to our model."

There have been many significant change-points for South West Communications over the years but migrating its base to the cloud is its biggest opportunity. "We've had cloud telephony for years but it's only taken off during the past 24 months," noted Lodge. "Cloud is



Brian Lodge

The challenge is mass market commoditisation of services. It's also our biggest opportunity to do the job better than anyone else

a natural and welcome progression for us. We have the billing infrastructure and the financial solidarity to spread what was a one-off capex profit over a three or five-year period. It fits our business approach."

Strong bonds

South West Communications is now a £24 million turnover group of companies with a 140 headcount. Its customer profile is wide ranging with installed sites from two to 5,000-plus users. Almost from day one South West Communications has sought to form strong bonds with its local business community via an enduring relationship

with Exeter Chiefs Rugby. "We have two directors who were players with the club and we have been its main sponsors for 25 years," commented Lodge. "The business demographic of the crowd fits well with our customer base and it gives us a local and national profile that normal marketing campaigns cannot compete with. It's nice to be associated with winners and, at the time of writing, they are at the top of the Premiership, so it's money well spent."

Lodge's priority is to raise South West Communications' game and ensure businesses work with the company for

its own brand ethos rather than the products it provides. "The challenge is mass market commoditisation of services – but this is also our biggest opportunity to do the job better than anyone else," noted Lodge. "We are mid-way through a CRM upgrade to add all the bells and whistles to our support desk. In truth, it's about people and we have a wealth of talent that with further investment in time and training will make a real difference to how we deliver our services in the future.

"We have already made some significant inroads into lifting our game and reinvesting

in staff by launching an apprenticeship scheme with the support of Exeter College that refocuses employees of all ages. This approach has been recognised in the awards we have won this year and Exeter College even showcased the model abroad as an example of how companies can do apprenticeships in a different way."

To say that Lodge himself approached the comms industry in a different way than most would be an understatement. He left school at 16 and started a four year apprenticeship at a local yacht builder in Devon. He qualified and went into commercial boat construction before jumping ship and moving to Australia on a working visa. "I could build a yacht from a set of plans but as far as telecoms goes there was not much synergy," stated Lodge. "That said, I was practical and could do most things if I set my mind to it. When you leave education early life skills come quickly."

South West Communications CEO Tony Rowe OBE comes from a similar mould, noted Lodge. "We could learn the technical side of things as we went along, but we had common sense which seemed in short supply from BT back then, and that was our only real competition. It was hard work, but as a private sector company with ambition and unencumbered

revenue trick

by legacy monopoly processes we couldn't lose."

South West Communications began its commercial life in 1983. Rowe had previously become involved in CB radio as part of his marine business and got into computers having set up a small shop in Exmouth. After Rowe serviced Lodge's father's boat engine the pair became acquainted in business.

"We had a few domestic phones in the shop got the opportunity to supply a full business telephone system to our accountants at the time that BT relinquished its grip on the UK market," added Lodge. "Tony saw the opportunity and we resold the Detwe E12 system. One of the original members of the sales team is now our Sales Director, Sarah Flowers. There are not many sales people who can claim to have hit or beaten target constantly for more than 30 years, but Sarah is one of them."

Both Lodge and Rowe soon realised that the best plan was to put profits back into the company, so they started their own finance organisation. "It was genuinely ours and not a white labelled solution that others were offering at the time," said Lodge. "This started us on the recurring revenue road and, when combined with our support business, it generated a significant contribution to our bottom line."

The case for recurring revenues remains overwhelming and only those resellers who adopt this model will be in the running, believes Lodge. "Resellers will only survive if they build a monthly model

because customers want it wrapped up, delivered and supported at a fixed cost," he said. "If you cannot add value the customer will bypass you and go direct."

To survive resellers will need to become 'mini MSPs', it's a move every VAR is going to have to make, believes Lodge. "Aggregate your services and wrap them up in a monthly cost with full support and proactive management," he commented. "The carriers, direct selling manufacturers and private equity companies building fast to sell cannot offer that kind of service. Maybe there should be a new acronym of VAMSP (Value Added Managed Service Provider) – after all, we're short on acronyms in our industry!"

Weapon of choice

When you consider the big and emerging trends of most interest to Lodge right now a new rash of acronyms is certain to break out. "We are moving towards more multi-media and mobile communication where voice is only a small and part of the solution," stated Lodge. "I am a firm believer in the smartphone as the weapon of choice for business people, and applications on devices are the future of our industry."

"My kids don't know what dial tone is and run away from a ringing landline. They are now old enough to be my customers and they are not changing their communication habits just because their dad used to sell desk phones. Everywhere I go the buzzword is 'disruption' so it's fair to say that agility more than anything else is now the key to any strategy in this business." ■

Just a minute with Brian Lodge...

Role model: A guy renting sunbeds for five euros in Spain. I did the maths and it was the best low cost of sale recurring revenue model I've ever seen

Your greatest fear? Personal failure. It's OK for everyone else!

If you weren't in comms what would you be doing? Space has always attracted me. It's the final horizon and I like horizons

One example of something you have overcome: The Monch next to the Eiger in Switzerland. I climbed it with my son Sam and some marines. That was a tough father-son learning curve

Tell us something about yourself we don't know? My favourite film is Love Actually

The biggest risk you have taken? I put my hand in the mouth of a live 200lb shark when fishing in Florida to get the hook out

Name three ideal dinner guests: My wife and two kids. That doesn't happen often and their knowledge and opinions with no background agenda are priceless

Industry Bugbear: I would give everyone fast and reliable access to fibre connectivity rather than squeezing the last bit of life out of a ropey bit of copper. Let's wake up and catch up!

How do you relax when not working? I'll let you know when that happens

Top tip for resellers: Never let anyone bill your customers for you

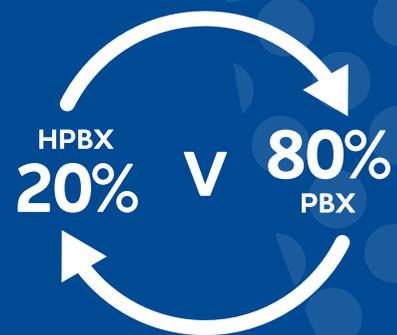
What possession could you not live without? I'll always have a boat, or if things get tight just something that floats

Make the move

PBXIT

WITH  vanillaIP

PBXIT is today's big debate, driven by the M&A question, but what will it look like in 2022?



PBX Resellers have to re-evaluate how they can get the best value for a lifetime's work building a successful telephony business.

VanillaIP launches a 2019 PBXIT programme

Designed to support PBX resellers transitioning your base to the cloud either:

- To exit the industry, realising the maximum return
- To develop and build a Cloud Revenue into the business
- To buy and build you value, through your own M&A programme

Contact VanillaIP for full details on the PBXIT support programme which includes 12 months free user licences, designed to help you make the most of your life's work with a planned M&A exit.

sales@vanillaip.com

0800 970 0971

www.vanillaip.com/pbxit

To advertise in **comms** dealer
contact The Sales Team on 01895 454411

Macri on AI, ecosystems

The rise of Artificial Intelligence has redefined the channel as a facilitator of an ever more intelligent workplace, according to Joe Macri, VP for Commercial Partners at Microsoft UK.

Macri's flourishing expectations for Artificial Intelligence in industry allows Microsoft to maintain its reputation as a leading channel innovator, but doing full justice to the opportunity at a time of disruption is a challenge. "AI is undoubtedly the focus," stated Macri. "The fourth industrial revolution is bringing huge challenges and opportunities for customers and partners. With the rise of AI and machine learning, technology is altering every aspect of the corporate and social landscape, fundamentally disrupting established business practices."

That AI will be the next big thing is obvious, believes Macri, and its potential must not remain pent-up behind a lack of digital skills and the maelstrom of unprecedented industry upheaval.

"Customers and partners are facing a period of rapid and intense change which is creating a new environment for all to operate in and do business," he added. "Three key trends are impacting customers and partners – Digital Transformation, AI and Digital Skills. Partners can create new opportunities in all three of these areas using intelligent technology to innovate products and processes, while attracting and developing great talent with the digital skills our customers need."

Macri defined the proper balance of AI as between



Joe Macri

With the rise of AI and machine learning, technology is altering every aspect of the corporate and social landscape

empowerment, innovation and ethics. "Organisations are already taking a principled approach to AI, establishing underlying ethics and values, and outperforming those that aren't by nine per cent," he stated. "Helping our customers to get their use of AI right enables them to take advantage of the enormous potential AI creates. AI and machine learning can help customers

innovate, empower, and accelerate their business through different tools to transform experiences for customers and employees."

Optimisation

In using AI, workers can be relieved of repetitive and time-consuming tasks, customers can be better understood, and both products and processes can be optimised to serve

everyone more effectively.

"The guiding principle should be to augment existing jobs, rather than eliminate them," affirmed Macri. "This is an area that we work with our partners on to add value and help customers navigate the changing economic and technological landscape and ensure they experience lifetime value from their investments and progression."

Figures from two household name industry research houses suggest that resellers would be wise to board the AI gravy train. According to IDC, 75 per cent of applications will use AI by the end of 2018, while Gartner says 85 per cent of enterprises will be using AI come 2021. Microsoft's own delve into the market draws a similar picture. Its new report, called 'Maximising the AI Opportunity – How to harness AI's potential effectively and ethically', is based on input from more than 1,000 business leaders and 4,000 employees, and includes respondents who are already embracing AI within their own organisations. "We are at a pivotal moment in AI adoption," stated Macri. "In our report over 40 per cent of leaders believe their business model will cease to exist in five years time, with technology, AI specifically, driving the transformation. Yet 51 per cent do not currently have an AI strategy in place."

The research makes clear that AI is a top priority for many businesses but knowing how to strategically adopt it is another matter altogether. Macri hopes that a significant portion of Microsoft's 21,000 UK partners (which collectively employ circa 570,000 people) will plug this gap. "Each of our customers operate in diverse industries, so we've invested in bringing industry expertise and focus to our customers," he said. "By doing so we are able to better relate to

and home life

our customers, understand their opportunities and help them maximise the potential that technology creates."

AI is not the only technology in town, pointed out Macri. "To leverage other new opportunities such as Intelligent Cloud and Intelligent Edge we create new channels to market with AI and high impact solutions," he explained. "It's not only our customers and partners that are going through transformation, Microsoft has been on its own journey too and we are committed to transforming the ecosystem to ensure the continued delivery of customer lifetime value from each engagement and outcome."

Partner services

According to Macri the lines continue to blur between Microsoft's partner ecosystem so in response it has created a Global Services Partner organisation that provides coverage for all partners building a managed service capability, services, IP, accelerators and solutions on any Microsoft platform – Azure, M365 and Dynamics as well as Bing search and the Microsoft Gaming platform. "Customers want the ability and agility to move partners and platforms, so partner competency and service will always remain a significant differentiator," he added.

In FY18 Microsoft's UK ecosystem grew over 25 per cent. "The economic impact of this is truly rewarding because for every £1 of revenue that Microsoft does, nearly £9 is done by our ecosystem," noted Macri, who, armed with insightful business knowledge and

past experiences must be credited with helping Microsoft to achieve these impressive figures.

Rewind the clock: With a Computer Science degree under his belt Macri's first job was a software analyst programmer. He saw how sales teams were working with customers to identify and solve some of their biggest challenges. "I then moved into a tech sales role," he said. "Doing my MBA a number of years later gave me a great breadth of skills in problem solving and developing strategic plans and capabilities."

But Macri's first objective is to share a principle he aims to live by every day

The guiding principle should be to augment existing jobs rather than eliminate them

– to ensure people don't prioritise their career at the cost of their personal life. "I've got a supportive wife and family who have been a huge influence on me over the years and helped me to be successful in my career," he commented. "Enjoying time with my family, doing the things that are important to us and putting family happiness front and centre has enabled me to make the right career choices. I'm passionate about how your personal life can influence professional success."

Just a minute with Joe Macri...

