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Flotek CEO sets out £100m growth plan

SCALING high growth MSP businesses is not for the faint hearted but Flotek CEO Jay Ball caught the beat in 2022 with a bold ten year plan to hit £100 million revenue – and there's no slowing down. See page 16

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Welcome comment



THIS month I'm going to go even more off piste than usual (although it should be a mainstream consideration, really) and give a shout out to the channel's single parents. Plenty of them about, with a lot on their plate, days starting early and finishing late, every day, and often nothing topping up the fuel tank. And there may be tipping points – all invisible to the outside world.

Comms Dealer has long produced editorials around all things people and team oriented. Driving awareness of issues ranging from neurodiversity and LGBTQ+ inclusion to all manner of support networks and wellbeing safe places for certain groups. But I don't recall single parents being included in that mix at all. That's not to say bespoke support does not exist, somewhere, but single parenthood is not so well recognised, if at all. I'm sure you'll agree.

So when you double down on staff welfare, spare a thought for the lone parents that might be in your midst. In a big company you may not even know who they are; and for those that do know, it's very easy to forget. Or partially remember. By that I mean it's great when people ask how the kids are – but that's as far as it goes. Next time you enquire after a single parent's children, ask how they are doing themselves. It'll probably be the first time they've been asked.

Single mums and dads reading this, who may feel the world is weighted against them, and/or who are ambitious but feel thwarted in their career journey (and those who have successfully navigated this pathway) get in touch and Comms Dealer will editorially address the challenges and barriers that exist, and how the workplace could become far more lone parent friendly, and aware. Email sgilroy@bpl-business.com.

Stuart Gilroy, Editor

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Big Goal helps young in need

The Big Goal continues to transform young disadvantaged lives for the better, aided by participating channel companies supporting the Academy programme.

Over 150 disadvantaged young people from 15 teams across the country took part in The Street Soccer Foundation National Academy Cup staged alongside Derby County FC last month, all thanks to companies in the ICT industry which have put their weight and brands behind The Big Goal football initiative.

"This is what The Big Goal is all about, helping people in difficult situations change their lives by attending Street Soccer Academies at their local professional football club," said Tez O'Brien, CEO of headline sponsor Giacom. "The benefits youngsters gain through teamwork and social interaction at the Academies is astonishing and many would never have the confidence of talking to people, let alone compete in a national football tournament."

The West Ham United Street Soccer Academy, sponsored by Utilize, ultimately triumphed in the tournament, beating Elite Group backed Everton Street Soccer Academy on penalties in a pulsating final. And the Daisy sponsored Sheffield Wednesday Street Soccer Female Academy secured the women's winner's trophy beating the West Ham

United Street Soccer Female Academy 5-3 in the final.

But the best result of the day was hearing from youngsters about the benefits they have gained from joining a Street Soccer Academy sponsored by The Big Goal members. Here, three rising stars tell us their stories:

Akifah, Huddersfield Town (Air IT)



I found out about the Street Soccer Academy at Huddersfield Town. Through a Street Soccer event I met some of the coaches and told them I wanted to be a coach and inspire other people – and they gave me a job! I will now encourage more people to join the Academies because they can change lives like it did for me.

Kai Dickinson, Sunderland FC, (ANS Group)

I'm in a treatment centre for addiction and joined



the Street Soccer Academy to get myself fit and to connect with people and learn about team building. I was homeless and didn't have much of a family life, but I've got that back now. I no longer think about drugs. It's the best thing that's ever happened to me. It gives you a purpose in life.

Enzo Denis-de-Piner, West Ham United (Utilize)

The best thing about the Academies is the relationship you build with coaches, players and staff. It's almost like being a professional footballer. You see everyone nearly every day and the people involved have become my closest friends. Thanks to Utilize for supporting us – and if companies like this continue their support it is going to help a lot of young people in this country.



To find out more and to sign up to The Big Goal for 2025/26 visit: www.TheBigGoal.co.uk

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M&A set for H2 uptick

Channel M&A is on an upward trajectory, driven by a key trend in particular that's intensifying, according to Knight Corporate Finance Director Paul Billingham.

Channel M&A drivers are evolving fast with a big shift in the buying triggers of most interest to acquirers, observed Billingham. "Across the market we have seen a downturn in deal activity, but our view is that the quality threshold for completed deals has been higher rather than acquirers pulling out of the market," he stated. "While the climate has been challenging over the last 12 months we have still seen good activity."

As well as raising the deal quality bar – rather than a dip in the number of active acquirers – another important factor is behind growing M&A momentum, noted Billingham who cited recent research conducted by Knight Corporate Finance. "Buy and build is often associated with acquiring a company and slashing costs to increase profit, but our survey says that this is not the case," he explained. "As the lines across different reseller channels blur, it is important for buyers to be competitive and acquiring new skills has been key in ensuring they can remain relevant to customers."

Billingham noted that Knight has had a good year, having

completed 17 deals in the last 12 months. And he says there is a high level of underlying confidence from acquirers in the comms and IT sectors, despite a relatively quiet start to 2025 for M&A.

Confidence

"A combination of economic uncertainty, interest rates and higher taxation has resulted in a fall in deal volumes with the first quarter of the year recording the lowest number of deals for three years," he added. "However, our research of over 30 buyers from across the MSP, communications and cloud services sector indicates that confidence remains strong with M&A still high on the agenda."

Research into the acquisition criteria for buyers revealed another telling trend, that building scale remains key with 24 per cent ranking increasing EBITDA as the most important factor. "However, it is clear that acquiring for growth is proving more important than cost savings with 62 per cent of buyers citing organic growth, securing a position in a vertical market or expertise in a new technology as their main driver for a deal," added Billingham. "Organic growth is the



Paul Billingham

We are talking to buyers, funders and private equity investors on a daily basis and know there is a strong appetite for M&A

ultimate key value driver and ensuring teams have the right customer proposition is key to achieving this. It was also interesting and positive to note that 21 per cent of buyers told us that the quality of people was a key driver for making an acquisition."

The research report went on to show that 77 per cent

of the buyers questioned had completed at least one deal in the last year. Ninety three per cent were looking to complete an acquisition over the next 12 months, with 70 per cent seeking to close multiple deals.

Furthermore, 83 per cent had debt facilities and/or sufficient cash to fund

their deals. And 86 per cent are actively searching for the right acquisition. "The remainder showed an intent to acquire but on a more opportunistic basis," commented Billingham. "We are talking to buyers, funders and private equity investors on a daily basis and know that there is a strong appetite for M&A."



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Davies' CCaaS playbook

The CCaaS market is a hotbed of innovation and opportunity, driven by advanced technologies such as AI and automation alongside a big shift to the cloud. Small wonder Maintel is doubling down on this vibrant market with CEO Dan Davies looking to capitalise on double-digit segment growth.

CCaaS is one of Maintel's most profitable divisions so it's no surprise that its in-house development teams continue to drive growth through the creation of applications, integrations, customer portals and quote-to-cash tools, and integrate these solutions into application, infrastructure and orchestration platforms. "The development of complementary integrations and applications that enhance our core CCaaS platforms is a key driver of higher margins, along with integrating AI technologies into the base offering," stated Davies. "Our platforms allow us to automate and orchestrate complete end-to-end services."

Davies noted that Maintel focuses its efforts across three strategic pillars, the second one being customer experience and CX technology. "The core focus of this pillar is the high

growth CCaaS market," he added. "Analysts forecast double-digit annual growth in the CCaaS space and our future planning is heavily based on how AI will enhance our product and service offerings and drive more revenues."

Group revenue for the financial year 2024 was £97.9 million (2023: £101.3 million), and cloud communications recurring revenues grew by 7.9 per cent to £17.3 million (2023: £16 million), with the majority of growth coming from cloud contact centre services. And while Maintel continues to secure more public and private cloud contracts Davies has observed an increasing drive towards hybrid models that combine the best of both the private and public cloud worlds. "Maintel is looking to capitalise on this trend by selling solutions that are more complete than out of the box offerings," he added.



Dan Davies

We look at customer outcomes rather than just focus on the technology – this gives us a competitive edge

The shift to remote and hybrid work models is also revolutionising the contact centre, boosting agent efficiency and cutting churn. "AI is at the forefront of this transformation, driving superior customer experiences across omnichannel platforms," commented Davies. "As customer demand

for personalised service intensifies, challenges around data security and regulatory compliance are coming into sharper focus. Nevertheless, the market is set for continued growth, fuelled by ongoing technical investments and strategic integrations across business functions. As part of this we look at customer outcomes

rather than just focus on the technology – this gives us a competitive edge."

He also noted that business technology buyers are stepping up their investment levels in CCaaS to improve brand reputation, boost CSAT scores and address challenges such as agent churn, compliance and security issues. "CCaaS helps businesses to not only acquire new customers but also enhance customer experience, leading to greater loyalty and retention," Davies commented. "Ultimately, customer retention and experience is a key driver of long-term success."



Contact centre report

A NEW contact centre market report provides a window on the behind the scenes success factors that supercharge 10 top MSPs in the CCaaS space (including Maintel). Download the report here – <https://www.comms-dealer.com/contact-centre/going-growth-contact-centres>



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Delivering an Outcome a

Achieving strong and sustained growth in a competitive market calls for a multifaceted approach and a focus on where to evolve and where to reinvent – but the imperative to deliver ‘more for less’ to exacting customers further complicates the conundrum. Therefore, this year’s gold standard Comms Vision Convention (12th-14th November, Gleneagles) doubles down on how to create a model that brings Outcome and Value Bonuses (OVBs) not just for end users, but also for MSPs needing to optimise their own operations to ensure long-term, and streamlined, business growth.

The biggest challenges facing MSPs today are to ensure more business growth at no extra cost while delivering higher value to customers along with productivity gains for their own organisation. But driving business transformation in a competitive and saturated market, with pressure from end users wanting more for less from their tech investments and MSP relationships, how far, and where, do MSPs need to evolve and reinvent to meet these demands and differentiate? Is sticking to your knitting an option when solving this new customer Rol and MSP efficiency equation?

Striking the right balance between evolution and reinvention to drive value and deliver more outcomes – while growing your business more efficiently – will be the pivotal factor when planning for competitive success. This also brings into question the viability of traditional channel models.

Customer demand for OVBs will only intensify, but how to deliver more Rol and grow at the same time is the strategic



Customer demand for an Outcome and Value Bonus will only intensify, but how to deliver more Rol and grow at the same time is the challenge facing channel firms. Solving this equation is key to sustained competitive success

challenge facing channel firms. To help unravel this conundrum Comms Vision will, in part, explore how the critical field of Enhanced Consultancy will become the new competitive battlefield, and how gaining control of margin erosion can also

help MSPs deliver the more for less business agenda.

Key questions

1. In order to meet today's and tomorrow's customer OVB expectations, which parts of your own operations, platforms and

GTM will need rethinking or reinventing? Is your consultancy practice good enough to compete long-term? Have you got control of margin erosion? Are you making the right decisions?
2. How should technology/vendor partnerships evolve to

maximise Rol for customers and your own business?

3. How can you ensure that your workforce is future-ready to drive exceptional value for all stakeholders?

Comms Vision's agenda will show how an interconnected



nd Value Bonus

approach to overcoming these siloed challenges will enable MSPs to create a blueprint for delivering more customer value, while securing their business's long-term viability through...

