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Welcome comment



Stuart Gilroy

WHAT does it mean to be relevant? Does it mean being a follower of fashion? Or being able to talk about all things topical? It could be either (and more), but you can't be relevant all the time because we're all different. The same goes for GTM strategies with a broad

brush approach. They inevitably suffer from gaping holes of irrelevance because different customer profiles will respond in varying degrees to what's on offer, or ignore the bait.

Aligning with customer needs is of course a major driver of growth, and perhaps the best way to set a trend in market relevance is to put appositeness front and centre of client engagement and growth planning. The old saying... 'jack of all trades and master of none' is totally relevant because we must specialise to excel. It stands to reason that the more specialised you are in meeting a certain type of company's requirements, the more relevant you are to their tech spending budget.

The verticalisation of GTM strategies has to be the way forward not just to reinforce relevance, but to drive differentiation and competitive advantage in a commoditising and saturated marketplace. There's more: It's a lot easier and far more efficient to be an expert in particular fields of business, able to optimise best practices, replicate specialisms across whole verticals and become an even bigger expert with every project.

Making smarter decisions that accelerate business goals is key, and how we turn temporaneous relevancy into long-term indispensability is perhaps one of the biggest deciding factors that will shape the future of MSPs. It's logical that industry-specific, ultra-relevant solutions backed by stand-out expertise – from CX to consultancy and implementation – will lead to a much stronger market position.

Stuart Gilroy, Editor

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PPA ISSN 1366-5243

bpl. A BPL Business Publication

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Subscriptions
Subscription rates for 12 issues:
UK, £65; Overseas: £80 (incl p&p)
Back issues can be obtained:
UK £6 (incl p&p), Overseas £10 each (incl p&p)
For subscriptions:
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Printed by Pensord Limited

World Cup for Big Goal victor

International glory beckons The Big Goal qualifiers who have a chance to represent England at the World Corporate Champions Cup in Morocco this coming October.

Following three highly competitive tournaments staged alongside Brentford FC, Sheffield Wednesday FC and Derby County FC, 15 ICT industry teams will meet at St George's Park – the home of England Football – on September 26th for the 2025 finals of The Big Goal. The winners of the nationals will represent England at the seventh World Corporate Champions Cup to be staged at Fez in Morocco from October 22nd-26th, organised by the International Federation of Corporate Football and featuring companies from 16 nations.

The 15 UK teams competing at St George's Park for the honour of wearing the three lions shirt in Morocco will be – OneCom (Southern Champions), Focus Group, Giacom, Comms Dealer, Sky Business, Elite Group (Northern Champions), Daisy Communications, PXC, ICT Reverse, ANS Group, Wavenet (Midlands Champions), Welcomm Communications, Virgin Media Business, Cameo and LANtern Tech.

"This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for one team from our industry to gain international recognition and represent our country in a world cup football tournament," enthused



Wavenet City celebrates Midlands region triumph

Tez O'Brien, CEO of The Big Goal headline sponsor Giacom. "It doesn't get much bigger than that.

"When we launched The Big Goal alongside the Street Soccer Foundation (SSF) and Comms Dealer we hoped it would grow in stature – it's delivered that and more. The regional tournaments have been superbly run and were played in great spirit. More importantly, the teams participating have enabled the SSF to stage academies across the UK which are helping young people lift themselves out of homelessness. That is the ultimate prize."

Elite Group won the Northern regional tournament, beating ANS Group 3-0 in the final to retain the trophy it lifted last year. CEO Adam Turton commented: "Taking part in The Big Goal has been the most impactful initiative

we've ever experienced for employee engagement and social responsibility. It combines the passion and camaraderie of football and team sports with the opportunity to make a real difference, positively changing lives and creating meaningful social impact."

Wavenet City triumphed in the Midlands tournament with a 3-0 victory over Welcomm Communications in the final. "After beating last year's winners Virgin Media Business in the heats we believe we have a great chance of winning the nationals and representing England," said Wavenet Player Manager Aaron Drake. "That must be the best incentive ever."

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Gamma takes next step



Gamma's move from AIM to the Main Market of the London Stock Exchange has been hailed as a 'huge milestone', and with a market capitalisation of circa £1.2 billion the step-up provides a bigger platform for its ambitious and accelerating growth strategy, says CEO Andrew Belshaw.

Gamma first listed on AIM in October 2014 with revenues of circa £173 million and around 500 employees based in the UK. Since then revenues have grown to nearly £580 million with headcount increasing to 2,200 people operating in the UK, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain. "In 2014 AIM was the right place for us, well suited to small, fast growing tech businesses," commented Belshaw. "But even then there was a sense that if things went to plan a move to the Main Market might eventually follow. This is a platform for the next stage of our journey, not the finish line."

"In three years time I expect Gamma to be significantly larger with a broader footprint in the UK and Europe. Structurally, we'll be more international but

culturally we intend to remain recognisably Gamma. Innovation will continue across many different areas of the business and we'll have an expanded set of solutions that help our partners grow their customer relationships."

Staying familiar

Belshaw is keen to emphasise that while Gamma now has a bigger platform there will be no step-changes in its identity and modus operandi. "The move allows us to invest more in the tools, services and innovations that help our partners grow," he added. "That's always been the focus and it remains front and centre."

He also noted that Gamma has grown to a point where it already operates within many of the structures of a Main Market listed business, including the required disciplines and visibility. "We've been operating



Andrew Belshaw

This is a platform for the next stage of Gamma's journey, not the finish line

with strong governance and structure for several years now," added Belshaw. "This move formalises it, but the fundamentals don't change. Yes, the governance obligations are more rigorous, but what matters more is the opportunity this gives us to continue investing in our people, our products, and above all, our partners. We're very conscious about maintaining our culture, our agility and our commitment to partner success."

As noted above, moving to the Main Market has long been part of Gamma's strategic thinking. But looking ahead, the focus is on integrating recent international acquisitions and driving local growth. The move also supports stronger vendor relationships, giving Gamma access to broader technology ecosystems and opportunities. And of course Gamma has an opportunity

to broaden not only its institutional shareholder base, but also extend opportunities to its own people. "We've always believed that employees should be able to participate in the success of the business," stated Belshaw. "Many already do, and as we grow we want to expand those opportunities. We're always looking for ways to make Gamma a better place to work."

Belshaw believes that the move to the Main Market is a boon to all involved and builds on an already strong growth momentum. "AIM has served us well and we have seen over a decade of consistent financial and operational performance," said Belshaw. "FY24 was another strong year, and the move to the Main Market is a huge milestone that reflects the hard work of everyone across the business. But we're not resting on it." ■



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Riley on megamerger: 'If yo

Daisy Group's visionary founder Matthew Riley is a paradigm of ambition, motivation and perseverance, all qualities that have bolstered his entrepreneurial dealmaking skills and grown the company he set up in his garage at home 24 years ago into a platform serving almost 700,000 business customers following his latest triumph. Comms Dealer caught up with Riley soon after the Daisy Group and Virgin Media O2 Business megamerger deal was inked to get the behind-the-scenes story.



Matthew Riley

The merger creates a new £1.4 billion revenue powerhouse with VMO2 taking a 70 per cent stake and Daisy Group 30 per cent. Riley has always known that achieving his growth ambitions is dependent on taking bold and proactive actions. And over recent years there have been periodic press indications that he might be on the verge of striking his next big deal – all false dawns – but nobody saw this one coming. The main factor behind the surprise

transaction is perhaps the incidental nature of its inception. You see, VMO2's business customer base had long been a favourite target for Riley – who has never taken his eye off the prize despite a number of requests to buy the base being politely and routinely turned down – until last December.

"I've always thought the VMO2 Business was a sleeping giant sitting under that big consumer brand," explained Riley. "It hadn't built momentum or been

Considering where we've come from and where we are now – probably second only to BT – I almost had to pinch myself. It's a massive opportunity for Daisy Group

fully brought to life, and accounted for less than 10 per cent of VMO2's revenue and less than five per cent of profit. I felt the business hadn't seen daylight so I tried a few times over the years to buy it – the answer was always no. I asked again before

Christmas and they said 'no... but, we have another idea'. This proves that if you don't ask, you don't get."

Establishing and running a business can be challenging, exciting and very personal. And the exhilaration shown by Riley when the merger

completed is rarely, if at all, experienced by business leaders in the channel. Such is the uniqueness and scale of this transaction. "The deal was building for some time and there was a release of emotion and excitement when it actually completed," stated Riley. "Considering

'If you don't ask, you don't get'



where we've come from and looking at where we are now – probably second only to BT – I almost had to pinch myself. It's a massive opportunity for Daisy Group."

The trigger for VM02 was that its own merger had been fully integrated and the need to commit to a bolder and longer-term B2B organic growth strategy became more obvious. This prompted a new direction in strategic thinking following Riley's latest pre-Christmas approach. His persistence ultimately takes Daisy Group's

growth strategy to a whole new level, pushing the boundaries and enabling Riley to write the next chapter in his success story as a totally hands-on Chairman. "I will be driving the strategy full-time and working closely with Jo Bertram on a robust delivery plan," he added. "I'll also be doing a lot of listening to customers and suppliers while thinking about what's coming next – which I enjoy doing."

First priorities

Riley noted that his immediate plan is to reassure customers and staff, then move the 500,000 strong VMO2 base onto Daisy's platforms and IT stack. "They currently sit within VMO2's consumer business so we will lift and shift to give them an excellent customer service experience and a one bill solution from a single portal, with a lot more automation and control over what they want to do with their account," he added. "This will take 12 to 18 months. We're used to this kind of integration and change management and are ready to start. Then it's about giving VM02's sales force all the products and services we have. They don't currently sell an MSP range – it's mainly mobile and connectivity."

As mentioned, VMO2 saw B2B as a big growth area and wanted to approach the opportunity in a different way – and the foundational migration of its 500,000 customers (building on Daisy's circa 180,000 base) positions Daisy Group to seize unprecedented opportunities. This is because the huge customer base is a gateway for in-demand MSP products and services. But Riley is not planning to

instigate a material change to his GTM growth strategy following the merger. Instead, he will replicate his proven cross and upsell model on a far larger scale. "The market sweet spot for us is unified comms, and selling hosted solutions into VMO2's 500,000 customers is a massive opportunity," commented Riley. "We have a big direct sales force and will be cross-selling UC at a rapid rate. We've proved the strategy by selling the HiHi product into our smaller customer base while driving the Gamma Horizon product into our bigger customers. We've seen phenomenal success and won numerous awards for our products and services. This is our prime objective for growth – and we just want to grow faster."

Riley expects this strategy to deliver positive net organic growth and an improvement in EBITDA. And he confirmed that acquisitions are on the cards but not for the first year to 18 months while customers are bedding in. He also noted that the resellers and MSPs most likely to thrive in the future are those that align with trends in customers' perceptions of value. "It all links into that IT conversation – which is where we have been for some time," stated Riley. "Microsoft is our fastest growing product category and more resellers are starting to realise they need to offer the bigger solution because it's cloud-based and customers want it. If not, IT providers will eat their lunch. Offering customers Microsoft and cloud products has worked well for us over the past three years."

Maximising value from deals is becoming more

Whichever way you look at it, the merger creates value, accelerates growth and is acknowledged as an M&A strategic masterstroke

challenging, hence the dip in M&A activity, but the VMO2-Daisy Group merger has many high value upsides. It also provides Daisy with a plentiful source of cheap debt having secured inter-company loans as part of the arrangement. "We have market leading borrowing costs because Liberty Global and Telefonica (the 50/50 shareholders in Virgin Media O2) have access to treasury options that I can only dream of," stated Riley. "PE-backed companies would likely pay more than double what I'm paying. This allows me

to invest further in growth and be more competitive."