Role model: Tom, my career coach for over 15 years, who helps me to see different ways of approaching challenges and opportunities

Name three ideal dinner guests: Nelson Mandela, an incredible person; Professor Carol Dweck, her research on Growth Mindset is insightful and empowering; and Ayrton Senna, an all-time great in F1

Tell us something about yourself we don't know: I was born in Australia to Italian parents and I live in Ireland

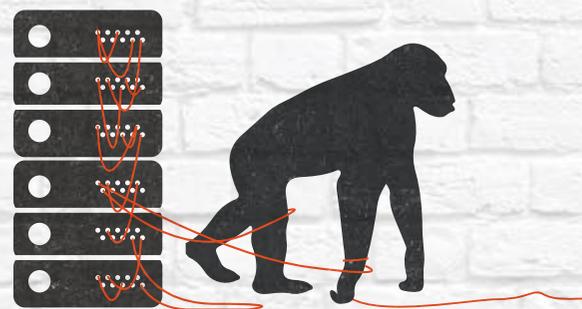
If you weren't in IT what would you be doing? I wanted to be a pilot when I was younger. I got through selections but didn't make it as I needed glasses. If that hadn't had been the case, I would have loved to be a pilot

Best piece of advice you have been given? My coach Tom has guided me to think differently over the years, helped me ask the right questions but never tells me what to do. This is far more valuable than a piece of advice

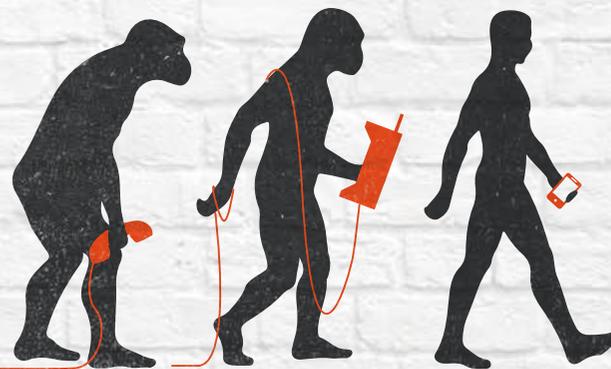
How do you relax when not working? Getting fresh air on my bike helps to clear my head and relax me

Name one thing you couldn't do without in your job: OneNote: It's the place I store all of my notes, links to presentations and reports etc. It's where I collaborate with my team each day. OneNote is the primary tool for me, enabling me to be so much more efficient and informed

Top tip for resellers: Have a clear services and customer value strategy



THE VOIP EVOLUTION HAS BEGUN.



Wherever your customer is on the IP Telephony evolution trail, we have a scalable, flexible solution just for them.

The Complete IP Solution:

☎ Number Manager

☁ Invosys Hosted

☎ Invosys SIP

Invosys

www.invosys.com | 0161 444 3333

To advertise in **comms** dealer
contact The Sales Team on 01895 454411

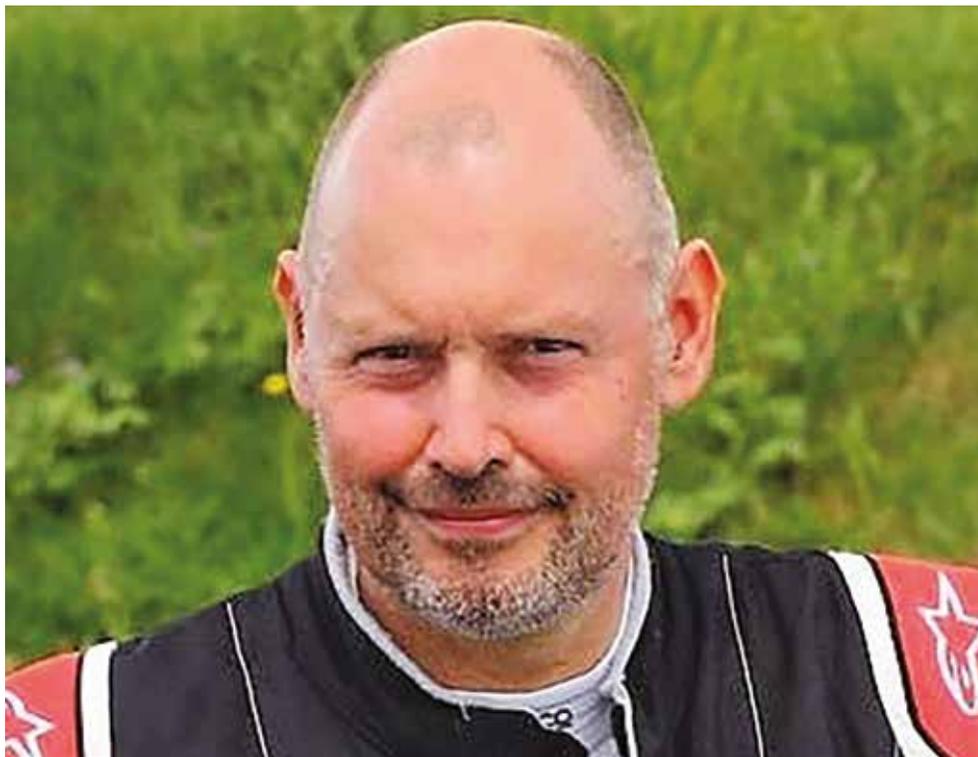
Docker turns early IP vision

With felicitous timing in 2004 MPS Networks Managing Director Tim Docker recognised that IP was the future and its potential only realisable through a series of strategic turns and an ongoing programme of business transformation.

Docker embodies to great advantage the significant aspects of his past experiences and deep insights into the ever evolving comms marketplace in which he thrives. This synthesis can be traced back to when he left school with A levels and joined Lloyds Bank's Management Development Programme, working in the Birmingham branches and studying to become an Associate of the Institute of Bankers where topics included economics and accounting. Frustrated by the pace of the Bank's programme he jumped ship after three years. "A friend of my father suggested I would be suited to a sales role, so with little to lose I took the first sales position I could find with a Midlands-based Ricoh photocopier dealership," stated Docker.

"The partners were experienced salesmen and provided me with a great grounding and a cultural reality check – sell to survive. I learned about presentation, negotiation, overcoming objections and gaining commitment, all skills used every day with customers, suppliers and probably most importantly my own team. Everyone needs to buy-in to the concept and work together towards a common goal."

Having embraced the emerging fax market and built specialist sales teams for



Tim Docker

A fraction of our customers take IT services so we have a significant opportunity in this area

a couple of resellers Docker established his own business in 1989 sub-contracting Panasonic orders to Midland Phone Services (now MPS Networks). Docker acquired the company from the Midland Phones Group in 1996. "Since then we have grown organically and by way of acquisition," noted Docker. "Our portfolio of products, services and skills now provides our clients with end-to-end, fixed and mobile, voice, data and IT solutions from a single source. We have also acquired three further PBX resellers."

From 1991 to 1996 growth had been slow due to an absence of a sales strategy properly aligned to the opportunity. This was quickly rectified following Docker's acquisition of the business which then achieved 100 per cent sales growth in 18 months. Fast forward to 2000 and the company entered into a dealership agreement with BT Cellnet and introduced mobile into its portfolio. Three years later MPS was established as Panasonic's leading UK telephone system dealer and strengthened this position by

acquiring Belworth Telecom, a Panasonic telephone system dealer based in Bristol.

Business review

"Following a review of the business and its strategy in response to market demands a decision was taken to differentiate from the traditional competition by broadening the portfolio of products, skills and services," said Docker. "New relationships were created with suppliers of data and IP networking infrastructure including Cisco and various wholesale ISPs. Technical

staff with data networking expertise, experience and qualifications were recruited.

"The plan was to transform the business into a converged voice and data networks systems integrator where solutions would be designed, delivered and supported exclusively by our own in-house resource. Data networking expertise would be required to proficiently integrate IP telephony and VoIP into the LAN and WAN environment and, in turn, capitalise on the opportunity afforded by the introduction of these technologies to the UK market."

In 2006 MPS acquired ADV Maincom, another Bristol-based Panasonic PBX reseller, and became a BT Openreach reseller. Two years later the company became a Mitel Partner and introduced the MPS Intelligent Communication Solutions brand to deliver a broad portfolio of products, skills and services throughout the UK and Ireland. "In 2010 many customers start to request IT services so an IT team was recruited," noted Docker. "The company became a Microsoft Partner and started to develop relationships with other IT vendors."

The acquisition of Portsmouth-based Panasonic PBX reseller Telecall preceded the introduction of the NEC PBX portfolio. "2015 marked the 25th year of trading and following a

on into strategy

prior share restructure we changed the company name to MPS Networks which more accurately describes the nature of our business in conjunction with our established strap line 'intelligent communication solutions'," commented Docker.

The company has grown from six staff and £500K annual turnover in 1996 to 40 staff and turnover of £6 million in 2018, with organic growth trending to £6.5 million turnover in 2019. MPS has been profitable every year since acquisition by Docker in 1996 and debt free with surplus cash at all times from 2000. Its circa 1,200 customers include around 300 public and 900 private sector organisations.

Target markets

The target public sector verticals are education and healthcare while private sector deals are aligned to a 20 to 2,000 seat horizontal market where the average is around 50 seats. "Our private sector sweet spot is 25 to 350 seats where businesses readily buy-in to our end-to-end ethos and are keen to outsource all ICT to MPS," added Docker. "They want to drive process change through ICT but don't want to manage the significant internal IT resource to do so."

Docker has witnessed much change in the market with a notable increase in the migration of fixed voice to SIP and/or the cloud, a rise in UC and mobile integration, a lift in connectivity sales at the expense of ISDN, greater demand from the established customer base for IT services, including Colo and VDC, in particular Office 365 and cloud back-up.

"A fraction of our customers take IT services so we have a significant opportunity in this area," added Docker. "Key to growth right now are partnerships with Gamma and GTT, and we have built our own Veeam Cloud Backup solution in the GTT VDC which we believe is superior to Azure and AWS in a number of key operation and commercial areas."

According to Docker customer service is the 'absolute cornerstone' of his business as it continues to develop staff through a training and development programme, as well as near perpetual systems and process improvements. "The aim is to work more and more closely with every customer to add value, underpinned by technology but ultimately driving business process change and Rol," noted Docker.

"Organic growth is driven by customer satisfaction, granular customer and prospect base analysis, proactive sales and marketing activity, recommendation and referral. We have a comprehensive sales and marketing strategy involving exhibitions, seminars and user group meetings for example. Our most recent focus has been around how we use social media and third party validation to nurture customers and new business prospects."

The ramping up of Docker's marketing function pushes his overall strategy to the front line and mirrors his early efforts to be at the vanguard of technology and industry developments. "In 2004 we realised IP was the future," he commented. "We knew we needed to add

Just a minute with Tim Docker...

What talent do you wish you had? To be a decent golfer

If you weren't in comms what would you be doing? Working in another business. I have some mileage left in me yet and I get easily bored

Tell us something about yourself we don't know? I race a VW Golf GTI TCR car in the Dunlop Britcar Endurance Series

The biggest risk you have taken? We've made acquisitions from our own cash and there is always a risk involved. The upside is a quantum leap forward

Top tip for resellers: Invest in people, delegate based on capability and capacity, and don't micro manage

Best piece of advice you have been given? You should get a job in sales

One thing you could not do without in your job: A sense of humour

Your greatest strength and what should you work on? Determination and commitment, but I could work on knowing when to give up

How would you like to be remembered? Trustworthy beyond any doubt but didn't take much too seriously

more value to our customer base and find new, larger more complex clients where the potential value add was greater. We committed to transforming the business into a converged voice, data and IT systems integrator where solutions would be designed, delivered and supported exclusively by our own in-house resource. This was the absolute turning point in the business." ■

inclarity

Wishing all of our partners a magical Christmas and a successful 2019!



PROVIDING FIRST-CLASS VOIP SERVICES FOR 16 YEARS

0800 987 8080
inclarity.co.uk/thefullpackage

 broadsoft  Polycom

To advertise in **comms** dealer
contact The Sales Team on 01895 454411

Dowden drives digital

At this turn in the nation's digitalisation journey only one thing matters – delivery on the ground – and the channel has a golden opportunity to work more closely with the Government as it undergoes its own transformation, explained Minister for Implementation Oliver Dowden CBE in his opening keynote at this year's Comms Vision Convention (Gleneagles 7th-9th November).

The upshot of Dowden's opening address is glaring: He backs full fibre and 5G to the hilt and believes that it is vital to get a workable Digital Britain transition underway which includes sweeping changes to how the Government procures digital services. "We need to discuss the outcome we want with tech companies, and understand how we can redesign procurement with a radically different process, while offering the right incentives for companies to design and deliver new solutions," he stated.

Dowden proposes that the last thing the Government needs is a flawed procurement process that excludes smaller ICT providers and is also open to abuse. "Too often we rush straight to procurement and have a short window," he said. "Over the course of the delivery contract we may see slippage in terms of timings, and in some cases

we experience companies putting in low bids with an expectation that over the course of the contract they will renegotiate and extract more value. This is not a sensible approach to Government procurement and excludes the more honest companies that submit realistic bids."

The Government must build up its digital capabilities or lose the confidence of citizens in its ability to deliver services, noted Dowden. To offset a public loss of faith he announced the launch of a Government Innovation and Emerging Technology strategy next spring which will reflect the technological revolution experienced by people in their private lives. "If we get this right we can deliver more for less and enable more tech companies to get through the door of Government," said Dowden.

"I have responsibility for GovTech and how we deliver full transformation and Government procurement.



Oliver Dowden

If we get this right we can deliver more for less and enable more tech companies to get through the door of Government

Smaller providers don't have large procurement departments, they can't spend hundreds of man hours on procurement, so we will make it easier for them to bring their skills and expertise to Government."