The Interconnected Solve

1. Strike the right balance

Pairing your own company's efficiency and productivity roadmap with revenue growth strategies is now a

Is sticking to your knitting an option when trying to solve the new customer Rol and MSP efficiency equation?

priority. And understanding where to focus when developing a future-fit operational, GTM, CX and customer value approach will be the silver bullet. This involves harnessing today's technology, including AI powered end-to-end data management, and tackling the age old problem of how to erase the impacts of margin erosion on performance – which is too often overlooked despite its potential to help MSPs deliver more for less. We also explore how matching operational excellence to Enhanced Consultancy practices could make a decisive difference in the evolving ICT market battleground.

2. Forge the right partnerships

MSP and customer priorities are inseparable from the broader channel ecosystem,

which brings into focus the future direction of strategic partnerships which are under pressure to be more intertwined and strategically aligned, in order to target the right tech and business markets, drive growth through greater collaboration, operational and platform efficiency, and promote integration and automation between partners. But how far is the

channel's supply chain responding to these pressures and evolving in order to deliver compelling OVBs? And are we moving fast enough?

3. Fire up your team power

Comms Vision will also focus on how this all links into the evolution of an agile

MSP workforce fit for the future, primed to help deliver more outcome-led value through the elevation of your organisation's capacity to innovate, disrupt and grow through a thriving people strategy. Building a workforce that's responsive to change and new opportunities is vital for long-term success, and how to meet this challenge successfully hinges on your people and teamwork – just as much as the strategic business decisions you make. But how can we prepare for that mindset shift today?

4. Decide on next moves

Knowing what to consider when transition planning

Solving the channel's more for less strategic equation – a 10 point plan

1. Take consultancy to the next level

2. Solve the new customer Rol equation

3. Boost operational and GTM efficiency

4. Make your data work for you

5. Erase margin erosion

6. Get empowered through productive partnering

7. Realise your people and team potential

8. Understand where to evolve, where to reinvent and how to differentiate

9. Take the right strategic decisions

10. Develop sustained leadership excellence

for a stronger future is a challenge for MSP leaders, therefore Comms Vision has set out to provide a framework that incorporates recommendations and guidance to help inform the astute decision making required to strike the right balance between evolution and reinvention, and deliver sustainable OVBs to customers while driving your own growth agenda. ■

About Comms Vision...

COMMS Vision is the leading annual leadership forum for CEO, MD and CTO delegates making up the major league of the UK reseller and MSP community. To find out more about this year's conference visit – www.commsvision.com



The Power of Choice:

Why VeloxServ Is the Connectivity Partner the Channel Needs

The Power of Choice: Why VeloxServ Is the Connectivity Partner the Channel Needs

As businesses become ever more reliant on digital tools, cloud platforms, and hybrid working, the demand for flexible, high-performance connectivity has never been greater.

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That's where independent wholesale aggregators like VeloxServ are changing the game. As a fully independent, wholesale-only Full Fibre connectivity aggregator, VeloxServ isn't tied to a single network or provider. Instead, it currently aggregates services from major carriers across the UK, including Openreach, CityFibre, Virgin Media O2 and Vodafone. More recently VeloxServ has also forged new relationships with other leading network providers such as ITS, FullFibre, Freedom Fibre and Vorboss, giving partners access and further depth to a truly comprehensive portfolio of broadband and Ethernet services.

This independence brings freedom. No bias, no upselling, no lock-in. Just clear, competitive pricing and fast quoting across multiple carriers, enabling faster sales cycles, better margins, and more customer choice.

But VeloxServ doesn't just simplify pricing, it adds value across the customer journey



Craig Messer, Managing Director, VeloxServ

as it continues to enhance its offering to partners. Further exciting developments to its partner portal in the coming months include a more expansive and intelligent pricing engine which allows partners to generate instant, location-specific quotes and order connectivity services seamlessly and efficiently.

The business has been founded on providing the highest quality customer service and technical support to service management and provisioning. And with a channel-only approach, partners never compete with VeloxServ for end users – removing a long-standing frustration that many face with larger providers.

At its core, VeloxServ is built around empowering partners. Its model enables MSPs, and ISPs to deliver tailored solutions that meet real-world business needs, without compromise on quality, price, or flexibility.

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Ten channel bosses share their top business tips...

Which channel chief urged resellers to make a choice between margin and growth? Find out here, along with many other top business tips offered by leading channel personalities.

Bluecube Managing Director Paul Reames

Don't spread yourself too thin, and build a network of trusted partners that you know will look after you.

Agilitas IT Solutions CEO Sara Wilkes

Stay closely aligned with where your customers are spending. Understanding their evolving needs and preferences will help you offer the right solutions at the right time.

Patrick Daly, Managing Director, Amillan

Trust in your capabilities and the unique value you bring.

Cybit Executive Chairman James Hunnybourne

Get an identity, have proactivity built into your services and build a robust voice of the customer programme.

Six Degrees CEO Vince DeLuca

All businesses need to weigh up increasing margins versus growing the business. Margin is important, but growth is the most important thing we have right now.

SolaaS Managing Director René Wheeler

Embrace the changes ahead, ensure you are adapting to customers' needs and be ahead of the technology curve.

Daniel Ellis, Chief Product & Marketing Officer, Lumilinks

Know the problem you solve and the value your solution delivers. That's your North Star.

Ross Jack, RVP Channel Sales EMEA, Dialpad

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

KubeNet Director Fraser Ferguson

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

Evolve IP EMEA Managing Director Paul Harrison

Stay aligned to market needs and be responsive. Value-driven relationships are the foundation of long-term success. ■

Vendors urged to share plans

First hand insight into vendor forward planning empowers MSPs to act early and deliver a strategic advantage – and it's time this was the norm, writes Loucerna Director Louise Grant.

One of the most significant frustrations for MSPs is the lack of visibility into vendor strategies, particularly regarding channel GTM approaches and product development pipelines. The channel often finds out too late to react, let alone plan strategically. If vendors want their channel to invest in them, they need to help partners see where they're going. That means fewer silos, more two-way communication and a commitment to long-term collaboration.

The fact is that vendors frequently operate in siloed environments where product and sales teams function with limited cross-departmental visibility. This disjointed approach leaves MSPs without the critical information they need to align their resources and strategies with vendor priorities. To combat this, vendors should prioritise breaking down these silos by promoting interdepartmental communication and collaboration. Transparent roadmaps shared across teams can help ensure MSPs (and the wider channel) have access to unified and consistent messaging. ■



Louise Grant

MSPs want to work with vendors who treat them like strategic partners – not just sales execution arms. This starts with transparency and partners becoming part of the planning conversation. Even if things change, a directional view helps MSPs make informed decisions about their offerings, hiring, marketing and customer conversations.

Building bridges

Advanced collaboration tools such as shared dashboards, roadmaps and forecasting platforms can serve as bridges between vendors and MSPs. These tools enable real-time insights into vendor strategies, providing MSPs with the clarity they need

to identify trends, anticipate changes and contribute meaningfully to joint success.

Vendors should also bring key partners into roadmap conversations and early product feedback loops. Some of the most valuable insights live outside the vendor organisation. That feedback doesn't just help MSPs feel included, it inevitably improves vendor outcomes.

Some vendors are getting this right with partner advisory boards, regular strategy briefings and dedicated planning sessions. But too many still treat transparency like a nice-to-have. It's not. It's foundational. ■



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Trends evolve in UCaaS

Combining a highly evolved and targeted approach to capitalising on UCaaS is key, says Richard Beeston, Chief Technology & Central Operations Officer, Digital Space.

Beeston's most compelling observation about the UCaaS space right now is that customers are driving for simplicity – single platforms, single vendors, and they want a better user experience across all channels. He also observed that AI-driven enhancements such as voice analytics, sentiment analysis and automation are gaining traction and becoming BAU for many mid-sized organisations. Meanwhile, compliance and security concerns (especially in regulated industries) are pushing customers to invest back into hybrid/privately deployed UC solutions. "Against this backdrop, growing competition from IT MSPs adding UCaaS into their portfolio is disrupting traditional telco-only providers," commented Beeston.

For Digital Space, changes to UCaaS purchasing trends are most obvious where clearing companies are exploring AI-enhanced customer interactions and self-service options. "The use of large language models and natural language processing will be among the most interesting and fast-growing solutions

over the next 24 months," said Beeston. "Developing vertically tailored UCaaS solutions with discrete plays around integration and API development is also an emerging revenue centre."

He noted that Digital Space's UCaaS proposition and GTM strategy continues to evolve with ongoing investments in private and hybrid cloud capabilities, API development and integrations. As part of that, the MSP's in-house development team is being fully leveraged to enhance API development. This includes improving platform performance, providing high level statistics and integrating network insights into bespoke customer portals.

"Delivering value for customers off the back of these advancements will be key to standing out in a crowded marketplace," added Beeston, who also pointed out that the most profitable elements of Digital Space's UCaaS sales are CCaaS and AI enhancements. "Businesses are willing to invest into better customer interactions, driving value for them while increasing revenue per head for providers,"



Richard Beeston

Growing competition from IT MSPs adding UCaaS into their portfolio is disrupting traditional telco-only providers

he added. "Custom integrations and consultancy are high margin."

Vertical approach

The verticals of most interest to Digital Space are retail, hospitality, healthcare and mid-market enterprises. And exploring deeper vertical solutions with enhanced value added services centred around AI is key for the business, noted Beeston. "In the UC space we see change happening fastest around AI-driven voice, integrated video enhancements and 5G-based UCaaS mobility solutions," he observed.

"Differentiation is tough in this market – our biggest edge is typically vertical

expertise and managed service capabilities when UCaaS is combined with a broader MSP solution that encompasses managed WANs. Embedded security is also becoming a major differentiator, especially when voice is delivered as part of a broader SDWAN or network solution."

Beeston says that the three biggest challenges when seeking to optimise UCaaS sales and deployments, in order of importance, are price competition (commoditisation continues to pile pressure on margins); customer education (many still see UCaaS as just voice rather than a broader productivity solution); and integration complexity

(customers struggle with multi-platform environments).

According to Beeston, Digital Space's main differentiator in the UCaaS market is its ability to deliver in line with a managed service that reflects cutting-edge AI and network solutions, combined with deep vertical expertise in key sectors. "Maintaining value in managed services and solutions is crucial," he stated. "Too often we see low-cost providers eroding market value. I also believe that customer confidence and clarity around long-term investments will become increasingly challenging. Our primary focus over the next 24 months is consolidation and vendor distribution." ■



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Morey pledges to give pa

With almost 30 years experience in the tech industry under his belt Will Morey took the reins as Gamma Business Managing Director in May this year. Here, the seasoned channel exec discusses his motivations and strategy, how he intends to drive deeper relationships with partners, and why the launch of Gamma Edge could be a game changer in channel support.

Why did you take the role of Gamma Business MD?

This is a role that brings together everything I care about... real people, a trusted solution set and a channel I've been part of for decades. I've worked closely with many of our partners over the years, and I saw this as an opportunity to build on that and help shape the next phase of growth together.

What strengths do you bring to the position?

I've spent my whole career in this industry, from running large distributor teams to co-founding businesses and growing them from scratch. That experience has given me perspective. I understand the pressures partners face and

how to help them respond. I'm collaborative and focused on long-term impact, not just short-term wins.

