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update p30

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## Welcome comment



Stuart Gilroy

YOUTUBE has to be one of the greatest resources to come out of the Internet age. It's democratised programme making and pretty much everything ever broadcast anywhere on the planet is at your fingertips at all times. Not only that, many video makers

on YouTube produce far better programmes than traditional broadcasters, their talent liberated for all to consume.

YouTube is also a proof point for people of a certain age who think things really were much better back in time, when Blue Peter's Valerie Singleton barely batted an eyelid after crashing during a speedboat race on the Thames against co-legendary presenters John Noakes and Peter Purves – narrowly escaping a disaster. They don't make kids' programmes like that any more – it's worth a watch. If it wasn't for YouTube, this gem along with thousands of other TV gold nuggets would be lost in time forever unseen. But thankfully they are within easy reach and also come with recommendations – like the infamous campfire incident that threatened to burn out the Blue Peter studio during a singalong. Other favourites include 1970s and 80s British sitcoms that have reached an enthusiastic and appreciative global audience of next generation fans.

But what can YouTube teach MSPs about building closer relationships with end users through being more accessible and driving the visibility of tailored recommendations? It's a model for developing the ideal customer relationship, based on being within fingertip reach of clients, being truly available and accessible, able to instantly recommend products and services that people are likely to want to consume, and take personalisation to the next level. This is how AI could create the YouTube factor and turn everyday customers into avid subscribers.

Stuart Gilroy, Editor

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

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# Report focuses on key success factors in contact centres

A just-released report provides a window on the behind the scenes success factors that supercharge 10 leading MSPs in the contact centre space and enable them to stand out.

The UK contact centre market is set for an unprecedented period of acceleration over the short-to-medium term, driven by the transition to more advanced technologies such as AI and automation and an associated shift in sources and scales of revenue. Another important point revealed by Comms Dealer's latest market research report (called 'Going for growth in contact centres') is that elevating consultancy to the next level is key to meeting customers' growing outcome and value expectations. But while acknowledged as being highly profitable and of great value to customers, consultancy is understated in MSPs' assessments of their key differentiation factors.

"This calls for a renewed and deeper focus – not just on the critical role of consultancy, but the imperative for Enhanced Consultancy as the primary source of differentiation and competitive advantage," stated Comms Dealer Editor and report author Stuart Gilroy. "The report emphatically confirms that MSPs operating in the contact centre market cannot afford to ignore the absolute priority to enhance their



consultancy skills and apply them across the workings of entire organisations."

### Qualitative data

The report distils all-encompassing insights and perspectives from 10 leading contact centre MSPs and brings to the surface the success factors that set them apart. "Our study uses qualitative data to ascertain

the triggers behind revenue growth, where developments are happening fastest and how these change-drivers will likely evolve," added Gilroy.

The report also places an emphasis on contact centre market, technology, product and service trends, especially those with the most market penetration and potential, and takes a close look at the factors that will enable MSPs to create a difference. "As part of this it is important to assess the challenges that impact our selected cohort of leading MSPs and highlight how they are responding," added Gilroy. "As we explore these priorities it becomes especially evident that a deeper focus on the critical role of consultancy is, more than ever, fundamental to sustained success."

**Report contributor Sabio in focus – see page 12**



Download the free report here – <https://www.comms-dealer.com/contact-centre/going-growth-contact-centres>

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# Going integration-first

**Integration isn't just a technical upgrade, it's a strategic shift that unlocks long-term competitive advantage, according to Samantha Dennahy, Product Marketing Manager, Giacom.**

**T**aking an integration-first approach is one of the most impactful ways resellers and MSPs can unlock sustainable growth and deliver value to customers. Dennahy also noted that many SMBs now favour a single strategic partner to manage their entire IT estate, driving demand for integrated end-to-end solutions that eliminate complexity and streamline operations. "This is fuelling a major transition in the channel," she stated. "The move towards managed service models, and ultimately to becoming a one-stop shop, is accelerating."

According to Dennahy, the growing requirement for integration puts a spotlight on the rise of operational excellence. "Integration is the foundation for operational maturity, which is what turns reactive businesses into high-performing, profitable and resilient organisations," she added. "As businesses grow and portfolios broaden, the complexity of managing multiple services, customers and suppliers becomes unsustainable without automation and integration. Those with the right foundations in place will

be best placed to deliver a consistently excellent service at scale. That said, it's not just about scaling faster, it's about delivering smarter, more strategic value to customers."

SMBs are increasingly demanding integrated digital self-service solutions that replicate the intuitive and seamless experiences they're accustomed to in their personal lives, observed Dennahy. "With the lines between B2B and B2C expectations continuing to blur, the ability to self-serve anytime, anywhere is a necessity," she said. "SMBs want more control, greater transparency and to manage their accounts, services and spending on their terms. Self-service platforms deliver that."

From the MSP perspective, these platforms don't just improve customer satisfaction they also enhance operational efficiency and scalability, freeing up time and resources, pointed out Dennahy. She cited a recent Giacom partner survey that showed 95 per cent of MSPs consider self-service as a critical component of their customer engagement strategy. "It's easy to see



Samantha Dennahy

## Disconnected systems and fragmented processes are among the biggest barriers holding back MSPs

why," she said. "Satisfied, empowered customers are not only more loyal, they're also more likely to become advocates and drive organic growth."

### Integration dividends

Dennahy also cited figures from Service Leadership which suggest that best-in-class MSPs achieve EBITDA margins of over 20 per cent. Meanwhile, the lowest performing quarter show average margins of -9.3 per cent. "There's a clear link between an MSP's operational maturity and EBITDA, highlighting that many are unprofitable due to inefficiencies," she said. "Disconnected systems and fragmented processes are among the biggest barriers holding back MSPs."

For resellers and MSPs starting their integration journey the best place to begin is with the billing system, advised Dennahy. This is because billing systems sit at the heart of a business ecosystem and connect the dots between sales, customer service, finance and operations. "The billing system is where MSPs can find the clearest view of customer activity and profitability, yet it's also where manual processes cause the most issues," she added.

"By providing tools that empower customers to take charge of their spending, MSPs not only alleviate their own operational pressures but also deliver an elevated customer experience. If

an MSP's objective is to empower end-user customers with self-service, then there's low-hanging fruit in billing."

### Strategic advantages

Once resellers and MSPs have established an integrated service capability the next step is to turn operational efficiency into a strategic advantage. "With systems connected and processes automated the groundwork is laid for accelerated growth and deeper customer engagement," stated Dennahy. "The focus shifts from simply managing operations to enabling innovation and delivering a consistently exceptional customer experience."

Introducing new products or services also becomes seamless with integration in place. What once required manual handovers, duplicated data and slow, error-prone processes can be achieved quickly and at scale. "This allows businesses to respond to market opportunities with agility, adding value without adding complexity," noted Dennahy. "A unified system also means a single customer experience – one quote, one invoice, one portal, regardless of the service or supplier."

As MSPs continue to grow, integrated operations ensure that service quality doesn't drop because the delivery becomes repeatable, scalable and far less dependent on manual effort or luck. "Today's SMBs expect fast, flexible and frictionless experiences," stated Dennahy. "MSPs that invest in integrated self-service solutions will also stand out from the crowd as forward-thinking, customer-centric businesses fully prepared for the future." ■



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## Ten channel leaders on their biggest career achievements...

Which high profile channel leader smashed the glass ceiling with every move? Find out here, along with nine other behind-the-scenes insights into the biggest career achievements of channel personalities.

### Six Degrees CEO Vince DeLuca

Early in my career I took the consumer of a technology product from point-blank not wanting to talk to me to having them want more with high fives and hugs.

### Bluecube Managing Director Paul Reames

Becoming the number one sales person at Project Telecom consistently in a sales team of more than 100 BDMS.

### Comms365 CEO Mike van Bunnens

Building a successful company and keeping on going when it looked like we had bitten off more than we could chew.

### Risc IT Solutions and Novem IT CEO Alex Heslip

Bringing people together to serve a common purpose. If you're straight with people you build trust.

### n2s CEO Rob Bolton

Being able to interact at all levels of a business and getting the best out of teams.

### PXC CEO James Smith

Making the transition away from my career in investment banking ten years ago to become CFO of one of my clients.

### Agilitas IT Solutions CEO Sara Wilkes

Smashing the glass ceiling. Every career move I have made has been an achievement.

### Focus Group CEO Neil Hall

Staying relevant.

### Greg Jones, VP of Business Development EMEA, Kaseya

Seeing the impact I've had on MSP successes and staff progression. I'm also proud of the 35-plus industry awards I've won and my involvement with the Alder Hey children's charity.

### Telet Research CCO Dr. Peter Gradwell

The early Gradwell Communications team was forged in the heat of a fast growing startup – we are still close knit.

# Onecom scores Big Goal win at regional finals

Hats off to Onecom who triumphed at the Southern Regional Finals of The Big Goal national soccer tournament last month.

The Hants-based MSP beat last year's winner Focus Group with a brace of goals scored by Product Manager Ross Oulton, a former Northampton Town FC apprentice. Onecom were undefeated across the whole tournament (which was staged alongside the Brentford FC Community Sports Trust) scoring 11 goals and only conceding three. CEO Martin Flick enthused "In scorching heat, the games were played with passion and sportsmanship, reflected by Zenzero which lifted the Spirit of the Tournament Award after losing to Giacom in a penalty shoot out in the Plate final. We can't wait for the finals in September."

Giacom (The Big Goal's headline sponsor) now go through to the finals being staged at St George's Park – the Home of England Football – alongside Onecom, Focus Group, Sky Business (South) and Comms Dealer FC. All will compete against qualifiers from the Northern Regionals being hosted by Sheffield Wednesday FC and the Midlands Regionals hosted by Derby County FC. "Just seeing the industry come together with Keith



Mabbutt from The Street Soccer Foundation, Terry O'Brien from Giacom and Nigel Sergent from Comms Dealer was enough for us because the initiative they have launched is changing the lives of disadvantaged young people across the country," added Flick.

### World Cup beckons

The overall winners of the tournament go on to represent England in the Corporate World Cup in Morocco this October. Giacom CEO Terry O'Brien enthused: "This was a fabulous day and we're delighted to qualify for the finals after a real nail-biter. We now have the chance to go on and represent England in the Corporate World Cup. What an incentive that

is for us and all the teams that qualify for the finals."

### About The Big Goal

The Big Goal is an ICT industry-led nationwide campaign created by the Street Soccer Foundation which aims to eradicate youth homelessness through the power of football. The Big Goal sponsors fund and support Street Soccer Academies staged at professional football clubs across England, inspiring disadvantaged young people and helping them change their lives for the better.

