



Flick's top tips
boost scale up
MSPs p8

Pickering leads
dbfb into new
growth phase p28



UK Partner
Week Summit
update p26

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3
Channel Update
Summit sets best
practice agenda

4
Interview
Wardell on his big
Charterhouse move

6
Profile
Best mates team up
to lead in Northants

12
Interview
Training duo unlock
CCaaS revenues

14
Comms Vision
Delivering Outcome
and Value Bonuses

20
The Big Goal
Channel's biggest
CSR story revealed



24
THE BIG INTERVIEW

Dancy sets out big plan to grow Rydal

RYDAL Group MD Steffan Dancy has catalysed an ambitious growth plan to hit £30 million revenue by 2028 based on a multifaceted business model with AI at its core. Find out how on pages 24-25

32
Channel Champs
Best summer awards
event in pictures

36
Kaleidoscope
Key points for MSPs
rethinking portfolios

40
Comms People
This month's movers
and shakers

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Welcome comment



Stuart Gilroy

I'M GOING to go against the grain of everything I've said about industry acronyms to date... like lamenting their proliferation, which is a universal bugbear that unites everyone in the channel (and customers of course). Instead, I'm going to augment industry

jargon with another three letter abbreviation, but one we can easily understand, one that does not need a lengthy and incomprehensible explanation, one that will be embraced by customers, vendors, MSPs and resellers alike. So no apologies.

Customers will prick up their ears when they hear about OVBs and the much desired benefits they offer. Because all organisations, including yours, need to double down on gaining an Outcome and Value Bonus (OVB). The imperative to deliver more for less is now upon us, and this year's Comms Vision Conference (12-14 November, Gleneagles Hotel) will focus on rethinking strategy and where to invest resources in order to not only drive OVBs for customers, but also for your own business.

As part of Comms Vision's agenda we have devised a 10 point action plan that covers all areas to address and improve performance (see page 15). And we kick off our pre-conference editorial programme this month with leading industry figures unravelling what the OVB agenda means for the channel and the actions required to meet today's challenges and opportunities (pages 14-19). This is critical because future success is not just about delivering OVBs, it's about growing your business at the same time. And knowing how to strike the right balance between where to evolve and where to reinvent will underpin the astute decision making required of the channel's business leaders at this pivotal time.

Already, the OVB concept and everything it represents is becoming a catch-all channel acronym that focuses minds on today's key issues. It's an acronym that should be written on the wall of every channel organisation.

Stuart Gilroy, Editor

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Summit boosts best practices

The inaugural high impact UK Partner Week Summit successfully raised the bar and elevated the channel's best practice agenda.

Recognising the power of the ICT channel and that its biggest strength is in its people, the first UK Partner Week Summit – July 9th, Convene, London and attended by 130 channel partner/MSP organisations – spotlighted how channel leaders and their teams could further raise the bar and perform at their absolute best.

Commenting on the conference agenda – which was 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 – Partner Week Ambassador Katie Sloan (Marketing Director, CloudClevr), enthused: "The UK Partner Week Summit was a valuable opportunity to reflect on where the channel is headed and how we continue to adapt, particularly in marketing, sales and customer value creation.

"The sessions sparked the kind of candid, cross-functional conversations we need more of, not just between vendors and partners, but between leadership, marketing, sales and technology teams.

"Furthermore, the panel discussions around talent



Jason Bevan: 'Tear up the rule book'

development, harnessing ambition and proposition building with differentiation in a crowded market were especially timely given the pace of change in the industry – and the risk that comes with playing it safe."

Knowledge sharing

Risc IT Solutions and Novem IT CEO Alex Heslip (UK Partner Week Summit delegate), emphasised the collaborative nature of the event and its focus on partnerships and knowledge sharing: "The summit was a great opportunity to connect with multiple suppliers all in one place, making the interactions highly efficient," he stated. "And the shared insights were truly beneficial."

Setting the tone for the day was Jason Bevan, former Head of Development at Warner Bros, who opened the summit with an

exploration of how VAR and MSP leaders can apply entertainment industry innovation principles to drive business transformation. The Summit closed 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.

Pictured above: The opening keynote from Jason Bevan, entitled 'Rocketfuel Your Ambition, Innovation and Creativity. Insider Secrets from the Big Movies and Their Makers', was a high-energy session packed with practical ideas for business leaders and big screen inspiration. ■

• UK Partner Week Summit in pictures – pages 26-27
• For the full list of speakers, panelists and Ambassadors visit <https://partnerweek.uk>

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Maximising potential

Last month's appointment of Business Systems Executive Chairman Mike Wardell as Charterhouse Group CEO signals a new chapter in the MSP's growth story, underpinned by a sharp focus on unleashing the group's full potential.