Another significant catalyst for the merger is the economies of scale it enables with around £600 million in equity value expected to be delivered. "The majority of synergy benefits will come from changing the platforms and systems and cross selling products and services into the base," commented Riley.

Whichever way you look at it, the merger creates value, accelerates growth and is rightly acknowledged as an M&A strategic masterstroke. It's also testimony to the potentially huge benefits of trying your luck and adds credence to the saying 'if you don't ask, you don't get'. "This merger is a significant milestone in Daisy's 24 year history," added Riley. "It will be driven by the entrepreneurial spirit for which we are known and will catalyse the next phase of our ambitious growth plans. I want to say a massive thank you to the teams that helped us. I'm the deal-doer, but I have a big team that helps me get things done. They don't always get noticed – and they should."

VMO2 Business-Daisy Group merger factfile...

- The merger of Virgin Media O2 Business and Daisy Group creates a £1.4 billion revenue powerhouse with around 700,000 customers and massive cross-sell growth potential.
- The deal (expected to close in July) sees VMO2 take a 70 per cent stake and Daisy Group 30 per cent.
- Daisy Group founder Matthew Riley will lead the merged entity as Chairman while VMO2 Business Managing Director Jo Bertram becomes CEO.
- The organisation will initially operate under separate brands out of existing office bases.
- Based on full year 2024 performances the new company will have pro forma revenues of circa £1.4 billion, adjusted EBITDA of £150 million and adjusted EBITDA less capex of £100 million.



Ten channel bosses on today's top leadership priorities...

Which high profile channel leader rates confidence in decision making as being a pivotal success factor? Find out here, along with many other insights into the leadership priorities of channel personalities.

Auxilion CEO Patrick Jordan

We all need to do better around ESG. Sustainability needs to be at the core of leadership priorities.

Evolve IP CEO Guy Fardone

Leadership is about adaptability, empathy, vision, fostering a culture of innovation, strong relationships, empowering teams and being confident in the decisions we take.

Risc IT Solutions and Novem IT CEO Alex Heslip

Communication is critical to plugging people into what the business is doing, why, and what it means for stakeholders.

Phil Grannum, CEO, Wavenet

It's about fostering a culture of innovation, collaboration, accountability, empowering teams, transparency and agility.

Everything Tech Group (ETG) founder and CFO Mark Allen

Today's top three leadership priorities are innovation, operational excellence and a customer-first approach.

Comms365 CEO Mike van Bunnens

Leaders have to listen to their teams, lead from the front, be firm but fair and approachable.

Espria CEO Clinton Groome

The most significant priority is the continuation of relationship building across customers and vendors.

Intercity Technology CEO Charlie Blakemore

You've got to provide a compelling proposition that's competitive and enables customers to do more.

Patrick Daly, Managing Director, Amillan

Maintaining customer-centricity, driving business transformation and adopting an innovative mindset.

n2s CEO Rob Bolton

Effective coaching and mentoring is key to helping my team make better decisions for the business.

Ways vendors can get it right

When vendors want to scale their growth through partner programmes they need to show a deep understanding of what makes channel engagement successful, writes Loucerna Director Louise Grant.

Having worked in the channel for most of my career I've seen many vendors get their channel programmes and go-to-market wrong. Mistakes often happen when they move too quickly, or when their channel programme isn't tailored to the target audience because it was built by someone who doesn't have the war wounds of experience. These are just two scenarios that can be rectified by giving due attention to the five key action points that will ensure vendors' channel strategies get off on the right foot and enable partners to hit the ground running.

1. Don't treat a signed contract as the finish line, the real work begins after the paperwork is complete. Onboarding should be seen as a continuous process, not a one-time event – and it's only the beginning.
2. Avoid generic value propositions: Vendors need a clearly defined channel value proposition that asks what's in it for partners from the outset. This starts with identifying the ideal partner profile and addressing that demographic appropriately to make their lives easier and more profitable.



Louise Grant

3. Don't be difficult to do business with: If your partner application process is clunky, your portal is hard to navigate, or your contracts take weeks to finalise, you're starting the relationship on the wrong foot. Fast, friendly and frictionless processes set the tone for long-term success.
4. Make sure your offer is channel-ready: This seems obvious, but it's often missed. Do you have clear pricing? Can partners easily quote and order your product or service? These priorities need to be ready to go before you engage with partners, otherwise you will come unstuck.
5. Don't ignore channel conflict: One of the quickest

ways to erode trust with partners is for them to compete directly with a vendor's sales team or with each other in an unstructured way. Channel conflict is often the result of poor territory planning, unclear rules of engagement or a lack of deal registration processes. To manage this effectively, be transparent about how leads are allocated, ensure fair compensation structures and establish clear escalation paths.

Ultimately, channel programmes should be based on clarity, speed and alignment. Partners aren't just an extension of a vendor's sales team – they're independent businesses choosing to work and grow with them. ■

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Get strategic about UC

Market expansion in the UCaaS space is a sure bet for MSPs looking to drive more revenue growth – providing the right approach is taken, says Uplands OneTelco CEO Paul Hooper.

Unified Comms is a major and growing part of Uplands OneTelco's business with AI-driven automation, voice analytics and next-gen contact centre solutions set to change the game, according to Hooper. He also noted that the UK UCaaS market is undergoing a major transition, driven by the ISDN switch-off and businesses looking for more flexible and scalable solutions. But while these market catalysts present huge opportunities, many businesses are still unprepared or unsure about their options. "The challenge is ensuring customers understand the real benefits of UC beyond just replacing a phone system," stated Hooper.

In terms of UC buying trends, change is happening fastest around cloud telephony adoption with organisations moving away from on-premise PBXs much quicker than anticipated, observed Hooper. "There's also growing demand for UC platforms that integrate directly with Microsoft Teams and other business critical applications," he commented. "Our focus isn't just selling UC – it's about embedding it into

our customers' wider IT infrastructure. This is creating new revenue opportunities, particularly in long-term managed service contracts and value-added integrations."

UC is a key revenue driver for Uplands OneTelco, but Hooper says that profitability isn't just about margin, it's about lifetime value and outcomes. "Businesses are no longer just looking for a phone system, they want fully connected, secure and integrated solutions," he added. "The shift to hybrid and remote work is still a key driver but compliance, cost control and automation are now playing a bigger part in decision making. Businesses need a provider that actually understands their operations and can tailor solutions to their needs."

Evolution

Uplands OneTelco started out as a mobile-first provider, and while mobility is still a core part of its offering the company has evolved into a full managed service provider over the last five years, integrating UC, cloud telephony and connectivity to give businesses a seamless, fully managed experience. "The biggest shift has been



Paul Hooper

Businesses are no longer just looking for a phone system, they want fully connected, secure and integrated solutions

moving away from just supplying solutions to truly embedding them in our customers' operations, and helping them use UC to improve efficiency, customer service and flexibility," added Hooper. "Looking ahead, our investment is focused on automation, security and deeper integration with business applications like CRM and collaboration tools. Our goal is to ensure that businesses get sustainable value."

Long-term managed service contracts bring the most value, noted

Hooper, particularly when UCaaS is integrated with mobile and connectivity solutions. "AI-driven call management and analytics tools are emerging as strong revenue generators, helping businesses improve customer experience and efficiency," added Hooper. "Contact centre solutions and enhanced Microsoft Teams integrations are also opening up new revenue streams."

Uplands OneTelco is experiencing strong traction in retail, construction, healthcare and professional services – sectors that need

high availability, multi-site and remote connectivity solutions. "We're also expanding into the public sector where there's increasing demand for scalable and secure cloud-based communications," added Hooper.

Unified Comms sits at the heart of Uplands OneTelco's managed services model, creating long-term relationships with customers rather than one-off sales. The profitability comes from layering UCaaS with connectivity, mobile and ongoing support – but there are three challenges to optimising UC sales and deployments, according to Hooper. "Many businesses still don't fully understand the long-term value of UCaaS and make decisions based purely on price rather than long-term value," he explained.

"Secondly, security concerns are growing. And thirdly, some vendors are slow to innovate which makes it harder to deliver cutting-edge solutions. We work with partners that have a clear commitment to innovation and continued development. We also develop our own integrations to streamline service management and improve the user experience for customers."

Uplands OneTelco's UCaaS revenues have grown year-on-year and Hooper expects continued double digit growth as more businesses migrate from legacy systems. "While competition has definitely increased, not all providers offer true value," he added. "Resellers who truly understand their customers' pain points will always win."



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Market trends create UC

An evolution in customer perceptions of value alongside the emergence of AI-enabled solutions has created a 'perfect storm' driving organic growth and deal value in the UCaaS space, according to Focus Group Regional Sales Director Richard Osborn.

Focus Group currently generates revenues of over £250 million with UC accounting for circa £75 million. Osborn forecasts the MSP's UCaaS revenues to continue growing at around 10 per cent, essentially because customers' value perceptions of the traditional UC tech stack have evolved and much of the typical fare, such as hybrid working capabilities, multi-device access and centralised cloud management are considered table stakes – the minimum expectations of a modern cloud telephony platform.

"These traditional value propositions have been leapfrogged by the newest generation of AI-enabled, productivity-enhancing automation and integration tools which offer measurable, referenceable ROI, both in monetary and productivity terms," he stated. "We're seeing budgets being carved out for these new technologies with buyers seeking advice and consultancy on where to invest and how best to

leverage the technology to deliver maximum impact."

Customers are also demanding choice, whether that's choice of how they interact, which is driving multi and omni-channel CX adoption, or a choice to self-serve, resulting in an increased investment in intelligent AI-enabled IVRs and chatbots. "Consumer demands are reshaping buying trends in the UC space and the fear of being left behind is driving investment like never before," added Osborn. "The arrival of new AI-enabled technologies, alongside a change in buying habits has created the perfect storm, resulting in an organic increase in both ARPU and overall deal value. The timing couldn't have been better."

Focus Group had the foresight to double down on these areas, investing in businesses such as Make. Contact – a specialist in CX and AI enabled technologies – which brings CX and CCaaS consultancy expertise and development skillset to



Richard Osborn

We're seeing budgets being carved out for new technologies with buyers seeking advice and consultancy on where to invest and how best to leverage the technology to deliver maximum impact

the group as a CX Centre of Excellence. "These acquired skillsets and associated products provide us with the credibility and referenceability that was lacking, while enabling us to pivot our marketing efforts to target higher ARPU opportunities," added Osborn.

Margin erosion

This approach is key to combating growing competition and market saturation in the SMB space which is putting pressure on margins and ARPU. "Competition continues to

grow, due in part to the rise of Microsoft Teams Voice," observed Osborn. "It's no longer a case of telco versus telco, MSPs are diversifying their portfolios to deliver voice within the Microsoft environment. Understanding how to build value into a Microsoft Teams proposition is vital. We should be able to deliver the same business outcomes to a customer irrespective of their choice of endpoint."

The SMB market is highly sought-after, and as mentioned somewhat

saturated, which has resulted in an inevitable race to the bottom. Transactional, price-led sales lead to a lack of customer loyalty and increased churn, highlighting a need to change the GTM narrative and strategy around UC sales.

"The evolution of our go-to-market strategy has been two-fold," explained Osborn. "Firstly, a pivot in sales and marketing messaging to focus on business outcomes, backed by credible statistics and proof points. This approach

aaS launch pad

enables our messaging to stay platform-agnostic, ensuring we stay agile enough throughout the sales process to deliver the right solution to the customer.