**For all the results visit: [www.thebiggoal.co.uk/2025-regionals](http://www.thebiggoal.co.uk/2025-regionals)**

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# Vendors urged to enable MSPs

**With more service-led partners poised to dominate the channel landscape, vendors must reassess and evolve their programmes to effectively support the ongoing rise of MSPs, writes Loucerna Director Louise Grant.**

**T**here is a critical difference between onboarding partners and the enablement of ambitious MSPs: True partnerships rely on shared strategies, mutual investment and long-term organisational alignment. This is a big step up from the traditional cookie-cutter approach to process-driven onboarding. It's no longer enough for vendors to simply offer rebates, training and resource portals. Enablement is about upskilling partners, the creation of a joint value proposition, the alignment of teams, and bringing joint vendor and partner strategies to life.

MSPs don't want to be treated as an extension of a vendor's salesforce, they want to be part of the vendor's growth story, which in turn makes the vendor part of their own growth narrative. This starts with collaborative planning. Vendors need to offer joint business development initiatives, strategic account mapping and co-funded service delivery models, all of which give MSPs a valuable stake in the outcomes they help to deliver.

Vendor flexibility is also vitally important. Partners



**Louise Grant**

**Partner enablement relies on shared strategies, mutual investment and long-term alignment**

have different business profiles, therefore vendor programmes should reflect the different shapes and sizes of MSP organisations, and take into account their specialisations, vertical biases and service innovations. The focus needs to be on creating and rewarding joint value, not just volume.

### Strategic support

A recent poll highlighted that enablement should no longer focus on certifications. MSPs need practical tools – hands-on demos, real-world scenarios to play with, API access, white-labelled services and co-marketing campaigns that support their brand and market positioning.

Strategic support like this makes a real difference when building recurring revenue models. Let's not forget the importance of trust. Transparent pricing, limited channel conflict and clear rules of engagement remain fundamental. MSPs need to know their vendor is committed to joint success, not simply looking to protect their own margins.

As the channel evolves, vendors that embrace this new dynamic by building shared goals, flexibility and co-creation into their programmes will be the ones who secure lasting, profitable relationships with high growth MSP partners. ■

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# Reasons to integrate

**Integrated products are critical to unlocking growth opportunities across the entire channel, says James Shraga, Sales and Partnership Director, Anvil.**

**S**tarting life in the 90s as a solution for rating and invoicing lines and minutes, Anvil's development has mirrored market needs. Sales and operations functions were onboarded in 2021 and further market research identified what Shraga called a 'critical gap.' He said: "Mainstream CRM platforms and ticketing systems designed for the masses were failing to address the specific compliance needs of our industry, particularly in aligning with Ofcom regulations." Therefore, Anvil has evolved into a comprehensive and industry-focused platform seeking to unlock further growth for MSPs that had hit their limits with off-the-shelf tools.

Shraga believes the demand for a centralised solution has never been clearer than in the current margin-sensitive landscape where operation efficiency stands out as a key differentiator. "As businesses seek to streamline their tech stack, the demand for robust, multi-layered integrations continues to grow," he added. "We are committed to leading this shift and our biggest opportunity lies in transforming how telecoms and MSP businesses operate by unifying their three core

platforms – CRM, operational management, and billing."

Therefore, Anvil's current priorities are to continue developing and enhancing these three streams with each having a distinct development roadmap reaching 24 months into the future. "Currently, we are focused on refining how billing and price adjustments are managed within the system while expanding order and management integrations with key networks," said Shraga. "This will streamline processes, making it easier for businesses to order, track, and manage services more efficiently."

By answering this demand Anvil aims to spur its own green patch. In the next 12 months Anvil is seeking to double its revenue and customer base through organic expansion. He said: "As demand for our integrated telecom solutions continues to rise, we will invest in talent and technology to sustain this momentum."

Shraga sees the next major shift as the expansion of APIs for order processing and management. "Vendors that prioritise unified, easy-to-implement



James Shraga

**As businesses seek to streamline their tech stack, the demand for robust, multi-layered integrations continues to grow**

integrations will empower resellers to sell and manage solutions more efficiently," he said. "Standardising these integrations across platforms will be a game-changer, reducing complexity and unlocking new growth opportunities for the entire channel."

Anvil will also continue to enhance the integrations on its platform. "Over the past decade, we have worked closely with network providers to develop APIs that enhance system control and efficiency," said Shraga. "As the industry evolves and new APIs emerge, we will continue expanding our integrations with key technology partners

to further automate processes and enhance service management."

#### Partner-led progress

As with past iterations, Anvil's future development phases will predominantly be driven by customer demand. Shraga said: "With a growing number of new customers onboarding each month, we've observed that every business operates slightly differently. This diversity continuously shapes our feature development, ensuring that enhancements benefit both new and existing customers."

To do this, Anvil hosts regular quarterly webinars, offering open drop-in

sessions where its users can share insights, challenges, and feature requests. Following these sessions, the company provides a clear roadmap update, outlining the enhancements being implemented.

"This collaborative approach ensures our go-to-market strategy, portfolio development, and integrations remain aligned with real-world industry needs, keeping Anvil agile and responsive to market demands," said Shraga.

"That is the key to continued success, staying customer-focused and offering not just a powerful platform, but also the support, flexibility, and innovation required to help businesses thrive. By maintaining close relationships with our users and adapting to industry shifts, we can continue to lead with a solution that truly meets the needs of telecoms and MSP providers."

Shraga noted that the most successful channel organisations embrace change and take a proactive approach in engaging with industry trends, such as the shift to integrated tools. "There can be comfort in the status quo, but this is an industry that has flourished in an ever-evolving landscape through its adaptability." He emphasised that working with an expert partner can help the channel to identify trends and capitalise on them earlier than the competition.

By following these tenets of collaboration and embracing change, Shraga hopes Anvil will be the UK's leading business management system for the telecoms and MSP industry within the next three to five years. ■



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# Charting contact centre

**Navigating industry disruption can be a challenge for the channel's contact centre MSPs, and with a major transformation on the horizon Sabio's Chief Innovation Officer Stuart Dorman discusses what lies ahead, where to focus and the critical importance of delivering ongoing customer RoI.**

**T**he words 'market transformation' have become a staple of the comms industry's lexicon but its strength of meaning is most profound in the CCaaS environment. According to Dorman, the contact centre market is on the cusp of an unprecedented shift in the next three to five years – tantamount to an upending. He pointed out that 70 per cent of solutions are currently on-premise/private cloud, with 30 per cent using CCaaS. "However, this ratio is expected to reverse within five years," commented Dorman. "The market is dominated by voice and email interactions (80 per cent) with current automation efforts focused on minor channels like webchat. The real growth opportunity lies in addressing cost-intensive voice and email demands through AI-based automation. This data-led, quick-start methodology promises to drive significant

growth and efficiency for Sabio and the wider market."

Dorman also observed that the market remains competitive with established players and innovative start-ups vying to make gains. "This competition is no longer just about offering the latest features, it's also about providing comprehensive support, optimisation and expert services guidance to help clients make the most of their existing investments," he added.

Dorman is also witnessing a number of market drivers manifest in different ways across Sabio's customer base – often in combination. "We're seeing more interest in AI, but with a cautious approach," he explained. "And there's growing interest in AI-powered tools such as chatbots, virtual assistants and predictive analytics. There's also a growing need for omnichannel integration and contact centre solutions



**Stuart Dorman**

## **The real growth opportunity lies in addressing cost-intensive voice and email demands through AI-based automation**

that can seamlessly integrate with other business systems like CRM, ERP and marketing automation tools. This is driving investment in more comprehensive and interoperable CCaaS platforms.

"Data-driven decision making is also key with advanced analytics and customer journey orchestration technologies gaining traction as businesses seek deeper insights into customer behaviour across all touchpoints. These tools, coupled with increasingly

sophisticated Voice of the Customer (VoC) and sentiment analysis capabilities are providing extraordinary levels of understanding and personalisation in customer interactions."

### **AI evolution**

At the forefront of these trends is the rapid evolution of AI, particularly Generative AI, which is reshaping how contact centres operate by enabling more sophisticated, human-like automated interactions, enhancing everything from virtual agents to real-time agent assistance

and predictive analytics. "The ongoing convergence of contact centre technologies is another area of significant interest," added Dorman. "We're seeing AI, data analytics and CRM systems overlapping to create a more holistic ecosystem for customer engagement. This integration is leading to more informed decision making, seamless handovers between AI and human agents, and ultimately a more cohesive customer experience."

Dorman believes that Sabio's position at the intersection



# transformation

of these trends enables it to offer forward-thinking solutions and expert guidance as a consulting-led digital CX transformation specialist. "We are at the heart of the data-powered contact centre, AI and CRM convergence, and this enables us to advise, implement and manage complex CX deployments," he added. "We also have a greater breadth and stronger consulting capability that local or regional contact centre specialists that tend to be focused on vendor relations and are often mid-market centric. This is what sets us apart as a partner for more than 650 customers globally."

Sabio remains a vendor agnostic organisation and has diversified so as not to rely too heavily on one particular vendor or partner. "Diversification has not only enhanced our technological capabilities but strengthened our position in the market," commented Dorman. "As such, we now work with technology providers such as Microsoft, Genesys, Avaya, Twilio, Amazon Connect, Google Cloud, Salesforce and Verint among others – complementing their technologies with our own IP and services."

Dorman noted that Sabio's capacity to build on partner technologies and capabilities with its own IP, in addition to its consultancy, professional and managed services support, remains the most profitable avenue for the firm. He also reaffirmed that a key growth opportunity lies in addressing the cost-intensive voice and email demands through AI-based automation. "Our strategy aligns with this trend, offering an AI model and

platform agnostic approach to automate these primary channels," he emphasised. "This data-led, quick-start methodology promises to drive significant growth and efficiency in the evolving contact centre landscape."

### Market change

In terms of market evolution, the UK contact centre space is currently in a state of flux, characterised by rapid technological advancement and a growing sense of caution among buyers, noted Dorman. "While we're observing a continued shift towards cloud-based solutions, driven by the need for greater flexibility and scalability, a recent Gartner report has highlighted an emerging trend of 'buyer remorse' in the tech industry which is also

### Key points...

- **The contact centre market is on the cusp of a big shift.**
- **Easing cost-intensive voice and email demands through AI-based automation is key.**
- **Interest in AI-powered tools like chatbots, virtual assistants and predictive analytics is growing.**
- **Demand is intensifying around solutions that integrate business systems such as CRM, ERP and marketing automation tools.**
- **Data driven decision making is also key.**
- **Business change adoption remains a big industry challenge.**
- **More organisations are struggling to realise value from their tech.**
- **Enhanced consultancy, implementation, training and ongoing support is vital to ensure maximum value is gained from contact centre investments.**

manifesting in the contact centre space," he said.

According to Gartner, many organisations are now questioning the large technology investments they've made as they struggle to realise the full potential of their systems. This scenario is equally prevalent in the cloud contact centre industry. "We're witnessing a high number of our customers approaching us for consultancy and guidance, choosing to optimise their existing infrastructure rather than immediately shifting to new technologies or making fresh investments," added Dorman.

"This trend underscores a growing emphasis on maximising return on investment and fully leveraging current capabilities before embarking on new technological ventures. It also highlights the critical importance of expert implementation, training and ongoing support to ensure that businesses can extract maximum value from their contact centre technologies."