Wardell's immediate priority is to ensure each element of the group is pulling in the same direction. Another key objective is to unlock the MSP's latent and untapped potential. "There's a huge opportunity to create a brilliant business," he stated. "The company has brought together a range of technology providers and solutions that form the building blocks for a compelling proposition."

The group encompasses a portfolio of brands including IT and connectivity provider Charterhouse, Microsoft specialist Symity and managed security services business Pentesec. All operating in markets familiar to Wardell. "I have worked across all the technologies we offer as a group, whether that's software, IT or telecoms as well as working in the channel and direct sales," he stated. "This gives me a head start in developing how we move forward. Our first objective is to enable our brands and teams to collaborate

effectively, with one culture and one way of working, taking the best elements from the various areas."

Wardell's next step will be to project these synergies into the marketplace and promote a clearer view of Charterhouse's overall proposition. "Different people will know us for different things depending on when they came across us, therefore sharing a consolidated view of our offering will help us drive growth," he added.

Complete tech partner

This process will better position Charterhouse to serve as a one-stop technology partner for its customers, according to Wardell. "It is becoming more commonplace for businesses to trust one provider to deal with their needs," he commented. "We are well placed to take advantage of this – a more refined approach will help us to provide an exceptional customer experience, taking away the pain from our end customers and helping them focus on their core business."



Mike Wardell

The first objective is to enable our brands and teams to collaborate effectively, with one culture and one way of working

Wardell's 20-plus years experience in the comms and tech sector includes a notable stint at Giacom where he transformed the business into a cloud marketplace, achieving recurring revenue growth in triple and double digits for many years. Giacom was then acquired by Digital Wholesale Solutions (DWS) in 2020, which later rebranded as Giacom. More recently, Wardell has played a key role at Business Systems

as Executive Chairman (a function he continues to fulfil), where he shaped the company's growth trajectory, turning it into a leading RegTech software firm. "I've successfully led several businesses through periods of transformation, with change increasingly becoming more constant," added Wardell.

Right now, Wardell is getting to know the Charterhouse team to fully understand

the group's key attributes with the aim of replicating these elements across the full organisation. "Given the amount of experience and talent in the business it's important that we use this intelligence to co-invent a strategy that makes us stand out in the market, while developing a culture and business that the team are proud of," he added. "Harnessing this will be key to our success."



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Best friends team up to le

Guru Technology founders Arran Kirton and John Bennetts are busy building a go-to central hub for all SMEs in Northamptonshire, with phase two of their master plan on track for completion this year.

Northamptonshire-based telecoms and broadband wholesaler Guru Technology began life in 2019, established by best friends Kirton (Managing Director) and Bennetts (Director). They previously worked for a comms reseller that was sold, enabling the pair to follow their dream and jointly set up a business. "Arran and I have worked together in some capacity, bar a few months, since the age of 16," explained Bennetts. "We know each other inside and out – we're almost telepathic."

Their strategically aligned thinking has enabled the company to hit £3 million revenue, serve 7,000 users and offer a mixed product set of mobile, VoIP, broadband, IT, CCTV, solar and EV. "Last year saw a 44 per cent revenue increase, and we built out our product set, internal systems and capabilities," added Kirton. "We also tipped over 260 five star Google reviews which is something we can hang our hat on."

This is just the beginning because 2025 is where Guru 2.0 takes shape."

The first iteration of the business has its roots in both Kirton's and Bennetts' ambition to do something for themselves using the knowledge they'd gained from just over 10 years working in the industry. "We started on my dining room table and scaled from there with a small investment from my older brother Jamie," noted Kirton. "The dream was to build a business focused on the SME marketplace that delivered better service and had its own identity."

Today, Guru Technology has 14 staff and the ambition is for it to be known as the go-to company in Northamptonshire for all things telecoms and broadband services. "Future growth will come from smaller partners working with us, natural new business growth from social media and referrals along with acquisitions," explained Kirton. "We are mid-way



Arran Kirton

Buyers need proof. They want to speak to customers, they want to feel they know the business and experience before they buy

through delivering our growth strategy and getting the foundations in place for customer acquisitions or full business purchases of dealers or wholesalers with sub £1.5 million turnover. We are also hunting for partnerships."

Key question

Bennetts pointed out that every decision, every recruit and every strategic move is driven by one question – how can they serve customers better while scaling at the same time? "From evolving our AI capabilities and processes, to exploring new markets and upcoming partnerships, we're always focused on unlocking faster and smarter access to

solutions for each customer and partner," he added.