What was your first priority as MD?

To listen. The best plans come from understanding what's working and where the gaps are. That meant having open conversations with partners and teams, and using what we heard to shape a response that's practical and genuinely helpful.

What changes are you making, and how will you make your mark?

We're aligning more closely with how partners want to work. That means clearer growth planning, easier access to the full Gamma portfolio and smarter



Will Morey

The real growth is coming from partners who are engaging across the portfolio and using the full Gamma offer to build smarter, more resilient propositions

commercial support. I want partners to feel that Gamma is not just backing their growth but actively enabling it every step of the way.

How did H1 this year shape up for Gamma Business?

In 2024, both the group and Gamma Business continued to grow strongly

driven primarily by our UCaaS portfolio. So far in 2025, we're seeing strong momentum. The real growth is coming from partners who are engaging across the portfolio and using the full Gamma offer to build smarter, more resilient propositions for their customers.

What are your short and long-term priorities?

Right now, it's about delivery. We've created a more joined-up partner experience and now we're rolling it out with energy and focus. Looking ahead, we have many exciting plans for our partners to shift to higher-value, recurring revenue



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Partners an Edge

models that support their long-term performance. That's why we introduced Gamma Edge, the most complete support framework we have ever launched, designed to help partners grow smarter, sell more and

Trust is the currency of this industry. Being the person someone still calls for advice or opportunity ten years later, that's the real win

create lasting value with their customers. It's a platform that brings together everything a partner needs to succeed in one connected place.

How did Gamma Edge come about?

We did not build Edge in a boardroom. We built it by listening. Over the past six months and beyond we have spent time with our partners across the country, asking honest questions and hearing real answers about what is working, what is not and where we can do better together. Those conversations have shaped everything about Gamma Edge, from the insight we provide to the commercial tools and support available.

How is Gamma Edge structured?

There are five components. 'Partner Pulse' is where we start, with joint business planning that's genuinely co-created. No two partners are the same. It's about

tailoring Gamma's approach to each and every partner.

'Velocity' turns that plan into reward. It's a simplified rebate engine that recognises performance across the entire Gamma portfolio –

UCaaS, connectivity, mobile and security. The more a partner grows with us, the more they earn. We've designed it to be transparent and scalable. 'Elements' gives partners the tools to deliver, and 'Boost' adds momentum. These are ready-to-go commercial accelerators created to help partners win faster.

'Migrate' helps

partners protect and future-proof their base. It combines platform risk analysis with tools to move customers away from legacy estates, securely, smoothly and with full support. Migrate is about reducing churn and simplifying the transition to modern platforms.

Where do you see the Gamma channel in three years?

I want our partners to be more confident, more profitable and better supported. That means helping them grow faster, reduce risk and deepen their customer relationships all with a simpler, more scalable Gamma experience behind them. I'm confident that will happen.

Which market trends are shaping your thinking?

We're seeing real demand for simplicity, value and trust. Customers want fewer suppliers and more dependable outcomes. For

partners, that means making smart choices about what to sell and who to sell it with. That's exactly where we want Gamma to deliver.

What excites you most tech-wise?

AI and automation have huge potential, especially when they drive partner productivity and customer experience. But we're also focused on making everyday adoption easier, packaging services better, embedding security by design and making it simpler to sell and support the full stack.

Your proudest achievement?

I'm proud of what we built at Pragma and EnableX, but what means the most to me are the relationships that have stood the test of time. Trust is the currency of this industry. Being the person someone still calls for advice or opportunity ten years later, that's the real win.

What would you change about the industry?

I'd take out the complexity. There are way too many people who speak 'tech'. Acronyms and techy words kill conversations with customers. We've also created layers that don't always add value. What partners and customers want is clarity, flexibility and services that just work, and that's what we need to focus on.

Today's top leadership priorities?

Strong relationships. Also, listen deeply and invest in people and partnerships. The strongest leaders remove friction and build confidence. It's not about having all the answers – it's about being reliable, relevant, and ready to deliver.

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How to be successful

Look for a channel-only supplier with:

- A wide range of differentiated SIMs that stand out against vanilla MNO offerings
- Differentiated hardware devices that are easy to sell, deploy and support
- Ready-made solutions for common use cases such as PSTN replacement
- OPEX and CAPEX financial models on hardware
- A real-time, fully automated, API-enabled, white-label portal that connects to every mobile network in the world
- Best-in-class network security as standard
- A go-to-market programme to help you find and win mobile data opportunities

Products

Our ability to innovate is one of our success stories at Jola. We continually innovate to help partners win deals. We offer a wide range of differentiated solutions from single-network SIMs for phones, tablets and mobile broadband solutions to multi-network QR eSIMs, M2M and IoT SIMs, fixed IP SIMs for WiFi, ticketing systems, monitoring devices and CCTV cameras. We provide innovative PSTN replacement solutions with battery back-up, suitable for lifts in shopping centres. We recently launched intelligent Teltonika routers, which arrive plug-and-play for digital signage solutions in supermarkets.

Portals

We were the first to market with a real-time automated portal, and we continue to lead and innovate in this area. MSPs and resellers do not want multiple supplier portals to deal with; they want the ability to order a wide range of technologies from multiple network operators in a single portal. They also want direct access to activate SIMs, add bolt-ons, and share data across accounts.



Cherie Howlett, CMO, Jola

"We develop unique solutions that partners cannot obtain elsewhere, at competitive prices, ensuring a healthy margin."

Security

Jola has a fully redundant and highly scalable IP edge network specifically designed to deliver high-performance and secure mobile data services. Our partners' critical services now operate over the Cloudflare network. Cloudflare's 121 Tbps global network blocks an average of 86 billion threats each day, including some of the largest DDoS attacks in history.

MRG™

Jola is assisting channel partners in identifying prospects with immediate needs for mobile data SIMs through our six-step Mobile-data Revenue Generator™ (MRG) programme. We develop unique solutions that partners cannot obtain elsewhere, at competitive prices, ensuring a healthy margin. As a channel-only provider, partners can rely on us to assist them in pitching and closing deals.

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Flotek on course for £100

From the outset, Flotek Group CEO Jay Ball set the right strategic course to grow profitably. Here, he discusses the ongoing evolution of his business model and strategy to hit £100 million revenue by 2032.

Generating fast business growth is nothing new to Ball, having started his first tech business at 21 and grown it to £5 million revenue before exiting in 2019 to SCG. Only to realise that selling and retiring into the sun wasn't quite enough. So Flotek Group (which now has over 100 staff) was co-founded by Ball in 2022 with a mission to bring IT, cyber and communications together (rather than be led by either comms or IT), launching with a ten year plan to achieve £100 million revenue by 2032, always ensuring organic continues to grow while adding M&A growth.

"We're currently at £18 million and ahead of our plan," stated Ball. "The goal is to end the year with a £20 million revenue run rate. And we expect organic growth to exceed"

Ball's top tip

AI IS SUCH an exciting opportunity. Don't miss the curve and be too late to the party.

this target but M&A will be lower. When we secure our next funding package that will accelerate again."

Flotek Group focuses on managed IT support on a per user basis, with cyber being a crucial target along with cloud comms. "The higher organic growth this year has been driven mainly by our new business development team," added Ball. "In terms of M&A, the current focus is to integrate our latest acquisitions then secure a larger acquisition facility which will enable us to deliver our growth plan for the next three years. We are seeing a huge number of opportunities but are very selective about which to pursue."

These impressive financials continue a trend that Flotek set in motion as soon as it was up and running. The fledgling business ended its first year on £5 million revenue, second year £10 million and third year was comfortably ahead of its £15 million target. "We will be at £30 million-plus in three years time," stated Ball.



Jay Ball

We will continue to grow through IT, cyber and utilise comms as an easier door into these customers to begin relationships

Flotek Group launched a dedicated business development team late last year which is driving the momentum. And Ball noted that the highest growth comes from customers who procure multiple services across IT and comms, which combined with

Flotek's ability to cross sell effectively is a win-win. "The average spend across our base is over £500 pcm and this is growing rapidly as IT adoption increases," he added. "Notably, our average IT customer spend is three times that of comms customers. We will continue

to grow through IT, cyber and utilise comms as an easier door into these customers to begin relationships."

GTM strategy

Flotek Group's typical customer profile is 20-150 staff – core SME. But the MSP does have many smaller

0 million

and larger customers outside this demographic. The common factor they share is that average revenue per customer is growing rapidly across the board, especially as Ball continues to evolve his sales and GTM approaches. "We're moving further towards a vertical based focus," he added. "For example, legal and hospitality are huge for

Our average IT customer spend is three times that of comms clients

us. Having a specialism in these markets means we can drive our knowledge, experience and relationships with sector vendors heavily.

Vertical focus

"Adopting a proper vertical focus means having solutions tailored to those businesses and speaking their language, whether that's expertise in hosting legal practice software, supporting cloud TV solutions for hotels and developing our cloud phone systems to work commercially in that market. Later this year I expect our marketing to be more vertical focused. Our team is always doubling down on solution selling, so focusing on verticals and addressing their pain points is key."

According to Ball, listening to the market is always going to be Flotek Group's primary growth driver. "This way we know when to pivot and adapt to the technologies that need dedication or resource," he commented. "Take cloud computing:

There was a drive towards AWS/Azure in the past few years. However, customers are now looking for more private cloud facilities and fixed costs, so we're exploring our own private cloud offering to complement the hyperscalers."

Ball says that Flotek Group's biggest opportunity right now is leading the charge to be a complete tech provider. Not an IT or comms solution provider with bolt-ons, but to cross sell in a way that brings all tech together. "Microsoft Teams is an enabler of this," he said. "It's the chosen product for most of our high growth customers. Cyber

will also continue to drive revenues within managed IT as there is so much focus on security and the repercussions of not taking it seriously. Given our expertise across IT and networking we are well positioned to provide customers with a comprehensive solution."

Flotek Group's greatest successes at the moment are linked to the growth across managed IT, reiterated Ball. "We've grown our IT revenue by over 200 per cent in the last year, driven by our two highest spend customer categories which are also up over 200 per cent," he said. "But customer education is critical to success, especially for IT, cyber, advanced networking and firewall solutions. We are putting a lot of investment into ensuring our customers can make the most of their technology and self-serve, as well as giving our account managers the tools to offer a more consultative sales process for complex solutions that need more time." ■

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The Comms Industry's Most Coveted Awards Return to Westminster – Enter Now!

The Comms National Awards, the UK ICT Channel's premier awards event, returns to the prestigious Park Plaza Hotel in Westminster, London, on Thursday, 25th September 2025.

Entries are now open, with a deadline of 16th July, offering a wide range of categories for MSPs, resellers, distributors, and service providers. Whether you're a growing business or an established industry leader, there's a category to celebrate your success in the UK's vibrant ICT channel.

Now in its 24th year, the Comms National Awards remains the most respected and sought-after recognition in the

industry—honouring the outstanding achievements of UK resellers and the vendors who empower them. With headline sponsorship from Giacom for the fifth consecutive year and independent judging by a panel of esteemed industry experts, the awards celebrate excellence across both reseller (customer solution) and vendor (service to the channel) categories.

As always, the evening promises

top-tier entertainment. Last year, broadcaster Clive Myrie brought style and professionalism to the stage, continuing the tradition of high-calibre hosts and unforgettable moments.