Digital objectives

The Government's existing procurement processes are not enough and go only a little way towards meeting its digital objectives. Attention must also be concentrated on best practice and collaboration via the Government Digital Service which has created a cross department capacity

that enables it to seize opportunities and take a more innovative approach to going digital. "We can't be cutting edge, nor take risks, but we should make sure that the tech transformation in the private sector is reflected in the public sector," added Dowden. "We must consider the transformative outcome we want to achieve rather than fall into the trap of doing what we've done before in the same way."

The single biggest boon to the creation of Digital Britain is the Government's commitment to full fibre and 5G, but delivering

Digital Britain on the ground is a big challenge and a priority for the Government. "It's easy for politicians to stand on platforms and make promises, more challenging to get legislation through parliament, but the real difficulty is delivery on the ground," he said. "The creation of a Digital Implementation Taskforce will help work through these issues."

Meanwhile, the Government will capitalise on existing strengths in automation, noted Dowden. "HMRC's deployment of robotic processes has cut costs by up to 80 per cent, increased accuracy and employees can now focus on interesting and more challenging work," he added.

Dowden's keynote kicked off a high calibre agenda that gave delegates a strategic sense of what Digital Britain means to the channel following the Government's full fibre switchover plan which is expected to be mainly completed by 2030. The Government intends to increase competition and investment in full fibre broadband, create more commercial opportunities and make it easier and cheaper to roll out the infrastructure for 5G. According to Government figures the UK has only four per cent full fibre connections and lags behind many key competitors – Spain (71 per cent), Portugal (89 per cent) and France (28 per cent).

Dowden is responsible for Government technology including the Government Digital Service, Infrastructure and Projects Authority and the Crown Commercial Service. ■
Comms Vision report – p43



Increase sales by driving customers to your website.

Pay per Click is an intelligent, highly effective way to gain new business. We can help you present your brand to potential customers from the very moment they search for the products you sell.



SEO



Web Design



PPC

0800 304 7555
revvd.co.uk

Cloud front and centre



Paul Emery

Any and every development within the ScanSource strategy roadmap has cloud at its core, according to Vice President of Cloud Solutions & Services Paul Emery.

E mery was promoted to the role of VP of Cloud Solutions and Services in July. The appointment is reflective of ScanSource's greater focus on cloud technology offerings and also draws on Emery's previous experience. "Due to my background in both sales and technology it was the right fit for me," he stated. "With the market moving rapidly one of my main objectives is to prepare customers for the transition and ensure that they are using cloud to their best advantage."

Armed with a degree in computer science Emery went straight into a graduate scheme with a distributor which gave him a firm grounding in pre-sales consulting. His

career path has not since wavered from distribution and led to ScanSource's doorstep over 12 years ago. "I always like to have the latest gadgets and products and I carry that mentality in business," he stated. "I'm constantly looking at how we can improve and grow as a company."

Emery's team is focused on expanding cloud solutions across Europe and working with other countries and European executives to build a cloud practice in EMEA. "I'm excited to be leading such a qualified team of professionals," he enthused. "ScanSource's commitment to cloud has been developing over the past few years and although we already had solutions in place the focus has been on putting more

emphasis behind our cloud offering. We have achieved this with two goals in mind. The first was the cloud practice, which I lead as part of my role, the second was the Intelisys Global acquisition which enabled us to strengthen our cloud proposition via an expansive portfolio of new vendors."

Key acquisition

ScanSource gained access to additional tools to bolster its cloud business following the acquisition of Intelisys. "These allow us to educate and support the reseller community in their cloud offering," stated Emery. "This is something we will harness and develop over the next few years. Resellers are also evolving, their previous offering of on-premise based solutions

going into the cloud means a change of model. One of the strategies they will have to pursue is compensating their people when the cashflow changes, this is something we can support."

Given a magic wand Emery would in a single stroke transform the industry to be focused on solution selling rather than individual products. "An agency based model enables this by deploying an agnostic approach to end user requirements," he added.

Cloud and 'anything as a service' is now the priority as market demand continues to gather momentum, pointed out Emery. He also noted that hardware devices still form a key component of the overall strategy. "In Europe we are focusing on our joint offering of both cloud-based services and physical devices," he confirmed. "Our UK channel objectives are focused on increasing our cloud supplier line card. The biggest opportunity for ScanSource is to deliver the entire solution to our partners. Helping our customers to connect with cloud services, data centres and audio-visual providers offers great opportunities for partners."

Citing Gartner's 2018 review Emery emphasised that 90 per cent of IT leaders will not purchase new premise-based UC infrastructure by 2021. "This shows the scale of the cloud market opportunity for partners," commented Emery. "As digital transformation and cloud technologies continue to proliferate resellers should question whether their distributor can truly support their business with cloud-based solutions and services." ■

Just a minute with Paul Emery...

Role model: Richard Branson: I admire entrepreneurs and see Richard Branson as a great role model when it comes to business, vision, drive, competitiveness, desire to win and ability to build and create effective teams

What talent do you wish you had? To play the piano

What do you fear the most? Failure

Tell us something about yourself we don't know:

I had surgery on my nose as it was badly broken when I was 17

Your greatest strength and what could you work on? My greatest strength is that I'm always right, my biggest weakness is learning to accept that I'm not always right

Name one thing you couldn't do without in your job: Caffeine

What's the best piece of advice you have ever been given? There is no such thing as failure, only learning experiences which develop you and help you to succeed

If you weren't in IT what would you be doing? The secret service... that's what I tell myself!

Name three ideal dinner guests: Winston Churchill, he would have some good stories to tell; Donald Trump to hear his outrageous comments first hand; and the comedy genius Michael McIntyre

One example of something you have overcome: The desire to please everyone which in life isn't always possible

Biggest career risk you have taken? Moving from technical management into sales management



Yealink

Easy Collaboration, High Productivity



Yealink are a global leading provider of unified communications.

We offer a scalable and secure multipoint video conferencing solution for huddle rooms, medium sized meeting rooms, and large conference rooms.



Highest Video Quality



Spectacular Sound



Transformative Reliability



Fast Implementation

Contact us today for more information regarding the Yealink portfolio including our accreditation programme and Skype for Business and Microsoft Teams solutions.



**Yealink UK
distribution
partners**



Yealink UK Ltd Salford Street, Bury, Lancs, BL9 6YA T: 07525 128677 E: chris.hopkins@yealink.co.uk W: www.yealink.co.uk

Part of the Nycomm Communications Group
MK6039CD071118

Smart moves in cities

Smart cities may soon become firmly part of the comms channel's growth outlook, according to Entanet Head of Products Paul Heritage-Redpath and CityFibre Product Manager Victoria Papathanasiou.

At the heart of any smart city is technology, creating an environment that encourages digital innovation and economic growth more than any other. But just five per cent of the UK can access full fibre connectivity right now, so major investment is needed if more UK cities are to become intrinsically smart. "With an ambitious investment programme CityFibre is building an intelligent full fibre network, providing gigabit connectivity to five million premises by 2025," said Papathanasiou. "That should help more cities and towns to press ahead with their smart city pilots and projects."

Smart cities are only made possible with a strong collaborative approach between the public and private sector. A good example of this is MK:Smart which saw the local authority and Open University working closely with infrastructure providers like CityFibre to deliver smart solutions for Milton Keynes. In 2016 CityFibre opened up its 162km full fibre network in Milton Keynes for businesses to access next generation Internet connectivity. Earlier this year the city was also

announced as the first UK city to benefit from CityFibre's city-wide full fibre roll-out in partnership with Vodafone. This means the CityFibre network, which enables Gigabit speed broadband services of up to 1000mbps, will be expanded to reach nearly every home and business in Milton Keynes.

Smart city projects are inherently bespoke, where everyone involved is to some extent sharing risk. "Small scale pilots run in an agile way with clear success factors are crucial to de-risking and lay the ground for longer-term revenue streams," commented Heritage-Redpath. "Public-private partnerships are key and there needs to be investment at multiple levels in smart solutions, analytics and machine learning technology, the systems to process data and of course the underlying infrastructure."

As councils seek to balance budgets by lowering operational costs, even mundane sounding projects like bin and vermin sensors can help manage headcount and truck rolls by directing resource only to the locations where it is needed. A largely unnoticeable but potentially life-saving



Victoria Papathanasiou



Paul Heritage-Redpath

application is the use of flood sensors to manage drains and waterways. "Cash strapped councils are open to cost-saving initiatives and, in what is an emerging market, vendors are keen to support channel partners with projects," added Papathanasiou.

Channel model

According to Heritage-Redpath the channel has always punched above its weight by leveraging personal relationships. "There's no reason why that model won't work in the context of local government," he said. "Indeed, working with a local partner is a marketable benefit for local authorities. There are opportunities now for the channel but investment is being held back by the lack of appropriate infrastructure. CityFibre aims to change that."

The readiness of the smart city market for the channel will increase as the level of full fibre infrastructure in towns and cities grows. CityFibre currently has major fibre infrastructure projects in over 50 towns and cities

throughout the UK with a plan to provide gigabit connectivity to five million premises by 2025. "This investment is making faster connectivity available to more businesses and organisations, stimulating business growth and innovation, which in turn creates significant opportunities for the channel," noted Papathanasiou. "It's also a question of channel providers bringing an opportunity to leverage technology to make savings for their local authority."

Although there are signs of barrier-busting initiatives beginning in government, planning and wayleave issues remain the main barrier to deploying suitable infrastructure, pointed out Heritage-Redpath. "At least local authorities can assist with this on their own estate," he added. "Security on data transmission and storage and the GDPR implications on the use of citizens' data are also key considerations."

The single biggest barrier to smart cities in the UK is the

lack of full fibre infrastructure needed to transfer the huge amount of data required for them to work. "Rock solid connectivity is the bedrock of a smart city strategy," reaffirmed Papathanasiou. "CityFibre, with its full fibre deployment not tied to the legacy exchange footprint, is placed to help. We're already working with a partner to roll out a LoRa (long range) pilot right now."

Any smart city project will have multiple layers and multiple opportunities, and the degree to which a partner gets involved will depend on their capabilities. "The channel will play a crucial role in the delivery of high-speed full fibre connectivity," stated Heritage-Redpath. "We encourage resellers to find out about the smart city ambitions of their local city or town council and ask them questions such as 'what's holding you back?'. The answer will no doubt be the lack of a full fibre infrastructure, and that is where CityFibre can make a difference, providing a foundation for smart city infrastructure." ■

KCOM

Journey

together to achieve your goals



We listen to your challenges and work on solutions together.



We're continually investing and changing to help our partners grow.



We deliver solutions that position you ahead of the field.



0345 122 4777 partner@kcom.com
business.kcom.com/partners

Forum to drive growth

Forget economic uncertainty and Brexit – the potential for ICT businesses to grow through investment and M&A is perhaps at its greatest scope than ever. The only threat is missing the opportunity, according to Knight Corporate Finance founding Directors Adam Zoldan and Paul Billingham, headline sponsors of February's ICT Investment Forum.



Adam Zoldan



Paul Billingham

The Forum, launched by Comms Dealer, will be held on February 28th 2019 at BAFTA, 195 Piccadilly, London, and facilitated by TV and radio business journalist and presenter Simon Jack. "Delegates will leave the event with valuable insights from funders, advisers and some of the sector's leading entrepreneurs," stated Billingham. "The breadth of expertise and experience on stage is unlike any other event we have seen in the channel."

Knight CF has been firmly cemented in comms sector investment and M&A activity for exactly 10 years this month, and 2018 saw the company complete 13 deals and its 100th transaction. According to Zoldan these deal numbers are reflective of an 'extremely buoyant ICT sector'. "With more active buyers in the market than ever before we have good visibility of an equally strong 2019 and expect further exciting announcements," he commented. "The high level of acquisition activity has

been driven by the increasing availability of funding within the technology sector. Private equity funding is widespread, particularly for the larger channel players, but 2018 also saw a higher and more varied level of debt finance available to the sector. Alongside investing in organic growth, debt is also prevalent for funding acquisitions. With funding remaining strong we don't expect any slowdown in deal-flow. We continue to see plenty of willing buyers and sellers."

The conditions for business growth in the ICT channel are propitious and precisely the ground upon which an escalation of investment and acquisitions can flourish, fuelled further by the sector's growing maturity. "There has been a dramatic improvement in the professionalism of the channel, but not at the expense of innovation and drive," added Billingham. "While actual growth in pure comms is at a standstill, the comms channel has driven change, adapted and delivered the next generation of solutions.

Convergence has happened. You just need to look at companies that have quietly dropped the 'telecom' or 'communications' moniker – such as Chess and Adept – as they acquire IT and tech capabilities. While there are plenty of transactions purely focused on scale we are seeing a high level of strategic deals with acquirers looking to build expertise in growth sectors such as the IoT, cloud, security and more."

Advice is key

For comms entrepreneurs seeking growth funding or a potential exit the most common problems they will encounter are a lack of preparation and an underestimation of the level of work required within a deal. "Our advice has always been consistent – know what you want from a deal, prepare your business accordingly and leverage the expertise of an adviser," stated Zoldan. "We suggest meeting an advisor long before a decision is made. You'll get an understanding of the

value of your business and advice on how to drive value long before a transaction. Knight's Vendor Assist product is a high level 'dry run' due diligence process that ensures the business is fully prepared for investment or an exit and will provide a list of recommendations.