According to Kirton, the customer buying profile has changed and the days of 'talking a good game' are over. "You need the systems and processes to help deliver for each and every customer," he added. "As we evolve, the use of live data metrics and a quality tech stack will be key because customers are more savvy, more clued up and know more about what they want. That's why our GTM is heavily focused on a show and prove approach. Buyers need proof. They want to speak to customers, they want to feel they know the business

and experience before they buy. We use a powerful tech stack, social media, our own customer and Google reviews to give potential customers the confidence to decide that we are the partner for them. The days of written testimonials or discussions around how great the business is are dead."

Within three years Kirton expects Guru Technology to become part of the bigger player conversations, and be better known and better networked in the industry – all under the auspices of two men who understand what leadership means. "From a young age I have wanted to run my own company,"



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Lead in Northants

commented Kirton. "The experience I gained from my first job doing three paper rounds, to call centre sales, to door-to-door knocking in 100 per cent commission roles, shows that I have the drive to create something and make it happen. We've scaled from nothing to £3 million and know what it takes to get over that first few million in good shape."

Bennetts also noted that aside from an 'unwavering belief in yourself', the key for any leader is understanding people and the ever-changing world around us all. "Everyone ticks differently and every staff member will have good times and bad times, but getting everyone pulling in the same direction is key," he added. "Surrounding yourself with great people will give you the best platform to build something successful. Furthermore, overcoming the challenges you face personally and in business while putting the best versions of ourselves forward for our families is what I'm most proud of. What we are building is really special." ■

Just a minute with John Bennetts...

Three ideal dinner guests? Tom Segura, Steven Gerrard and Joe Rogan.

Your greatest strength and what could you work on? My main strength is hard work, trying to give more today than yesterday, even though sometimes that's just not possible. My weak point is public speaking at events and conferences.

One example of something you've overcome: Moving out of a bad household at 14 and paying my own bills, supporting myself from that age, ensuring I stayed on a positive path in life.

Best piece of advice you have been given: Show up every day regardless of how you feel.

Favourite comedian: Bert Kreischer.

Biggest risk you have taken: Starting Guru. When you decide to start a business with no safety blanket of a salary it is make or break.

What talent do you wish you had: To dunk a basketball.

Top tip: We know a lot less than we think. Chat with other people, absorb and share knowledge.

Just a minute with Arran Kirton...

What do you fear most? Deep water and heights.

Tell us something about yourself we don't know: I can run a marathon in three hours 11 minutes.

One example of something you've overcome: My daughter Delilah being born not breathing for a long time.

Best piece of advice you have been given: My dad said, 'Be the hardest worker in the room and never give up'.

Your biggest career achievement? Starting a business just before Covid and going through personal challenges at the time, while running businesses and trying to be a good dad, partner and MD. It was, and remains, the biggest challenge.

What talent do you wish you had: To swim.

Industry bugbear: The supplier channel: 95 per cent of vendors are too poor and too slow. Things need to change.

Your greatest strength and what could you work on? I never give up – it's a trait that's so important in life. But I can work on being more patient when it comes to solving problems.



John Bennetts

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Flick's top tips for scale u

Perhaps the biggest question facing MSPs today is how to scale while delivering more for less across their own business and for customers, writes Martin Flick, founder of JMT Consulting and recently appointed Director of Strategy at international law firm 360 Law Group.

The outlook for MSPs across the telco and IT sector is exciting and full of opportunity for those organisations that can scale and grow, at the same time as delivering more for less across their own businesses and for customers. While the managed services market is growing fast, so are the pressures faced by the channel – like rising customer expectations, educated buyers and the constant requirement to stay competitive in a crowded market. That's not all: Customers are demanding more services, tighter SLAs and predictable costs. They expect trusted and expert advisors to help navigate the emergence of new technologies like generative and agentic AI, while also helping to defend against threats posed by cybercrime in a largely cloud-based environment.

With MSPs operating in a world where telco and IT managed services are coming together rapidly, keeping up with the pace of change is

a major challenge without significantly increasing overhead or compromising on quality. Although challenging, this also represents a huge opportunity to scale.

Securing top talent

Accelerating growth starts with ensuring you have a high performing team with a clear vision and a well defined mission that is owned and shared by the whole team. This requires strong values and a culture that are not just words, but part of the DNA of your organisation. The market for talent is burning hot, so having a strong purpose and vision will help attract and retain the talent that is essential for growth. Look to run apprenticeship schemes to develop skills from within and promote career progression.