"Secondly, we've doubled down on our verticalisation efforts. Having learned from our successes in primary healthcare that the magic ingredient for vertical success is an intrinsic understanding of the industry, we're investing heavily in bringing the right people into the business to spearhead these initiatives."

Going vertical

Osborn emphasised that when evaluating potential vertical propositions, credibility is key, which in large part is based on having clear insights into existing success factors. "Understanding where we've been organically successful, why we've won in that space, alongside potential addressable markets was pivotal to shaping our future strategy," added Osborn. "Vertical propositions are most successful when they deliver a silver bullet, providing value or functionality specific to a known industry challenge.

"Our Think Healthcare proposition is exactly that. With industry specific integrations into primary healthcare patient databases we were able to accelerate sales in this vertical, because we could deliver deeper integration. To secure this advantage and develop the proposition we acquired the IP and development team."

But core licensing remains the most profitable element of a UCaaS sale, pointed out Osborn, despite market

Key points...

- **Focus Group currently generates revenues of over £250 million with UC accounting for circa £75 million.**
- **The MSP's UCaaS revenues are forecast to continue growing at around 10 per cent.**
- **Traditional value propositions have been leapfrogged by the newest generation of AI-enabled, productivity-enhancing automation and integration tools.**
- **Budgets are being carved out for these new technologies with buyers seeking advice and consultancy.**
- **Competition and market saturation in the SMB space is putting pressure on margins and ARPU.**
- **But the arrival of AI-enabled technologies, alongside a change in buying habits has created the perfect storm, resulting in an organic increase in ARPU and overall deal value.**
- **Core licensing remains the most profitable element of a UCaaS sale, despite market pressures.**
- **The three biggest challenges to optimising UCaaS are complexity in integration, differentiation in a crowded market and adoption resistance.**
- **A focus on business outcomes and verticalisation creates differentiation.**

pressures. "Strong vendor relationships and the ability to deliver sizeable volume has enabled us to achieve year-on-year growth," commented Osborn. "With a focus on business outcomes and delivering value we're driving initiatives to increase attachment

rates of value added services such as analytics, recording and integration. These incremental revenue gains when scaled will deliver considerable growth figures from our existing billing customer base."

Growth potential

Osborn expects the next generation of value added services to hold huge revenue potential, because chatbots/voicebots, sentiment analysis tools, automation and CX tools all provide measurable ROI which leads to accelerated adoption. "Innovation is being driven by customer demand for increased productivity and a better understanding of consumer satisfaction," added Osborn.

"In the UC space change is happening fastest around CX, AI, automation and self-service. Notably, the line between UC and CX is continuing to blur with informal contact centre use cases being prevalent in most opportunities, and the technology becoming more accessible to all."

At the moment, observed Osborn, CX-focused solutions are mainly the delivery mechanism for AI with the likelihood that these will trickle down into core UC products. "With the rapid advancement of AI technology it'll be interesting to see how transformative the technology becomes," he commented. "The UK UC market is a rich melting pot of innovation, collaboration and healthy competition. As a channel we are collectively driving technology forward, improving consumer interactions, enhancing brand loyalty and accelerating growth for UK businesses." ■

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Decision time on UC strategy

The question of how to approach the evolving UC marketplace is becoming more pressing for MSP leaders such as Bluecube Managing Director Paul Reames. Here, he discusses the determining factors under consideration – and with a growing focus on AI we can perhaps see which way the scales will tip.

Reames has arrived at a fork in the road in his UC planning and is weighing up the pros and cons of which strategic route to follow. "We either go cheap and go for volume or we add value to UC and provide a niche service," he explained. "Inevitably, MS Teams will improve its voice proposition and we're deciding how to replace any lost revenue."

Reames noted that while access to free or cheap UC services such as Microsoft Teams is a concern, he's not seeing any changes or worrying signs from his UC customer base just yet. "However, to keep winning in the UC space we're going to have to choose our battlefield," he added. "Our UC proposition and go-to-market strategy is constantly evolving. Following the pandemic we were all about online meetings and demos. Now we're back in the boardrooms but still talking about the latest technology within UC and how it can integrate with other tools."

The pandemic played a big role in boosting the



Paul Reames

sentiment and transcript analysis have created new revenue streams and heightened interest in UC."

UC currently accounts for approximately 55 per cent of Bluecube's revenue and the most profitable elements of UC are generally around the addition of CCaaS capabilities. "We expect AI tools like sentiment analysis to bolster CCaaS revenues as they develop and become more affordable to SMBs," added Reames. "There is slow growth in our UC forecasts so we're more focused on areas that will maintain our fast growth trajectory. For example, we're looking at AI tools and niche markets to reinvigorate UC revenue growth."

Reames is encouraged by the 'major benefits' of AI in areas like call analysis and CX tools along with the integration of business applications. "Integration with messaging platforms like WhatsApp and Messenger are already improving the customer experience," he commented. "AI driven functionality and services will save customers time and money."

growth of UC, and even with businesses moving back to the office Reames is still seeing an increase in demand for hybrid working tools across the majority of customers. "As the features and tools within UC products develop the investment that businesses are prepared to make in UC will continue to grow," he added.

Conversation turner

"Old school features that were once a selling point are now an expectation, so we've turned the conversation to how UC can help with compliance management or efficiency through AI tools, for example. AI features like

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The rapid shift to sector specialisation

Channel partners and technology enablers have evolved from selling products to actively addressing current business needs. Today, they occupy an advisory position and an extension of clients' businesses. Relationships that were once transactional now prioritise long-term customer goals.

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"During our research, 84% of channel partners told us that they see specialisation as essential for staying competitive in the future."

Helen Imms
Partner Acquisition Lead

and taking on the role of a long-term innovation partner.

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Going mobile with MS Teams

BT Wholesale's launch of Teams Phone Mobile is a timely solution for resellers wanting to tap into surging demand for UC and collaboration tools, says Channel Director Gavin Jones.

With demand for collaboration tools increasing, along with the rise of flexible working, growing dependence on business smartphones and over 70 per cent of Microsoft Teams users relying on mobile apps, there's a market gap for solutions like BT Wholesale's Teams Phone Mobile, claims Jones. "Microsoft Teams has more than 320 million monthly active users and is the collaboration tool of choice for many organisations," he stated. "Most businesses know that the age of the desk-bound phone system is a thing of the past. Hybrid working is the norm and UCaaS delivers streamlined communications and collaboration tools. Adding mobile capabilities enhances the offering further, and channel partners can establish themselves as indispensable technology enablers if they can provide it."

Jones believes that the combination of Microsoft Teams and EE in Teams Phone Mobile enables partners to effectively turn demand for mobility into new revenue streams. "With 99 per cent UK 4G coverage, growing 5G coverage and 24/7 monitoring for security, Teams Phone Mobile delivers seamless



Gavin Jones

Most businesses know that the age of the desk-bound phone system is a thing of the past.

on-the-go communication that supports customers with client retention, stakeholder engagement and, ultimately, business growth," stated Jones.

Unified experience

He says solutions like Teams Phone Mobile also provide an opportunity for customers to consolidate redundant fixed line and mobile services, alongside delivering more collaboration capabilities, greater call reliability and a unified experience that

brings call history, unified voicemail, status options and one number across all Teams devices. Organisations can also extend their corporate policies, such as recording, to ensure complete customer communications records, while users' personal numbers are kept hidden.

Adding more value

"There are lots of additional value adding services partners can provide to supplement revenues," commented Jones. "For example, AI-driven analytics provides a greater understanding of customer behaviours through delivering actionable insights from communications. And call management capabilities, such as intelligent routing and interactive voice systems, ensure that inbound calls are handled efficiently, reducing wait times and enhancing the customer experience."

Jones also cited additional revenue opportunities from fraud prevention tools that boost protection against increasingly sophisticated threats. "Channel partners should use the deep understanding they have of customers to consider how else they can drive the most from Teams Phone Mobile, and then work closely with vendors to build comprehensive propositions," stated Jones. ■

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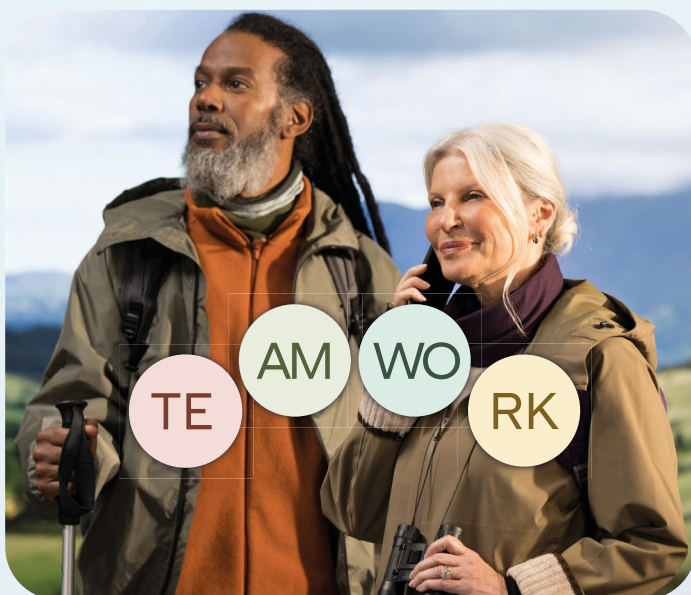
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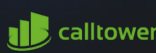
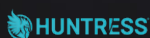
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High growth CCaaS market

Opportunities for growth in the CCaaS market continue to multiply as in-demand technologies like analytics and AI transcription services, supported by expert consultancy, unlock high value outcomes for customers and sustainable revenues for MSPs, says Ian Taylor, Head of CX, Avoira.

Avoira operates in many areas of the market and generates revenues approaching £30 million, of which contact centre solutions and consultancy services account for around 25 per cent and rising. According to Taylor, demand for more sophisticated multi-channel solutions is a key factor in the MSP's contact centre growth. "The market is evolving with businesses upgrading from basic UC to more sophisticated solutions as they embrace multi-channel communications," he stated. "They want much more than telephony to respond to business challenges and consumer expectations. They're looking to procure solutions that can drive change and deliver solid returns."

Buying trends are being driven by three factors, observed Taylor. Firstly, a competitive need to stay ahead of the game.

Secondly, the realisation that investment in more powerful solutions can drive increased sales and optimise upselling. Thirdly, a need to better protect businesses, whether supporting customer and agent wellbeing through pro-active monitoring or guaranteeing and evidencing regulatory and corporate compliance.

Taylor emphasised that in the financial services sector stringent new rules introduced by the Financial Conduct Authority last year have significantly increased the regulatory burden. "Firms now want solutions that not only enable compliance but evidence it so that best practice can be demonstrated on demand," he added. "We have made a significant impact on the financial services market, most notably within the insurance sector, and this remains fertile ground. While firms are often initially attracted by the ability to monitor



Ian Taylor

Like Formula One racing, delivering a solution takes a team. With an AI project you need people not just behind the wheel but in the pits to achieve top performance

and evidence regulatory compliance, once they realise the sales and service benefits that can also be secured they're blown away."