Dorman cited business change adoption as a big industry challenge. And he says that in the wider industry many migration projects to an expensive and disruptive tech platform result in no corresponding operational improvements.

"Taking advantage of a CCaaS platform requires a transformation programme at the point of implementation and an ongoing commitment to take advantage of the new features that have been added," he said. "Otherwise you fall behind the wider market and fail to capitalise on the investment."



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# Switch on to value add

**The January 2027 PSTN switch-off is fast approaching but too many partners are still grappling with the scale and complexity of migrating legacy estates and missing out on a rare opportunity to capitalise on new value added services, according to Dale Parkinson, Managing Director – Connectivity, Giacom.**

**T**he All-IP transition marks one of the most significant shifts faced by the UK comms industry in decades, and there is an urgent need for the whole channel to move with the times and prepare. “While many partners are well ahead in moving to an All-IP world there is still some way to go,” stated Parkinson. “As an industry we have nearly five million legacy assets impacted by the switch-off and, realistically, just over a year to migrate them. In terms of channel, we are seeing a mixed bag. While we are working with partners who want to get ahead and build capability in the fibre market we still have a significant number of partners who are taking a different approach.”

In many instances, observes Parkinson, partners do not have the resources, time or investment to transform legacy assets, and it can

be an expensive and time-consuming task when new kit and installations are factored into the equation. “There are practical challenges for partners,” he added. “All-IP isn’t just a technical evolution, it’s a strategic turning point for the entire industry. And supporting channel partners with more effective products and services is where the sector has needed to be for a number of years, enabling new revenue streams through managed services and value-added offerings.”

#### Seamless transition

According to Parkinson, there are three key factors that make the All-IP transition seamless for end users. Firstly, being able to work with a single channel partner who can front the whole process end-to-end with the right support and migration resources in place. Secondly, making the experience as straightforward and non-



Dale Parkinson

**As an industry we have nearly five million legacy assets impacted by the switch-off and, realistically, just over a year to do it**

disruptive as possible. And thirdly, ensuring that the adoption phase of new All-IP services is fully supported for each customer, creating a robust and resilient platform for future service overlays.

“To meet these requirements we have focused on simplification and cost reduction at the product level, and invested in resources to support partners with migrations,”

explained Parkinson, who also noted that all Giacom partners can now buy Sky Broadband on its Cloud Market portal and leverage Giacom Easy Switching via the All-IP Managed Service.

While there is help on hand for partners there remains a gap between the industry and end customer awareness about the move to All-IP. “Unlike the transition to digital TV there

is no nationwide marketing campaign behind the switch-off so the burden has fallen onto the industry,” stated Parkinson. “We address the issue through engagement at the micro-level – campaigning our customer bases and migrating end user services. This will take time and money, which is why we have been waving the flag for early action for so long.”

#### Revenue opportunities

The die is cast. Fibre coverage is growing and legacy services are on the way out, presenting partners with new business opportunities as well as the challenges discussed earlier in this article. “As we run up to the PSTN switch-off many SMBs will be faced with a broad range of technology investment choices,” said Parkinson. “Having a strategic advisor who can support and guide them through the minefield of communications, collaboration, storage and security options has to be the most significant opportunity for partners over the next two years.”

Partners can sell a range of value added services that build out resilient, reliable and scalable Network as a Service propositions, says Parkinson. He cited Giacom’s launch of the Sky Business Hub end user router solution later this year as an example. The launch will be followed by a roadmap of chargeable services such as cellular back-up, guest Wi-Fi and security. “Growing revenue and margin through the PSTN switch-off is not a pipe dream,” added Parkinson. “It’s a reality for partners who embrace the move to MSP or add connectivity value added services to their existing MSP portfolio.” ■



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# Redsquid's growth poten

As the old saying goes, good things come in threes... and Redsquid accelerated its growth plan last month with a trio of acquisitions that help keep the Herts-based MSP on track to achieve its £150 million revenue goal, according to CEO Sohini Raithatha – who provides a masterclass in how to grow your business effectively, efficiently and quickly through M&A.

**F**ew MSPs demonstrate the transformative impact of a solid business growth strategy better than Redsquid: Last month the company augmented its acquisition tally with the purchase of London-based cyber firm Computer Security Technology, Surrey-headquartered Gamma partner Penstone Communications (boosting its UC operation) and Scotland based Itek. These deals also show how Raithatha is reshaping Redsquid and evolving in different directions – including new territories.

"Our company could become a unicorn within the next three to five years as we expand across Europe and the USA," he stated. "We will achieve this by staying at the forefront of

technology, continuing to be solutions-led, investing in our people and their skills, understanding customer needs and becoming a data-driven organisation, while acquiring and merging with culturally aligned businesses to accelerate growth."

#### Strong pedigree

Over the past year Redsquid tripled its headcount and revenue, so Raithatha is building on stronger foundations. The MSP quadrupled EBITDA since 2022 and client numbers have surged to circa 1,800. "Last year we completed three acquisitions, reshaped our M&A strategy, entered the film and production industry, opened a branch in Aberdeen, became a B Corp and were recognised by The Sunday Times as one of the best companies to work



Sohini Raithatha

**Our company could become a unicorn within the next three to five years as we expand across Europe and the US**

for," said Raithatha. "In the first three months of 2025 we aimed to strengthen our senior management team, complete three acquisitions within three months and we've done it all during the first two weeks of our new financial year."

To say that Redsquid is going places quickly would be to greatly understate the extent of Raithatha's ambition as he doubles down on his latest clutch of acquisitions. They also put a spotlight on Raithatha's super-slick transaction

process. "Completing these deals simultaneously is logistically more efficient from the perspective of our lawyers as well as from a momentum standpoint," he explained. "By conducting due diligence over a three or four month period we



# tial unleashes

maintain a continuous workflow aligned with our objectives without frequent interruptions. This approach ensures that once completed we can move forward without having to revisit tasks shortly thereafter."

However, noted Raithatha, the disadvantage is that under time constraints there may be a risk of rushing through processes and potentially cutting

## Hire top advisors, even if they're costly. They are crucial to getting it right

corners when handling multiple tasks. "It is crucial to remain disciplined and ensure thorough due diligence," he added. "If necessary, deadlines should be flexible and adaptable to prevent compromising on the quality of work."

### Key learnings

Raithatha also pointed out that while acquisitions can be challenging each deal provides valuable learning opportunities. "It's crucial to stick to the process and not cut corners, even when rushed," he reiterated. "If someone you know is selling a business, use the same thorough approach to avoid issues and don't be afraid to pull out if due diligence doesn't hold up. Staying level-headed until everything is finalised can save you from losing millions on a bad deal. Losing a few thousand in fees is more feasible than risking millions on a business that isn't right for you, your customers or your team."

Meanwhile, says Raithatha, an effective acquisition strategy also requires a crystal clear understanding of the vendor's practices, how they conduct their business, treat employees and service customers. Other key considerations include evaluating tools, systems, customer profiles, geographic reach and identifying skills or technology gaps. "Over the coming years these assessments will

likely evolve as our strategy includes larger acquisitions and expansion into Europe and the USA," added Raithatha.

The key to achieving integration success, he noted, is effective communication. "This

is essential, both for internal teams and with vendors," he explained. "Ensure you have comprehensive documentation prepared, including customer and employee communications. It's also crucial to have sufficient bandwidth and capacity within your team. Also, learn from past acquisition mistakes by conducting thorough post-analysis."

Raithatha swears by his methodical integration plan and says that to achieve the financial and strategic

objectives of deals it's also essential to integrate data and systems successfully. "This is the only way to create long-term value," he noted. "Maintaining value creation requires data that helps us serve customers and prevent churn. This is why we keep the customer at the heart of all our acquisitions and only proceed where we can maintain or improve the day to day customer experience."

### Trusted advisor

Redsquid's customer base has expanded significantly to encompass various sectors including education, pharmaceutical, financial services and construction. And as a trusted advisor, Raithatha says it is especially imperative to explore how AI can benefit clients. "This exploration can take various forms, including workshops and demonstrations that showcase how we use AI," he stated. "Opportunities in AI and security are growing – and customers prefer a single supplier. It is crucial therefore to ensure that you have an engaged and well-equipped workforce capable of meeting customer needs with the right skills and talent. Fostering and maintaining an integrated culture that supports and enables customer satisfaction is also key."

## Looking to make an acquisition? Here's Raithatha's top tips...

**UNDERSTAND** why you want to acquire businesses. Can you achieve your goals organically? Identify the type of business you seek... security, technology, people or location. **Decide** how you will fund the acquisition and ensure you understand that process. **Hire top advisors, even if they are costly, as they are crucial to getting it right. Maintain a solid pipeline and avoid desperation. And while it is exciting to have a first meeting with a potential M&A, always remember that there are many opportunities available.**



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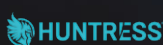
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# High growth market beco

Last month's Comms Dealer Channel Forecast insight session put a spotlight on high growth segments in the mobile arena, including specific opportunities around the retirement of 2G and 3G networks, the upcoming PSTN switch off, in-demand tailored solutions for vertical markets, and perhaps most importantly the latent potential residing in existing customer bases.

**J**ola and Onecom Partners are a testament to the mobile market's ongoing revenue potential, generating 20 and 50 per cent growth in this space respectively over the past year. Both are also ramping up efforts to bring resellers on this journey, united in their conviction that the time for channel partners to act is now. This is because big opportunities are there for the taking, according to Roan Pratt, Sales Director, Onecom Partners. "It's as simple as talking to existing customers and asking about their SIM usage," he stated. "Resellers will be amazed at the opportunities they can unlock from their own business."

Jola CEO Adrian Sunderland highlighted how these opportunities continue to be catalysed, pointing to mobile operators sunsetting their 2G and 3G networks to free up capacity for new 5G services. "There are millions of devices that only work on 2G or 3G so this is a compelling narrative that resellers can seize on," he commented. "For example, look within your base for customers with a fleet of vehicles as they may need a solution for their trackers. Across retail and hospitality, older payment terminals will need swapping out."



Adrian Sunderland

## Most of our partners got their first mobile win from a customer calling to solve a problem. What a great place to start

Sunderland also highlighted the PSTN switch off as a major opportunity. "The answer from the fixed line world is to put a broadband line in and run the PSTN service over IP," he said. "However, there are millions of lines with no broadband and they just want the PSTN line. Now is the time to talk to customers about next generation connectivity."

When it comes to winning deals in the UK mid-market

(businesses with 10 to 500 employees) resellers have an advantage over carriers, according to Sunderland. "This is down to trust," he added. "Businesses buy from businesses that look like them, and if you've been reliably supplying other services and meet their every need, then you will be their first port of call when they feel the effects of a compelling event. Most of our partners have got their first mobile win from

a customer calling to ask if they can solve a problem. What a great place to start."