"Our favourite deals typically involve a buyer that respects the achievements of the company they are acquiring. Often in these instances we see our former clients remaining in senior positions and enjoying work for years afterwards. We ensure that our clients' aspirations are achievable and prepare the businesses before we start a transaction."

Entrepreneurs cannot sensibly barricade themselves off from the expertise they badly need to realise their growth ambitions. Knight CF has proved time and again that good advice is near priceless, and that focused industry platforms such as the new ICT Investment Forum will function as an essential hub for education, advice, and the sharing of valuable insights into the mechanics of funding, buying or selling a business. "Always use an advisor who will set out your options, prepare for a transaction and help you drive value," said Billingham. "The transaction process is complex and we have seen people do it themselves and regretting it later."

Maximise the value of your business

ICT Investment Forum, February 28th 2019, BAFTA, 195 Piccadilly, London

Insight sessions include:

- Navigating the comms sector growth landscape
- How to identify the optimal financing solution
- Investing in the future: You have the funds, what next?
- M&A strategies: First steps and how to get it right
- High calibre interviews with business growth experts

This event is free to attend based on approval. To register your interest please go to: ICTInvestmentForum.com



Maximise the value of your business

Digital transformation is impacting all areas of the comms market, disrupting traditional business models and prompting a wave of M&A deals and investments in high growth channel businesses. Against this backdrop, it is essential that potential buyers, sellers and investment-seekers understand their options and how to advance through the process.

Insight sessions include:

- How to navigate the comms sector growth landscape
- Financing your growth plan: How to identify the optimal financing solution
- Investing in the future: You have the funds, what next?
- M&A strategies: How to get it right



*Hosted by Simon Jack,
Broadcast Business Editor*

LIMITED PLACES AVAILABLE

Passes to attend this event are free of charge, based on an approval process. To apply for a pass for a leading representative from your business to attend go to:

ICTInvestmentForum.com

Portals enter new era

Convinced that the user experience should always be at the forefront of automated and self-serve platform development, Wavenet Channel Sales Director Antony Black says wholesale providers must focus on giving partners what they really want – a strategic and flexible portal.

The surge in demand for automation and self-serve has led wholesale providers to a new accountability to their partners: Portals are expected to deliver not just basic tools but a competitive advantage, and Black urged non-progressive service providers to reverse the trend of portals being limited to short-sighted tasks rather than a strategic advantage. “Businesses all too often treat portals like an afterthought,” stated Black. “Our portal is our biggest advantage.”

He says developers must look out to their marketplace and seek relevant feedback, then act on the data because new specialisms and the quest for ongoing progress is now obligatory, and achievable only by constantly asking the question ‘what more can we do?’. This approach serves Wavenet well and is advanced primarily by Operations Director Stewart Motler who gathers intelligence from the sales team each week.

“Everyone from marketing to operations is responsible for translating the interactions

they have with partners into portal-relevant feedback,” stated Black. “Myself and Stewart feed that knowledge to our in-house developers. Using this continuous feedback loop we have created a development roadmap, and the best ideas or the most urgent requirements go straight to the front of the queue.”

Data management

Expanding the possibilities, capacity and utility of portals in large part depends on their flexibility and API capabilities to drive a new pathway to data management. “We integrate our customers’ digital tools with our own to reduce the number of interfaces they need to navigate,” added Black. “Wavenet has also opened up an API stack that enables partners to interact with the back-end of Toolbox, take the data and automatically place it into any system they see fit.”

Any wholesale business that’s run with little concern for a new dawn in higher portal development and partner centricity may risk ultimate collapse. It’s a wake-up call



Antony Black

The faster we can provide partners with the information they need the more likely they are to convert their sale

to service providers that Black says cannot be ignored. “If our portal wasn’t partner led the end product would likely deliver a sub-par experience that alienates and tarnishes our reputation,” stated Black. “Moreover, misalignment between our portal, Salesforce, website and other external facing functions would create inconsistencies that negatively impact everything from operations to retention. Left unchecked, these problems have been known to cannibalise our competitors’ proposition, albeit slowly and quietly.”

Tailoring portals to the key function of engendering brand loyalty has been a fuse-lighter for their growth,

as has the catalysing effect of more reliable technology to self-serve and deliver instant information. “Our developers are invested in the user experience,” commented Black. “Partners that have experienced an effective portal are, more than ever, demanding more from them. Refining the user experience of a self-service portal is essential. The faster we can provide partners with the information they need the more likely they are to convert their sale. Gone are the days that you can call back a lead a few days later with a response.”

Underpinning this functionality is data that can deliver important insights

into how partners think, act and respond to services. “Wavenet leverages data to develop a rich understanding of individuals’ behaviour and preferences while keeping tabs on the wider marketplace,” commented Black. “That information allows us to know how, when and where to evolve our offerings and tailor them to remain relevant. We can also white label our portal. This is an area we will develop in the future.”

In practice, Wavenet’s partners can obtain pricing from up to eight suppliers in under two minutes and finalise quotes in real-time, then progress to solution design with a multiple carrier approach. “The portal has improved the efficiency of our partners’ service operations,” noted Black. “Once the customer is on board they can continue to log-in to the portal and manage the account. As a standard practice our partners can adapt to carrier diagnostics and through continuous measurement nurture up-sell opportunities.”

As we have seen, a wholesale provider’s portal can bring a fresh perspective to service provision and also remodel its future planning and direction, which is a boon to differentiation in a crowded market. “In the world of telecoms it can be hard to distinguish between companies because the offerings are so complex,” stated Black. “Often, it’s not until you need to use services or require urgent assistance that you can make a valuable judgment. Portals have enabled businesses to make that discernment, and we get excited about the possibilities we are yet to dream up.” ■

Keeping you and your customers connected at Christmas



Thank you for partnering with us to connect the UK.

Merry Christmas, we look forward to working together for a successful 2019.

talktalkbusiness.co.uk/partners

Disruptive mobile solutions

More businesses than ever are deploying mobile solutions and with 5G just around the corner, ultra-reliable low latency communications will create new opportunities for resellers.

In preparing for a wireless world, the next step for resellers is not necessarily the development of ground-breaking new tech, but a consolidation and alignment of current technology to streamline processes and save on costs, all through devices talking to each other.

The implications of the ISDN and WLR switch off will be huge and the roll out of FTTP and 5G will create opportunities for agile resellers to transform their approaches to customers and improve loyalty. By 2020 there's expected to be over 20 billion connected devices so now is the time to develop plans to address this market.

Comms Dealer is launching a new thought leadership and networking event to help resellers understand the fast-growing mobile solutions market and high volume M2M and IoT opportunities.

Margin in Mobile, to be staged at the Northampton Marriott Hotel on March 21st, 2019, will help resellers integrate new mobile connectivity technologies into their portfolio.

The UK's top providers in the mobile solutions and M2M/IoT sector are supporting Margin in Mobile and the following comments indicate their commitment to the networking and educational opportunities the event presents.



**BERNIE MCPHILLIPS
PANGEA**

WHY DOES THE MARGIN IN MOBILE EVENT APPEAL?

As a channel-only IoT solution provider, we intentionally have no direct route to market. All of our resource, investment, and effort goes into supporting our partners and we feel that sponsoring an event such as Margin-in-Mobile will be key in helping them make the most of this very exciting market opportunity.

WHY DO SOME RESELLERS AVOID MOBILE SALES?

Experience, expertise, and resource. While the IoT market is exciting, its vastness can initially seem a little overwhelming. Furthermore, successful solutions need to pull from a whole ecosystem of connectivity, devices, and analytics.

WHY SHOULD RESELLERS ACT ON MOBILE NOW?

IoT is rapidly moving from a "nice to have" technology to a critical asset. As a result of an increase in both demand and developments in technology, the market has reached tipping point. If resellers are not IoT ready then others will be.

WHAT BENEFITS DO IOT/M2M SOLUTIONS OFFER?

Whatever sector you're looking at, there'll be an IoT application that presents real value—whether it's optimising processes, cutting costs, or designing new services. For our partners that means new profitable revenue streams, longer-term contracts, and higher ARPUs than we have seen in mobile for many years.



**KEVIN BOYLE
CLOUDCELL**

WHY DOES THE MARGIN IN MOBILE EVENT APPEAL?

We want to better understand the challenges facing resellers and use these insights to further improve our offering. By supporting Margin in Mobile we aim to inform the channel about the opportunity to drive incremental annuity revenues afforded by CloudcellConnect.

WHY DO SOME RESELLERS AVOID MOBILE SALES?

Within the industry there is a lack of awareness of the complexities of deploying a mobile solution. It is incumbent on specialist suppliers, such as Cloudcell Technologies, to help educate the channel through such events as margin in mobile.

WHY SHOULD RESELLERS ACT ON MOBILE NOW?

Given the growing maturity of 4G networks and the availability of cost effective SD WAN solutions, now is the time to commence building the skills and capabilities to sell, install, manage and support mobile products and drive incremental revenue opportunities. We believe that with the advent of 5G, the industry will flip to "mobile first" for both consumer and enterprise connectivity.

WHAT BENEFITS DO IOT/M2M SOLUTIONS OFFER?

IOT/M2M solutions, done right, are a game changer in driving process improvement, enhancing customer satisfaction and unlocking new business models. However, these benefits are only achievable if the solutions are built on reliable connectivity.



**WAIL SABBAGH
STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES**

WHY DOES THE MARGIN IN MOBILE EVENT APPEAL?

By 2025, GSMA predicts a Mobile-Only world - with 3/4 of the world's internet users accessing the internet through their mobile devices. Margin in Mobile is an important event tailored to the growth and proliferation of 5G, IoT and cloud connectivity. This is where the future lies and it important to start now. 5G is already being tested in parts of the UK - and is advancing so much quicker than anticipated. Getting a hold on what this means for channel partners will be a step towards securing their hold of the market.

WHY SHOULD RESELLERS ACT ON MOBILE NOW?

25 billion connections are predicted to be IoT devices by 2025 - and the main player in this market will be industrial use devices - channel partners need to address this as they need to plan how to deliver IoT beyond connectivity. This is where they will be able to make their money, so getting ahead of the curve and strategically planning for the future will stand them in good stead for the future.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF MOBILE BILLING?

Modern billing platforms are not just about generating invoices. Revenue assurance, margin analysis, regulatory compliance, real-time rating, and churn management are some of the innovations that are driving and underpinning success in the mobile space. Moving forward billing providers must offer support for Direct Carrier Billing and mobile payments to capture a rapidly growing revenue stream.



**STEVEN LOWE
GAMMA**

WHY DOES THE MARGIN IN MOBILE EVENT APPEAL?

We are totally committed to helping our channel partners to build valuable and sustainable businesses. If our partners grow, then Gamma grows. We believe that events such as this will provide positive insights and connections, stimulating ideas that will help channel partners to add even more value to their clients at a time of accelerating change.

WHY DO SOME RESELLERS AVOID MOBILE SALES?

Mobile is often seen as a commodity sale rather than an opportunity to add value to clients' businesses as an integral part of the overall communications solution. In IoT, it is often a lack of education in spotting opportunities.

WHY SHOULD RESELLERS ACT ON MOBILE NOW?

The future competitive landscape is going to be increasingly challenging, with new competitors and accelerating change. It is essential that channel partners retain and strengthen customer relationships, secure robust revenue and margin streams and continue to demonstrate their value add.

WHAT BENEFITS DO IOT/M2M SOLUTIONS OFFER?

IoT / M2M is a key and growing revenue stream. By 2023, we expect 30% of all mobile connectivity revenues to come from IoT. In addition, there are opportunities to diversify into other areas of the IoT value chain.

BUILD YOUR MOBILE AND IOT CHANNEL



Northampton Marriott Hotel, 21st March 2019

for sponsorship opportunities contact Simon Turton

– sturton@bpl-business.com – 07759 731134

ns are new margin makers



MIKE VAN BUNNENS
COMMS365

WHY DOES THE MARGIN IN MOBILE EVENT APPEAL?

M2M and IoT are still specialist subjects that need to be fully understood to appreciate the revenue opportunities. We felt that it was important that we be part of the education process based on our 10 years' experience of delivering advanced mobile data services into some of the largest service providers in the UK.

WHY DO SOME RESELLERS AVOID MOBILE SALES?

Confusion is definitely one of the biggest obstacles. Resellers who are experienced in selling voice and data are now presented with a whole host of new use cases that don't (on the surface) fit the traditional footprint of the channel.

WHY SHOULD RESELLERS ACT ON MOBILE NOW?

By focusing on key use cases that complement and extend their existing business objectives, channel partners can add significant value to their service offerings, whilst widening their target market.

WHAT BENEFITS DO IOT/M2M SOLUTIONS OFFER?