Significant player

Avoira is also a significant player in public sector markets where there's a need to enhance service and

protect the public. Taylor says that Avoira currently serves the second largest contact centre in this sector in the UK with its analytics solution capturing, transcribing and giving insights into more than 90,000 calls daily. He also believes that the ability to deliver these outcomes gives Avoira a competitive edge

in the contact centre space. "Our team's experience, not just in contact centre, but with our AI transcription service gives us a competitive advantage," he added. "From a technology perspective the adoption of our analytics on customer interactions is where change is happening fastest."

ket hots up

Taylor pointed out that large corporates such as AWS and Microsoft, via ChatGPT, are educating businesses about the huge potential AI offers. "Of course it's been around for years, but now, as long as you have the right specialists involved, you can harness that potential," he added. "Our solutions can be bolted onto any telephony platform to generate substantial added value."

AI journey

Taylor also noted that AI speech analytics is new to many businesses, and that poor implementations will likely lead to a huge amount of wasted time and money. "As experts, we pull customers along the journey with a partnership approach," he added. "We've got highly mature processes having completed, maintained and supported a large number contact centre solutions. We are well drilled on where to include InfoSec and CX success and know how to guide customers through the process."

But it's not all plain sailing: Challenges to optimising contact centre solutions exist, and perhaps the biggest barrier is people, believes Taylor. "There are always objectors in the clients' team," he added. "We are proficient in working with them so they can understand and realise the benefits. Engagement is another part of the winning formula. Like Formula One racing, delivering a solution takes a team. With an AI project you need people not just behind the wheel but in the pits to achieve top performance."

"We've grown our expertise and team organically and see ourselves as pioneers,

Key points...

- **Avoira generates circa £30 million revenues of which contact centre solutions and consultancy services account for around 25 per cent.**
- **Demand for more sophisticated, multi-channel solutions is a key growth factor.**
- **The market is evolving with businesses upgrading from basic UC to more sophisticated solutions.**
- **Procurement triggers are the need to be competitive, boost revenue generation and to better protect businesses through analytics and compliance.**
- **Avoira says its analytics and AI transcription service gives it a competitive advantage in the contact centre space.**
- **Challenges to optimising contact centre solution success include 'objectors', but expert engagement ensures they realise the benefits.**
- **Consultancy services are Avoira's most profitable activity.**

gaining experience from some of the most challenging contact centres in the UK. These span private and public

sector organisations of all sizes. We've been through painful projects in the past, which is the point most resellers are at now. And because we've been through the pain barrier and gained real world experience we can deliver swiftly and smoothly as a value added partner."

Taylor also explained that Avoira adopts an inter-departmental approach to CCaaS deployment based on learning and supporting each other and customers, ensuring the right technology is always deployed. This is key because contact centre business is rapidly replacing other revenue streams such as on-premise telephony solutions. "Looking forward, we see success not just from the contact centre licences but our CX consultancy services too," added Taylor. "Consultancy services are our most profitable activity. They also deliver the highest value to the client. Consultancy is about empowering companies to protect themselves and consistently deliver service excellence. I'm confident that we'll continue to grow, especially in consulting where it's less about tech and more about business return projects." ■



Contact centre report launched

A JUST-released contact centre market report provides a window on the behind the scenes success factors that supercharge 10 leading MSPs in the contact centre space (including Avoira) and enable them to stand out. 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. Download the free report here – <https://www.comms-dealer.com/contact-centre/going-growth-contact-centres>



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Ross turns the dial on UK

A combination of AI-led technological prowess, unbridled ambition and a growth-focused channel-first strategy will drive comms giant Dialpad to the forefront of CCaaS and UCaaS markets across Europe, according to Ross Jack, RVP Channel Sales EMEA.

As the business comms and IT landscape reshapes and evolves, Dialpad is aiming to make a bigger impact this year, fuelled by channel partnerships with VARs, MSPs and SIs operating primarily in the CCaaS and UCaaS space. "Channel growth across EMEA is what we're focused on right now, and with an oversaturated market the time is right for a new player to make an impact and help channel partners navigate the AI world – while enabling end users to realise the full potential of AI," stated Jack.

As well as investing in channel partnerships, Dialpad aims to expand its presence and influence in the EMEA region through AI-driven product innovation and regional infrastructure to capitalise on growing demand for cloud comms solutions. In fact, the company plans to become a dominant force in the fast growing AI-driven

UC and contact centre markets. "We've reached over nine billion business minutes for our own LLM (DialpadGPT), and still growing," added Jack.

Dialpad's target markets in EMEA are evolving rapidly, driven by the rise of hybrid working, increased demand for AI and automation, and a focus on seamless omnichannel experiences. "UC platforms are integrating intelligent features like real-time transcription and predictive analytics, while video-first collaboration and sustainability are gaining prominence," stated Jack.

Portfolio expansion

In response to market trends Dialpad has expanded beyond voice into video meetings, contact centre and team messaging and developed an all encompassing UC platform. This evolution has been driven by customer expectations for a one-stop-shop solution, pointed out Jack. "To drive adoption



Ross Jack

Channel growth across EMEA is what we're focused on right now, and with an oversaturated market the time is right for a new player to make an impact

and stickiness, Dialpad is also investing in integrations with major productivity tools like Google Workspace, Microsoft 365 and Salesforce while enhancing our partner ecosystem, including technology alliances as well as VARs and MSPs," added Jack.

He noted that Dialpad's move in H2 to include wholesale

into the channel programme, alongside an agent referral model, will enable the business to significantly expand its channel presence in EMEA this year. "We have a channel-first model and offer partners a single pane of glass platform, along with mix and match user type solutions and a la carte features across all user types, meaning

partners can deliver bespoke solutions," commented Jack.

The EMEA campaign is Dialpad's latest push for growth, building on annual recurring revenue (ARR) of \$300 million-plus and targeting \$1 billion ARR with the EMEA region making up 10-15 per cent of the total. Dialpad now has over 1,500 staff across the world



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and over 50,000 customers in various industries.

According to Jack, Dialpad's biggest opportunity resides in the EMEA channel and its untapped potential.

Channel focus

"With growing demand for hybrid work solutions, localised expertise and cloud migration, channel partners can leverage Dialpad's real-time AI features, scalability and partner programmes to

The consensus is clear, closer IT-telecom integration is essential for driving future growth and competitiveness in the digital economy

drive adoption across diverse markets," commented Jack. "This approach enables Dialpad to scale efficiently while offering partners strong revenue and margin potential through high value recurring SaaS offerings."

As well as integrating voice, video, messaging and AI-powered analytics into a unified workspace, Dialpad's platform has also expanded AI language support for eight languages, and added advanced security controls, compliance tools for data governance and strategic integrations for workflow automation.

Many of these advances have been achieved through

Dialpad's acquisition strategy. In 2018, the company acquired TalkIQ, enabling the incorporation of AI into its platform. Subsequent acquisitions such as Highfive in 2020, Kare Knowledgeware in 2021 and Koopid in 2021 expanded Dialpad's capabilities in CX videoconferencing, analytics and omnichannel support.

"Contact centres are shifting to cloud-based infrastructures, enhancing flexibility and scalability and leveraging AI to automate routine tasks and improve customer service," stated Jack. "Compliance with data privacy regulations remains a key priority, especially as digital engagement continues to expand."

Jack confirmed that Dialpad's primary investment areas will always be to continue expanding its AI features and

bring more capability into the tech stack with no third party applications. "Dialpad is also increasingly targeting larger enterprises and international markets, prompting investments into data residency and much more multilingual support," he commented.

Dialpad has also enhanced its Microsoft Teams integration, offering contact centre capabilities for Microsoft-centric enterprises. "This integration enables organisations to operate Dialpad's AI-powered features directly within Microsoft Teams while maintaining full visibility and control," explained Jack. "Dialpad is also working towards the Certified Contact Center Solution for Microsoft Teams this autumn."

Dialpad's evolution provides more evidence that the convergence of IT and telecoms is accelerating, driven by key trends like network consolidation, AI-powered customer experiences and the adoption of cloud-native and edge computing. And against this backdrop Jack highlighted that telecoms operators are increasingly collaborating with IT ecosystems through API-driven innovation, global partnerships and open infrastructure projects.

"This shift aims to enhance scalability, support advanced applications and deliver more personalised, seamless digital services," he commented. "The consensus is clear, closer IT-telecom integration is essential for driving future growth and competitiveness in the digital economy." ■

Ross Jack in profile...

JACK has worked in the IT and communications industry for 28 years, starting at Actimax where he worked through the ranks over a 13 year period. He then became Admiral's Sales Director and Sales Manager of Solution Builders, with stints at Daisy Group and BT also under his belt. Vendor roles include spells at UKB/Relish and more recently with Mitel, initially as UK&I Channel Account Manager and latterly Head of Partner Recruitment for UK&I. "I have experience from both side of the fence," commented Jack. "This enables me to shape the EMEA channel programmes to work for both channel partner and vendor."

About Dialpad...

DIALPAD is a cloud-based communications platform founded in 2011 by Craig Walker and Brian Peterson. Walker, a seasoned entrepreneur, previously founded Dialpad Communications which was acquired by Yahoo in 2005. He later co-founded GrandCentral which was acquired by Google in 2007 and became Google Voice. Peterson, a former Google engineer, contributed to the development of Google Voice. Together, they launched UberConference in 2012 which was later rebranded as Dialpad in 2013 after acquiring the Dialpad brand from Yahoo. The company has received several accolades, including being named to the 2019 Forbes Cloud 100 and Fast Company's 2022 list of the World's Most Innovative Companies. Dialpad's current valuation is \$2.2 billion.

Just a minute with Ross Jack...

Role model: From an ICT perspective, John Massey. He was my first real manager in this industry when I worked at Actimax. His passion for sales and work ethic was second to none.

Three ideal dinner guests: Pelé, Bruce Lee and Muhammad Ali. They represent excellence, discipline and cultural impact beyond their sports, and some of their life stories would be totally amazing.

If you weren't working in the ICT sector what would you be doing? I'd be a stock market trader. It's a fast-paced and intellectually stimulating environment, much like sales in many ways.

Best advice you have been given: Be genuinely curious, not just present. Great sales isn't about pushing a pitch – it's about truly understanding the customer's world.

What talent do you wish you had? To be a magician. That unique blend of art, entertainment and connection is a bit like sales.

Tell us something about yourself we don't know: In my younger days I was a British cruiserweight kickboxing champion.

If you could change any aspect of the tech revolution what would it be? The end user ecosystem needs to be more join up, covering IT and telecoms. These ecosystems can work more closely by aligning around shared business outcomes, integrating platforms and services and fostering cross-functional collaboration.

One thing you couldn't do without in your job? Being in front of customers and channel partners. Remote works, but nothing beats that in person interaction.

Your biggest career achievement: I've successfully grown sales teams numbers both direct and more recently vendor sales with channel partners. I've built a scalable partner enablement programme, optimised onboarding and aligned incentives with business goals.

Today's top leadership priorities: Adaptability grounded in self-awareness. Great leaders evolve with changing environments, consistently learn and adjust their strategies while staying aligned with their values and vision. They listen, empower others and lead with empathy.

Top tip for resellers: Lead with business outcomes, not just features. Specialise in a vertical and sell the strategic value of cloud.

Harnessing top trends

Elite Group Managing Director Peter Jury is aiming to realise the full potential of AI and workflow automation, both tipped as essential technology trends in the CCaaS space.

Elite Group has witnessed 'exceptional' market growth in CCaaS globally and expects more of the same following forecasts by pundits of a CAGR of over 19 per cent up to 2030. "We have seen large uptakes of cloud services in the UK due to remote and hybrid working, alongside customers wanting to take advantage of AI and workflow automation which provide greater ROI and improve customer experience," stated Jury. "This is where CCaaS truly drives benefit and differentiation."