### Opening doors

This is where the network of channel suppliers comes into play, with Jola and Onecom Partners both seeking to lower the bar to entry for resellers. Pratt noted: "Organisations don't need to be experts to start winning in this space – that is why we are here. We're investing time so that when end users ask

questions about intelligent mobile data, resellers can respond confidently knowing they have experts to lean on. We see these opportunities through from start to finish, getting involved at point of concept, right through to the delivery and even the in-life management."

Leveraging expertise also enables resellers to take a more targeted approach, added Sunderland. "We can look at somebody's customer base and identify client problems and opportunities," he stated. "This removes cold calls and leads to a more consultative approach by identifying business outcomes."

This approach also brings the biggest wins for resellers and provides differentiation, observed Sunderland, who added: "We signed up our 15,000th reseller last month so have a good cohort from which to assess the strategies that work. Common among the winners is their ability to tell a great story about how they solved a business problem for a customer in the past, and what the outcome was. This gives potential clients confidence through the telling of a story that resonates."

"The new go-to-market reality is that customers no



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# comms resellers



Roan Pratt

## It's as simple as talking to existing customers and asking about their SIM usage. Resellers will be amazed at the opportunities they can unlock from their own business

longer come to you seeking a set number of SIMS or routers, they come looking for a solution to a problem. Showing that you can solve the problem – for that business in that sector – is the pinnacle of marketing. Having been in this space for over 11 years we can arm resellers with stories from every sector and geography that you could imagine."

A single win can often turn on the tap for many opportunities, says Pratt. "Our role is to help resellers get a few wins under their belt and build momentum," he added. "Confidence grows with each win and a reseller will own more of the onboarding process every time they uncover an opportunity. Each win is also another story to tell,

and in short time a reseller can position as an expert in a lucrative technology."

### Beat the mobile drum

Sunderland explained how resellers that present themselves as having a specific practice, such as an IoT skillset, are more likely to attract opportunities compared to resellers who hide their light under a bushel. "Many mobile resellers present a legacy version of themselves having websites that lead with calls, lines or IT consultancy," he said. "I cannot believe how many partners are working on cutting-edge, and replicable projects, yet not telling the world about that."

Jola's biggest deal in the last 12 months came from a small four man reseller

that won a contract due to its SEO-enhanced website. "A global enterprise was searching for a mobile data solution in the UK and their first step was a Google search," he explained. "Our client came up showcasing a website full of case studies that demonstrate successful delivery. This was our biggest deal last year and the biggest deal the reseller has ever won."

To further strengthen the strategic hand of resellers and boost their capacity to deliver high value outcomes, both Pratt and Sunderland highlighted the importance of technical, commercial and strategic differentiation. Pratt noted: "The world of sales has changed. It's now all about solution selling and value-add."



## Zen's Fibre Hub brings full fibre choice and efficiency to the channel

Zen's Fibre Hub is now up and running for channel partners, marking a major step forward in the provider's ambition to become the UK's alt-net aggregator of choice.

market competition he's seen in that time.

"There's going to be a lot of change between now and the end of the decade in terms of consolidation in the industry, but the quick

"The greatest opportunities come during periods of change."

Richard Tang, CEO, Zen



The Fibre Hub gives partners easy access to Zen's entire full fibre footprint, which now covers up to 20 million residential and business premises. Openreach provides the lion's share of that total, but Zen has now also added CityFibre's four million plus full fibre-ready premises to the Hub, and that's just the start.

Later this summer they'll be adding Trooli's FTTP network to the range of alt-net options available to partners, followed by Freedom Fibre's. Zen has also agreed heads of terms with two more alt-nets, and the management team is currently in discussion with a number of others, including several focused on the B2B market which will further broaden choice for Zen's channel partners.

### Competition and innovation

In total, according to Zen's CEO Richard Tang, there are around 20 alt-nets operating at scale in the UK, driving competition and innovation in the market. In the industry for 30 years, Tang describes the full fibre roll out as the best free

rollout of FTTP and the competition for customers is creating a fantastic window of opportunity in the channel," he says. "The greatest opportunities come during periods of change."

### Creating opportunity

The Fibre Hub is ready to help Zen's partners grasp that opportunity, wherever they operate in the country. The aim is to offer as much choice as possible alongside some of the most competitive pricing in the channel. The Fibre Hub provides a one-stop shop for full fibre residential and business services across the UK, along with sales and marketing campaign data and materials.

The Fibre Hub is Zen's easy-to-access full fibre aggregator for the channel, and it's just getting started. Zen will be signing up other alt-nets and adding their networks to the Hub as quickly as possible, giving even more choice, reach and opportunity to its channel partners.

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# Redefining the value of integration

**Only a more strategic and value-led approach to integration will deliver the seamless, speedy and intuitive solutions required by partners and their customers, says Nick Kewney, co-founder and Chief Product & Technical Officer, Layer Systems.**

**T**wo fundamental tenets advanced by Kewney provide a foundation for delivering successful integrations – capturing the synergy between integration and automation, and prioritising customer value over the technology itself. “It’s time companies look at integration as more than just a technical improvement,” he stated. “As customer expectations continue to evolve, delivering a connected, seamless experience is no longer a bonus, it’s a baseline. Whether it’s faster onboarding, smoother billing or smarter support, the goal is always the same – to make life easier for the end user.

“This is a moment of real opportunity. Businesses that invest in integration now are setting themselves up to work smarter, serve better and stand apart from competitors still wrestling with disconnected systems. The technology is there, what matters now is how we use it to build experiences that feel intuitive, efficient

and genuinely helpful from start to finish.”

Kewney noted that businesses want their tech to work together as seamlessly as the apps on their phones. They want their apps quickly, intuitively and without needing a manual. “That doesn’t mean everything must live inside one system – but those systems should orbit a platform built to connect and adapt,” he said. “Automation is also moving from a nice-to-have to being essential. As service portfolios evolve the legacy manual processes can’t keep up, especially when it comes to keeping data in sync across systems. Integrations that enable data to flow naturally between platforms reduce friction, speed up delivery and let teams spend more time on serving customers.”

#### Joined-up solutions

Top of the priority list for telecoms resellers and MSPs is end-to-end visibility, observed Kewney. He says SMEs are asking for joined-up solutions that connect CRM, billing, onboarding and



Nick Kewney

## It’s not just about connecting systems, it’s about ensuring those connections create value

support, because managing each of those in a silo just creates confusion, errors and delays. “There’s also growing demand for support systems that offer a full picture of the customer in one place,” he added. “If a service agent can instantly see what products someone is using, download their most recent invoice along with any system changes, it becomes a better experience for everyone – faster answers, fewer mistakes and a smoother journey overall.”

According to Kewney, the fastest wins for resellers and MSPs usually lie in connecting everyday functions like billing and customer support. “These are high-frequency areas where even small improvements make a big difference,” he explained. “Automating direct debit mandates, syncing CRM customer and order data with billing systems to support automated billing, or auto-populating service tickets from sales data are all simple changes that pay off quickly.

We’re already using AI to support workflows – from surfacing suggested answers to triaging incoming queries – helping teams respond faster and smarter. From the end user’s perspective, the magic is in the experience... things feel joined-up, intuitive and responsive.

“Whether it’s seeing accurate billing info or getting timely updates on a case, integrated systems help deliver a service that feels thoughtful and well designed.”



# Integrations

Once a reseller or MSP has established an integrated service capability, the next step is to get smarter with the data, believes Kewney. "This can be around automatic case creation and closure, or using trends and behaviours to spot potential issues before they escalate," he added. "Proactive customer success is a huge opportunity, where you engage customers before they even realise that they need help. Building out customer portals or dashboards is another logical next step. With systems integrated on the backend it becomes much easier to give customers a clean, self-serve experience where they can view, manage and resolve things all in one place."

## Challenges

But taking integration to the next level can create challenges, with legacy systems often being the biggest hurdle. "Not everything is built for integration, and getting older platforms to play nicely with modern ones can be time-consuming," noted Kewney. "Scalability is another concern: As businesses grow their systems need to grow with them. If integrations aren't designed with flexibility in mind they can quickly become bottlenecks. Then there's the human factor. Change can be uncomfortable and shifting to new, integrated processes takes buy-in from teams. It helps to start small, prove the benefits early and build momentum from there."

To make it easier for channel partners to address integration and automation opportunities it is vital for suppliers to make things simple and

accessible, pointed out Kewney. "Partners need integrations that are plug-and-play where possible, but also customisable without requiring a team of developers," he said. "It's not just about connecting systems, it's also about ensuring those connections create value. That might mean triggering actions based on a sale, automating follow-ups, or reducing the steps it takes to onboard a customer. The easier it is to build those workflows the faster partners can unlock real efficiency and deliver the kind of joined-up experience today's customers expect." ■

## Key points...

- Leveraging the synergy between integration and automation is key.
- Creating more customer value from connections is the new success factor.
- Integrations that enable data to flow naturally between platforms will reduce end-to-end friction.
- There is strong potential in adding AI to support workflows.
- End-to-end visibility is a top priority for resellers.
- The fastest wins for resellers and MSPs are in connecting everyday functions like billing and customer support.
- Once you have an established integrated service capability the next step is to get smarter with the data.
- Proactive customer success is a huge opportunity.
- The key challenges are integrating with legacy systems, scalability and the human factor – shifting to new, integrated processes takes buy-in from teams.
- It is vital for suppliers to make solutions simple and accessible for their partners.

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# Do business anywhere with Teams Phone Mobile



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# Teams Phone Mobile: Transforming work, today and tomorrow



**Thea Sztejka**

Managing Director,  
BT Wholesale

Anywhere. Anytime. That's the reality of modern business. From the home to the office and anywhere in between, work can happen wherever people are, with many employees constantly switching between devices and applications.

Reliable connectivity and integrated systems are essential to make this kind of flexible working seamless and effective. The modern workforce needs more than just communication tools – they need solutions that allow them to collaborate effortlessly from any location and any device. The challenge for businesses is to provide this functionality securely and without unnecessary complexity.

The solution? BT Wholesale's Teams Phone Mobile. It combines Microsoft Teams' powerful collaboration features with EE's award-winning connectivity. Designed for the UK wholesale market, it keeps businesses connected and protected, wherever they are.

## The UCaaS opportunity is off the hook

The growth potential in the unified communications as a service (UCaaS) market is enormous. By the end of 2028, it's set to reach more than 131 million users,<sup>1</sup> presenting a major revenue opportunity for channel partners to tap into.

One of the key drivers behind this growth is Microsoft Teams, a platform already trusted by over 300 million monthly users globally. As a market leader, Microsoft Teams has created an enormous pool of users actively seeking efficient and effective ways to enhance their communications. The platform's widespread adoption across sectors – from education to enterprise – gives channel partners the opportunity to meet evolving customer needs with tailored solutions.

Alongside the rise of hybrid and flexible working, this means digital solutions are more needed than ever. In the UK, 72% of employers are offering flexible working,<sup>2</sup> which has led to a paradigm shift in how work is done. The need for seamless communication tools that can bridge the gap between on-site and remote teams is clear.