IoT and M2M solutions are generally there to solve specific business challenges, if there is no need, there is no point. Selling IoT will help channel partners to get more involved in their customers businesses which in turn will drive closer relationships.



MARK CURTIS-WOOD
NIMANS

WHY DOES THE MARGIN IN MOBILE EVENT APPEAL?

This event is a great opportunity to enable the channel to understand how to profit from new technologies in the mobile market, key to this will be 5G. Nimans will be showing resellers how to unlock this with EE Wholesale.

WHY DO SOME RESELLERS AVOID MOBILE SALES?

Access to the best mobile networks and the training and knowledge to unlock new revenues, are some of the biggest obstacles. Nimans is working with EE the UK's biggest 4G network helping resellers gain access to this through wholesale and the best training possible.

WHY SHOULD RESELLERS ACT ON MOBILE NOW?

The mobile market is mature now and we are at a crossroads of technology where just talking about price is not enough. To maintain growth new conversations need to be had that focus on solutions for the customer.

WHAT BENEFITS DO IOT/M2M SOLUTIONS OFFER?

IoT and M2M open up brand new revenue streams for partners by providing critical solutions for their clients. One of the biggest benefits is that it enables new conversations to take place with clients that are current and engaging.



ANTON LE SAUX
ZEST4

WHY DOES THE MARGIN IN MOBILE EVENT APPEAL?

As a mobile service provider and IoT MVNO dedicated to the channel, we are committed to delivering partner education and support, to open-up new revenue opportunities for our partners. At Margin in Mobile we will be able to share our knowledge and thought leadership and look forward to meeting partners keen to progress their digital journey and discover new opportunities.

WHY DO SOME RESELLERS AVOID MOBILE SALES?

Complete solutions can take longer to implement and yield a return than traditional channel products, there may also be a requirement to upskill or invest in resource. The channel seems reticent to do this without an immediate ROI.

WHY SHOULD RESELLERS ACT ON MOBILE NOW?

The IoT revolution is still in its infancy. Despite this, 8.4 billion connected devices were in use in 2017, this is a 31% increase over 2016. With this growth curve set to continue the channel are missing out.

WHAT BENEFITS DO IOT/M2M SOLUTIONS OFFER?

Common sense suggests that IoT will bring unlimited opportunities and improvements in every aspect of operations. The key for channel partners and their clients is new long-term revenue, business multipliers, operational efficiencies, new customers and secure their future in this space.



LAUREN MCMANUS
DAISY WHOLESALE

WHY DOES THE MARGIN IN MOBILE EVENT APPEAL?

We are supporting Margin in Mobile so that we can encourage resellers to embrace the huge opportunity presented by mobile and converged solutions. The future of mobile is strong so we're looking forward to helping our partners take advantage of the fastest growing solution in the Channel.

WHY DO SOME RESELLERS AVOID MOBILE SALES?

With the introduction of new technologies, many resellers may not feel confident in their knowledge of mobile. Past experience with mobile meant it was difficult to differentiate between propositions and resellers were tied into contracts that left them liable.

WHY SHOULD RESELLERS ACT ON MOBILE NOW?

The UK mobile workforce is growing at an exponential rate with many SMEs driven by the desire for flexibility. Channel partners need to realise the potential of mobile and get involved before it's too late. Mobile can help them grow their business and improve their bottom line.

WHAT BENEFITS DO IOT/M2M SOLUTIONS OFFER?

IoT and M2M give partners the flexibility to build solutions that are tailored to their clients. By building relationships, partners are able to ensure they are offering the best products and services for each and every customer.



DAVID NELSON
TECH DATA

WHY DOES THE MARGIN IN MOBILE EVENT APPEAL?

Our Tech-as-a-Service proposition, gives resellers a great way to drive not only higher margins, but also improved customer retention and opportunities to grow their business. Tech-as-a-Service gives customers an easy way to acquire the latest technology immediately and flexibly, on a subscription basis. It means customers can move up to next generation technologies as soon as they become available.

WHY DO SOME RESELLERS AVOID MOBILE SALES?

Businesses are getting used to the 'as-a-service' approach and are not always ready to fund capital purchases when they'd like to. Our Tech-as-a-Service proposition gives them a convenient and flexible option that enables them to invest right away.

WHY SHOULD RESELLERS ACT ON MOBILE NOW?

With Tech-as-a-Service and Samsung, resellers can offer a different and attractive option and set themselves apart. It can be applied to deals of almost any size, and it means the customer can invest and resellers can get the benefit, now.

WHAT BENEFITS DO IOT/M2M SOLUTIONS OFFER?

There are many, but you need expertise in different areas to deliver complete IoT solutions. Tech Data has built pre-defined, industry-focused solutions that are ready to deploy, so we can actively help resellers address the potential with IoT.

ZOE PULLEN
SAMSUNG

SAMSUNG

Margin in Mobile is a great opportunity to aid Tech Data in building the confidence behind an accessible subscription service and highlight just how accessible the Samsung ecosystem is for businesses from SME through to large corporates.

Investing in new mobile technology can often involve making some tough decisions. The pace of technological change is fast and can outstrip businesses ability to fund critical deployments. In today's environment, true value lies in proactively managing technology from deployment through to retirement and asset disposal.

At Samsung we recognise that organisations now operate in a new world of disruption. Research predicts that 75% of the current S&P 500 will be replaced by 2027, and the key driver for this is mobile. The 'as-a-service' model provides businesses with the flexibility to keep up with these changes.

New business models are forcing the C-Suite to look to new mobile solutions to drive new business and revenue streams. The key to success in this changing business environment requires a complete reimagining of businesses as mobile-first.

Places at Margin in Mobile are expected to be taken up rapidly so register your interest in attending as soon as possible.

You can register now at www.margin-in-mobile.co.uk

GOLD SPONSORS



SILVER SPONSORS

Bligh joins Windsor



Richard Bligh



Rebecca Fry



Darren Brown

FORMER Gamma COO Richard Bligh has joined Windsor Telecom as a Non-Exec Director as the company pushes ahead with plans to expand into the channel market with a hosted proposition, and seeks to double revenues within three years. Bligh brings 30-plus years tech industry

experience to the role. The hires of Darren Brown as Channel Manager and new Head of Marketing Rebecca Fry also provide a boost to Windsor's growth ambitions.

With 11 years telecoms industry sales experience under his belt Brown's new remit is to develop the existing partner base and selectively recruit more partners. He joins from CityTalk where he was Head of Sales. Previous roles include stints at BDR in new business development and GHM specialising in the care sector. Fry moved from KCOM where she was Marketing Executive and brings 15 years marketing experience to the position having worked across the private and public sectors in a variety of roles. "My goal is to develop a cohesive marketing strategy that delivers results for Windsor Telecom in both the direct and partner side of the business," she stated. "I want to share Windsor's brand and customer service values with the channel community."

Managing Director Sue Kempton said: "I am enthused by these hires and the expansion of our management team. We have worked hard to create a solid foundation to create strong growth figures."

Manx move for Hughes

IARLA Hughes has joined Manx Telecom as Chief Financial Officer and Director of the Board. Hughes moved from International Aerospace Coatings where



Iarla Hughes

he was Group Chief Financial Officer and Company Secretary for over three years. He previously held a General Manager position at Cable&Wireless Ireland before becoming Chief Financial Officer at Digicel Turks and Caicos. Hughes also spent a number of years in various senior finance roles at Cable&Wireless and Vodafone.

While at Caribbean telecoms provider Digicel, Hughes had financial responsibility for the purchase and integration of West Indies Video, a high speed broadband and cable TV service in the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Manx Telecom CEO Gary Lamb commented: "Iarla brings extensive experience of leading finance teams in large scale international businesses, as well as on-island telecoms."

Also on the move...



Rashesh Rao

INCLARITY Communications has added operational management and experience to the business with the appointment of Rashesh Rao as Operations Director. He previously worked for Arrow Communications

and Reeves Lund and brings 12 years telecoms industry experience to the role. Inclarity Managing Director Enzo Viscito commented: "Rashesh's experience with hosted telephony and the fact he has successfully built and managed customer centric operations teams is what makes him an ideal addition to Inclarity's management team."

IP TELEPHONY business Snom Technology's appointment of Fabio Albanini as UK Head of Sales builds on his existing roles as General Manager of Snom Technology Italy and Head of Sales South Europe. Snom has been operational in the UK telecommunications market for over a decade, developing partnerships with international organisations including Trust Distribution, Xelion



Fabio Albanini

and Vtel. Gernot Sagl, CEO Snom Technology, said: "Fabio has been part of the team for more than nine years, responsible for developing important partnerships with telcos, VoIP carriers and the channel, achieving year-on-year sales growth."

Bale hired as Transformer



Chris Bale

BUSINESS transformation and change management are top priorities for Exertis as incoming Chris Bale moves into the newly created position of Head of Transformation, reporting to Gerry O'Keeffe, Exertis International MD. "Chris's appointment

will enable our businesses across Europe to improve operational efficiency and productivity through not only sharing best practice but also adopting new ways of working that can drive growth, enhance profit and take advantage of new opportunities," said O'Keeffe.

Bale joins from the Coop where, as Head of Investment Appraisal and Transformation Finance, he played a key role in supporting the company with its largest transformation programmes. Previous to the Coop he worked for 11 years at Ernst and Young.

Bale added: "Exertis has set out a strategy of geographic expansion with a number of recent acquisitions already completed. I will work with the country management teams to build programmes that can drive business improvements and help shape and implement integration projects that maximise the investment."

ITP greets new board member



Paul Adams

THE ninth member of The Institute of Telecommunications Professionals' (ITP) board has been confirmed as Paul Adams, Marketing Director UK&I at Nokia Networks. Prior to his appointment Adams was associated with the industry body as an ITP Fellow. ITP CEO Crissi Williams commented: "Paul is a valuable addition to our board, bringing strategic operational and marketing insight." Adams added: "I am passionate about the ITP's work and about bringing new talent into the industry."

Partner Service

The Clark's nutcracker disperses the seeds of the whitebark pine, helping it to grow, while the pine provides a vital source of food for the bird – together, the two form the perfect partnership.



Working in Partnership

No monthly quotas, no demands for exclusivity or partnership fees – just well-engineered solutions to help boost your business.

Spitfire key solutions:

- **Broadband:** VDSL, FTTP, SDSL, ADSL - all with free or low-cost back-up
- **Ethernet:** Fibre, FTTCoE, EFM - with market leading SLAs & QoS
- **WAN:** MPLS, CloudConnect, P2P, VPN & private cloud connections
- **Hosted voice:** New Spitfire Hosted PBX 2.1, 3CX Cloud and SIP Communicator™
- **Telephone services:** resilient SIP trunks and intelligent call routing
- **Interconnects:** to UK's main cloud providers and data centres

SUPPORT YOU CAN TRUST

Highly trained and helpful account managers with qualifications including CCENT and CCNA.

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Dedicated, hands-on practical training in London and the Midlands.

AWARD-WINNING

Unique range of award-winning internet, telephony and IP engineering solutions.

LONGSTANDING HERITAGE

Partner Service was formed in 2001 and we currently partner with over 500 IT and Telecoms companies.

 Spitfire Network Services Ltd:
Training TechTalks

 @SpitfirePartner

 Spitfire Partner Service

Partner Service 020 7501 3150

Innovative • Flexible • Reliable • Supportive • Cost Effective

Powered by

KCOM



COMMS HEROES ASSEMBLE...

Join the League of Comms Heroes at the 2019 Comms Dealer Sales & Marketing Awards

CDSMA
= 2019 =

THURSDAY 2ND MAY
THE MARRIOTT GROSVENOR SQUARE

Enter now at WWW.CDSALESAWARDS.COM

SPECIAL REPORT
pages 44-57



Digital Britain

Let's move faster!



THE GLENEAGLES HOTEL
7TH, 8TH & 9TH NOVEMBER 2018

CONNECTING WITH A NEW WORLD OF OPPORTUNITY



This year's Comms Vision Convention unravelled one of the biggest triggers of change ever seen in the ICT channel following the Government's Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review (FTIR) published in July 2018 which set out a national long-term digital strategy for the UK.

Comms Vision 2018 aimed to establish a strategic sense of what Digital Britain really means for delegates and the channel as a whole, and cleared a pathway towards new revenue opportunities catalysed by the targets set in the Government's FTIR and emerging technology innovations. In its report the Government threw its weight behind full fibre and 5G services as the de facto infrastructure for the whole of the UK.

We also assessed the hurdles faced by the industry as we move towards Digital Britain – including the potential impact arising from the post-WLR world and BT's switch to all-IP in 2025 – and explored how the comms sector should prepare for the opportunities ahead and why collaboration between the industry, Government and regulator will be key. Digital Britain offers an unprecedented opportunity to reshape IT and communications, but how can channel partnerships continue to create the conditions for growth and underpin future customer requirements at a time of historic disruption? We explored the impact of this question, and other factors, on how the customer and partnering landscape is likely to evolve and the significance of this for the channel.