CCaaS, UC and associated professional services accounted for 13 per cent of group revenue in financial year 2023, with overall revenues of £34 million reported. "Revenues from these solutions were up on the prior year and we expect to see a continual uplift this year and beyond," added Jury. "CCaaS and UCaaS are the core product for many customers that support and

Top tip

Focus on your target audience and understand their needs through a consultative approach.

deliver a number of ancillary products and services."

Professional services continue to be the most profitable part of CCaaS sales, pointed out Jury, ranging from installation support to development.

"Looking ahead, AI will drive the greatest returns through powering omnichannel strategies, generative AI, conversational AI and analytics," he added. "As part of our three year strategy we will be doubling down on how we can integrate contact centre features like AI and automation into customers' existing UC services. This will enable clients to take advantage of the latest technology without the initial expense."

One roof

Growth in demand for CCaaS is particularly down to cost-efficiency and scalability benefits, observed Jury. Customers want to engage in any number of ways – phone, email, WhatsApp, social – and businesses need to bring all of these interactions under a single roof. "Furthermore, organisations need to spend their money in the most efficient way and taking advantage of technology



Peter Jury

CCaaS is not a product, it's a service that delivers value, solves problems and improves customer experience

such as conversational AI and workflow management allows them to reduce costs and invest in other areas," added Jury.

The term 'CCaaS' is predominantly used among enterprise customers, noted Jury. However, more and more businesses want to discuss how technology can drive efficiency and benefits. "Rather than focus solely on CCaaS, Elite Group puts the emphasis on customer experience and how technologies such as CCaaS

can drive improvements and create differentiators," he commented. "Small and medium sized businesses still think CCaaS will be too expensive to deliver ROI, but advances in technology and the lowering of costs means

they can realise ROI quicker and take full advantage."

Elite Group supports all customer verticals where CX is central to their business. The MSP reports success in travel and tourism especially, but addresses any sector that prioritises a customer-first approach. To do this effectively Elite Group resells CCaaS from multiple suppliers and has its own in-house software development team. Jury says the group's people, skills and knowledge set the firm apart, with particular skills in pre-sales and engineering teams enabling a full understanding of customer needs and how to solutionise them.

Jury also noted that the three biggest inhibitors to optimising CCaaS are addressing scalability challenges, enhancing security and managing integration complexities – all key to delivering the most value. Meanwhile, he noted that the move to the cloud continues at pace in the CCaaS market and reiterated that the integration of AI and automation tools significantly improves quality and reduces operational costs. "These are the technology trends in the CCaaS market that interest me most right now," he stated. "Customers want to ensure they can offer the best services in the most efficient and cost-effective way. AI and workflow optimisation takes care of these challenges." ■



Contact centre report

A NEW contact centre market report provides a window on the behind the scenes success factors supercharging 10 leading MSPs in the CC space (including Elite Group). Download the report here – <https://www.comms-dealer.com/contact-centre/going-growth-contact-centres>

Join the Channel Champions

The 2025 shortlist has been announced for Channel Champions Awards and once again the ICT channel will assemble to recognise the industry's most successful teams.



Companies from all corners of the industry have entered this year's process and 110 submissions have been shortlisted, covering teams working in sales, marketing, engineering, billing, culture, and management.

"We have had a wonderful cohort of companies entering this year with even more new faces, underlining what a dynamic and inspiring industry we work in," said BPL Business Media MD Michael O'Brien.

A team of judges selected for their knowledge and experience across the award category disciplines will now decide on the winners. Terry O'Brien, CEO at Giacom told Comms Dealer, 'Channel Champions is one of the great days in the industry calendar. What it does so well is celebrate the unsung heroes in the channel with the awards open to every aspect of our partners' businesses. This is why we have been headline sponsor for five consecutive years. The day is also great fun and a great chance for networking with a unique



Terry O'Brien

breadth of industry colleagues from all different disciplines'.

The garden party awards lunch will again be staged in the ground of Regents University in Regents Park, London on July 3rd and is the official start of UK Partner Week.

To book your table at the event visit www.channel-champions.com or email Heather Miles hmiles@bpl-business.com for details.

Sponsors comments



We're proud to support the Channel Champions Awards 2025 and sponsor the 'Reseller Technical Support and Engineering Team' category. As AI, IoT and other innovations continue to reshape the business landscape, these teams play a vital role in keeping businesses connected and driving digital transformation. Their technical expertise and dedication often go unseen, so it's fantastic to celebrate their impact in supporting growth across the channel.

Thea Szejka
Managing Director, BT Wholesale



People are at the heart of every business, which is why we're proud to sponsor Channel Champions once again. This event shines a spotlight on the dedication and achievements of those driving the channel forward. We're excited to celebrate everyone's hard work and wish all the nominees the very best of luck!

Paul Taylor
Chief Commercial Officer at Voiceflex



CityFibre is thrilled to be involved in this year's Channel Champions Awards. It's a great opportunity to celebrate the amazing people and teams who make the Channel such a brilliant place to work. The passion, drive and energy in this sector never fails to impress, and these awards are all about recognising that. Best of luck to everyone involved!

Andy Wilson
Wholesale Sales Director at CityFibre



Anvil is proud to support the Channel Champions Awards as hospitality sponsors again this year. We believe in recognizing the passion, hard work, and dedication that drive our industry forward every year and there's truly no other event like it. These awards celebrate the people behind the progress, those who consistently go above and beyond for their customers. It's a privilege to stand alongside our peers and champion the spirit that makes this community so exceptional.

James Shraga
Sales & Partnership Director, Anvil

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Ferguson focuses on buy-

Having secured a £2.25 million investment from Maven Capital Partners in March on the back of a 27 per cent increase in revenues over the past two years, Glasgow-based KubeNet swiftly acquired Aberdeen IT firm ISN Solutions, the first bolt-on deal in an accelerating buy-and-build campaign, says Director Fraser Ferguson.

What next following the Maven deal?

Our immediate priority is to integrate ISN Solutions and build on another successful year of organic growth. We hit around 80 per cent of the targets we set in 2024 including getting our first acquisition over the line, which has enhanced our MSP capabilities. We are in discussions with a number of companies in Scotland that will complement our existing tech stack and add skill sets. Our M&A strategy will be the major focus over the next 12 months as we look to expand KubeNet's UK-wide client base. Growing our MSP and cyber credentials is also high on the agenda.

How's revenue growth right now?

We are on target to hit a turnover of £8 million by 2026, not counting any

further acquisitions. EBITDA has also increased in line with growth. We've seen double digit growth and a number of high profile new business wins during the first half of this year.

Where are you seeing the greatest success?

Across three business streams – managed services, cyber (which is a major push) and voice. Delivering a service where all clients consume more of our products is key to growth.

How was KubeNet established?

I built my first business, called KFJ Resourcing, and sold to a PLC having developed specialities across telecoms, manufacturing, IT and call centre recruitment. Building on the contacts I'd made I then set up a consultancy with Julie Inglis in 2012 which became KubeNet, progressing through WLR,



Fraser Ferguson

Our M&A strategy will be a major focus over the next 12 months as we look to expand KubeNet's UK-wide client base

becoming an ISP and building our own L2 network. KubeNet now operates as an MSP across IT and infrastructure with cloud, voice, IoT and cyber all part of our technical skill sets.

What are your target markets?

SMBs with up to 500 employees continue to be our main focus, but we also have a number of enterprise clients where we deliver global Microsoft Teams calling and their UK infrastructure.

We also have a number of public sector contracts.

How are you evolving your sales and GTM approaches?

How we engage with the market has changed during the last three years. As buyers become younger and subscription-led we need to adapt to how they want us to engage. Our digital transformation team is looking at how we integrate AI into the sales process and how our teams

build partnerships. We've also worked hard over the last six months to reduce both our vendors and tech stack with Cisco, Microsoft and the likes of Sophos a mainstay – with Giacom becoming a major partner.

What's influencing the evolution of your strategy?

Confidence in the SMB space is currently low and changes in the SMB tech stack have changed – so listening to what our clients actually need and working with them at a

-and-build

strategic level – and how we deliver – is key. Our partners have been a great source of information, helping us to drive our approach to the market. Furthermore, skill shortages in the ICT space are growing – that's an opportunity for the channel and will drive the growth of managed services.

What are today's leadership priorities?

Creating opportunities for those that want to take them is front and centre of our leadership approach. We also prioritise leadership ambidexterity which is key to balancing stability and transformative growth. We've talked a lot about distributed leadership, sharing responsibilities to empower teams to grow, which I think is vital.

Where do you see KubeNet in three years time?

We're aiming to be the go-to UK channel business focused on delivering more services through our managed services teams. Our M&A strategy will be crucial to where we want to be.

Do you have a role model?

Willie Limond, a former colleague at Digital Equipment who taught me life lessons I still use to this day.

What talent do you wish you had?

A concentration span lasting more than 10 seconds.

Tell us something about yourself we don't know

I'm a failed professional footballer.

Name three ideal dinner guests

Rabbie Burns for poetry, a sing song and

tears post dinner; Billy Connolly for laughs; and Napoleon... imagine the stories he could tell.

What are your strong points, and what could you improve on?

I've always had great energy and can drive things forward, but forgetting to look behind to see who's still with me is a flaw.

Your favourite comedian or comedienne?

Billy Connolly.

Your biggest achievement?

Growing KubeNet as a single parent of three and keeping sane during that period.

If you could transform any area of the IT/comms industry what would it be?

I'd slow down the new products conveyor belt.

What would you have done differently in hindsight?

I wouldn't have sold my first business as early as I did to a FTSE listed company – there was a negative impact on staff.

Best piece of advice you have been given?

You can run low of cash, but you can't run out because no one will be your friend.

If you weren't in ICT what would you be doing?

I'd be a trader.

The biggest risk you have taken?

There's been a few – some have paid off and others not. I don't hesitate to take risks – never have.

Top tip

Become an MSP and a strategic partner for customers – it'll help deliver growth and profit. ■



NetSapiens Presents: US Channel Trends with Peter Radizeski

More Than Voice



Vendors are adding AI, video, SMS, CX and so much more to their UCaaS offering. Boil that down and that means voice is just one component. Stop focusing on just voice!

The ROI for UCaaS comes from the many components that a unified offering can replace like video conferencing, audio bridge, team chat, file share, and so much more. To really sell the value of Unified Comms, we need to break away from selling voice replacement.

The first word is Unified. The whole idea behind that was efficiency in having a single pane of glass for many forms of communications. Customer Experience and omni-channel take that to another level. Being able to see WhatsApp, social media, texts and more in a single window is the holy grail for very small businesses who have to have their coordinator work with six apps open all day. Now it can all flow to one window to make it efficient. This means we are affording the customer of time savings in minutes every day.

These are talking points to have with prospects and customers. Most customers may not know about the added functionality since they signed on. Most businesses have employee turn-over so the employees may be unaware of the many advantages of your service offering. Education is a vital part of sales and retention.

We have to remember that what we are really selling is a Software Platform – and the myriad capabilities that flow from that. It is a full stack of software that includes voice, but goes far beyond that.

Because it is software, it can integrate with other software. These software integrations have increasingly improved and with AI will become an even bigger driver of productivity for many workers. Inputting data once and having it available across the workflow is a dream for workers.

Sellers normally forget to ask the buyer about software being used in the business. The discussion typically is around the voice and PBX. Those are table stakes of commodity sales. Helping a business leverage the many aspects of the platform to propel the digital transformation of the business moves the sales rep from a sales rep to a business advisor. That's where the magic happens.