The critical role of mobile devices in the workforce is also undeniable. In the UK, 57% of workers say that smartphones are essential to their jobs,<sup>3</sup> highlighting a growing reliance on mobile technology for productivity. It should come as no surprise that many Teams users rely on its mobile app.

## Dialling into customer needs

Businesses with hybrid workers need reliable, secure and unified communications. Effective collaboration, no matter where employees are located, is the goal.

This means integrated calling and messaging in one platform – enabling greater flexibility, wherever people are working. Solutions also need to be easy to manage and set up, minimising troubleshooting calls to IT teams later down the line and ultimately increasing productivity.

Businesses are also looking for security as a standard feature to ensure that sensitive business communications are protected and that private data stays private. This is underpinned by a need for greater reliability across different devices and networks.

## Calling channel partners

Teams Phone Mobile offers a secure, reliable, mobile-first UCaaS solution for businesses of all sizes. Whether teams are working from home, the office or on the move, this integrated, ready-to-go solution ensures joined-up collaboration – all through one app, across multiple devices.

Our Teams Phone Mobile solution is also backed by the UK's best network, EE. Don't just take our word for it – according to the independent tester Rootmetrics, EE has been top for speed, coverage and reliability for more than 11 years.<sup>4</sup> And with 99% UK 4G coverage, growing 5G coverage and 24/7 monitoring for security, it's a network that offers countless growth opportunities.

That means partners can drive customer transformation with an exceptional enterprise-grade mobility solution, strengthen brand positioning with Microsoft and EE, and unlock new revenue by delivering mobile-first UCaaS.

Teams Phone Mobile is available now for channel partners. To learn more, visit [www.btwholesale.com/teamsphonomobile](https://www.btwholesale.com/teamsphonomobile)



Scan here to  
find out more

<sup>1</sup> Cavell, 2024 Cloud Comms Market Reports. <sup>2</sup> Flex Index, The Flex Report: UK Edition 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Oxford Economics, Maximising Mobile Value, 2024.

<sup>4</sup> All claims based on the RootMetrics® UK RootScore® Report: H2 2024. Tested at locations across the UK with the best commercially available smartphones on 4 national mobile networks across all available network types. Your experiences may vary. The RootMetrics award is not an endorsement of EE. Visit [ee.co.uk/claims](https://ee.co.uk/claims) for more details.

# Evolve IP channel boosted

**The business combination of ATSG and Evolve IP late last year unlocked value across all areas of their propositions with the UK channel receiving a significant and multifaceted boost, says Evolve IP EMEA Managing Director Paul Harrison.**

**T**he combination of ATSG and Evolve IP (that formed XTium) continues to strengthen the market presence of both founding entities, with Evolve IP maintaining its brand identity in the EMEA region. They aim to deliver broader value to customers and partners by leveraging pooled assets, resources and expertise – including XTium’s platform of intellectual property and infrastructure-centric managed services and Evolve IP’s suite of desktop-as-a-service, cloud communications and contact centre solutions. According to Harrison, the deal has been transformative for Evolve IP, providing expanded capabilities and a more comprehensive solution portfolio.

Together, ATSG and Evolve IP generate £170 million-plus revenues and serve over 950,000 end users across 1,700 global customers. The big question now is how Evolve IP plans to leverage the additional skills,

funding and technologies at its disposal. “The combined capabilities will enrich our channel offering significantly,” commented Harrison. “With enhanced resources we can provide partners with access to a broader portfolio of services, including advanced cybersecurity, cloud communications and managed IT solutions. We’ve also expanded our partner enablement programmes, offering greater marketing support, technical training and joint go-to-market strategies. The additional funding enables us to invest in tools and technologies that make it easier for partners to work with us.”

Harrison says Evolve IP is on track to achieve the original deal objectives both financially and strategically, as well as organisationally. “Financially, we’ve seen positive momentum with stronger revenue streams and enhanced profitability,” he explained. “Strategically, the integration has enabled us to combine the best



Paul Harrison

**Strategically, the integration has enabled us to combine the best of both organisations, strengthening our position**

of both organisations, strengthening our position in the market. And we’re focused on delivering predictable, scalable solutions to partners along with robust support frameworks. Regular feedback loops and collaborative development with partners remain at the heart of our approach.”

Harrison also noted that Evolve IP achieved its 2024 targets and he is clear about his objectives this year. “Last year we saw significant growth across key metrics including revenue, customer retention and partner engagement,” he added. “For 2025, our targets focus on expanding

market share globally and enhancing our UCaaS and CCaaS offerings. This year started strongly with new technology partners coming on board and a successful partner day with our reselling partner base in EMEA.”

As mentioned, the combination of ATSG



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and Evolve IP now serves thousands of customers globally and the latter has grown its European team by 20 per cent, forecasting double-digit revenue growth for the year ahead. "Our immediate priority is to ensure that we have a solid cloud communications portfolio to meet the demands of resellers," stated Harrison. "This includes bringing in some new

## For 2025, our targets focus on expanding market share globally and enhancing our UCaaS and CCaaS offerings

technology partners. Our key investment areas also include AI-driven solutions, automation and partner enablement tools. Longer-term, we aim to solidify our position as a leading provider of integrated cloud services across EMEA and globally."

Evolve IP delivers integrated cloud comms, collaboration tools and managed IT services underpinned by a carrier grade voice platform. Its primary markets include mid-sized and enterprise organisations across healthcare, financial services, hospitality and retail, among others. "We've always been vertically focused," said Harrison. "Some verticals have been slow to adopt hosted cloud communications but with the demise of the PBX, and more recently Mitel's challenges, we are seeing a large increase in new prospects. Integration

into business intelligence in verticals is key – voice can no longer be a silo offering."

This evolution is in large part driven by the need for agility, and Evolve IP is meeting the growing complexity of customer demands with new partner programmes that provide greater flexibility, incentives and support, with an increasing focus on co-selling and co-marketing initiatives. Harrison also expects Evolve IP's vendor partnerships to deepen as they jointly innovate around hybrid working environments, AI-driven solutions and cloud-native applications. Key technology partners currently include Microsoft, Cisco,

Webex, Dubber, Akixi and Talkdesk (among others). "We see collaboration tools such as Teams and Webex as important integration points for our solutions," said Harrison. "We also see AI, collaboration and CCaaS as big growth markets. We're helping partners improve the customer journey and reduce costs in these areas."

The stand-out characteristics of Evolve IP's most successful partners are their agility, customer-centricity and commitment to continuous learning, observed Harrison. "We help them differentiate through the development of their USP," he added. "Our resellers are largely self-sufficient... but we're on hand to advise on, and enable, project completion, whether through technical support, operational guidance or sales enablement and funding." ■

### Just a minute with Paul Harrison...

**Role model:** Former Evolve IP CEO Guy Fardone. His passion and can-do attitude was infectious.

**Tell us something about yourself we don't know:** I'm now a grandad and it feels great.

**If you weren't in ICT what would you be doing?** Something outdoors.

**One example of something you've overcome:** Covid and the market changes it forced. Re-invention was needed and we did it.

**Three ideal dinner guests:** David Attenborough, I love his passion for our planet; Professor Brian Cox, his enthusiasm for the universe makes you realise the enormity of everything; and Daniel Craig, I'm a big James Bond fan.

**Best piece of advice you have been given:** Revenue is vanity and profit is sanity.

**Your strong points and what could you work on?** My greatest strength is selling. And my weakness is my tolerance if something has not been done correctly and a customer is affected.

**Favourite comedian or comedienne:** Micky Flanagan.

**What talent do you wish you had?** To play the piano and complete a marathon.

**Industry bugbear:** The customer experience is too complex.

**Biggest career achievement:** Establishing thevoicefactory in 2010 in a challenging market, then becoming part of Evolve IP in 2018. We've stayed relevant, forward thinking and are trusted advisors to our customers.

**Today's leadership priorities:** Adaptability, empathy, vision, fostering a culture of innovation, strong relationships and empowering teams.



## Addressing the evolving needs of end users

**O**ur new Partner of the Future research highlights the need for end users to balance emerging and mature technologies while encouraging channel partners to offer industry-specific solutions. The results clearly show that successful channel partners adapt to meet the core needs of end users and anticipate future priorities to win new business



we're committed to supporting you at every step, helping you gain a clearer understanding of your clients' needs.

Many channel partners acknowledge they could get closer to customers. Our research shows that 67% find understanding their customers' current and future needs a challenge, while 28% reported difficulties in identifying the best solutions for their customers.

These challenges emphasise the importance of building strong, consultative relationships. Many channel partners already dedicate time to understanding their customers' industries, pain points, and strategic goals, deepening this understanding can enable them to offer more tailored and impactful solutions. This approach will ultimately enhance their role as trusted advisors.

We recognise the opportunities that await as channel partners adapt to new end-user demands. That's why

We've built our suite of services from the ground up, to deliver the tools and knowledge you need to succeed. We help our partners analyse their current approach and offer tailored customer acquisition plans and marketing support. We also provide ongoing business support, and our dedicated partner support team is on hand to provide guidance, answer questions and help navigate complex customer challenges.

The future for channel partners is clear. The focus is no longer solely on the hardware and software you deliver, but on the added value that supports your customers' broader goals.

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# Unravelling a UC market

**Unified Comms and UCaaS market disruption is a long way from stabilising but the trajectory is predictable with a number of key themes emerging, according to Wavenet's Head of Wholesale Jon Harris.**

**T**raditional comms players who apply a system sales approach to UCaaS are creating instability in the UC market, believes Harris, who says the issue is a major challenge for the sector. "The Unified Comms and UCaaS market is in turmoil with traditional system providers struggling to provide a cohesive cloud story while trying to retain legacy models," he stated. "Recent Chapter 11 announcements from PBX manufacturers highlight the difficulties in transitioning to full or hybrid cloud. And many vendors are reviewing their GTM strategies as the market shifts to UC3.0 with the rise of collaboration tools being the main driving factor. The Zoom-Mitel deal underlines this shift – customers don't want separate voice and collaboration clients."

In terms of UC and UCaaS buying trends, Harris is seeing three key areas where change is happening fastest. Firstly, the aforementioned focus on collaboration tools with Teams, Zoom and Cisco becoming the endpoints of choice. Secondly, the extension of CX features into the wider estate where

efficiency gains can be achieved. Thirdly, the rise of AI functionality which Harris says is being increasingly viewed as 'table stakes'. "End users struggle to understand how AI can help their business but by creating specific use cases the value can be highlighted," he added. "Whether it's full agentic AI with high levels of integration, or utilising AI to provide live transcription and summarisation, we will see use cases develop at an increasing rate of knots. All of these areas are creating new revenue streams."

Wavenet is forecasting circa £500 million revenue in its next financial year with UC contributing around £100 million (expected to grow by 10-15 per cent over the coming years). "Unified Comms is a key component of Wavenet's mix and an important revenue stream," noted Harris. "It becomes increasingly profitable when combined with other areas such as professional services, integrations, IT support and management. Security and reliability are also paramount. Ensuring solutions can fit into customers' security policies using areas such as SSO and



Jon Harris

**Many vendors are reviewing their GTM strategies as the market shifts to UC3.0 with the rise of collaboration tools being the main driving factor**

MFA reduces the risk factor and attack vectors. This is a key factor in any sale."