From industry recognition and world-class entertainment to invaluable networking opportunities, the Comms National Awards is the must-attend event where the ICT channel comes together to celebrate in style.

Submit your entry today and be part of the celebration www.cnawards.com

A word from our headline sponsor



We're very proud to be this year's headline sponsor of the Comms National Awards 2025.

The Comms National Awards remain one of the most highly anticipated

events in the channel calendar. They offer a chance to recognise the businesses that are not just performing, but progressing. Those embracing change, building stronger customer relationships, and finding smarter, more sustainable ways to deliver value.

We're sponsoring again this year because we believe in celebrating the partners who are setting the pace. The trailblazers who are shaping what success looks like in a channel that continues to evolve. Whether through innovation, integration,

or simply doing the basics exceptionally well, these are the businesses helping customers navigate complexity and prepare for the digital-first future.

At Giacom, we are passionate advocates for the channel. It is our lifeblood, and we count ourselves incredibly fortunate to be part of such a vibrant, forward-

thinking community.

We're looking forward to coming together once again to recognise the achievements of our peers and to celebrate the spirit of progress that defines the best our industry has to offer.

Terry O'Brien, CEO, Giacom



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A word from our sponsors



At Gamma, we believe in celebrating the innovation, resilience and talent that drives the channel forward, which is why we're proud to support the Comms National Awards once again this year. The CNAs are a standout event in the industry calendar, and a brilliant opportunity to recognise the partners, people and solutions shaping our shared success. We love giving our partners the competitive edge and the CNAs celebrate exactly that.



Will Morey, Managing Director, Gamma



PXC is proud to sponsor this year's Comms National Awards – a true celebration of innovation, excellence and creativity in the Channel. This event leads the way in recognising outstanding achievements in our industry and we're excited to support a platform that highlights those driving real progress and innovation. Best of luck to all the finalists!

James Smith, CEO, PXC



We're passionate about the huge opportunity that IoT presents for the channel. Sponsoring this award allows us to recognise those in our industry who have already seized the opportunity and delivered successful outcomes for their customers. I look forward to meeting the finalists, our customers, suppliers and peers on what will undoubtedly be a fantastic night.

Adrian Sunderland, CEO, Jola



Voiceflex is delighted to again be sponsoring the Comms National Awards this year to celebrate the innovation, dedication, and success within the channel. As a 100% channel-only provider, we believe in recognising the businesses driving the industry forward. These awards highlight excellence and achievement and we're honoured to support and be part of that celebration.

Paul Taylor, CCO Voiceflex



NUSO are proud to be sponsoring the prestigious 2025 Comms National Awards, the evening is one where we can celebrate the achievements of our channel and recognise those that deliver real value in both vendor and the reseller community!

The NUSO team look forward to seeing you all on the night and wish all finalists the very best of luck.

Justin Blaine, Sales Director – Unified Communications, NUSO



The CNAs bring our community together, not just to compete, but to connect, collaborate, and honour the excellence that defines the channel. Congratulations to all the finalists, and here's to another outstanding evening!

Craig Howell, Sales Director, Xelion



Meet 2025's CNA judges

Each year the Comms National Awards assembles a panel of industry experts that can draw on impressive industry tenure to ensure judging of the highest standards. The collective cohort represents multiple facets of our industry – including finance & M&A, HR and recruitment and MSP leadership – to address the breadth of categories this awards process offers. Our judges pledge impartiality and discretion before agreeing to join the panel.



Marcus Allchurch



Kate Brunning



Richard Carter



John Chapman



Dawn Fenton



Louise Grant



Julie Mills



Nigel Sergent

Business updates point to

Last month's Channel Forecast insight session gauged the business outlooks of three channel firms, assessing H1 company performance, their take on market trends, growth hotspots, the shift towards outcomes versus simple reselling, the channel engagement strategies that work best and what this all means for resellers and MSPs in H2 and beyond.

There's plenty of scope for optimism in the coming six months, according to our panel of three industry experts, each reporting good growth, and all preparing for an H2 uptick. "We've had a strong first half of the year, measuring growth across most of our products and technologies with clear momentum in all the right areas compared to 2024," said Ralph Mora, VP & GM EMEA Region, Nuso. "We are doing especially well where cloud adoption is maturing and have had a bright spot in integrating Microsoft Teams and Zoom Phone into our business telephony suite. We're still building out this ecosystem so that partners can grow through a broader reach with richer solutions."

Despite a slower first quarter, Evolve IP has also seen growth pick up with record attendees at its April partner day. It is also planning an H2 spike by doubling down on its Microsoft play via the impending launch of Operator Connect. "We've built an ecosystem around the Microsoft piece with call recording, analytics and contact centre," said Sales Director Jamie Hughes.

He also highlighted churn from smaller customers as another trend to keep an eye on. "This doesn't have

to be a negative, larger customers are stickier and one or two deals can make up for churn," he said. "Our strategy is to point customers at the mid-market and enterprise space and avoid the low-end which can be a race to the bottom."

VeloxServ has also driven year-on-year growth, according to Head of Marketing Rob Tickle, having ramped up its connectivity offering and signing up a raft of new suppliers. He said that VeloxServ's priority is to go all-in on marketing and partner enablement to add new resellers and deepen its relationship with existing partners. "The goal is around equipping our ISP and MSP partners with the right data, insight collateral and all the tools they need to be able to sell their value-added solutions confidently and differentiate themselves," he said, noting that VeloxServ is aiming at the SME and mid-market customer base where demand is high for infrastructure.

All agreed that H1 trends were especially seen in changing customer spending habits. This is not characterised by a tightening of purse strings, but by more selective and strategic investment. Hughes commented: "Customers are retaining the same



Ralph Mora

Customers are redirecting their spend towards platforms and services, often seeking more measurable impacts and looking to extract value from the existing technologies that they have

amount of spend but they are being more targeted about its deployment."

Mora expanded on the point: "Customers are redirecting

their spend towards platforms and services, often seeking more measurable impacts and looking to extract value from the existing technologies that they

have." Tickle summarised that customers are trying to spend smarter by 'prioritising reliability, efficiency and a more long-term return on investment'. He also noted an uptick in demand for flexible, scalable solutions.

Changing perceptions around value mean vendors must facilitate a change in their go-to-market approach for resellers. Mora explained: "The best-performing and smartest resellers aren't just chasing revenue, they're building relevance and resilience to make their customer relationships stickier. Relevance means staying aligned with customer expectations, so these resellers are looking for vendors who offer flexible go-to-market options and strong enablement pieces."

Hughes also emphasised the new value perceptions facing resellers, as well as Evolve IP's enablement strategy. He said: "If you go into a meeting and talk about features you're going to be brushed aside. It's now about measurable outcomes and long-term value."

To accommodate this, Evolve IP has restructured its sales teams, implementing Technical Account Managers to deliver on outcomes. The company has also invested in tools that chew

strong H2 performances



Rob Tickle

Our partner engagements now focus more on collaboration and cooperation, not just the reselling of services

customer data to quantify business-specific efficiency savings. He added: "It is tangible and personalised and gives something for a CFO or wider buying committee to buy into."

VeloxServ is also shifting how it does business alongside partners. Tickle said: "Our partner engagements now focus more on collaboration and cooperation, not just the reselling of services. It's strategic enablement that we're offering because that's where the real value is. The winners ultimately will be those that can guide their customers through complexities and

deliver tangible results at the end of it."

Nuso is also facilitating an outcome-based approach for partners by offering a range of options. "We're constantly investing in technology to enable partners to keep adding value added services to their customers, through our own IP investments and through the acquisition of turnkey technologies," said Mora. "It's about allowing customers to enhance existing technology and then migrate, when convenient, to new platforms."

"Our job is to help partners become advisors, not just

sellers. If they win customers on trust and on value, we will all grow. Investing the time with the customer and truly understanding their business objectives, their model and their future aspirations remains a central tenet to our channel model."

Where this approach can be particularly effective for resellers is when specialising down to specific verticals, according to Hughes. He extols the benefit of finding niche markets that resellers can totally own. He said: "If you can package the best solutions and position them in a way that addresses a sector's niche needs, perhaps with the help of an industry expert, then that world is your oyster. You will build momentum through word of mouth and a growing base of case studies. From a valuation point of view that is going to be a lot more appealing to some buyers."

This consultative approach requires tighter strategic proximity between suppliers and partners than ever before. Therefore, a key theme throughout the discussion was the steps being taken by vendors to become easier to do business with. Tickle added: "Growth comes from strategic collaboration so our focus is on being as frictionless to work with as possible."

This is also a focus for Nuso which has relaunched its global websites to be more relevant to customers selling on outcomes. This came alongside a portal relaunch, a new platform allowing for numbering and porting selection and work on toolchain enablement. Evolve IP has taken a similar approach in addressing

its partner portal and integrations, enabling its partners to begin provisioning their own numbers rather than having to raise a ticket.

Efficiency matters

Hughes said: "This is the year for becoming more operationally efficient. As the channel, we need to train our thinking on the cost of doing business, not just the cost of buying services, because reductions here will be where the growth comes from. If you can streamline your business from transaction to delivery, you'll naturally get growth not just through existing customers, but also for future prospects."

Tickle advised: "Focus on partnerships that offer flexibility, transparency and

long-term value. Growth isn't about chasing volume, it's about building trust and delivering consistently excellent service. Align with providers that understand your customer's challenges and can help them to innovate."

Mora also advocates for resellers to evaluate their existing vendor relationships. He said: "The market has changed, and people have changed, so as technology specialists, resellers should be looking all the time to see what other products and services are available, benchmarking themselves against their competition, and seeing how they can improve their customers journey through the technology minefield." ■



Jamie Hughes

Customers are retaining the same amount of spend but are being more targeted about its deployment

Harnessing the power of

Getting your data right is the vital first step in every successful AI strategy, says Daniel Ellis, Chief Product & Marketing Officer, Lumilinks. Here, he discusses how to approach the multifaceted AI opportunity and reveals his plan for Lumilinks to become a market sector front runner.

Ellis confidently predicts that Lumilinks will soon become a category leader in AI-ready data products and fully managed services, and there has never been any question about how he will achieve this goal. "Our route to get there is clear," he stated. "Build scalable applications, maintain our pace of innovation and keep delivering customer value that compounds over time. We've already shown how automating next best actions across supply chains can deliver a tenfold acceleration in performance – and that's just the beginning."

Lumilinks is headquartered in London but was founded in 2018 in Cambridge – the birthplace of mathematical and scientific discovery – with a vision to solve complex, real-world industry problems using data and science. "From the outset we were clear on our purpose," reiterated Ellis. "We weren't here to build technology for technology's

sake – we exist to illuminate the hidden links within our customers' data and help them turn information into action. We help organisations transform and manage their data so they can deploy AI applications with confidence."

Ellis has spent the last 25 years helping businesses of all shapes and sizes navigate the evolving digital landscape – from the early days of self-service technology to today's AI revolution. "My experience has taught me how to spot market opportunities, build products that matter and deliver scalable value," he added. "My role at Lumilinks brings all of that together. My focus now is on making businesses AI-relevant by building solutions that unlock real, measurable growth."