Telling stories of how similar businesses took advantage of the platform will allow the buyer to see the possibility AND take a step away from PBX replacement. Remember that a key system buyer hasn't shopped in over five years and the capabilities available to a small business now for \$20 per user were unaffordable and unfathomable.

Many sales reps even forget to discuss the mobility piece of UCaaS. Work from Anywhere

To really sell the value of Unified Comms, we need to break away from selling voice replacement.

is still a viable business strategy. Businesses – even small ones – have many employees who are not just remote but mobile or at least on the move. Having a mobile friendly platform to stay in the know and on top of things is one more productivity point to make.

It is really easy to get caught up in PBX and voice replacement in the sales process, but we are the experts on this software platform. Our job is to educate the buyer on the many ways that this software can enhance his business and improve productivity for the workers.

During the sales process, you can have a discussion about the value of the platform and the outcomes that other businesses have derived from it or you can talk about the commodity component (voice), lower the price and hope for the best.

For more information go to: netsapiens.com

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UK Partner Week Summit s

The UK Partner Week Summit (July 9th, Convene, London) will provide channel leaders and their teams with a framework of content tracks that offer guidance on which practices work best across Sales, Marketing, Technology and Leadership, and how they can be effectively implemented, maintained and reinforced. The Summit also doubles down on maximising opportunities for both business and personal growth, supported by a range of sponsors who in the following pages share insights into what this inaugural industry event means to the channel.

Will Morey
MD, Gamma Business

Sponsor



The channel is evolving. Consolidation and convergence are reshaping how partners operate, and customers increasingly expect more from fewer providers. At Gamma, we see that as an opportunity to support our partners in delivering broader value, opening new revenue streams and standing out in a competitive market. Our 'Good Together' approach is rooted in partnership. The event is a celebration of this and a reaffirmation of our belief that with the right support, every partner, regardless of size can scale with confidence. The Summit focuses on the three essentials for growth: sales, marketing, and technology. These aren't just themes, they're the building blocks that make a channel business stronger, smarter, and more sustainable. We remain fiercely committed to the UK channel. We're not just listening, we're inviting our partners to help shape our future strategy, ensuring our portfolio continues to reflect your ambitions and needs. Products evolve. Markets shift. But one thing remains: one trusted partnership. Endless possibilities.

Nisreen El-kaloush
CCO, AllPoints Fibre Networks

Sponsor



We became a sponsor of the UK Partner Week Summit because it's not just another industry event; it's creating space for those who get involved in the details of connectivity to collaborate and find better ways of working together. That's exactly what the channel needs and why we're proud to be involved. We've just launched aquila – our new wholesale platform built to give ISPs, MSPs and telecoms resellers a seamless route to the largest UK full fibre footprint. It's all about API automation, stability and unlocking opportunities to scale. True simplification can only be mastered if you think outside the box and that is exactly how we approach every pain point. So, an event focused on vision, growth, and identifying future leaders? Sign us up. The themes are spot on. They reflect the conversations we want to have with connectivity service providers. To reshape the industry, we need more spaces like this where we can benchmark, learn, challenge inefficiencies, and support each other in building a smarter, more scalable route to fibre. We're looking forward to the conversations with old and new partners alike."

Justin Carl
Managing Director, ProVu

Sponsor



Collaboration is at the heart of everything we do. That's why we're proud to sponsor the UKPW Summit. It is a brilliant opportunity to come together with our peers to share ideas, build lasting relationships, and drive growth across the channel. We believe that our success is rooted in the success of our partners, whether they are vendors, service providers or integrators. Events like this allow us to show up, support the channel, and

contribute to shaping a stronger future. By encouraging open conversations around leadership, innovation, and sustainable growth, the Summit fosters an environment where ideas thrive, and partnerships deepen. The themes of this year's event strongly align with our ethos: sharing knowledge, developing talent, and striving for operational excellence. We're excited to be part of these conversations supporting the channel in navigating what's next.

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wavernet

sets best practice agenda

Ryan Martin
Head of Indirect, ANS Group

Sponsor



This event provides a unique platform for industry leaders to come together, share insights, and drive forward-thinking strategies. By sponsoring, we are investing in the future of the channel, supporting initiatives that foster growth, and helping to create an environment where businesses can thrive through shared knowledge and best practices. The Summit represents a pivotal opportunity to embrace collaboration and innovation. The channel is ripe for this new type of event because it brings together diverse perspectives and expertise, fostering a

culture of continuous improvement and teamwork. By focusing on best practices and team dynamics, we can collectively elevate our standards, drive growth, and navigate the evolving market landscape confidently. The themes are crucial as they address the fundamental aspects of successful channel leadership. Enriching business vision, identifying future leaders, gaining practical insights into revenue growth, benchmarking against best practices, and networking are all essential for sustained success. Engaging with these themes allows channel leaders to stay ahead of industry trends, foster innovation, and build resilient, forward-thinking teams. ■

Paul Holden
VP of EMEA Sales, CallTower

Sponsor



As our first event in the UK market and with CallTower being a new brand in this space, the Summit offers a unique platform to share our story and showcase our capabilities. With a strong track record of success in the US, our strategic expansion into the UK and EMEA makes this gathering invaluable for networking with a wide range of channel partners. This event presents a fantastic opportunity for the channel to engage with new brands and providers entering the UK market. These organisations bring a variety of go-to-market strategies and transactional models designed to

drive revenue growth for the channel. Additionally, they offer an expansive portfolio of solutions, creating new opportunities to expand and thrive. The market is rapidly evolving, with end users increasingly adopting collaboration technology as part of their voice platforms. This shift presents a valuable opportunity for the channel to adapt and unlock new revenue streams. Customer experience remains a top priority, and events like these play a crucial role in fostering collaboration and driving collective innovation to address these changes. ■

Jamie Hughes
Sales Director, Evolve IP

Sponsor



We are proud to be part of the inaugural UK Partner Week Summit, a landmark event dedicated to setting a best-practice agenda for the channel's future. In today's fast-paced market, driven by surging customer expectations, hybrid working, and the unstoppable evolution of cloud and AI technologies, collaboration and innovation are not just beneficial, they are essential. UK Partner Week provides a vital forum to build deeper connections and share real-world insights, strategies, and visions that help partners adapt and thrive. The focus on themes like talent

development, leadership, benchmarking, and revenue generation mirrors our own commitment to empowering the next generation of channel leaders and cultivating sustainable growth. We believe in turning insight into action and are excited to engage in practical conversations that move beyond theory and drive meaningful change. As the Summit champions a new spirit of openness, excellence, and shared success, we're ready to embrace it and we encourage all our peers to do the same. Let's make this a turning point. ■

Sean Dixon
CRO, Fidelity Energy

Sponsor



The channel has changed dramatically in recent years; more collaboration, broader services, and an ever-evolving customer expectation. Now more than ever, there's an appetite for shared learning and team-level engagement. We are proud to support the UK Partner Week Summit which represents an exciting shift in how we connect and grow as a channel not just as individuals or businesses. The event promises to energise and unite the partner community, going beyond surface-level networking and diving into practical, future-focused conversations. Its themes speak directly to the challenges and opportunities channel leaders face

today. Whether it's revenue growth, leadership development, or redefining business models, no organisation can afford to stand still. A growing area we are keen to discuss is the increasing pressure on businesses from both internal and external stakeholders to better understand and reduce their carbon footprint. We are evolving our offering to help partners respond to this demand, not just through procurement but by providing tools and services that support sustainability goals. ■

Greg Jones
SVP of MSP Enablement – EMEA
and North America, Kaseya

Sponsor



At Kaseya, we're passionate about helping MSPs grow and thrive, and that's exactly why we're backing the UK Partner Week Summit. It's not just another event; it's a space where the channel can come together, share what's working, and learn from each other. That collaboration is powerful. We've built our Global Partner Programme to give MSPs the support they need at every stage — from MDF funding to drive demand, to initiatives like TruPeer, which is designed to help partners scale by improving operations, sales, and leadership. Everything we do is focused on enabling success and making sure MSPs have the tools, insights, and community around them to push forward. The event themes couldn't be more relevant. Business growth, leadership, best practice, and benchmarking are all critical for MSPs navigating today's challenges and opportunities. If you're an MSP that is serious about growing your business, you need to be at this event. It's where you'll get fresh ideas, practical strategies, and connect with peers who are on the same journey. We're proud to be involved and look forward to the channel coming together for something that truly makes a difference.

Mark Pillow
MD, VoIP Unlimited

Sponsor



We chose to sponsor this event because it offers a unique opportunity to engage with leaders and wider teams within the channel. We've seen first-hand how BPL events deliver a demonstrable ROI in partner recruitment and brand exposure. UK Partner Week presents an even broader platform, by bringing the entire ecosystem together to collaborate, learn, and grow. There is an opportunity to rise above a sea of mediocrity by offering technically well-thought-through products and solutions. At Voip Unlimited, we help partners drive new revenue streams while maintaining the commercial strength needed to compete in a commoditised market. UK Partner Week represents a fresh approach that focuses not just on business deals, but on best practices, team engagement, and collaboration. Its main themes like team leadership, sales innovation, and customer experience, represent essential pillars for any business looking to scale sustainably. At Voip Unlimited, we complement this by delivering technically differentiated, commercially viable solutions that empower partners to better serve their customers.

Ken Rosko
EMEA Channel Leader NinjaOne

Sponsor



NinjaOne has a healthy obsession with customer and partner success, so the channel is a top priority for our company. Channel partners give technology companies the scale, reach, depth and expertise to accelerate growth and build awareness of new technologies. Being a sponsor of the UK Partner Week Summit is just one of the ways we're connecting with and continuing to learn from the channel community. No matter how much experience someone has in their field, it's always possible to learn something new. Events like this provide invaluable opportunities for networking with peers and absorbing new ideas, gaining insights into future trends and why they matter, and encouraging channel professionals to step out of the day-to-day, take stock, and assess their broader strategy.

Adam Zoldan, Director
Knight Corporate Finance

Sponsor



We help business owners at a pivotal moment in the life of their business that has taken years of work and planning to reach. Therefore, meeting new businesses and reinforcing relationships with old and new clients is very important for us. These are interesting and challenging times. Over the last 30 years, the partner channel has always shown that great challenges deliver great opportunities. The single most important driver of value is Growth. The content themes provide genuine insights into how we can deliver growth – vision, leadership and strategy. Looking at some of our clients – the focus on future leaders seems astute! Comms Dealer has long been the matriarch of the channel community, and great things happen when we all get together.

Dave McCourt, Head of Marketing
Communications & Strategic Partnerships, Strategic Imperatives

Sponsor



Working with over 200 UK service providers means we're deeply embedded in the channel ecosystems. We recognise that success is defined not only by what or how you sell but also by the partnerships you build. The Summit provides a platform to engage, listen, and shape future opportunities together. We're excited to celebrate the progress of our contemporaries and see the best practices that shaped success this year. We also have exciting news: our recent innovations in leveraging transformation have empowered

our partners to deliver exceptional customer experiences through powerful commercial models, such as monetisation for complex services via our Elevate IQ billing platform. Equally, our Fibre Café platform unlocks the new FTTP ecosystem for MSPs and Service Providers. Ultimately, it's about helping our partners not just keep up with change but lead it, a mindset that resonates throughout Partner Week. Our mission is to empower service providers with a launchpad for growth to drive the best business outcomes.