#### Strategic evolution

In response to the market, Wavenet's UC proposition and GTM strategy has evolved towards collaboration tools and integration, especially since coming out

of the pandemic. "Our UC strategy is to partner with selected cloud vendors and build a full service wrap that creates an ecosystem," explained Harris. "Two examples are call recording and analytics. By integrating a leading third party platform into our provisioning and management engine we

can ensure the features are ahead of the market while being easy to consume."

Integrating and combining carefully selected vendors and solutions to create a simple proposition is the single factor that gives Wavenet a competitive edge in the UC and UCaaS market,



# in 'turmoil'

says Harris. The company's in-house development team is another vital differentiator. "This capability enables us to build features based on partner feedback," explained Harris. "Our approach led us to develop the TeamsLink platform that allows partners to leverage the voice elements of Teams. Recent introductions of CRM integration and upgrading our Pro CX features are also a direct result of channel input. The development team specialise in making these things simple."

### Profit centres

UC offers a range of highly profitable areas to develop, pointed out Harris, whether around adoption support, management, integration with CRM or ITSM platforms, or enhancing customer workflows with reporting tools. "Competition is intense in the UC space with user expectations evolving," he added. "There are many UC providers struggling to provide value add and we are seeing increased commercial pressures. Traditional SIP channels and minutes, and even low cost hosted seats are highly competitive – and providers reliant on just the revenue without enhancements will find it increasingly competitive. On the flip side, the demand for integration features and increasing CX functionality is driving more investment where customers can identify efficiency savings and enhancements."

A big challenge for resellers and MSPs is retaining value through the sales cycle, noted Harris who also emphasised that articulating the value message correctly and clearly is key. But, he warns, too many organisations are

selling on price rather than outcomes. "Understanding customer needs and ensuring a great scope of works from the outset is vital," he commented. "Stop selling on price and move to outcome led sales that meet all of the required use cases. This means communicating the deliverables to avoid scope creep."

"Moreover, the deployment and adoption phases are increasingly undersold. Good deployments and adoption programmes take time, skill and effort and pay big dividends through sustained customer satisfaction."

### Key points...

- **The themes in this article will have significant implications for resellers under pressure to align with the rapidly evolving UCaaS environment.**
- **Traditional system sale approaches to UCaaS are disrupting the cloud narrative.**
- **Customer demand for integrated voice and collaboration tools are redefining the UC market.**
- **Demand for integration features and certain CX functionality is also driving more investment.**
- **AI is becoming increasingly viewed as table stakes.**
- **UC is far more profitable when combined with related areas such as professional services, integrations, security, IT support and management.**
- **In-house development capabilities provide the flexibility to innovate in response to market demands.**
- **A key challenge for resellers and MSPs is retaining value through the sales cycle.**
- **Too many organisations are selling on price rather than focusing on outcomes.**



## NetSapiens Presents: US Channel Trends with Peter Radizeski

### AI Hype is Real. ROI? Not So Much (Unless You're Smart About It)



Everyone's got an AI project. From your barber to your bookkeeper, it's raining "powered by GPT" stickers. And while Wall Street cheers, Main Street is left scratching its head.

Here's the real talk: most AI talk is BS for small businesses.

Enterprise CIOs dream of 10% productivity gains. Small business owners? They want more leads, fewer no-shows, and to stop drowning in emails. They don't care about "generative models" — they care about not spending their Saturday fixing someone else's screw-up.

#### Hype Slows Sales. Confusion Kills Momentum.

When every vendor claims AI supremacy, buyers freeze. Nobody wants to buy the wrong tool or miss the next big thing. This isn't innovation, it's paralysis by analysis.

The big players are feasting:

- OpenAI doubled ChatGPT users to 1 billion.
- Microsoft says over 1 million devs pay for GitHub Copilot.
- 70% of Copilot users say they're more productive, 29% faster.

Awesome. But if you're running a landscaping company in Ohio, those stats mean nothing unless your software stops overbooking crews and starts billing on time.

#### Small Biz Doesn't Want Magic. They Want ROI.

Small businesses aren't firing call centre agents - they don't have them. But a website chat widget that converts leads at 2x the rate? Now you have their attention.

The catch? Most small

businesses don't have structured data lakes. They have Stripe, QuickBooks, or a 12-tab spreadsheet called "FINAL\_final\_USE\_THIS\_ONE.xlsx." They're not running Salesforce, they're surviving on duct tape and Gmail filters.

So, AI has to deliver results without demanding a PhD or a \$50K setup fee.

#### Workflow Is the Real Frontier

Forget flying robots. The killer AI use case is a single window where everything lives: email, SMS, WhatsApp, social DMs - all in one place.

Why? Because Millennials now make up 51% of B2B decision-makers, and they hate phone calls. They communicate in fragments: text, memes, Slack messages, and emojis. If your business isn't there, you're invisible.

The solution? Omni-channel platforms that capture all of this noise and turn it into something actionable. All those chats become data. That data becomes insight.

#### vCon: The Underrated Superpower

Ever heard of a vCon? It's like TiVo for business conversations: voice, video, email, text, chat, all wrapped up in one structured, searchable file. Not just a call recording, but the full story.

AI can then:

- Summarise and search every customer interaction.
- Highlight why people call (or complain).
- Help small teams punch above their weight.

Suddenly, the HVAC company has enterprise-grade intelligence. Not bad for a two-person shop with a van and an iPad.

Here's the real talk: most AI talk is BS for small businesses.

#### Show, Don't Sell

Small business doesn't need another "AI strategy." They need proof it works.

Want to move a sale forward? Skip the jargon and show:

- Faster lead response = more booked jobs.
- AI-driven scheduling = fewer missed appointments.
- Smart transcripts = better follow-up and fewer screw-ups.

This isn't new. It's the same battle between IVR and auto-attendants. One makes you sound like Citigroup. The other? Like "Generic Corp, please hold."

#### Final Word: Focus on What Matters

AI won't replace your team. It'll replace the stuff your team hates doing, manual follow-ups, repetitive emails, bad scheduling.

Want to win with small business? Don't pitch AI. Pitch outcomes. Show how this tech makes their life easier, faster, and more profitable.

Clear value, fast ROI, zero fluff. That's how AI wins Main Street.

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# UK Partner Week adds more

The UK Partner Week 2025 Ambassador programme has welcomed three more members dedicated to raising awareness of the inaugural Partner Week (July 3rd-10th) initiative and Summit (July 9th). Here, they share insights into why they've adopted the Ambassadorship mantle and why the UK Partner Week Summit will be pivotal for delegates wanting to develop a best practice operating model while networking with peers.

Dave McGinn, CEO,  
Daisy Comms

Ambassador



UK Partner Week and the Partner Week Summit have been established to help the channel prepare for the challenges and opportunities ahead, collaborate, share bold ideas and build the vision, leadership and resilience needed to succeed in our fast-moving industry. The Summit themes strike a chord – we need to think beyond today and enrich a stronger long-term vision for our businesses. We need to identify and support future

leaders, not just for our teams, but for the health of the whole sector. We need practical tools and insights that we can act on. And we need benchmarks to ensure we're not just busy but building something that lasts.

For these reasons I am proud to become a UK Partner Week Ambassador. The role gives me a chance to help unite the telecoms partner community and share what's working today and what will work in the future. Just as

**The UK Partner Week Summit is a platform to share ideas, swap experiences and learn from each other in a meaningful way. I encourage every channel leader to get involved**

importantly, these collaborative events help build real connections. Whether you're attending, speaking or just taking time to listen and learn, this is your space. The event gives us a platform to share ideas, swap experiences and learn from each other in a meaningful way. I'd encourage every channel leader to get involved.

UK Partner Week and the Partner Week Summit are more than just industry events, they're part of a movement to support, inspire and uplift the entire channel. In a fast-evolving industry these gatherings offer space to pause, reflect and grow. It's a brilliant opportunity to step away from daily pressures and look at the bigger picture.

Adam Turton, CEO,  
Elite Group

Ambassador



From vision and leadership to growth strategies and the value of networking, the UK Partner Week Summit's core themes cover the full spectrum of what it takes to run a thriving, resilient and relevant business. It's all about helping channel leaders build strong teams and craft creative solutions that deliver more value to customers. These goals resonate strongly with me and I was honoured to become an Ambassador for this initiative. As an Ambassador, I can champion the discussions about how we adapt,

innovate and overcome challenges together. In short, I'm passionate about the mission of UK Partner Week and saw this as a chance to give back to the channel, to share insights from my own experiences and help celebrate and shape the future of our industry.

**The UK Partner Week Summit's core themes cover the full spectrum of what it takes to run a thriving, resilient and relevant business**

The channel is ripe for this new forum and format because our industry is transforming faster than ever, and we need a fresh platform to engage more stakeholders to collaborate on the way forward. Business leaders and teams who invest time in these topics and attend events like this will be better equipped to steer their companies through today's challenges and leverage new opportunities.

By leaning into initiatives like UK Partner Week – where we share knowledge and ideas – we will further strengthen our collective resilience for the future. Forums like this are so important. The UK Partner Week Summit offers an opportunity to stress test your plans, learn new strategies and come away inspired with tangible actions to implement.



# the Ambassadors

Gary May, Founder,  
Channel Sales Academy

Ambassador



**UK Partner** Week offers an opportunity for partners and their teams to step back from the day-to-day and enrich their vision for the future, witness what's working across the wider partner landscape, benchmark their models against best practice and learn from some of the sharpest minds in sales, marketing and technology. For me, accepting the opportunity to become an Ambassador for UK Partner Week was a complete no-brainer.

I've been in the channel for over 20 years — creating, developing and recruiting for some of the most prolific sales teams in the industry. And if there's one thing I've learned, it's that collaboration is key to the channel's and end user customer success. The UK Partner Week Summit creates the space for genuine connections to be formed. It's a forum for teams and channel partners to collaborate, strengthen existing relationships and build new ones that last.

**The UK Partner Week Summit is a chance to stay ahead of the curve, prepare for what's coming and differentiate. Inevitably, those who don't embrace opportunities to evolve will not last the course**

Furthermore, it's not just about collaboration and learning, it's about uncovering untapped potential. And events like this help to identify future leaders, give them exposure to fresh thinking and provide practical insights into revenue growth strategies that teams can actually take away and implement. Inevitably, those who don't embrace opportunities to evolve will not last the course. And with the channel and its technologies moving forwards at such a rapid pace, the UK Partner Week Summit is a chance to stay ahead of the curve, prepare for what's coming and differentiate.