His immediate priority is to help customers simplify their data landscape – making it easier to access insights that drive better decisions. "Longer term we're continuing to invest



Daniel Ellis

We've shown how automating next best actions across supply chains can deliver a tenfold acceleration in performance – and that's just the beginning

in scalable AI products, underpinned by trusted data strategies," added Ellis. "This means further developing our self-service suite, expanding integrations and investing in go-to-market partnerships that accelerate adoption."

Lumilinks has grown consistently since day one,

and 2024 was no exception with the company achieving 70 per cent year-on-year growth. "We're on track to sustain that momentum into 2025, driven by demand for scalable AI solutions and our focus on customer outcomes," added Ellis. "We're now a team of 50 and proud to serve a growing

customer base across the UK and the US, with 60 per cent of revenue coming from the UK and 40 per cent from North America. Our projections for 2025 remain ambitious but grounded, building on solid foundations and repeatable value delivery. We want to be known as the partner who delivers real-

AI-ready data

world impact – not just pilots, but products that scale.”

Lumilinks primarily supports two core markets – businesses with 200 to 1,000 employees that are growing fast and need agility; and

still matters most – along with meeting demand for simplicity, visibility and speed. “These factors are shaping how we build, sell and support our products and applications, keeping organisations in control of their own assets while unlocking the power of AI,” explained Ellis.

Data accessibility, quality and reliability come before AI can deliver value – and that’s our sweet spot. There’s no successful AI strategy without a solid data plan

larger multi-site enterprises (5,000-plus employees) facing the challenges of scale and integration. The common factor that spans both focus areas is that Lumilinks simplifies complex systems and infrastructure.

Growing demand
“We’re seeing increasing demand from multi-site organisations dealing with M&A, expansion or legacy infrastructure – and the common thread is always the need for a single source of truth,” noted Ellis. “Data accessibility, quality and reliability come before AI can deliver value – and that’s our sweet spot. There’s no successful AI strategy without a solid data plan.”

While AI is transforming the way businesses think and operate, Ellis believes that human-centric design

global recognition at the Snowflake 2025 Summit in San Francisco for its AI product suite, a win that Ellis chalked up as a major milestone. “Particularly as we were selected from over 1,000 businesses across 100 countries,” he added. “This signals just how relevant our work is right now. We’re seeing real traction in AI applications that solve specific problems like rapid entity resolution and delivering a single customer view in minutes – and that’s just the start.

“Future growth will come from productising these solutions for broader industry adoption. Underlying all this is our focus on the basics and making data accessible, interoperable and actionable. AI can only deliver value once those foundations are in place.” ■

Just a minute with Daniel Ellis...

Role model: Sir Alex Ferguson: A master of sustained success and adaptability. His ability to rebuild winning teams, instil a winning mentality and lead with conviction through constant change is something I deeply admire.

Tell us something about yourself we don’t know: I have multiple black belts and once qualified for the UCI World Road Race Championships.

If you weren’t in ICT what would you be doing? Something creative and physical... probably sports coaching or design. I love building things that make a difference.

Best advice you have been given: If it’s important, write it and send it in the morning.

Three ideal dinner guests: Sir Alex Ferguson for his stories, leadership wisdom and mindset; Bruce Lee for philosophy, discipline and mastery of the mind; and Julian Clary who’d bring charm – and mischief to the table.

The biggest risk you have taken: A family skydive: I was one of five siblings jumping from a plane.

Your biggest career achievement: Maintaining relevance in a fast-moving sector. But a standout moment was winning at the Snowflake Summit. Lumilinks was selected as the top solution globally from over 1,000 businesses.

Your favourite comedian or comedienne: Micky Flanagan – need I say more?

Today’s top three leadership priorities? Profitable growth, smart investment in technology and scalable operations. While AI is often seen as the silver bullet, success depends on strong teams, focused delivery and measurable outcomes.

PXC

Accelerating growth with the PXC Partner Programme

The PXC Partner Programme is built to help partners unlock real commercial value for their business – fast. Designed as a full support ecosystem, it gives partners the tools, products and incentives they need to grow with confidence and stay ahead of market demands.



One partner seeing the impact of the programme first-hand is Dental IT, a specialist in IT networks for dental practices, who joined the programme in early 2024 looking to enhance their product offering.

As a programme member, Dental IT gained early access to PXC’s future-ready broadband and Zoom products – helping them bring the latest technologies to their niche market quickly to stay competitive. With dedicated training and support from PXC specialists, they were also able to upskill their teams fast, delivering better outcomes and service for their clients.

What stood out most, however, was the quarterly incentive scheme, which rewards partners for their growth. In the past 12 months, Dental IT have won the scheme three times and used their vouchers to fund team-building experiences for their employees.

In November 2024, Dental IT used their incentive vouchers for a team-building day at The Cube in Manchester. Continued success has earned them two more vouchers this year,

which they’re planning to use for more memorable experiences.

“We used the vouchers to fund team-building days that brought everyone together. It was a chance to step away from day-to-day pressures, reward hard work and strengthen team culture.” - Liam McNaughton, Consulting Director, Dental IT

These rewards did more than boost morale for Dental IT. They encouraged the team to explore more of PXC’s portfolio and make full use of platforms like the partner portal 1Portal, to improve their internal processes and expand what they could offer customers.

“Dental IT are a great example of how our programme can deliver for partners who engage with it. They’ve enhanced their offering, earned financial rewards and used those to invest in their people.” - Paul Smith, Chief Sales & Product Strategy Officer, PXC

For partners like Dental IT, the PXC Partner Programme delivers real growth, stronger teams and lasting rewards.



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UK Partner Week Summit

Recognising the power of the ICT channel and that its biggest strength is in its people, the UK Partner Week Summit (July 9th, Convene, London) will be wholly dedicated to bringing the best out of the channel, its leaders and teams.

The UK Partner Week Summit agenda has been tailored to provide a springboard for the development of best practice in channel businesses across a framework of Insight Sessions and Tracks focused on Sales, Marketing, Leadership and Technology. "The first UK Partner Week Summit puts a spotlight on the trends, challenges and opportunities reshaping each of our panels and four Track categories, and provides guidance to help board leaders, department heads and their team members to respond effectively, raise the best practice bar and drive growth," stated Michael O'Brien, Managing Director, BPL Business Media (organiser of the event). "The summit will provide resources that enable channel partners to further develop their leadership, sales, marketing and technical talent. It's also a platform for partners to collaborate and create strategies for individual and business growth."

Cobalt Managing Director Ian Dunstan (and UK Partner Week Summit Ambassador) is typical of summit delegates who have registered for the event, bringing some of his team to meet business leaders, sales, marketing and tech specialists to spark innovation and growth. "UK Partner Week and the Partner Summit is all about celebrating collaboration



Cobalt MD Ian Dunstan (and UK Partner Week Ambassador)

UK Partner Week and the Summit are all about celebrating collaboration and the amazing things we can achieve together

and the amazing things we can achieve together," he enthused. "Getting your team on board and all paddling the same canoe is key to everyone achieving a common goal."

O'Brien added: "The Summit's objectives, content tracks, insight sessions, interactive breakouts and guest speakers have been brought together to help channel businesses build

a resilient and growth focused future in a progressive team, and fun, collaborative environment." **To find out more about the UK Partner Week Summit visit: <https://partnerweek.uk>**

UK Partner Week Summit 2025: Where ambition meets action

The business technology partner landscape is evolving at breakneck speed and the businesses that thrive are those that adapt, innovate and lead from the front. Against this backdrop, the UK Partner Week Summit promises to be high impact, bringing together industry visionaries, successful practitioners and forward-thinking leaders for a day that promises to help delegates reshape how they approach growth, leadership and competitive advantage, whether they are channel veterans or navigating their career path.

Keynotes that inspire action with creativity and collaboration

Setting the tone for the day is Jason Bevan, former Head of Development at Warner Bros, who opens the summit with an exploration of how VAR and MSP leaders can apply entertainment industry innovation principles to drive business transformation. The Summit closes with Karen Blackett OBE, former President at WPP whose remarkable career trajectory and leadership philosophy have made her one of the UK's most respected business leaders. Her closing keynote will focus on authentic leadership, building inclusive high-performance cultures and

sets best practice agenda

turning market challenges into competitive advantages.

UK Partner Week Summit Insight Sessions...

Enable Ambition, Maximise Growth

This session brings together Platinum sponsors and a Partner Week Ambassador to explore growth strategies that work, offering practical guidance from leaders who've successfully scaled their organisations while maintaining service excellence. Delegates will hear about growth drivers, partnership strategies and overcoming the internal barriers that can limit ambitious expansion plans.

MSP Question Time

This session offers something truly unique – direct access to four successful channel leaders in an open Q&A format. Delegates will get honest answers about operational challenges, client relationship management and strategic planning from those who've navigated these waters successfully. No prepared presentations, just real conversations about real challenges.

Team Impact

This panel explores what truly distinguishes high-performing teams in our industry. With insights from sponsors, MSPs and Ambassadors, the session will uncover the behaviours, cultural elements and systematic approaches

that unlock team potential and drive consistent results.

Get on Track with UK Partner Week Breakout Sessions...

Sales Excellence Track

Enhanced Consultancy – Shift the Conversation

This track explores how to become a trusted advisor rather than just another vendor.

Heroes assemble – Transforming sales teams into superheroes

This session provides proven methodologies for developing sales capabilities that consistently exceed targets.

Selling new stuff – Why it's hard and what to do about it

The breakout session addresses one of the biggest challenges facing VARs and MSPs... how to successfully introduce new products and services.

Leadership Excellence Track

Future leaders – Nurturing next-gen talent

The session explores succession planning and leadership development strategies for smaller organisations.

Marketing Excellence Track

Stand out from the crowd – Deliver differentiation

This session tackles the critical issue of creating genuine

competitive advantage in saturated markets.

Raise the bar – Develop high value propositions

This breakout shows how to move beyond price competition to create offerings clients gladly pay premium rates for.

Technology Excellence Track

Turn tech experts into growth enablers

This session addresses how to unleash your technical team's business development potential.

What's coming down the line, and why it matters

This breakout provides essential insights into emerging technologies and their business implications.

Go big on differentiation – Maximise tech expertise

This session shows how to position technical capabilities as genuine competitive advantages.

Industry expertise elevates every session

Every session features carefully selected speakers who bring real-world experience and proven track records. Our sponsors share their market insights and strategic perspectives, while industry Ambassadors provide the practitioner viewpoint that makes insights immediately applicable.

Meet UK Partner Week Ambassadors

The UK Partner Week Ambassador programme has welcomed 11 members dedicated to raising awareness of the Summit.

For the full list of speakers, panelists and Ambassadors visit <https://partnerweek.uk>

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

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
- Raise the bar – develop high value propositions

Leaders Track

- Future leaders – nurturing next-gen talent

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 for additional information about the UK Partner Week Summit please visit <https://partnerweek.uk>

GUEST SPEAKERS



Karen Blackett OBE



Jason Bevan



UK Partner Week Ambassador David Alldritt MBE, Chairman, FCS

"There is no better time than now to make sure your goals are clear and that your business model is optimised to deliver them."



UK Partner Week Ambassador Camilla Karm, Chief Revenue Officer, Redsquid

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

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Key buy accelerates Conv

**Convergence Group CRO
Chris London shares insights
into a major strategic
reorganisation of the group's
operating model, and why
last month's acquisition of
M247's UK connectivity and
services operation is a game
changer in the company's
quest to hit £250 million
revenue within three years.**

Convergence Group was founded by CEO Neal Harrison in 2003 and provides end-to-end managed connectivity services, primarily WAN and LAN with an emphasis on quality and outcomes. It currently generates £80 million revenues and the big plan is to grow the business to over £100 million in the near-term and £250 million-plus over the course of the next three years.