Sponsor



industry experts who will be sharing valuable knowledge. The event attracts the right senior decision-makers from UK-based MSPs, MSSPs, and VARs, to explore how new processes, products, and technologies can deliver enhanced value to existing customers and unlock new markets. We look forward to a successful, engaging and enjoyable event. ■

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best practices are shared and lasting relationships are built. By coming together, we can drive the industry forward and meet future challenges. The channel is ripe for such an event because it encourages a culture of continuous improvement and collective success, benefiting everyone involved. The Summit's content themes are vital for channel leaders to enhance business vision, identify future leaders, grow revenue, benchmark against practices, and network. Engaging with these themes fosters continuous improvement and success. ■

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inadvertently helps the business grow successfully. All businesses and their leaders can benefit from taking time out to listen to others, learn something new and engage with peers as this helps them to view their business in a new, maybe clearer light of path. I always walk away from summits with ideas, positivity and new connections!

Sponsor



reflects our commitment to building strong partnerships and supporting the channel with practical, forward-thinking finance solutions. The channel is evolving, and events like this are vital for fostering teamwork, sharing best practices, and driving sustainable growth. We're here to support that journey. The Summit's themes around leadership, transformation, and sustainability align with our own "People, Planet, Profit" strategy and our Aurora innovation programme. Engaging with these topics is essential for channel leaders looking to future-proof their businesses.

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our horizons. This type of event can help businesses uncover diverse perspectives and expertise which are essential in a field where new technology and solutions constantly emerge. The themes enable us to look at things from a fresh perspective, gain insight from professionals we don't always get to hear from and listen to the views of future channel leaders. It's important to engage with the themes across Sales, Marketing and Technology to ensure all aspects of your business are aligned to drive the best results.s. ■

UK Partner Week adds Amb

The UK Partner Week 2025 Ambassador programme has welcomed two 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.

Camilla Karm, Chief Revenue Officer, Redsquid

Ambassador



As an industry, it's crucial for us to unite and use our collective power to drive growth and improvement across the board. The only way we can do this is by sharing ideas, knowledge and resources, whether that is about increased sustainability and educating the next generation of future leaders, while ensuring the UK remains at the forefront of technology. This is why I became an Ambassador

for UK Partner Week, and I look forward to seeing the channel community come together to share resources, bring new ideas and work towards common goals that will achieve long-term success.

Historically, the channel has been exclusive. But now, as we face a changing world, it's vital to embrace new ideas, drive business growth innovatively, and invest in our teams. To build future leaders and strong businesses we must

By working together at the UK Partner Week Summit we can leverage our collective strengths, share successes and support each other

focus on the complete picture, not just the bottom line. By working together at the UK Partner Week Summit we can leverage our collective strengths, share our successes and support each other through challenges. Collaboration, open communication and mentorship will help us to create a sustainable and prosperous future for the next generation of leaders who will continue advancing our industry.

Supporting initiatives like UK Partner Week is something I'm proud of and I look forward to engaging in impactful debates that encourage fresh thinking. This message deserves attention from all leaders, and we should use every available forum to emphasise that. ■

Katie Sloan, Marketing Director, CloudClevr

Ambassador



I believe in the power of partnerships to drive bold transformation, and UK Partner Week offers a rare opportunity to reframe what great looks like in the channel. As someone who has spent years working across both telco and IT, I know that real growth happens when we stop siloed thinking and start connecting ideas, people and possibilities. Being an Ambassador means championing that mindset and helping shape the next chapter.

The channel doesn't need more noise – it needs relevance. And the UK Partner Summit aims to cut through with content designed for real-world challenges, not PowerPoint platitudes. As we face pressure to deliver

I believe in the power of partnerships to drive bold transformation, and UK Partner Week offers an opportunity to reframe what great looks like

more with less, and faster than ever, this new format creates space to pause, connect and think strategically about where value will come from next. The businesses that show up curious, collaborative and willing to be challenged are the ones that will win. The timing couldn't be better because now is the time to accelerate change in our industry.

The summit's themes are more than talking points, they're business critical because vision without execution is just hope. Growth without benchmarking and accurate measurement is just guesswork. And future leaders won't wait to be identified – they'll emerge in companies who invest in their people, culture and strategies. I'm particularly passionate about bridging the gap between marketing, sales and service to drive customer-first growth. The summit helps make those connections clearer – and actionable. ■

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ambassadors

AGENDA SNAPSHOT: Get on Track with UK Partner Week Summit sessions

Sales Track

- Enhanced consultancy – shift the conversation
- Heroes assemble – transforming sales teams into superheroes
- Selling new stuff – why it's hard, and what to do about it

Marketing Track

- Stand out from the crowd – deliver differentiation
- Click with clients – turn data into customers
- Raise the bar – develop high value propositions

Leaders Track

- Future leaders – nurturing next-gen talent
- Embrace inclusion – empower women leaders

Technology Track

- Turn tech experts into growth enablers
- What's coming down the line, and why it matters
- Go big on differentiation – maximise tech expertise

To find out more about these sessions and to register your interest in attending the UK Partner Week Summit visit <https://partnerweek.uk>

GUEST SPEAKERS



Karen Blackett OBE



Jason Bevan

THE UK Partner Week 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. Michael O'Brien, MD, BPL Business Media, said: "The summit's objectives, content tracks, insight sessions, breakouts and guest speakers have been brought together to help channel leaders build a growth focused future in a progressive team, and fun, collaborative environment."

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UK Partner Week

July 3rd to 10th 2025

Celebrating the Power of Partnerships

A festival of events and initiatives
across the UK ICT channel

Get involved in Partner Week

UK Partner Week will help you and your teams

- Enrich your vision for their business
- Identify your future leaders
- Gain practical insights into revenue growth strategies
- Benchmark your business models against best practice
- Network with the wider partner community
- Have FUN!

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At the heart of UK Partner Week is the UK Partner Week Summit, a free to attend event for MSP and channel business leaders, sales, marketing, and technical specialists featuring...

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- Expert contributors and partner panels
- Content streams highlighting real world practices
- Sponsor & MSP speaker dinner
- Live studio broadcasting
- Networking with industry peers

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Candid honesty defines Ae

Talking about a more diverse and inclusive ICT industry is one thing – making it happen is another. Enter the Aequitas Network forum, held at The Sheraton Grand (London, May 15th – sponsored by BT Wholesale and Vodafone Business) where keynote speakers and invited delegates addressed the key issues in an atmosphere of openness, honesty and inspiration.

Hosted by Baroness Ayesha Hazarika and organised by Comms Dealer publisher BPL Business Media, the Aequitas Network dug deeper into the comms sector's diversity challenges at a more personal level, as well as from a business perspective. "The tone of the discussion was as honest as it gets, touching on challenges in leadership, championing diversity in traditionally rigid structures, and highlighting those 'why am I the only woman in this room?' moments that many of us know all too well," commented Dave McGinn, CEO, Daisy Communications.

"It was collaborative, warm and refreshingly candid — less of a panel discussion and more a camp fire chat with some of the most inspiring people you'll meet

in our industry. And, just like any great conversation, it sparked more questions than answers, questions that lead to positive change."

Authentic discussions

The Aequitas Network encouraged open and authentic dialogue that is 'both rare and empowering', observed Jessica Blight, COO, IT Naturally. "It is uncommon to hear business leaders be totally vulnerable and authentic," she commented. "And you get a real sense of what people are doing in their businesses and what is working. By discussing topics such as women in tech, leadership and cohesion – that are transcendental of day-to-day business yet tangible within every organisation and every person – we can build real frameworks for the future."



Baroness Ayesha Hazarika

There has been a clear gap in the market for bringing together a collaborative and supportive network of women in the channel

Success hinges on business leaders taking the right, committed actions to shape diverse and inclusive teams, noted Sue Elliott, Managing Director, DRC: "Business leaders must support policies that promote gender equality and ensure that women have equal opportunities for advancement," she said. "This is a crucial step towards creating a more just and equitable society. For

men in leadership positions, true allyship goes beyond words, it requires action."

Change drivers

This was echoed by Martin Flick, CEO, Onecom Group, who highlighted the need for men to use their position in a male-dominated industry to drive change. He said: "It is incumbent upon male leaders to continue to provide the space and

capacity for diversity across the sector. It's typically been a male, pale, stale industry dominated by alpha males like me, but there is real strength in diversity across all parts and aspects of life. We must do more."

Thea Szejka, Managing Director, BT Wholesale, also emphasised that encouraging diverse talent into the industry is critical.

quitas Network forum

"It enables us to draw on a wider range of perspectives and experiences," she stated. "That way our teams and our decision making can better reflect the demographics of our customers and of the UK as a whole, and drive better outcomes. Ultimately, if you're getting talent from 50 per cent of the population you're missing out on so much potential."



Kathryn Platt, Head of Indirect, Vodafone UK, added: "It was great to spend time with fellow panellists, hear their stories, understand the similarities in our experiences and how we can use these takeaways to support other people. This is not about offering every job to a female. It's about recognising that there's so much talent out there."



An effective route towards greater diversity is to take small, but impactful steps that lead to big shifts. This approach was brought to life by guest speaker Bonita Norris, once the youngest British woman to climb Mount Everest. Karen Shepherd, Commercial Manager, Nimans Connect, stated: "What resonated with me was how Bonita talked about 'one small step followed by another' when climbing Everest."

Elliott was equally inspired. "Bonita broke it down brilliantly when she said the biggest – and hardest – decision was whether to be brave and step out of the tent or stay inside and climb back down the mountain. That's a lesson for all of us when we feel overwhelmed by the bigger picture stuff – just look at what's in front of you, take a deep breath and step out of the tent." ■

Thoughts on the Aequitas Network...

Kathryn Platt, Head of Indirect, Vodafone UK

It was fantastic to take time out and recognise the women in our channel, the massive talent pool of females and encourage confidence in them to join our industry.

Nikki Foote, Head of Customer Marketing, Retentions and Relations, Fidelity Group

Hearing from trailblazing women across the industry is crucial as it reinforces how vital it is to champion not just representation, but real equity where opportunity, recognition and support are embedded into culture.