The big industry question now: How to profit from Digital Britain? As you will see in the following pages this year's Comms Vision Convention provided delegates with an understanding of the developing infrastructure, voice and data ecosystem, and enabled them to take the strategic action required to prepare their organisations to thrive on the pathway to Digital Britain.

UK channel out in spite of legacy inf

Despite woeful FTTP penetration levels the UK still has it both ways: Our channel and industry constitution is disrupting the incumbent like no other comparative nation, and UK cloud uptake is far outstripping European counterparts, according to Gamma CEO Andrew Taylor in his Comms Vision interview.

Taylor believes the short and long-term outlook for the channel is positive despite significant challenges and the surreptitious invasion of 'wolves in sheep's clothing'. "When I look at some new entrants in the UK their general approach is to go straight to the end user," he stated. "They want to maximise the market. Like wolves in sheep's clothing they bear gifts, engage and get buy-in but ultimately their intention is to go over the top. Be wary of the wolves."

In flushing them out Taylor urges the channel to reconsider their business relationships with partners and dig deep to fully understand their motives. It's a central problem that must be front of mind, he warned. "It should be about the channel owning the customer contract, it should be a wholesale relationship where the channel decides what competition looks like," stated Taylor. "The channel must be wary of this risk I see in the market today."

Against the backdrop of this territorial 'invasion' the channel occupies a land way beyond what you'd expect given the sorry state of the UK's underlying comms infrastructure. Conventional wisdom holds that Digital Britain is dependent on a full fibre foundation – which is only just getting under way – yet Taylor credits the channel for great advances made in spite of the connectivity obstacles. "The channel in the UK has been

We are 27th out of 28 countries – it's unbelievable. When you look at penetration and speeds we are not where we should be

Platinum sponsors



Gold sponsors



Silver sponsors



strips European players

Infrastructure

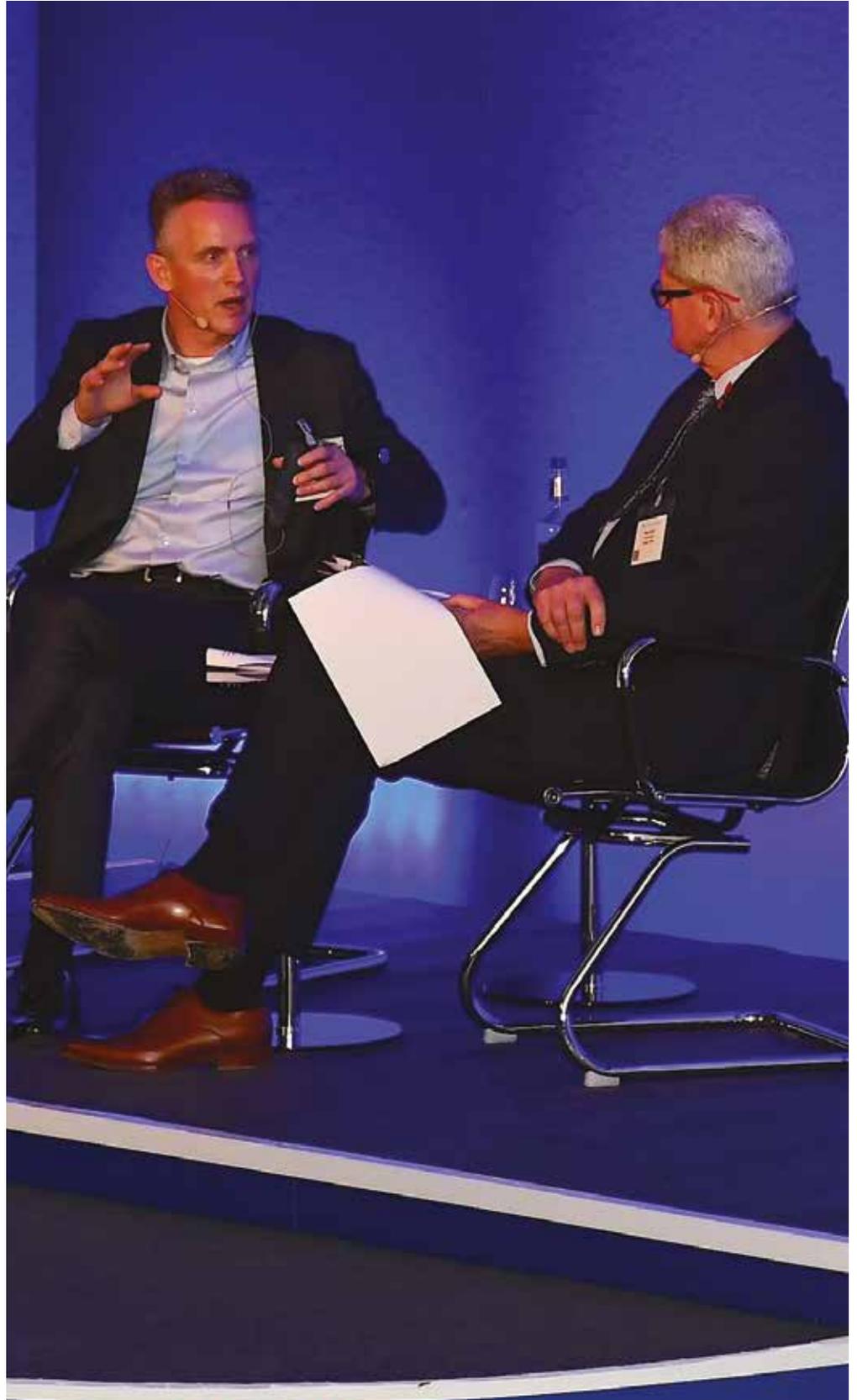
transformational in the move from legacy to cloud, and the migration opportunity has never been greater," added Taylor. "Cloud telephony in the UK sits at 20 per cent penetration, SMEs 11 per cent, the channel 37 per cent; but look across Europe and the penetration levels are between two and five per cent. The channel has also truly disrupted the incumbent. In comparing the UK experience to other countries we are well ahead in gaining market share from the incumbent."

These achievements are the litmus test of the channel's robustness and ability to make gains against the odds. "A key observation of the channel is its diversity – small, medium and large businesses focused on local areas and having great knowledge of their business community, keeping them close to customers," stated Taylor.

Extending Horizon

It's an opportunity reflected in Gamma's plans to introduce new features and products that will enable partners to move into new verticals. These include an addition to Gamma's UC portfolio – Horizon Collaborate – a conferencing and file sharing solution that has been under development for 18 months and is due to launch in Q1 2019. Also in development is the UK's strategy to upgrade legacy technology and create a Britain fit for an all-digital future. "From a regulatory point of view Ofcom and the Government are addressing the fibre issue," said Taylor. "The overall prognosis is positive, but it's important we catch up. The channel relies on strong foundations from an infrastructure perspective. Our penetration level for FTTP is three per cent. We are 27th out of 28 countries – it's unbelievable. When you look at penetration and speeds we are not where we should be. But the market is so disrupted now by new fibre players with deep pockets. We need that infrastructure. Openreach has an obligation, industry has an obligation, and I'm convinced the channel will meet the all IP switch over." ■

The overall prognosis is positive, but it's important we catch up



Silver sponsors



Tempest on Digital Britain

primary challenges

Speed and agility will win the race to Digital Britain, emphasised BT Wholesale Managing Director Alex Tempest as she issued a wake-up call to the channel in her Comms Vision interview.

There is no place for a slow creep in the transition to all-IP. The objective is clear – Digital Britain – and projects must be kicked off without delay, according to Tempest. “Digital Britain is happening, there is no option, and partners will be more successful in starting the journey sooner rather than later,” she stated. “That is fundamentally about planning. Seven years seems a long way off, it’s not, so don’t kick this into the long grass – it’ll be hang on for the ride! Take the early mover advantage and grasp the opportunities, especially in professional services and guiding your customers who you know inside and out.”

Success in Digital Britain will be tightly correlated with success in partner education and support, believes Tempest, who is preparing BT to become an inspirational teacher to address the tactical necessities that partners will require. “I am passionate about continuous learning,” she commented. “We want to invest in working with partners and that investment comes through training.”

Taking forward the normalising of learning is a balance between partner feedback and how BT responds to gathered data for the collective advantage. “Training is one element,” she commented. “We must take feedback, look at engagement, learn from these information streams and apply different responses as part of a continual learning and improvement process.”

Another prerequisite for the channel to deliver Digital Britain is cultural change, encompassing a shift in business models and strategies, a requirement which BT has already embraced through structural reform. In April this year BT Group created a new customer-facing

unit called Enterprise, bringing together the previously separate Business and Public Sector and Wholesale and Ventures divisions. Enterprise has 17,000 staff and delivers £7 billion revenue. “All organisations need to look at their future and post-Christmas we will share our strategy and direction,” said Tempest. “We have best-of-breed right across Enterprise which will be deeply embedded as part of the One BT strategy.

“Historically, BT built its credibility as a product-centric organisation, and along the way forgot how to engage with customers. No more is that the case. Everything I have witnessed over the last two years shows that customer-centricity is now core. No longer will there be misconceptions in the market as we become more engaged with partner businesses, not just in terms of presence but in how we help partners to flourish.”

Absorbing the pain

Mastering the challenges ahead grows easier the more familiar those circumstances become. And the more BT helps partners and ‘absorbs the pain’ of industry change it is more likely that resellers will follow in its footsteps. “In the transition to Digital Britain we will feel that pain first, and I want to do as much as possible in terms of absorbing that pain to better understand how we can help partners on their journey,” commented Tempest.

“The approach has to be simple so we’ve taken a step back, looked at the entire product portfolio and considered how we can make it ready for the whole IP journey. That’s critical. We must look at things differently, look at patterns to predict and anticipate future environments and get on top of those.”

Seven years seems a long way off, it’s not, so don’t kick this into the long grass – it’ll be hang on for the ride!

Platinum sponsors

Gold sponsors

Silver sponsors



in success factors and



According to Tempest, a condition of realising Digital Britain is to have simplicity and agility running at the core of operations. "We need an environment that is easy to place orders, raise challenges and service issues etc," she commented. "Those are basic things you should expect from us. But it's more than just helping partners with the evolution, it's truly about making sure they are equipped to move into the all IP world, and do so seamlessly."

Tempest's desire to support the channel is there in spades, and the advance of partners will, on the whole, be achieved through the relentless application of her fundamental belief in channel support and reform. But if the channel means to achieve long-term change it should also be ready to act now. "With the rise of new and varied entrants and greater competition in an already crowded environment there is huge disruption in marketplace," observed Tempest. "We also have unprecedented investment, most recently the £2.5 billion funding for CityFibre's roll out of fibre, which is arguably the biggest investment the

telecoms market has seen for a number of years. It's phenomenal and tells us where we are going."

Disruption in the market has to bring a reduction in costs, but the challenge is that cost reduction in the wholesale market will come through methods you would not normally expect. "We've got to use the technology we're developing now to help lower costs, by looking at AI and machine learning, and how we can utilise technology around blockchain to simplify processes," said Tempest. "What cries out is a need for innovation."

Overhauling the country's legacy network infrastructure with an emphasis on fibre and 5G will undoubtedly catalyse unprecedented and propitious conditions for innovation like we have not yet witnessed. "5G is the network of the future," stated Tempest. "It will fuel innovation around the IoT and drive the absolute convergence of mobile and fixed. 5G is an enabler, allowing agility and disruption to turn things in their heads, while enabling us to continually consume data." ■

We want to invest in working with partners and that investment comes through training

Silver sponsors



CityFibre-Entanet blaze

boosted by £2.5bn

The rule of Digital Britain demands that the future success of full fibre roll out cannot be separated from the creation of a level playing field that encourages competition and an influx of funding, according to CityFibre Commercial Director Rob Hamlin and Entanet CEO Elsa Chen. On that, they believe there can be no compromise.

The absolute requirement for competition is clear. Also beyond question is CityFibre's intent to play a lead role in delivering Digital Britain following its announcement of a mammoth £2.5 billion investment plan to expand its full fibre network and meet a third of the Government's 2025 target. "The Government has woken up to the fact that the UK economy needs a digital infrastructure," stated Hamlin. "It would be a big mistake to rely on the monopoly. There must be competition. There is plenty of room for investors and infrastructure builders, and it is important that the country emerges from this upgrade with a competitive infrastructure landscape."

Without a level playing field Digital Britain is a near impossible goal, and in a similar vein CityFibre's early doubters were of a mind that its ambitions were unachievable. "From the outset a number of observers said we can't do this, we can't dig the streets, but we can and we are," stated Hamlin. "Investors, the Government and Ofcom are saying 'yes', and confidence in the channel is growing as they see that it can be done. We've always had that confidence."

As CityFibre puts the scale of its investment down into new infrastructure as an alternative to Openreach, replacing the local loop, Chen is emboldened by what the investment means to the channel in terms of the greater scale of products it can offer partners. "The challenge for partners is to translate this opportunity into something meaningful for their business," she commented. "There

needs to be a willingness from partners to change and adapt their business model to embrace Digital Britain. The barrier is not technology, it is the business model.