According to London, to achieve this objective it is vital for the group's proposition to be narrow and 'purposefully deep', a prerequisite that received a boost last month. "Our portfolio is tight by design," stated London. "We engage through clarity, service and

London's top tip

To be a winner, simplify complexity for customers and build a lean, accountable business internally.

results and the acquisition of M247's UK assets strengthens our position. It gives us full control over our UK network infrastructure, delivers a national radio network, eliminates downstream suppliers and allows us to provide flexible, cost-effective WAN connectivity with stand out service quality. That's a game changing shift in our market approach. And our expanded infrastructure in Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool and Birmingham positions us as a true UK wide operator."

The combined business serves over 2,000 customers across enterprise and SME sectors and has a 250-plus headcount. And looking ahead, London noted that growth will be driven by three interlocking strategies. "Firstly, our integrated network, now enhanced with radio infrastructure, gives us a commercial and service advantage in a commoditising market," he explained. "Secondly, we'll continue to refine our go to



Chris London

As the market commoditises, customer expectations are going in the other direction – they want outcomes, not just infrastructure. This is shaping how we position, how we sell and how we deliver

market focus by identifying sweet spot segments where our proposition delivers the most value. Thirdly, we'll continue to optimise our operating model to maximise customer facing time and remove internal friction, freeing our teams to focus on real value."

London confirmed that Convergence Group will continue to invest in tools

and automation to develop how it serves and supports customers. The group will also continue to work with a curated ecosystem of technology and integration partners, using them to gain market intelligence and extend value. "We're operating in a complex market where demand is shifting, expectations are rising and margin is under pressure," commented

London. "To succeed we must be more than reactive, we must adapt with purpose. And as the market is commoditising, customer expectations are going in the other direction, they want outcomes, not just infrastructure. This is shaping how we position, how we sell and how we deliver. Our approach is to simplify the complexity for our customers by focusing



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Convergence Group

on outcomes and obsessing over delivery quality."

The tension between price pressure and service expectation is an area of growing interest for London. He pointed out that while WAN and LAN are becoming commoditised they remain business critical. "Customers want agility, visibility and

We're operating in a complex market and to succeed we must be more than reactive, we must adapt with purpose

performance without the legacy overhead," he added. "At the same time, hyperscaler influence, SD-WAN/SASE evolution and hybrid infrastructure demands are changing how organisations think about their networks. We're watching this closely and building a proposition that gives customers the outcomes they need, without the cost or complexity they're trying to escape from.

"As our proposition evolves we'll embed AI, automation and customer insight across sales and operations, improving efficiency and

tailoring solutions even closer to our customers' true needs. Our focus is not to do more, but to do better, building smarter connectivity that delivers meaningful, measurable outcomes."

To support this strategy Convergence Group is shifting towards leaner, higher-performing

commercial teams. That means fewer sales people with higher output, which requires improved coaching, smarter recruitment and optimising sales conversion. "Customer expectations are rising fast," reiterated London. "They want trusted partners, not suppliers. That means ease of doing business, proactive service and outcomes, not transactions.

We're responding with a more integrated, insight-led customer model."

Discovery phase

This strongly directional strategy is accompanied by a simultaneous working out period following the M247 acquisition, which London has called a 'discovery phase'. "What's already clear is that we need to scale our go-to-market capability, both in terms of team coverage and technical expertise," he commented. "We're developing a GTM plan that reflects the strength of our new connectivity proposition. This includes a clearer

account ownership model, a stronger sales cadence and the introduction of a sales academy to bring new talent into the industry. The driver is simple... we have a big opportunity to differentiate in a commoditising market, and that demands an evolved, scalable commercial model."

And here's why London is just the man for the job: His biggest career achievement to date was building and leading the transformation of multiple siloed sales divisions into a unified, high performing specialist sales function. "This wasn't just a restructure, it was a total shift in the way of working that had a profound and measurable impact," explained London. "The challenge was significant, breaking down entrenched behaviours, aligning incentives and creating a shared rhythm across disconnected teams. By unifying the sales strategy, introducing a structured GTM model and instilling a customer-first mindset, we built a single view of the customer, eliminating duplication and inconsistency.

"The results spoke for themselves. We tripled the team headcount, significantly improved sales overlay engagement and increased performance from 60 per cent to 110 per cent of target – delivering £81 million in overlay sales revenue that year. For me, this achievement represents the essence of my leadership style, strategic execution, cultural alignment and performance through people. It proves unequivocally that when you remove internal noise and focus everyone on a shared purpose, great things happen."

Chris London in profile

DURING his 26-plus years experience working in tech and telecoms London focused on building high performing teams, aligning commercial strategy to execution and delivering shareholder value. At Convergence Group he brings together his strategic sales leadership, operational experience and commercial rigour to scale revenue, protect recurring income and deliver sustained strong organic growth.

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- Harnessing Security opportunities to drive growth
- A look ahead to 2026

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Creating a competitive edge

Here, Business Systems Group (BSL) Head of Consulting Hamish Cliff provides a masterclass on how to differentiate and gain a competitive edge in the thriving and hotly contested contact centre arena.

BSL's success in the CCaaS space rests largely on the blend of a rich, highly experienced heritage and technological innovation, according to Cliff. He says BSL's main differentiator is its team's pedigree and hands-on experience in all key operational areas, and a focus on bespoke outcomes. "Our experts have direct, real world experience in contact centres, covering interaction management, workforce management, quality management, analytics as well as sales and customer service," he explained. "This allows us to not only understand our clients' challenges but also bring the technology to life for them. Importantly, as a vendor agnostic provider

we offer unbiased, tailored recommendations."

As well as its sharp focus on delivering an outcome-driven value bonus to customers BSL also has its own in-house development team and IP. The most recent development is a digital customer engagement platform with a deployment tool that enables users to leverage a range of AI-based technologies in the contact centre and customer engagement space.

"This platform integrates key orchestration features, conversational AI and analytics, and is designed to work seamlessly with generative AI, large language models (LLM), natural language understanding (NLU) and various data



Hamish Cliff

Our capabilities have been developed in-house, allowing us to provide tailored, high value and differentiated solutions

sources," stated Cliff. "It allows clients to combine their in-house language models, datasets and systems with the most appropriate technologies, ensuring maximum accuracy, security and automation while optimising costs."

Cliff explained that the platform spans all commonly used channels and modes, supports predictive and proactive outreach to customers and offers agent assistance. "Our capabilities have been developed in-house, allowing us to provide tailored, high value and differentiated solutions without the need to acquire

external businesses for these skills," he added.

BSL's expertise particularly comes into play when tackling the three biggest obstacles to realising customer value, pointed out Cliff. He identified the first major challenge to optimising contact centre solutions as working practices and adapting to technology change. "Organisations need to adopt flexible approaches that enable safe experimentation, testing, learning and continuous optimisation," he commented. "The ability to iterate and improve based on real world use is crucial."

Focusing on outcomes, not just technology, is the second imperative. "It's essential for organisations to maintain their focus on desired business outcomes, continuously assessing

Cliff's top tip

YOUR value proposition must be crystal clear and you need to demonstrate it in every engagement. Additionally, achieving outcomes is a partnership... your commercial constructs should be designed to support long-term collaboration with clients, ensuring you work together to deliver their desired goals over time.



Contact centre report

A NEW contact centre market report provides a window on the behind the scenes success factors that supercharge 10 top MSPs in the CCaaS space (including BSL). Download the report here – <https://www.comms-dealer.com/contact-centre/going-growth-contact-centres>



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edge in CCaaS

progress,” added Cliff. “And being brave enough to pivot or change course when necessary – whether something isn’t working or is delivering unexpected value – is important.”

The third area to be addressed is strategic alignment and scalability, noted Cliff, adding that a lack of strategic direction or misalignment across functional areas (customer, contact centre and technology for example) can hinder optimisation efforts. “Also, many organisations struggle to scale effectively leading to performance issues and service disruptions,” he said.

“To overcome these barriers we place significant value on creativity and thought leadership and continually challenge ourselves to improve. We are focused on working with clients on an ongoing basis to make sure they get the return on their investment as well as helping them achieve their business objectives, or address operational pain points.”

Cliff forecasts significant growth in the solutions offered by BSL, particularly those with an emphasis on AI-based technologies. “Conversational AI-powered solutions and advanced agent assistance tools are some of the fastest growing areas, along with predictive and proactive solutions that preempt and avoid customer issues before they arise,” he added. “These technologies are gaining traction and various market analysts predict further growth over the next five years.”

The UK contact centre market is healthy and growing,

driven by AI, automation and cloud-based solutions, with a focus on enhancing customer experience and reducing costs. “There’s rising interest in digital-only or agentless models, with AI-powered voice solutions and virtual assistants seeing widespread adoption,” observed Cliff.

“At the same time, the value of human support, especially in the voice channel, is being recognised as automation reduces low value contacts, enabling agents to focus on more complex interactions. But despite these tech

Key points...

- **BSL’s main differentiator is its team’s hands-on real world experience in all key operational areas.**
- **BSL’s capabilities are developed in-house, allowing it to provide tailored, high value and differentiated solutions.**
- **The three barriers to CCaaS optimisation are working practices and adapting to technology change; focusing on outcomes, not just technology; and strategic alignment and scalability.**
- **Working with customers on an ongoing basis to make sure they realise true RoI is key to overcoming these challenges.**
- **Conversational AI-powered technology, advanced agent assistance tools, along with predictive and proactive solutions are gaining the most traction.**
- **End users are not significantly increasing their technology spend but they are shifting their focus onto greater flexibility and scalability, driving uptake of cloud-based solutions.**
- **Cyber, data security and regulatory compliance are all core to BSL’s proposition.**

advancements, traditional challenges like high wait times and low first contact resolution (FCR) remain, prompting organisations to seek innovative ways to manage contact volumes and improve satisfaction.”

This trend is not driving an increase in overall end user tech investment, noted Cliff, but a shift in focus. “Organisations are looking for greater flexibility and scalability leading to continued adoption of cloud-based solutions,” he commented. “While there is still demand for core contact centre capabilities such as traditional voice and workforce management, the focus is also shifting towards more advanced technologies. For example, investing in automation, self-service and conversational AI to help unlock greater value from voice interactions.”

BSL has a strong track record of delivering contact centre solutions across multiple verticals, but it has a particular focus on regulated sectors like financial services, utilities, retail and the public sector. “Security is increasingly a priority for all organisations, especially those adopting generative AI solutions where safeguarding data is critical,” commented Cliff.

“Cyber, data security and regulatory compliance are all core to our proposition, which has a strong heritage in the monitoring and compliance solutions market. Our voice recording, capture and management technologies are trusted by some of the largest financial institutions, contact centres and public sector organisations globally.” ■

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Preparing for an opportu

How to continue succeeding in an opportunity rich technology and business environment is a question facing many channel leaders under pressure to continuously stand out from the crowd and unclear about how to prepare themselves for ongoing long-term success. To help unravel the issues, BT Wholesale hosted a working lunch last month attended by leading MSPs and led by leadership coach Cally Beaton.