Beth Hooper, Operations Manager, Uplands OneTelco

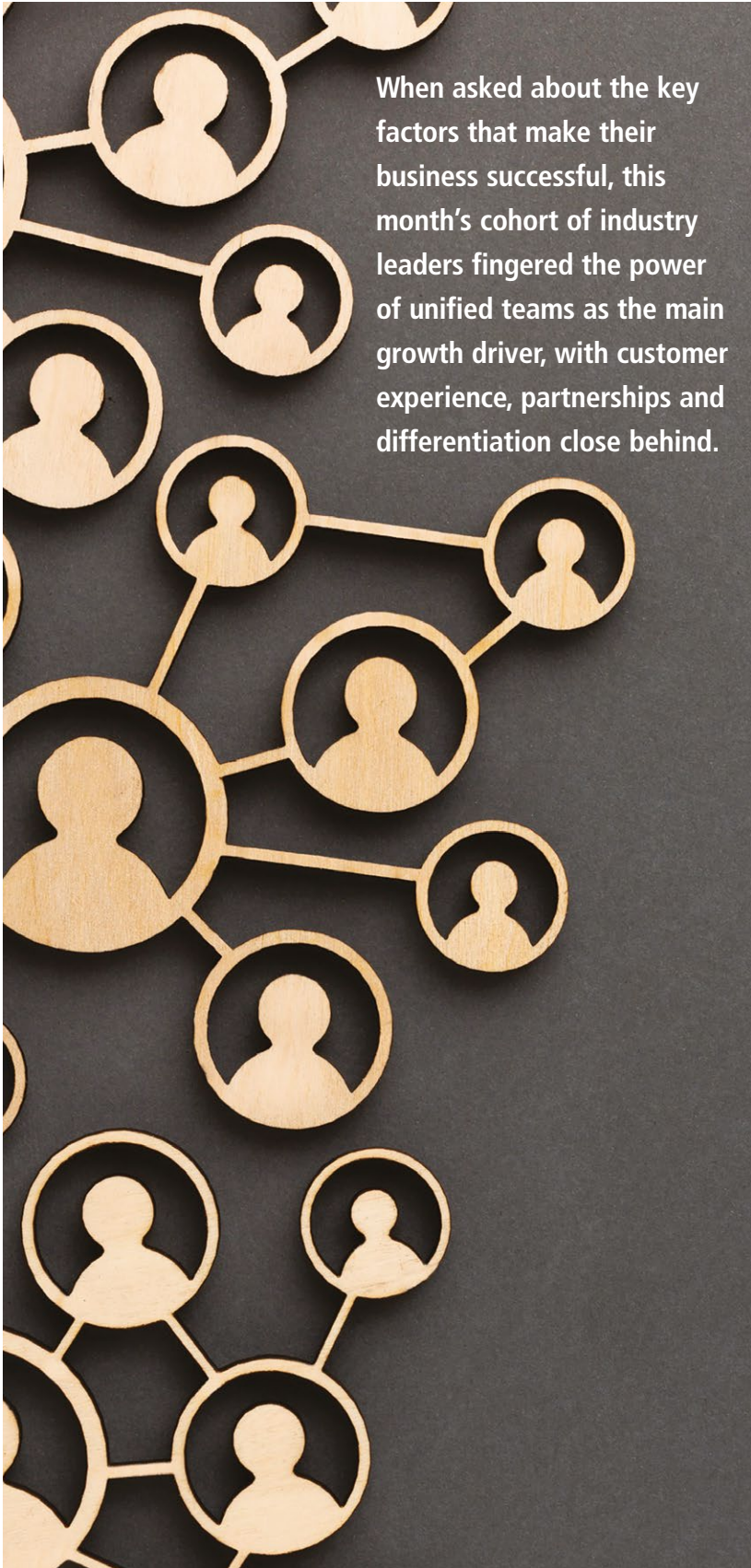
It's not often you hear people speak so candidly about the realities women face in tech. It was validating, thought provoking and a reminder that sometimes the biggest barriers are the ones we put on ourselves.

Elena Doncheva, Marketing Director, Cyberlab

I left with fresh ideas on how we can enhance diversity and inclusion at CyberLab. There has been a clear gap in the market for bringing together a collaborative and supportive network of women in the channel.



Unified teams identify



When asked about the key factors that make their business successful, this month's cohort of industry leaders fingered the power of unified teams as the main growth driver, with customer experience, partnerships and differentiation close behind.



RICHARD SCOTT
SALES DIRECTOR
START
COMMUNICATIONS

PEOPLE are the most important factor in our success. Alignment on core values of transparency, honesty, and integrity ensures we work toward common goals with greater efficiency. Regular development keeps our team growing and aligned. Next is customer experience. Instead of focusing only on what we think we deliver, we look inward to examine how customers perceive every interaction with us. Our aim is to make each touchpoint, across every stage of the journey, genuinely positive and meaningful. A third success factor is offering a comprehensive yet uncomplicated service range. When product options become too numerous, the value proposition can become diluted, making choices harder for customers and reducing overall impact. By keeping our offerings simple, effective, and efficient, we boost customer satisfaction and business profitability. These factors in balance drive the sustainable growth of our business.



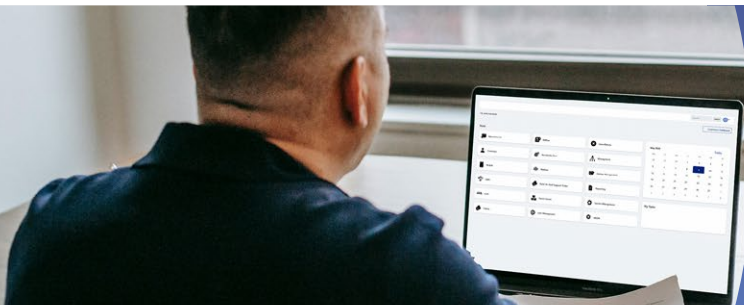
RICHARD BETTS
CEO
VIZST TECHNOLOGY

VIZST Technology's success is built on three key factors. People are at the core of everything we do. We've created a culture where trust, autonomy, and curiosity drive performance. Our team is empowered to innovate, challenge convention, and make decisions that deliver better outcomes for our customers. Purpose keeps us focused. We exist to simplify complex technologies, helping businesses reduce risk, remove stress, and achieve more through IT. Our clarity of mission ensures every action we take adds measurable value to our customers. Partnerships power our growth. We work with a narrow band of vendors by design - allowing us to go an inch wide and a mile deep. This focus means we can be true specialists, offering depth of knowledge and strategic guidance our customers can trust. As we grow, we'll continue investing in people, partnerships, and purpose-led delivery.



EMMA CARTER
CEO
WESTSPRING IT

OUR people's their passion to deliver excellence in service and their commitment to providing technical expertise in a personable way has been the foundation of our growth over the last eight years. We will further this through investment in formal development programmes, enhancing our recognition and engagement methods, and developing our mental, physical and financial well-being support with flexible policies and personalised benefits. Second is client relationships. We have genuine strategic partnerships that drive growth for both parties. Without partners being willing and open to change, committed to us and being reasonable people, we wouldn't have the business we have. Finally, is the good old boring 'structure' of our business! The way we organise our teams, our processes, our decision making and our culture of EVERYONE getting stuck in means we are agile, efficient and can scale sustainability. We have a major project plan over the next year to evolve our structure, processes and ways of operating to enable the next stage of growth.



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People as top success factor



DAVE MIDDLETON
FINANCE DIRECTOR
FLOTEK GROUP

AS a service-based organisation, we obsess over customer experience. Without this, customers will look elsewhere and our team will lose confidence in the service we provide. As more data and more noise is at our fingertips, we must remain focussed on customer outcomes. Ensuring we remain an exciting and rewarding place to work as well as continuing to develop our services and team are crucial to stay ahead of the curve. Our team and customers identify with us as a growing business, so constantly evolving how we provide our service and developing what we offer is important to continue this. Strong leadership encourages different perspectives and opinions but ultimately aligns the team on a strategy and delivers consistently. Confidently taking calculated risks and adapting when plans inevitably change is crucial in a high growth organisation. We're investing heavily in developing our management team to build on this for our future.



JAMES HEALEY
COO
AIR IT

OUR success is built on a people-first culture, where colleagues feel supported, empowered with the right tools and are given opportunities to grow. As a growing business, retaining and developing top talent is essential. As Richard Branson once said: "Look after your people, and they'll look after your clients". A motivated, engaged team is key to delivering excellent service and building long-term client relationships. What will truly set us apart is this combination of culture with our forward-thinking approach to technology. We're actively investing in innovation and leveraging automation, AI and data-driven tools to drive performance, both internally and for our clients. These technologies are core to our long-term strategy. We believe our people and our passion for innovation through technology, will continue to be the driving force for growth.



IAN WALKER
COMPANY DIRECTOR
FIFTEEN GROUP

THE single most important factor in our success is our team and our culture with the employee experience being key. We invest in their growth, foster a culture of collaboration, and empower them to lead with creativity and accountability. We believe that a motivated, skilled and engaged workforce is our competitive edge, we don't do anything different to any other MSP, we just need to do it better than everyone else. Therefore, pillar two is innovation. Technology evolves rapidly, and so do we. We continually invest in R&D and software development, adapt to emerging trends, and integrate the latest tools to deliver smarter, more resilient and secure solutions. Our innovation keeps us relevant and respected in a fast-paced market. Finally, we pride ourselves on building long-term relationships based on transparency, reliability, and measurable results. Understanding customer's evolving needs by being the trusted advisor ensures we stay agile and indispensable.



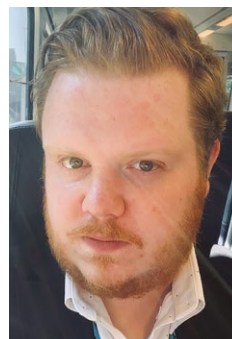
STEVE HARRIS
CEO
CLOUDCLEVR

CUSTOMER relevance. We've strategically completed four baseline acquisitions to build a portfolio across six core technology pillars. We believe that customers are increasingly looking to work with suppliers who can deliver fully converged solutions across Cloud, Communications and IT, and we will continue to innovate in these key areas. Differentiation. We don't just deliver services, we prove value. Our proprietary Clevr360 platform powers a unique customer engagement framework that maps solutions to measurable ROI. This is how we drive a genuine partnership with our customers and we're doubling down on it. Execution. Data drives our decisions. We're investing heavily in becoming a data-led business that consistently delivers on its promises. Values. Everything we do is grounded in commitment, expertise, and innovation. These values aren't just internal, they shape every customer interaction and drive long-term trust.



DAVE O'CONNELL
MD
ADVANTEX NETWORK
SOLUTIONS

OUR success comes down to three key things: people, trust, and doing the job properly. We've always believed that if you build a strong team and look after them, they'll do the same for your customers and that approach has driven our growth. We're proud to be a place where everyone has a voice, from apprentices to senior leaders, and that inclusive culture flows directly into how we work with clients: honestly, reliably, and with long-term goals in mind, not quick wins. Looking ahead, we're investing heavily in both emerging technologies, particularly AI-driven automation and surveillance, and the continued development of our team, but without losing sight of what matters: being easy to work with and solving real problems. We'll keep growing by staying agile, listening to our colleagues and customers, and never settling for good enough.



TOM HORNSBY
HEAD OF TECHNICAL
COBALT

OUR business succeeds through strong client relationships, an empowered team, and a commitment to quality. Managing customer expectations is key so we communicate clearly and honestly to build trust and deliver reliably. Our team is our greatest strength. We invest in people by supporting natural talents and developing new skills through apprenticeship schemes. Our culture is shaped by values such as decisiveness, being supportive and working collaboratively. These principles empower staff to make confident, informed decisions. Consistently high-quality service reinforces our reputation and builds lasting client loyalty. To develop these strengths, we continue prioritising team development, embedding our values in daily practice and refining how we engage with customers.

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Sloan joins CloudClevr



Katie Sloan

KATIE Sloan has joined CloudClevr as Marketing Director, following her role as Marketing Director at Core Technology Systems. She previously led the marketing function and strategic vendor relationships at Timico (now Digital Space), and established the award winning marketing department at Fidelity Group in 2016. Sloan commented: "CloudClevr brings together the capabilities of multiple businesses into one MSP and I'm here to unify our brand, sharpen our voice and create campaigns that drive real demand. It's also a privilege to be working once again with people I've built strong relationships with over the years in the Comms Dealer community."

Pangea swoops on product guru

FORMER PXC Chief Product and Marketing Officer Neil Wilson has joined forces with Pangea as a Product Marketing Consultant. His career to date spans across telecoms and technology environments in start-up to high growth and corporate businesses in the B2B and channel markets. This includes a 13 year spell at Alternative Networks before moving into wholesale with stints at Virtual1, TalkTalk Wholesale Services and PXC. Pangea Managing Director Dan Cunliffe said: "With deep channel experience and a strong track record of turning strategy into traction, Neil is the perfect fit to work with our partners and give them what they need to move early and confidently in the cellular IoT space, especially as demand for solution-fit connectivity rises and legacy networks phase out."



Neil Wilson



The differentiation dilemma

Reflecting 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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