"Resellers can make their business fit the full fibre model and continue to own the customer relationship. This could involve sales training and reconsidering go-to-market strategies. There is a general tendency to operate in a reactionary mode, but it's time to proactively reconsider and restructure the business model to embrace the technology."

Planning ahead

Chen issued a wake up call to the channel as current modes of operation will prove no match for the business model changes she predicts. "The coming convergence of 5G and full fibre means partners should create their customer space knowing that new products and services are coming down the line," she explained. "This is where competition and differentiation will play out and represents a huge opportunity for the channel to not only serve full fibre markets, but also identify areas of demand and leverage CityFibre's capacity to build infrastructure into those areas of demand."

CityFibre is one of the UK's most exciting emergent businesses, yet its evolution over seven years from start-up to Digital Britain trail blazer has met with many challenges, and that continues to be the case as it seeks to demystify the full fibre marketplace. Research commissioned by the company affirmed that swathes

Investors, the Government and Ofcom are saying 'yes', and confidence in the channel is growing as they see that it can be done

Platinum sponsors



Gold sponsors

Silver sponsors

the Digital Britain trail



of the nation's broadband users are not happy with the quality of their connection nor its speed. Most of those taking part in the survey also believe that broadband advertising rules should be changed.

"A new generation of services are not full fibre and we need to help customers be clear about what they are buying," stated Hamlin, who is on a mission to inundate the Advertising Standards Authority with pressure from industry to take a tough line on cases of misleading advertising.

Gold rush

CityFibre, which acquired Entanet in July 2017, has catalysed a sea change in the fortunes of partners as well as benefiting the homes and businesses located in the regions in which it operates. "The channel has responded brilliantly," commented Hamlin. "We have connectivity partners scaling from a few customers to hundreds. There will be a gold rush, a bow wave of enthusiasm and opportunity if the UK gets this

model right. Full fibre providers will ultimately create an opportunity to offer more services than we can imagine today. We're already trialling new optical platforms and more innovation will follow."

The full fibre infrastructure builder currently works in 54 towns and cities passing 4.5 million premises, but its titanic £2.5 billion funding boost has inevitably greased the wheels of its full fibre campaign convoy. The investment follows CityFibre's acquisition in June 2018 by Antin Infrastructure Partners and West Street Infrastructure Partners (a fund managed by Goldman Sachs), and is expected to generate £85 billion in associated economic benefits and create 5,000 construction jobs.

"We're considering over 100 regional towns and cities as part of the current investment plan," said Hamlin. "This will bring a big change in usage and revenue streams as we anticipate a large scale movement of customer bases onto our infrastructure. There is a big opportunity for the channel to ride that wave and deliver new services." ■

There will be a bow wave of enthusiasm and opportunity if the UK gets this model right

Silver sponsors



Frictionless but complex

of disintermediation

Digitalisation, while being a boon to the channel, has brought real challenges in its train, including disintermediation and a bad attack of end user technodazzle, says Tom Cheesewright, an applied futurist, TV and radio technology presenter.

Cheesewright works with large comms companies and consumers of technology to address three basic questions: What does our future look like, how do we tell that story and what do we do about it? In his Comms Vision keynote and interview Cheesewright said it is sometimes important to look at the past when considering the future. "Mankind's ancestors worked out how they could amplify their own capabilities with tools and do more if they worked beyond the limitations of their own biology," he stated.

Why is this important for Digital Britain and the future of our industry? "We use technology to make our lives easier," added Cheesewright. "Technology is life's lubricant. It takes friction out of our day-to-day lives, releasing us to do other things. It doesn't stop there: We also take friction out of the use of technology, making it easier to access and deploy."

In this context the channel is reaching a critical moment, in effect undermining its future prospects through attempts to find a way to the all-digital future. How is this the case? As technology gets easier to use and more reliable there are fewer points of friction and little intervention needed. For example, cars are now engineered to remove friction and make them easier to use. "This a problem because every point of friction is an entry point to the customer, an opportunity to sell them a product or service," added Cheesewright. "But we are progressively engineering the friction out of the entire value chain. Customers want to go direct which is causing disintermediation. And deployment is simpler: The shift to the cloud and hosted technology makes life

easier and the technology is getting more intuitive. All of these entry points into the customer are being engineered out as we move into an increasingly digital world."

But all is not as it seems as the march to Digital Britain proffers alternative and more extensive opportunities. That is good news for the channel, enthused Cheesewright. "Is this really doom and gloom and a challenge to the channel?" he asked. "Actually, there's some interesting new opportunities emerging out of one of the biggest trends – the explosion in choice in media, technology and products. People in general don't know what to do with it and they no longer have straight choices. Customers need help to navigate this complexity."

Explosion of choice

According to Cheesewright the evidence and common sense suggests that a fall-back to short-term outdated approaches to market would be utter folly. If we wish to trade friction-free with the business community we must do so on its terms. The issue is how, and that must lie in the removal of ever growing complexity around the 'explosion of choice', according to Cheesewright. "Just as we see real disintermediation we're also starting to bring back the middlemen who are best placed to help end user businesses navigate the complexity of choice that they face," he added. "If you can put your arm around your customers' shoulders, be their trusted voice, and even though there may be no transaction to be done your capacity to advise is now increasingly valuable."

As we pave a way through to Digital Britain traditional business models are disintegrating around us. A mix

We are progressively engineering the friction out of the entire value chain

Platinum sponsors



Gold sponsors

Silver sponsors

Market emerges in era



Customers were once constrained in their ICT procurement processes by formal dependencies on their comms and IT providers, but digitalisation and disintermediation has let them loose. This does not mean that order has broken down, but it does mean that an appropriate response is urgently needed. While traditional business models are disintegrating, the channel's secret weapon – consultancy – remains sharp.

“Diving into customer problems beyond traditional comms is a starting point,” explained Cheesewright. “Then match that understanding to what potential solutions might look like and how to deliver them, perhaps with a delivery partner. It’s early days but nevertheless there is a huge opportunity.”

The old business model was monolithic, not agile, and companies are starting to structure for agility. Businesses are mobilising and morphing with the times, deconstructing and rebuilding as if made from lego bricks. Partnerships play a role in this by helping to remove friction. Sooner or later, every channel player will have to stand up and be counted, be innovative and disruptive to yield the business benefits of a near-frictionless but more complex market. As we have seen, in Digital Britain the channel must turn its attention towards a more constructive purpose by being at the vanguard of applying business problems to technology and pain point resolution.

“Start by asking all stakeholders and staff in a business what frustrates them, what makes their day worse, and what stops them from being as productive as they could be,” noted Cheesewright. “Where are the holes in their industry, what are the aspects that everyone in that industry believes to be outdated but nobody challenges? What are the domains you sell into today, and the possible domains you could sell into tomorrow? The channel must get to the central point of what a solution might look like. You need to be constantly innovative while bringing new ideas to the fore. Get your brain back into learning mode and focus on practice.”

Universal solutions are starting to scale and it may be harder to differentiate, noted Cheesewright, who offered the example of a chip from China that costs no more than 50p to illustrate his point that innovation is a key route to differentiation. The chip can connect anything to the Internet via Wi-Fi, and Cheesewright's nine year old son is already a dab hand and coding it.

“This chip is all you need to solve some customer problems,” he stated. “The development skills >> p52

of innovation and consultancy will no doubt hold greater appeal and that will be the responsibility of channel partners. Customers are entitled to expect that the partners they previously selected to lead their ICT agendas keep their best interests at heart no matter the digital-driven upheaval. This expectation is a clincher, because exposed to the reality of ever growing choice customers cannot become effective components of Digital Britain if hamstrung by complexity and problems they cannot themselves resolve.

Great expectations

“Customers have rising expectations and these expectations are incredibly portable,” commented Cheesewright. “My expectations are set by Amazon. I expect my product to be delivered tomorrow and the user interface to be slick and easy. People also have high expectations of what their service can deliver. Just good enough isn’t good enough now. The service must be totally seamless and this is an opportunity for the channel.”

The development skills and technology are out there, innovation is cheap and quick and there is a huge range of opportunities. In this the customer relationship is core

Silver sponsors





<< p51 and technology are out there, innovation is cheap and quick and there is a huge range of opportunities. In this the customer relationship is core. Most people acknowledge that they can't keep up with the rate of change. They are looking for advice and people to help guide them through."



On the whole, the application of seamless technology might ultimately fail to account for the human experience, in a market of human beings. The answer lies in human nature, the magic dust of experience, and that teaches us that digital is a

means, not an end. Likewise, the case for a strategic breach with legacy technologies and their accompanying business models is totally rational and beyond argument, noted Cheesewright, who believes that no other market opening will come close to the IoT opportunity in terms of scale.

"We'll be talking machine-to-machine over the next few years versus human-to-human," he stated. "There is huge but invisible pent-up demand for IoT solutions, and customers will be looking for expert guidance which is simply not out there. This technology has opened up a whole new wave of innovation. Digital may have lowered friction and taken away some of the pain points you used to solve, but it has created enormous potential for innovation, an opportunity that I don't see being taken up right now."

There are some completely missed aspects of 5G, particularly its potential to connect the IoT, believes Cheesewright. In a hands-up poll of delegates, a fraction of the Comms Vision audience fully grasped the extent of this opportunity. The MNOs are, in the main, equally mystified, revealed Cheesewright. "MNOs are challenged," he said. "They know the IoT is huge but are a long way from fully understanding the B2B opportunity."

An ability to grasp new market opportunities will win the race in Digital Britain, and one of the most exciting emergent technologies is mixed reality, believes Cheesewright. "It's a novelty now but fast forward ten years and consider what will replace the mobile phone," he commented. "It will be mixed reality, possibly through glasses that combine new display, graphic and battery technology. Mixed reality will become the primary interface to the physical world including the workplace. The technology is not there yet but the direction of travel is clear to see."

Palmer signals shift to focused business

The main thrust of 9 Group CEO James Palmer's Comms Vision interview was reflective of the big changes in comms technology and the industry he has got to know so well.

For Palmer, the forthcoming months and years have a coherent trajectory which is a million miles from 9 Group's first iteration as a minutes business, with later advances made in hosted comms and data. Just as resellers need to engineer a new relationship with customers to succeed in Digital Britain, Palmer must take the lead and judge the shifting market dynamics, a task made easier by his self-imposed detachment from the day-to-day running of the business.

With space to think more clearly and long-term, now is the moment for consideration and the overwhelming weight of his strategy lies in the provision of a complete applications suite. Above all, his priority is to devise the long-term strategy and gain acceptance from the Group's employees. "Make sure staff buy into your vision," he said. "You must prioritise full engagement with colleagues."

Future revenues

In charting his journey Palmer noted the long history of hosted, it's nothing new, and expressed a belief that the CPE market is far from dead. But the big issue occupying his mind right now is from where future revenues will be derived. "Voice is a shrinking part of the customer's wallet share," he said. "Voice is less critical because more messaging platforms are being deployed. So we will look at all forms of communication and help people to work smarter."

Palmer's back story is characterised by an instinct to move with the times while always evolving his business, also through acquisition, to offer something more interesting



Platinum sponsors



Gold sponsors

Silver sponsors



Shift towards applications

to partners. His approach includes a link up with Mitel for a hosted offering, and a connectivity play with the launch of a data network, enabling 9 Group to act as a one-stop-shop for partners. Now, Palmer is redefining 9 Group as an applications business. "This has to be the direction of travel," he told Comms Vision Convention delegates.

In all of this Palmer reflected on the key changes that are happening in the market, the primary developments that he is already positioning his business to capitalise on through the execution of a strategic expansion plan. "By opening up access to data the security aspect becomes a massive play," he commented. "We have made acquisitions in the data space and are thinking about how to engage with customers and take them on the journey away from voice. Partners have the trusted relationship with customers, so why not introduce wireless products, which leads to a conversation about security, routers and firewalls. Once you're into security,

We have made acquisitions in the data space and are thinking about how to engage with customers and take them on the journey away from voice

consider device management. There is a massive opportunity in providing a full suite of applications."

Revenue target

9 Group is targeting £100 million turnover and employs approximately 200 staff. The company has travelled far from the days when Palmer set it up on his own and continued to perform many vital tasks single handedly perhaps longer than was necessary. "You end up liking your way of doing things," he added. "I became something of a control freak but had to accept that I can't micro manage the business any more. I detached myself from the company for five weeks and empowered my teams. Staff churn is virtually non-existent. Now I'm hands-off and visit the office once a week. I work more on strategy and the future direction of the business. Empower your teams to deliver. Being hands-off and developing a culture with regular cross company communications makes a big difference."



There is a massive opportunity in providing a full suite of applications

Silver sponsors



Olson-Chapman: We have

and the race is on

TalkTalk Business Managing Director Kristine Olson-Chapman injected a note of urgency in her Comms Vision interview as she rallied the channel to the Digital Britain flag with her key message: “The only way forward is full fibre.”