Cally Beaton urges delegates to 'choose courage over comfort'

adding value will prove the key differentiator for MSPs moving forward, according to leaders attending the session. The discussion also pointed up how the way resellers and MSPs deliver services is changing, based on the imperative to build deeper customer relationships and create greater value.

GTM strategy

But what is the best GTM approach for resellers wanting to attach high revenue, high margin services that drive more value and help them to differentiate? According to Maintel CEO Dan Davies, market differentiation has entered its third phase. He identified phase one as being speed and quality of installation, and categorised phase two as being how well you run your own systems. Phase three requires a consultative approach that delivers personalised solutions. "This is the only way to avoid a race to the bottom which is inevitable when you are selling the same solutions as those around you," he said.

Peter Watson, UC&C Product Manager at Wavenet, highlighted how he is changing the company's sales behaviours to reflect this trend. "The old school

Shifting mindsets towards outcomes and adding value will prove the key differentiator for MSPs

Adapting to market change and leading from the front is key to being ultra-competitive, so Beaton unravelled the multifaceted challenges and opportunities facing today's business leaders in the channel, and why they should 'choose courage over comfort' to compete more

effectively, and ultimately turn each strategic decision and product expansion into a breakthrough event for their business.

For context, this channel insight session was held on the back of BT Wholesale's launch of Teams Phone Mobile, a timely solution for resellers wanting to tap into

surging demand for UC and collaboration tools. Today, Microsoft Teams has well over 320 million monthly active users and in 2023 Cavell estimated that only around 17 million are using Teams with telephony enabled – forecasting a massive rise to 40 million by 2027 (mainly in North America and Western Europe). Bolt on the fact

that the broader UC market is tipped to be worth £155 billion by 2030 and the scale of the Microsoft Teams channel growth opportunity becomes crystal clear, so long as a bold, targeted and outcome-led value-building GTM approach is adopted.

Shifting mindsets towards delivering outcomes and

Preparation is key to digital transformation.



unity-rich future



Christopher Wellbelove

Marketing hasn't hit the sweet spot yet – messaging is too focused around technologies and their features, not the solutions they help to solve

sales mentality is to assume you lost a deal because the other party had a solution you aren't offering," he added. "This mindset leads to a bloated and unfocused portfolio that makes it harder for teams to sell and bundle. Instead, look at what more could have been done through a consultative process."

This isn't just a sales imperative, but something that marketers must also consider, according to Christopher Wellbelove, Senior Marketing Consultant at BT Wholesale. He said:

"Marketing hasn't hit the sweet spot yet – messaging is too focused around technologies and their features, not the solutions they help to solve."

Narrowing scope

To deliver on the outcome expectations of customers, each MSP in attendance is narrowing their scope to ensure service is more tailored to specific verticals. Maintel has begun to focus on four key verticals, which were chosen after a comparison of areas where it is seeing success alongside identified high-growth markets.

Digital Space has also gone through the process of focusing on where it can provide the most value. Richard Beeston, CTO/COO, added: "We built a £60 million monolith and have realised we can't be everything to everybody. We are now looking at verticals where we can have the best conversations and are building technology stacks around the needs of those markets."

Courage

At the heart of this new mindset is courage, according to Alex Mawson, Product and Marketing Director (Mobile) at Giacom. He noted: "Sometimes you must be brave and tell customers you can't deliver something. If you promise to deliver everything, you are going to erode trust in the future so focus your energy where you can be an expert because that is where trust is delivered."

Wavenet has built verticalised strategies into its feedback loop. Sam Phillips, Mobile Product Manager, stated: "From a mobile point of view, we tell our teams to be active with questions so we can start to build a profile around the needs of a vertical. At the end of the day, it's about providing what the customer wants, rather than what you want to provide the customer."

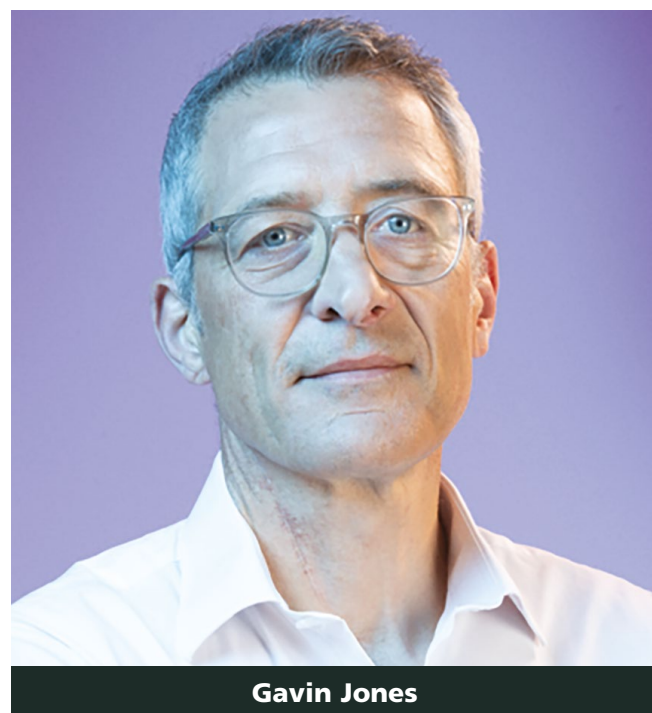
Gavin Jones, Director of Wholesale Channel at BT Business, extolled the virtues of bundling around certain verticals, and even at the more granular level of employee profiles. He added: "If you are a business selling individual solutions, you are missing a big opportunity. Start to bring

pieces together and create bespoke communications packages." He recommends unique bundles for mobile workers, desk workers and customer service workers. "This proactive approach is more targeted and easier to manage in the long run," he added.

Davies noted that this approach is in demand due to increased uncertainty in the end user base. He believes 90 per cent of Maintel's customers just want to be advised. "They don't care what the solution is, they just want it to work," he said. "They aren't tapped into a large technology strategy, their strategy is about where their business is in the now. Success for them is great outcomes without

having to think about their resilience and security."

This all plays into the opportunity for resellers to capitalise on growing interest in UCaaS and collaboration platforms that integrate directly with Microsoft Teams and other applications, noted Jones. "Most businesses know that the age of the desk-bound phone system is a thing of the past," he commented. "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." ■



Gavin Jones

If you're selling individual solutions you're missing a big opportunity. Bring pieces together and create bespoke communications packages

Preparation is key to digital transformation.

Ekco unlocks SMB security

Helping 'powerless' SMB leaders sleep at night in the face of an evolving and intensifying cyber threat landscape is perhaps the biggest MSP opportunity right now, according to Ekco VP of Managed Security Services Lee Driver.

Demand for MSP skill sets is hotting up, especially in the security space, observed Driver, who constantly hears the same thing from users – that cybersecurity is becoming so complex they sometimes feel powerless to prevent breaches. “MSPs and MSSPs have always, first and foremost, excelled at keeping this complexity to a minimum, and today's market needs that service more than ever,” he stated. “The key opportunity for MSPs now is to offer flexibility and choice, either through a broad portfolio of solutions or an all-in-one offering that helps businesses take the first step.”

According to Driver, MSSPs in particular are well placed in the new landscape, with recent attacks on major UK fashion brands and retailers increasing the urgency for many businesses. “It's no longer practical to separate cybersecurity from other day-to-day IT operations,” he added. “MSSPs can offer a bird's-eye view of vulnerabilities across all

operations and deal with threats in real time as they arise, regardless of the form they take. Keep things simple and safe for your users, and they'll reward you.”

Driver says that end users are ‘absolutely committing more budget’ to security, with the frequency of breaches and attempted attacks increasing hugely for many organisations across all sectors, and some of these have limited experience in dealing with large scale cyber attacks. “In particular, we've seen a jump in firms turning to cyber insurance as a key part of their risk management strategy – up to 55 per cent from 43 per cent last year,” added Driver. “This is sensible, as long as it's matched by suitable investment in preventive measures.”

What interests Driver most is seeing Attack Surface Management (ASM) shift security from reactive to proactive. Instead of waiting for an incident, security teams can identify vulnerabilities and misconfigurations in real-time



Lee Driver

A fifth of SMBs that experienced attacks last year said it nearly destroyed their business. Ekco is seeking to address this blind spot

before attackers do. “It's a mindset change that aligns perfectly with how modern threats operate,” said Driver.

“And the key thing for any company facing new kinds of cyber threats is not to be overwhelmed by the range of responses. MSSPs and channel partners are vital to making sure that businesses understand exactly what products and services they need to focus on, and to offer ongoing support as those needs inevitably evolve.”

But Driver has seen SMBs underserved by the market for years. It's the big firms that make headlines, and the bigger the business, the more attempted breaches they're likely to experience per year. “However, SMBs are still extremely exposed and the stakes are much higher,” he commented. “A fifth of SMBs that experienced attacks last year said it nearly destroyed their business. This is a blind spot that Ekco is seeking to address. We recently launched Cyber Defence Complete, a comprehensive

security solution with a flexible, tiered approach that can grow and scale as businesses mature.”

Key acquisition

In May this year, Ekco secured its fourth acquisition, netting Predattech, a Manchester-based cybersecurity consultancy specialising in penetration testing and assurance services. The company will operate as a dedicated security unit within Ekco's MSSP division. Driver noted: “Predattech's penetration testing services



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cy market

and advanced assessment systems mean we can expand our offering and improve our ability to laser-focus on the precise needs of each and every customer. For us, it's about investing in keeping all bases covered.

The market needs straightforward solutions that consolidate threat detection, incident response and day-to-day operational continuity

There's no one-size-fits-all approach to cybersecurity now. No matter how much you invest in security solutions, if they're not right for your business and your employees' workflows, you'll be vulnerable."

AI-enabled attacks

The acquisition came just days after Ekco's research revealed 62 per cent of organisations lack confidence in their defences against modern AI-enabled attacks and nearly the same number of IT leaders identified AI attacks as the top cloud security challenge, overtaking data breaches for the first time. "That said, the recent attacks on major UK retailers like Harrods and M&S will be lodged in the front of security providers' minds for a long time," added Driver. "The losses and reputational damage are difficult to overstate.

"But while retailers have made recent headlines, no

industry is immune. Cyber intelligence companies are warning everyone from online dating firms to fast-food providers that attackers are scouting them out for vulnerabilities. The message from security providers is simple – an ounce of prevention is worth £300 million of cure. The market needs straightforward solutions that consolidate threat detection, incident response and day-to-day operational continuity."

However, there's a paradox for business leaders, believes Driver. He says that the recent attacks have shown that even

when it comes to traditional data breaches, bad actors are more sophisticated than ever – but they're still exploiting the simplest flaw of all – human nature. "Training is vital, but it's no longer enough when even a single slip-up can cost hundreds of millions and leave a lasting scar on consumer trust," added Driver.

To combat security threats and contain breaches Ekco offers a comprehensive platform with local specialists providing round-the-clock responses, detection, prevention plus tailored advice and support in the event of an incident. "The other key for us is that our team isn't comprised of IT support professionals who provide security as an afterthought," said Driver. "Ekco is made up of security experts and professionals who have worked across a wide range of sectors for years. Security is the bedrock of everything."