## UK PARTNER WEEK SUMMIT AGENDA UPDATE

THE inaugural UK Partner Week Summit (9th July, Convene, London) aims to elevate and enable best practice across key MSP/ICT reseller business functions, and the Summit agenda has been tailored to provide a springboard for the development of best practice across a framework of Tracks focused on Sales, Marketing, Leadership and Technology. "The first UK Partner Week Summit puts a spotlight on the trends, challenges and opportunities reshaping each of our four Track categories and provides guidance to help board leaders, department heads and their team members to respond effectively, raise the best practice bar and drive growth," stated Michael O'Brien, Managing Director, BPL Business Media (organiser of the event). **To register your interest in attending the UK Partner Week Summit visit <https://partnerweek.uk>**

UK PW 25 July 3rd to 10th 2025

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- Identify your future leaders
- Gain practical insights into revenue growth strategies
- Benchmark your business models against best practice
- Network with the wider partner community
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**Heather Miles**  
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Channel Sales Academy

# How channel firms are leveling up

Getting to grips with the power of data is a top priority for channel business leaders as they redefine their CX, culture, sales and marketing functions, enabling new, more effective operational strategies to drive their businesses forward.



**PAUL HOOPER**  
CEO  
UPLANDS ONETELCO

IT'S never been more important to have transparent, accurate and timely data. We're using it to inform every decision so we know we're focusing on the right areas, working at the right pace and doing the right things. In customer experience, we're spotting issues early and improving service before problems escalate. In sales, data helps us focus on what's profitable and where momentum is building. For marketing, it's about insight-led targeting – less noise and more traction. When it comes to culture, data gives everyone direction. It's not just for management, teams across the business are use data to prioritise, track progress and stay accountable.



**ELI HAFFNER**  
MARKETING MANAGER  
ALFONICA

WE'RE increasingly relying on data to shape growth. Across CX, we're developing tools that give clients transparency from first interest to contract, supported by structured onboarding and regular feedback. In sales, we're improving the funnel by using segmented data to target the right audience, working closely with marketing and CX to align key messaging and shorten the sales cycle. We are also streamlining internal processes that support customer-facing teams. Improving our CRM and creating a tailored ticketing system is essential for a more reliable customer experience. For marketing, targeting is key. We're concentrating on offering the most relevant solutions without pushing services that a customer already uses, using clean customer data. Culturally, performance data encourages a focus on results and shows how dedicated our teams are to meeting SLAs.



**CATH BRACKEN**  
CSO  
CORE TECHNOLOGY  
SYSTEMS

OUR data strategy has evolved from a technical function to a business-critical driver of decision making, customer experience and growth. We're embedding data more deeply into every function, particularly CX, where insight-led personalisation helps us anticipate needs and respond faster. In sales and marketing, data guides smarter segmentation, more accurate forecasting and sharper campaign performance. We're leaning into automation and AI to accelerate outcomes without losing the human touch. Culturally, our teams are empowered with dashboards that don't just report but recommend. We've moved beyond adoption to actionable innovative solutions. The MSPs that win will be those who treat data not as a by-product of business, but as the engine of it.



**DION O'BYRNE**  
CHANNEL SALES  
MANAGER  
RYDAL GROUP

BUSINESSES want real-time insights they can act on. In CX, MSPs are doubling down on unified platforms to better understand and personalise client interactions. That means higher retention and more upsell wins. Sales teams are using data to spot their ideal clients, streamline their pipeline and speed up the close with smart automation. Marketing is shifting from mass emails to targeting the right people with the right message and campaigns based on behaviour, backed by data on what drives ROI. Culture leaders are using insights to track engagement, reward performance and build more agile, outcome-focused teams. MSPs who can connect the dots across customer, operational and behavioural data will be the ones who stand out and scale in this fast-moving market.



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# eraging the power of data



**RICHARD BETTS**  
CEO  
VIZST TECHNOLOGY

WE'RE using data to drive a more personalised and responsive customer experience. By integrating data analytics we're identifying trends and refining touchpoints across the customer lifecycle. We are utilising anonymised historical customer support data to deliver faster outcomes. Our data strategy enhances sales performance through deeper insights into buying patterns, account behaviour and opportunity scoring. This empowers the team to prioritise high value leads with greater precision. We're leveraging data to better understand audience intent, optimise campaign performance and deliver content that resonates. We're embedding data into everyday decision making, encouraging teams to use insights to inform their work. This is supported by accessible dashboards, regular knowledge sharing and enhanced data literacy in line with accreditations such as ISO.



**MARTIN PATTERSON**  
HEAD OF INNOVATION  
AUXILION

THE traditional input-based pricing approach is being challenged by demand for value-based outcomes and data is the key to unlocking this potential. MSPs will have to leverage large language models and data orchestration, and integrate with other data workflows, IT infrastructure and tooling, thereby empowering customers to make cohesive and insight-driven decisions. This creates competitive advantage for MSPs but conversations around data and AI invariably become conversations about risk and exposure. The associated skills and internal talent to capitalise on data strategies, coupled with the impact of automation and cybersecurity, means that while MSPs are evolving their data strategies they are doing so in a climate of uncertainty and exponential innovation.



**VINCE DELUCA**  
CEO  
SIX DEGREES

WE are committed to becoming a truly data-driven organisation. We lead by example as 'customer zero', ensuring our internal transformation sets the standard for our services. Strong data governance is central to maintaining trust. As AI adoption grows, we proactively update our data framework and policies to protect our business, people and customers. Data sprawl is a natural consequence of growth through acquisition and we're actively reviewing and rationalising our data landscape to preserve the integrity of our core datasets and support compliance. We are also building a strong data culture. Empowering teams with the right tools and practices enables informed, intelligent decision-making across the organisation, ensuring data is available, trusted, well managed and used to create real business value."



**IAIN SINNOTT**  
HEAD OF GROUP  
CUSTOMER  
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**JAMES KIRK**  
BUSINESS  
INTELLIGENCE  
DIRECTOR  
DAISY  
COMMUNICATIONS

OUR data strategy is rooted in building a strong data-driven culture across our organisation with our central data department delivering value across the business. Our data professionals and modern tech stack empower us to visualise and interpret data in real-time, enabling quick, informed decisions. While this foundation has served us well we are developing smarter, more connected data solutions to fuel our next growth phase. We're increasingly embedding the business into the data lifecycle, which helps us foster collaboration, share insights and drive continuous improvement. By embracing cutting-edge technology and automation we're ensuring AI readiness and long-term competitiveness."



**ROAN PRATT**  
SALES DIRECTOR  
ONECOM PARTNERS

MSPs are increasingly recognising the importance of data. For clients, they are analysing data to provide proactive solutions and recommendations for optimisation and efficiency. This is enhancing the customer experience and retention. This (and other customer data) enables MSPs to identify the ideal customer profile, including size, vertical and technology usage. This allows for highly targeted marketing campaigns which can increase the sales conversion rate and drive more profitable deals. Around culture is where the MSPs are making the biggest changes, trying to achieve the fine balance of a data-driven mindset and maintaining the human touch.

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# Aequitas Network creates

A new community initiative launched by Comms Dealer celebrates the achievements of women in our industry and champions inclusion across the ICT channel. Here, event sponsors BT Wholesale and Vodafone Business, along with a group of invited attendees, look ahead to the first Aequitas Network forum this month at The Sheraton Grand (London, May 15th).

Kathryn Platt, Head of Indirect, Vodafone UK

Sponsor



Vodafone is delighted to become a lead sponsor of the Aequitas Network to promote gender equality, empower women and create an environment where women feel respected and valued, and where they can thrive. At Vodafone, we strive to create an inclusive environment that celebrates diversity and reflects the communities and businesses we serve, and I am looking forward to sharing our collective experiences to drive positive change.

Although the industry has made promising progress in recent years to become more diverse, I often find that I'm still the only female in the room. But while there is still more to do from a diversity perspective, I'm proud to say that my team at Vodafone is 50 per cent female. And I would like to see a concerted effort among all stakeholders in the industry to

**It is only with initiatives like the Aequitas Network that we can bring the industry together and gain real momentum in gender equity**

keep moving forward, offering new opportunities to people from different backgrounds. But we can only do this by working collectively and this is where the Aequitas Network has a crucial part to play. Networking and mentoring relationships are a critical career resource, and the Aequitas Network will bring together women and allies to collaborate and network, celebrate achievements and break down barriers to representation in leadership roles – and help drive the equality agenda forwards. Encouraging women into the sector needs to be built alongside a cultural shift within the whole industry, and it is only with initiatives like the Aequitas Network that we can bring the industry together and gain real momentum in gender equity in the workplace.

Thea Szejka, Managing Director, BT Wholesale

Sponsor



The Aequitas Network is a fitting initiative for an inspiring community of diversity champions who lead by example and advocate for workplace inclusion. BT Wholesale is a lead sponsor because we want everyone to feel welcome in the industry at a time when attracting the best talent is critical. When everyone can be their authentic selves, the industry will have a brighter future. The Aequitas Network emphasises the need to support these goals through collaboration and celebration.

**What's exciting about the Aequitas Network is the way it combines inspiration with action**

The sector is a much more supportive place for women now but there continues to be room for improvement. Women and underrepresented groups remain significantly absent from senior leadership roles, and there's a need to address not just representation but also workplace culture, allyship and progression opportunities. We can't compromise when hiring and promoting talent, therefore allyship and the development of diverse talent is critical in the industry.

There's clearly a growing desire across the sector to do better, but not everyone knows where to start. What's exciting about the Aequitas Network is the way it combines inspiration with action. It's not just about awareness, it's about building a stronger community that can share ideas, challenges and practical ways to drive change. It's also about making the industry more accessible.

Creating visibility and networks, and championing allyship, is key to breaking down barriers and fostering long-term equality. And the Aequitas Network has huge potential not just to support individuals, but to influence organisational thinking and industry standards.



# inclusion-led community

## Rachel Wood, Head of Indirect Marketing, ANS



The Aequitas Network has the potential to initiate a special community that acknowledges female leadership in the MSP and partner landscape, helping to amplify womens' voices in tech while creating genuine leadership development opportunities. Although we've seen some progress on gender equality and inclusion in the ICT industry, women are still underrepresented in tech, which underlines a significant opportunity for greater inclusivity in the industry. As technology evolves, new possibilities are emerging, opening up opportunities for more women to explore and embark on tech careers.

It would be great to see the Aequitas Network develop into an established community with regular events dedicated to elevating the voices of women in ICT, taking action and creating real opportunities for leadership

growth. True progress in diversifying the tech industry relies on organisations that actively support and create opportunities for women. I am optimistic that with focused initiatives like the Aequitas Network we will see a notable increase in women in tech in the coming years. ■

**I am optimistic that with focused initiatives like the Aequitas Network we will see a notable increase in women in tech over the coming years**

## Cherie Howlett, CMO, Jola

As you look around the room at channel events you will likely see an increasing number of women today. However, the number of female business owners and female board directors is lower in the channel compared to other industries. Therefore, creating a community event for female leaders like The Aequitas Network is an ideal opportunity for us to come together, celebrate achievements and elevate D&I role models in the channel.