The oft-cited assertion that first movers gain a strategic market advantage has perhaps never rung so true as with the rise of full fibre infrastructure and the ultimate goal of building a future proofed Digital Britain. “It’s important to be first in the market with FTTP,” stated Olson-Chapman. “For users, their experience of fibre is phenomenal. Once a customer has full fibre they are unlikely to move. The key is to be there first.”

Rising demand for bandwidth and a creaking legacy infrastructure could have brought the UK to a near crisis point. But the Government and Ofcom have at last acted. “The Government sat on the fence and nobody knew how an infrastructure upgrade would be funded,” noted Olson-Chapman. “Now the Government and Ofcom have made an explicit policy change in favour of competition. There is a wealth of funding and progress has been made but we have to keep the regulatory environment working for us. We need competition, we need Openreach to play a key role and we need to move faster.”

The advance of Digital Britain will certainly weaken the prospects of channel businesses that fail to react appropriately to the demands of the market. But marching in step with the UK’s digital quest will significantly strengthen the hands of proactive resellers tuned into a nation mesmerised by the benefits of ever greater bandwidth consumption and handy digital services. “By most measures Britain is advanced digitally, in terms of shopping for example,” added Olson-Chapman. “We also have thriving tech clusters that attract talent and investment to the country – all this despite our infrastructure – we have to make the change now.”

Digital Britain is more than an infrastructure build. It has to be a scale play that gives access to all existing bases. And, says Olson-Chapman, common sense dictates that the best approach for TalkTalk Business and its channel partners is to adopt a strategy that covers all bases. “Our first priority is the network,” she said. “It’s at the heart of our and our partners’ businesses. We are future proofing the network, increasing capacity and changing the topology to handle ever higher bandwidth, while delivering greater resiliency, more protection, adding network choice for partners, developing our APIs and portals and getting the billing right. Multiple networks creates more complicated access methods and our role is to bring it all together, remove complexity and make it easy for partners.”

New possibilities

Come the arrival of Digital Britain it is a near certainty that the channel will be showered by new avenues and possibilities for business growth, believes Olson-Chapman. “There is a huge opportunity for the channel to provide more products and services than ever before,” she commented. “Customers want to consolidate their ICT providers and they need partners with the ability to best serve their needs.”

Full fibre is everything, but it remains to be seen whether the conditions for Digital Britain to flourish will be fully realised. “Full fibre is for everyone and we must ensure that nobody is left behind in a rural-urban divide,” said Olson-Chapman. “There must also be equal emphasis on business as well as residential markets, and the UK’s digital skills set needs addressing to help people embrace Digital Britain.”

There is still much to do but the transition will be over in the blink of an eye

Platinum sponsors



BT wholesale



TalkTalk Business Partners

8x8 Global Cloud Communications



FluidOne

FidelityEnergy Emerging Our Partners

INFORM BILLING

KCOM

timans Network Services

imperatives billing reinvented

MASERGY

MYPHONES.COM

Gold sponsors

Silver sponsors

e to make the change



In the race to full fibre there is no denying that the gap between first movers and slow starters will widen. There is little choice but to act now, and Olson-Chapman is strongly in favour of a galvanised channel that recognises Digital Britain as a golden opportunity and a chance to push its own agenda, and argue for an open marketplace with no barriers.

Critical challenges

"The regulatory environment is critical," she commented. "Is Ofcom doing the right thing? We have a good start but more has to come in terms of overcoming practical challenges like wayleaves, road closures, access to ducts

and poles etc. The upcoming consultations are important and the channel needs to speak out. It would be great to have a united channel front on these issues. We also need multiple networks and altnets have a vital role to play. This is our race to the stars. If you're in the race we all go further and faster with greater levels of competition."

The fog is at last starting to clear around the future look of Britain's digital infrastructure, and what lies ahead is plain for all to see. "There is still much to do but the transition will be over in the blink of an eye," commented Olson-Chapman. "The channel must embrace the change and go forward, rather than bury its head in the sand." ■

Is Ofcom doing the right thing? We have a good start but more has to come

Silver sponsors





Mountain people will be the forgers of Digital Britain, argued legendary athletics coach Frank Dick OBE in his inspirational keynote.

In their capacity to take risks and grasp opportunities to change the comms landscape mountain people are to be celebrated, and are massively advantageous to the emergence of Digital Britain, believes Dick. "Valley people start sentences with 'would have, could have and should have'," he stated. "They have an excuse for why they believe they are not in control of their life. But mountain people decide to take the risk of winning. They see change as an opportunity. Mountain people are proud of the shirt they wear which says 'If you're not living on the edge you're taking up too much room'. But you can always change your attitude. You are in control of your own performance and the performance of your team. That, from my point of view, is the focus of everything in life."

Another essential point is that Digital Britain won't happen if we limit our horizons, noted Dick. "What does Digital Britain look like?" he asked. "If you don't know where you're going, how can you plan the journey? You've got focus on dreams and milestones at the same time. Your dream is the long-term strategy and what you imagine, the milestones are the moments on the journey. We need to get into a world where there are no excuses and no limits to our mentality. Disrupt your thinking on how you do things, scatter everything, then create a dream, make decisions about your dream, and from there create a design of what you want to do next – and delivery will fly out of the other end."

That's not all: Only by collaborating with others will Digital Britain open up a real opportunity to the channel, believes Dick. "If we're serious about Digital Britain and our target to become the greatest digital nation in the world, we have to work together," he stated. "It's pointless to be competing all the time and not learn from each other. Coopetition means we learn more and operate at a higher level."

Such an approach would initiate a new era of industry partnerships that would precipitate a release from legacy infrastructure. "You can do nothing about what is written in history," stated Dick. "But you can do everything about what you will make become history." ■

Time to launch for Digital Britain

As entrepreneurs such as Sir Richard Branson ride the wave of innovation and disruption, and target industries stuck in reverse, they reveal the full potential of our times, according to former Virgin Galactic space pioneer Will Whitehorn who urged Comms Vision delegates to reach for the stars in Digital Britain.

If you learn how to manage risk, and that comes down to building good business plans, it's likely that the innovation you undertake will succeed

To say the UK's comms infrastructure has been firmly lodged in reverse mode is an understatement, and as with Branson's space project, for example, the drive for Digital Britain will turn established models on their head and unleash pent-up potential. Disrupting sectors are magnets to entrepreneurs seeking to profit from innovation, but without a watertight business plan innovation and disruption will mean nothing to them despite their general biological predisposition to make a success of things, said space pioneer Will Whitehorn in his Comms Vision keynote.

"Look at the history of innovation and disruption, and why entrepreneurs are so good at thriving in these environments, and you see many have dyslexia or ADHD," he stated. "As a result they have no particular fear of failure. They are more likely to think the opposite, which is managing risk. If you learn how to manage risk, and that comes down to building good business plans, it's likely that the innovation you undertake will succeed."

As the former President of Virgin Galactic and ex-Virgin Brand Development Director Whitehorn has built a reputation for driving industry disruption. His current roles include Deputy Chairman of Stagecoach, Deputy Chairman of Good Energy, Chairman of the Scottish

Platinum sponsors



Gold sponsors



Silver sponsors



a new business plan fit



Event Campus and The Scottish Gallery, and he is a board member and Non Executive Director of The Royal Air Force. Whitehorn also had a strong hand in disrupting the estate agent sector. Until recently he was on the board of Purplebricks Group, and helped the two founding entrepreneurs to start up in 2011 and launch in 2014.

Innovation and disruption

In his fascinating address to Comms Vision delegates – entitled Innovation, Disruption and Entrepreneurship in Digital Britain – Whitehorn laid down the markers for realising innovation and opportunity through strategic planning as Digital Britain moves from concept to reality. “Richard Branson took his brand and amazing ideas into new areas, many of which failed, but the ones that succeeded did so in spectacular style,” he said.

“This brand adventure capital model led to the idea of creating business plans to give people greater utility, we then came to a particular industry that hadn’t changed for a long time – the space industry. If you look at every

other sector they’ve been changed by the methodology of distribution – everything else changes around that – but we’d not seen that distribution change in space.”

Whitehorn noted that it’s always worthwhile looking back at the early inventive stage of an industry, where the materials technology may not have been there and great ideas were ahead of their time. According to Whitehorn the X15 showed that a space plane was the best and most cost-effective method of getting to space. In a similar vein, comms entrepreneurs understood the benefits of cloud computing many years ago, but we lacked the infrastructure and methods to make it work. That’s no longer the case, and Whitehorn urged delegates to reach for the stars in Digital Britain.

“Innovation doesn’t just need to come from those brilliant entrepreneurs with ADHD,” added Whitehorn. “Innovation and disruption can emerge from people working on a state owned project even, so long as you apply the presets of a business plan to it.”

Disrupting sectors are magnets to entrepreneurs seeking to profit from innovation, but without a business plan innovation and disruption means nothing

Silver sponsors



COMMS PAGES

THE COMMS PRODUCTS AND SERVICES PAGES

To reserve your place and to be a part of the comms directory contact the call Simon now on **01895 454603** or email sturton@bpl-business.com for details

WHOLESALE LEASED LINES TELECOMS BROADBAND HOSTING

0845 00 99 175
hello@icuk.net

icuk.net

INFORM BILLING

Discover the next generation of billing software



informbilling.co.uk 01332 92 70 70



Daisy Wholesale Limited
Hampshire House, Hampshire Corporate Park
Templars Way, Chandler's Ford
Eastleigh, SO53 3RY
Tel: 0330 100 1233
E-mail: sales@daisywholesale.com
Website: www.daisywholesale.com

WHOLESALE

helping your business grow.

Daisy Wholesale was established in 2001 and serves over 1,000 wholesale partners across the UK. Through our partner channel we deliver over 100,000 fixed lines and 90,000 broadband services to a range of SME, mid market and corporate customers.

Our partners benefit from the highest levels of support, customer service and choice, enabling them to drive efficiencies, improve productivity and profitability within their business. This flexible approach, constant innovation and new product development programmes have placed Daisy Wholesale at the forefront of its field and made it the natural choice for the channel.

The Complete Billing Solution

Recommended by 98% of our customers

0808 250 7400 | sales@ebillz.com



Building your telecoms business has never been easier

Become a partner and offer high quality telecom services to your customers for unlimited earning potential

- ✓ UK mobile SIMs (Vodafone & O2)
- ✓ International roaming SIMs
- ✓ International and local calls
- ✓ Lines, call & broadband packages
- ✓ Calling cards
- ✓ Instant worldwide mobile top up
- ✓ wizzcall
- ✓ UK & international access numbers
- ✓ Conference calls
- ✓ Smart phone app
- ✓ SIP trunks & Hosted PBX

Contact Abraham Keinan
Tel 0344 545 0051 · info@swiftnet.co.uk
www.swiftnet.co.uk

swiftnet
Innovative communication solutions

AURORA

BILLING SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS



FIXED LINE, MOBILE & CLOUD SERVICES

WWW.AURORA-BILLING.CO.UK INFO@AURORA-BILLING.CO.UK 01634 673800

FluidOne

0345 868 7848

contact@fluidone.com

www.fluidone.com

PLATFORM ONE

Probably the **most complete connectivity network** in the UK...

Trusted partnership, delivered by experts

GET IN TOUCH
0345 868 7848

True cloud based Billing Systems

quickstart

Inspiring large and small telecoms resellers
Escape the limitations of your current billing platform

Quickstart billing, powered by PRD, offers a complete range of premium level solutions. From start-ups to custom systems, we service some of the most reputable telecoms suppliers.

We would love to hear from you.

prd www.p-rd.com 01256 799812 enquiries@p-rd.com

Get a billing solution designed to meet your needs

We have delivered bespoke telecoms billing solutions for nearly 20 years



Contact us to find out how we can help your business grow

www.symbiant-technologies.com
enquiries@symbiant-technologies.com

01227 455002



aBILLity™

The experts in billing & provisioning solutions

020 8614 9090
unionstreet.uk.com



iameve.co.uk

The Most Disruptive and Feature Rich Platform in the Industry!

Margins of over 80%

2 Distinct different models to choose from

Feature Rich Platform - White labelled portal
& Sub domain - Handset Agnostic

Contact us now 01708 320000 or email: sales@nta.co.uk



oak

Award Winning Communications Management Software



Call Recording

Fully FCA & PCI Compliant
Solutions for Every Business



Call Reporting

Performance Analytics for
Businesses and Contact Centres



CRM Integration

Automated Screen Popping
of CRM Contact Records

0800 9889 625

oak.co.uk

COMMS PAGES

COMMS PAGES

To list your company products and services here for a full year – call Simon now on **01895 454603** or email sturton@bpl-business.com for details

FREE TO

PERFORM

Limits only exist in the mind

Push beyond your limits and achieve your true potential, with help from 9.

Our partners receive the advice and support they need, allowing them to focus on growing their business. Find out how partnering with 9 can help you to achieve ultimate success.



Contact us at partners@9group.co.uk
or call 0800 068 5939

FREE TO PERFORM