NetSapiens Presents: US Channel Trends with Peter Radizeski

The 4 Pillars of Modern Sales: How to Sell When Growth Slows



Two important facts about sales. One, you need a plan, a strategy, a framework for sales. Two, fundamentals are required and need to be executed as best as possible and always improving.

The industry got lazy in 2020. Anyone that answered a phone was able to close a UC&C order. Not a sale, because no real selling was going on – just order taking. Now that cloud comms growth is in single digits, selling is required.

Sales people have gotten lazy on fundamentals too. They skip steps; hurry to close the deal. Meanwhile, Enterprise sales are slowing down. They take longer because of the macroeconomic environment and that more people are involved in the decision. Every sale is getting harder to bring to ink.

We need to go back to the 4 pillars: Focus/Target; Positioning/Why?; Messaging/Earn Trust; Where to fish and how.

Number one: WHO BENEFITS THE MOST FROM YOUR SERVICES? The problem with most providers is that they think Everyone is a Customer. Unless you are BT or Orange that is incorrect. Even for those two giants, it isn't everyone any more. There is a section of the marketplace that you can serve best. There is product-market fit. For that segment of the market, the service delivery results in benefits for the business.

Look at your customers to see if any verticals or sizes or other characteristics stick out. What about your top customers is similar?

The second pillar is of course marketing. Positioning is about defining how your company is the best at something that the market cares about. It is part of defining the value proposition. The why you instead of the thousand other SPs that offer UC too. It is about benefits, customer needs, and your unique differentiator. An example of this could be that you are the best at delivering a communications platform to Zoho customers with 10 to 99 employees who achieve a 15% productivity gain from the combination.

Now you may be thinking: that cuts our addressable market to a fraction. The largest US CLEC had 55K customers. 8x8 has 55K global businesses using their services. Zoom has 4,192 customers billing \$100K+ in ARR. Think about the next 100 or 1000 customers that you want to acquire; not the next 100,000 or million.

The third pillar is Messaging. What are you saying to prospects and the market? Are you telling stories or pushing out PR? With AI replacing search, SEO won't be as effective as stories about benefits and outcomes.

What are stories valuable? Our brains are wired for stories. It is how we pass down human history. The use case could be a story

Now that cloud comms growth is in single digits, selling is required

about the impact your services had on a customer. If it was a good story, it would be memorable, which makes it repeatable and sticky. Sales Engineers are good at sales because they can map features to benefits and translate the technical to the business need. In telecom we push product; but businesses especially SMB buy solutions, not products. They don't buy technology but what the tech can do for the business.

The final pillar is Where does the sales team fish? That depends. Start in your network. Look at verticals. Do you have former customers? It needs to be multi-threaded with cold outreach, referrals, networking, and other avenues. There is still money in emails. Social media can work. Obviously, this is more effort than before but that is just what is required now.

Story-telling, Positioning, Targeting. And fishing are the 4 pillars of a sales plan that coupled with executing well on the sales fundamentals is the path to success for providers..

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Identifying today's win

Navigating the channel's competitive landscape with a fit for purpose GTM strategy is a growing priority as competition intensifies, customer expectations shoot up and the market hits saturation point. Here, channel leaders highlight their three biggest go-to-market challenges and how they are addressing them.



BRITT MEGAHEY
FOUNDER AND MD
BARCLAY
COMMUNICATIONS

FOR resellers and MSPs, the biggest go-to-market challenge today is differentiation. When everyone is selling the same SIP, UCaaS and broadband, value must come from service, integration and trust, not just price. Second is demand generation. Buyers are smarter and more sceptical. Cold calls and generic pitches don't work. At Barclay, we've learned that clear messaging, real customer outcomes and specialist knowledge make all the difference. Lastly, vendor control can make or break delivery. If your upstream partner drops the ball, your brand takes the hit. The answer? Build strong, transparent relationships and stay close to the customer experience from start to finish. The telecoms space is tough, but for those who adapt, the opportunity remains massive.



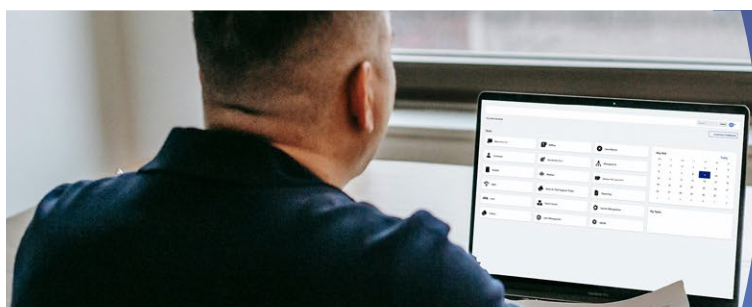
IAIN JOHNSON
HEAD OF SOLUTION
DESIGN
FOURNET

IN a saturated market, differentiation is everything. We've shifted from being a tech reseller to becoming a trusted advisor, offering consultancy-led, outcome-focused solutions. Second, integration and customisation are becoming more complex. Customers want solutions that work seamlessly with what they've got, as well as what they're planning next. And third, sales cycles are long and often stalled by decision making inertia. To overcome that, we focus on delivering early value, sharing proven CX-led results and showing how we've done it for other customers. It's all about building trust, reducing risk and delivering results, quickly and clearly.



RICHARD SCOTT
SALES DIRECTOR
START
COMMUNICATIONS

THE top challenge is building brand awareness and standing out in a saturated market. It is critical to define a clear identity by targeting specific verticals and aligning with industry-specific platforms like CRMs. This creates relevance, differentiation and added value. The second challenge is managing pricing pressure. Per-user pricing comparisons often lead to commoditisation, squeezing margins and undervaluing services. We are focusing on the quality of our service, technical expertise and responsive customer support, prioritising long-term value over short-term cost. The third challenge is maintaining service excellence as the business scales. Growth can strain support capabilities, increasing the risk of customer churn. To counter this, we invest in proactive monitoring, automation and managed services, ensuring we meet SLAs and deliver a reliable, high-touch experience.



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Winning GTM strategies



NIKKI LAKER
MARKETING
DIRECTOR
OPUS TECH

AI is reshaping the marketing landscape across all industries. It can execute to an outstanding level when used effectively, not replacing the human element of marketing but enhancing it. We have spun up tactical campaigns in a matter of hours using Chat GPT Paid to elevate performance. Buying committees are getting larger and more complex. It's critical to understand who is in the mix and what they need to help shorten the sales process. You will see buyers doing all the research before making inbound enquiries. They already know what they want, so making sure you do it differently or to a higher level is critical. The current economic climate is creating a reluctance to spend, with projects being put on hold. It is important to look for creative ways to nurture these buying committees and keep them alive so when the project reactivates your business will be front of mind.



PETE TOMLINSON
CEO
WINDSOR TELECOM

IT'S tough for many SMEs right now. They want to deliver a brilliant customer and employee experience while reducing costs. That means being guided in how to succeed, not sold-point solutions. We've created propositions that meet specific business challenges and communicate them in a way that's easy to consume. Organisations increasingly want a single provider with vision and strategy, but many providers lack these qualities, prompting them to switch. We've curated a broad portfolio of providers into a single tailored service model. The automation and AI imperative has now arrived. Creating a portfolio of services with these tools embedded allows for easy adoption. We're also investing in developing our team so they can work side by side with customers to help prepare them to securely adopt these new ways of working.



JALPA SHARMA
MD
DBSL

MARGIN erosion is a growing issue and competing on price alone is no longer viable. At DBSL, we tackle this by offering bundled solutions with performance-based SLAs that focus on long-term value, not just cost. Second, there's still a perception gap around offshoring. Some equate it with compromise. We address this through transparent onboarding, reliable infrastructure and real-world case studies that prove otherwise. Finally, the biggest challenge I see is scaling sales without scaling overhead. Most teams simply don't have the resources. We embed AI and automation into pre-sales, onboarding and support—freeing up internal teams to focus on relationship-building and closing deals.



JAMES ROUTLEDGE
CHIEF SALES OFFICER
GLOBAL4

IN a saturated market, traditional means of winning fresh business at scale are tougher and more costly than ever. For us, business through recommendation or embedding into a sector with partnerships has a far greater impact than telemarketing, PPC or emailing alone. Also, many businesses look at IT support, telephony, connectivity and cybersecurity etc as commoditised products. The truth is that choosing the MSP desperate enough to provide it at near loss-making numbers poses a significant risk – and supporting a change in client mindset on this can be challenging. Thirdly, it's easy to say yes to all client demands and stretch yourself too thin. We must have an eye on how we best support the client on an ongoing basis and educate change, or in other cases simply qualify out of a deal.



JULIE BISHOP
CEO
IT NATURALLY

THE go-to-market landscape is shifting and IT Naturally is adapting. Firstly, flexible co-managed models because not every business wants to fully outsource. Many have in-house IT teams they value but they need trusted support out-of-hours. So we are becoming an extension of their team on evenings and weekends. Our hybrid approach ensures continuity without disruption. Then there's the short-term mindset. Long-term contracts are ideal, but not always realistic in today's climate. We offer flexible contract lengths and rework onboarding models to ensure our services remain accessible. It's about meeting customers where they are, not just where we'd like them to be. Next, cybersecurity: There are still many companies that don't have basic cybersecurity in place. We carry out audits to assess risk, then co-create a roadmap prioritised by urgency and budget. This means customers feel in control and secure at a pace that suits their business.



MARK SALVIN
CEO
ORBITAL10

THE biggest GTM challenge in cybersecurity is getting clients to recognise their own vulnerabilities and take them seriously. Many believe they're too small to be targeted or that their current setup is good enough. When things go wrong, it's not just inconvenient, it's costly, disruptive and damaging to trust. Clients need to understand that proactive investment in security and support is essential. Prevention is always more cost-effective than recovery. The second challenge is standing out in a saturated market. Too many MSPs offer surface-level fixes that leave businesses exposed. What clients really need is a strategic partner who understands their risks and delivers tailored, outcome-driven solutions. Finally, even when clients are ready to act, complexity often holds them back. That's why it's crucial to simplify the process, guiding them with clarity so they can make confident decisions.

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Key hires for Six Degrees



Mike Drolet



Tony Healy

SIX Degrees has bolstered its leadership team with the appointments of Mike Drolet as Chief Operating Officer and Tony Healy as Chief Information and Technology Officer. Drolet has previously held a number of COO positions in the technology, professional services and consulting industries, including spells at Geometric Results, Pontoon (a subsidiary of the Adecco Group), Infocrossing and Deloitte. Meanwhile, Healy brings experience from multiple private equity-backed organisations operating in pharma, transportation, retail, infrastructure, software and professional services. Six Degrees CEO Vince DeLuca said: "These appointments will help us to achieve key strategic pillars including reaching new markets, delivering for our customers and elevating our service portfolio."

Daveney to lead strategy at Focus

JON Daveney has joined Focus Group as Chief Strategy and Transformation Officer. He most recently served as Value Creation Director at Hg Capital (which invested in Focus Group in June 2024) and brings experience in driving transformation within high growth technology companies. Prior to his appointment Daveney worked closely with Focus Group to help define the company's strategic vision and transformation initiatives. Focus Group CEO Neil Hall stated: "Jon has gained a deep understanding of our business over the past year and already made a significant impact in helping us define our long-term vision and strategic roadmap. As we continue to expand and diversify Jon's expertise will be instrumental."



Jon Daveney

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

AWARDS SUCCESS

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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