Alongside networking comes relationship building which is essential to the success of the channel. By sharing our own experiences and solutions to common problems we may be able to attract more women into our industry. Jola was started from scratch with five channel veterans, one of whom was female. Eleven years later our employees range from age 17 to over 65, and 25 per cent of our management team is female. By prioritising D&I we could all help drive growth and innovation. ■



**The Aequitas Network is an ideal opportunity to elevate D&I role models in the channel**

## Fran Miller, Head of Strategic Vendor Management, Maintel



The Aequitas Network has the potential to accelerate the gender equality agenda by creating a supportive, collaborative space where individuals and organisations can share best practices, resources and insights. It can serve as a platform to amplify the voices of women and underrepresented groups in the ICT

industry, advocating for systemic change and fostering an environment where gender equity is prioritised. By bringing together leaders, allies and professionals, the network can help drive initiatives that challenge the status quo and push for policies, hiring practices and company cultures that promote gender inclusivity. In turn, this can help to create a more balanced workforce and better representation at leadership levels.

While progress has been made over recent years, gender equality and inclusion in the ICT industry still has a long way to go. The sector has traditionally been male-dominated and there is a noticeable underrepresentation of women in technical roles and leadership positions. Some companies and organisations are making strides towards addressing this imbalance through diversity and inclusion initiatives, but the overall pace of change can be slow.

Gender stereotypes and biases persist, which creates barriers to entry for women and limits their advancement. To achieve gender equality the industry needs to adopt a more holistic and sustained approach, including improving recruitment, retention, mentorship and leadership opportunities for women. Ultimately, it would be good to see the Aequitas Network become a leading force in helping to shape a more inclusive and equitable future for all in the UK ICT sector. ■

The Aequitas Network preview continues on page 36

**It would be good to see the Aequitas Network become a leading force in helping to shape a more inclusive and equitable future for all in the UK ICT sector**

## Francesca Bannister, Marketing Manager, Voip Unlimited



The Aequitas Network has the potential to become a platform for making real progress on gender equality in the channel, a space where individuals and companies of all sizes can share tangible strategies, benchmark progress and openly discuss challenges. We need to spotlight diverse female talent across all roles – not just the boardroom. Showcasing women in engineering, operations, sales, marketing and product roles helps reshape how the industry sees itself – and how future talent sees their place within it. It's not about ticking boxes, it's about reflecting the real talent that already exists and opening up opportunities for them.

The industry must acknowledge that not everyone has had the same visibility or access to opportunities. In some cases, leadership circles remain insular and male dominated, particularly in customer-facing or C-suite roles. That dynamic needs to shift. Inclusion needs to be baked into everyday culture... how we hire, communicate, provide development support and give people the freedom to contribute authentically. I'd like to see the Aequitas Network evolve into a collaborative, outcomes-driven community that supports grassroots involvement as much as top-level advocacy. Representation is the foundation for building better businesses and a stronger industry.

## The Aequitas Network has the potential to become a platform for making real progress on gender equality in the channel

### Martin Flick, CEO, Onecom

The Aequitas Network has a unique opportunity to unite our industry around a common cause, creating lasting, measurable change in gender equality. By bringing together leaders, sharing best practices and holding ourselves accountable, we can amplify the impact of individual organisations and accelerate progress collectively. The Aequitas Network can help shift the conversation from intent to action by building a community that champions real representation, inclusive policies and equitable opportunity at every level.

While the ICT industry has made progress, we're still grappling with a significant gender imbalance, particularly in senior and technical roles. Inclusion isn't just about numbers, it's about building cultures where everyone feels they belong and can thrive. That demands conscious leadership and sustained efforts. The dial is moving, but it's moving slowly. We need to be bold enough to disrupt the status quo and committed enough to see it through. Some of our greatest successes have come from grassroots initiatives driven by passionate colleagues. When you empower people to lead change, the impact is far more meaningful.

I'd like to see the Aequitas Network evolve into a catalyst for real transformation, not just a platform for discussion but a driver of measurable outcomes. That means expanding its reach, diversifying its voice and providing tools that help businesses translate ambition into progress. I'd love to see cross-industry mentoring, shared benchmarks and a collective commitment to transparency and reporting. If we work together, support one another and hold ourselves to account, we can make equality a reality – not just a vision.



## The Aequitas Network can help shift the conversation from intent to real action

## Sue Elliott, Managing Director, DRC



I'd love to see the Aequitas Network continue to grow and shine a light on gender imbalance and other areas of underrepresentation in the comms and IT sector. It would be great to see members of this community raise the aspirations of young females in the education system and show that the technology arena is full of career potential irrespective of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or neurodiversity.

This subject is close to my heart and our leadership team is equally split between genders. But there is a long way to go before STEM careers are promoted equally to both boys and girls. Education is key. I've worked with local schools, conducted talks to whole year groups and provided 1-2-1 mentorship to girls in years nine and 10. Female tech leaders should not be a novelty, they should form a sizeable portion of the industry. And the more we can do to promote gender equality and women in tech the better, which is why the Aequitas Network is a brilliant initiative.

I have seen some improvements in D&I during my 25 years working as a female leader in the tech sector. However, these don't go anywhere near deeply and broadly enough – and I've lost count of the number of times people have assumed that I work in a typically female stereotyped role. A Tech Nation report reflects these assumptions, showing that 77 per cent of tech director roles are filled by men. This figure is even less for black and Hispanic women at just three per cent, with Asian women at five per cent. This disparity needs to be addressed. Studies have also shown that more gender diverse teams can increase productivity by as much as 48 per cent, so there is a compelling reason to get this on everyone's agenda.

## The more we can do to promote gender equality and women in tech the better, which is why the Aequitas Network is a brilliant initiative



## Debbie Wealthall, Finance Director, Meraki Communications

The Aequitas Network has a real opportunity to make a difference by bringing people together, encouraging honest conversations and highlighting voices that don't always get heard. It's a great space for sharing knowledge, offering mentorship and supporting each other in pushing for change.



By working with industry leaders and championing inclusive practices the Aequitas Network can help turn good intentions into real action. At its core, it's about fairness and making sure everyone has a fair shot, no matter their gender.

While there has been some progress in raising awareness and getting more representation in the ICT world, there's still a long way to go when it comes to real gender equality. Women, especially in tech-focused or senior roles, are still underrepresented and the importance of intersectionality often gets missed. We're tackling gender representation from a few angles and one area where we've really seen progress is in early career hiring. These programmes have helped us bring in a much more balanced group from the start. Now we're putting more focus on helping people move up and succeed in mid to senior roles.

Many companies are starting inclusion initiatives which is great, but sometimes they don't go deep enough or tackle the underlying culture. On the bright side, more and more businesses are seeing that diverse teams lead to better ideas and outcomes and they're starting to treat inclusion as a core value, not just a checkbox.

## By working with industry leaders and championing inclusive practices the Aequitas Network could become a go-to space for ideas and taking action

I'd like to see the Aequitas Network grow into a go-to space for ideas and action, a place that connects people across different industries, puts intersectionality front and centre and helps drive change from both the ground up and the top down. Building a strong mentorship community and sharing practical tools for inclusive leadership would also make a big difference. The Aequitas Network could become a trusted resource for anyone looking to make gender equality a genuine part of their culture.

**Aequitas**  
CELEBRATING WOMEN IN COMMS AND IT

**Celebrating Women in the  
UK Partner Channel**

# Aequitas

CELEBRATING WOMEN IN COMMS AND IT

15th May 2025  
Sheraton Grand London

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<https://aequitas.network/>

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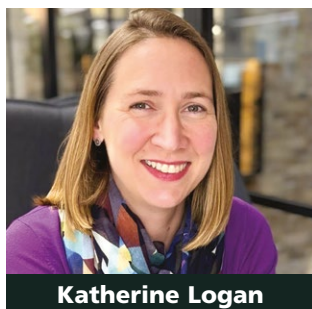
Wayne Jones (left) and Jay Ball

FLOTEK Group has appointed Wayne Jones as Group Sales Director following its acquisition of the remaining equity in north Wales-based managed IT service provider Office Equipment Systems (OES), which Jones headed up since 2012 and Flotek first invested in early last year. Jones has now become a shareholder in Flotek Group and joined the board. "Acquiring the remaining equity of OES means we can expand into the north with a great team of individuals already in place," stated Flotek Group CEO Jay Ball. "Wayne becoming Group Sales Director allows me to step back from the sales team and focus on future acquisitions, while Wayne focuses solely on delivering our ambitious growth plans to achieve £20 million revenue by the end of 2025."

**FORMER** Forterro Northern Europe President Steve Fearon has joined Pulsant as Chief Commercial Officer. His prior experience also includes GTM leadership roles at Capita and Oracle. "Steve's leadership experience in driving growth through modern, programmatic GTM strategies makes him the natural fit for Pulsant," stated CEO Rob Coupland.

## Air IT boosted by double exec hire

AIR IT has made two more exec appointments following the arrival of Barney Taylor as CEO in December last year. Katherine Logan joins as Chief People Officer, moving from PE-backed Go City; and Andy Moss arrives as Chief Financial Officer, bringing over 25 years of financial leadership experience including a track record in mergers and acquisitions. "These strategic leadership appointments mark a pivotal moment in our growth journey," stated Taylor. "Our investment in AI and automation is reshaping the way we deliver managed services and with our new leaders now on board we are poised to accelerate growth."



Katherine Logan



## The differentiation dilemma

**R**eflecting culture and values came out as critical during the session. Julie Mills, CEO at Support to Win said: "You want to read an entry in the tone of the entrant. A good submission will get under the hood of a company to showcase its identity." This can include an honest look at the lessons learnt on the way to success, said Richard Scott, Sales Director at Start Communications. He added: "Where relevant, we highlight where things didn't go right but we pivoted quickly. Judges know things don't always go smoothly and this makes it more personable."

unique as it's in the fabric of how we operate," she added.

Conveying a company's voice can be done through supporting information such as testimonials and visual aids. Gareth Pritchard, Head of Comms, PR and Events at Giacom added: "Try to illustrate the points you are making in the body of the entry and bring them to life. A great bit of supporting information can leave a lasting impression for judges inundated by text."

Paul Hooper, CEO at Uplands OneTelco



Key to achieving an authentic voice is engaging the appropriate stakeholders. Elizabeth Sparrow, Founding Director of Blabbermouth Marketing noted that entries can misrepresent the value of a project if the author wasn't directly involved. "Engage the people who led the project," she said. "They will enthusiastically talk about the unique elements that led to success." She points to the value of bringing in an outside perspective. "Wrapped up in our own worlds we forget what we are doing is

noted that differentiation can conflict with authenticity in less successful entries. "Some may try and shoehorn in differentiators that don't reflect the truth," he said. "Don't start to fabricate elements to impress judges. Be authentic." AI is another threat to award authenticity. Candice Cunliffe, MD at F6 Agency, added: "Increased use of AI has unfortunately led to more generic entries. Utilising AI is great but weave in a brand story, value proposition and package it beautifully."

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