With these building blocks in place, it is vital that the management team has an agreed methodology, an operating model and well defined objectives that they can clearly communicate,



Martin Flick

Scaling isn't just a tech or a sales problem. It's an operational challenge that touches everything – your systems, people, processes, culture and overall business model

and those objectives have accountabilities that can be measured. In short, put people first... that means your team, your customers and your vendor contacts to ensure everyone has mutually aligned goals and fair value exchange.

Getting your propositions right

Delivering and managing increasingly complex propositions while using legacy systems and billing platforms is another big challenge. Siloed products

are becoming commoditised and the key to avoiding a race to the bottom is to provide converged and bundled services that are predictable in cost and deliver more value, but without the billing complexity. Smaller businesses can win here and gain market share through creativity and agility, which in turn creates differentiation. Larger players – the network operators and Tier 1 providers – rarely move fast enough without compromising service quality and customer intimacy.

Value time and resources

However, scaling isn't just a tech or a sales problem. It's an operational challenge that touches everything – your systems, people, processes, culture and overall business model. To avoid spiralling costs while scaling up, time and resource become your most valuable commodity. Establishing a return on effort with clear and measurable outcomes that feature forensic accountability and clearly defined KPIs is imperative to scaling up efficiently and profitably.



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Maximise the technology

Digitisation, automation and self-service are also key. Where possible seek tight integration of systems with clear frictionless and logical processes that are iterated and can evolve as the business grows. Introduce technology to process mundane and repeatable tasks like the management of MACs (moves, adds, changes), ticket raising, billing queries, contract drafting etc that allow for valuable human resource to be freed up and deployed where needed. Tools like virtual IVA, natural language processing and AI-enabled web chat with CRM integration allow for improved customer experience without compromise. Technology like this is now affordable to MSPs and resellers of all sizes.

Know your customers

Navigating the complexity of converging technologies for your customers is increasingly challenging. Many are still shifting from legacy services to emerging tech-based solutions which can be confusing. Scale up MSPs need to have a clear proposition that is not one size fits all. Having that clear proposition with well documented benefits for your target market will help. Most importantly, talk and listen to customers about what is key to them. Driving client engagement, measuring NPS/CSAT and working in partnership to drive service improvement creates a value exchange and will improve customer loyalty as well as referenceability.

Work with the best

Selecting vendor partners carefully and aligning with them to achieve common

and ambitious goals is important and will help build repeatable and recurring annuity revenues. Being clear about products, proposition and benefit stack, and then working in partnership with vendors will greatly enhance sales success. Warning: Be selective. Sales teams need to sell the benefits of solutions, not let customers pick from a catalogue of similar products with different brands. You can only nail your colours to a limited number of masts. Stick with what you do best which is servicing customers. And look to use third party cutting edge technology providers to streamline things like PR, marketing, accountancy, HR, recruitment and legal services.

Bundles of benefits

Scaling is impossible with one-off solutions and bespoke integrations for every customer, and although proximity to customer need is important, standardised and consistent support packages with SLAs are vital to scaling up quickly. It's a crowded and competitive market so in order to offset margin compression bundle products carefully, include high value components as-a-service that are repeatable and recurring in nature.

Repeat and measure

The trick to delivering more with less during a scale up phase is to standardise as much as possible and drive relentless automation with well documented repeatable processes. Measure everything, rely upon data to make informed decisions, double down on successes and fail fast on initiatives that are not working as expected – and create a delivery engine that scales without breaking. ■



NetSapiens Presents:
US Channel Trends with Peter Radizeski

AI Hype: Why the Noise is Slowing Sales



We are deep in the AI hype cycle. Generative AI, LLMs, Agentic AI - buzzwords dominate the headlines. Gartner defines this cycle as the journey from inflated expectations to disillusionment before reaching meaningful, practical use. That's where we are now.

But let's not forget, AI isn't new. IBM Watson made headlines as far back as 2004 and famously won Jeopardy! in 2011. The novelty isn't the tech; it's the marketing surge and the avalanche of claims that AI will replace call centers, SDRs, and more. Maybe it will - eventually. But right now, all the hype is backfiring, especially when it comes to selling.

change. Selling cloud services is already hard, you're asking a business to abandon a system they've used for years. Selling AI? Even harder. It's change on steroids.

2.FOMO Leads to Paralysis

Buyers are overwhelmed. With daily AI announcements, they worry: What if I choose the wrong vendor? What if something better launches next week? The result? Inaction. Faced with too many choices and too little clarity, many simply stick with the status quo.

3. AI Still Requires Strategy and Structure

The idea of a magical AI agent answering every customer question sounds great, until you realize it

larger enterprises are stuck with siloed or unstructured data that AI can't digest. No data, no insights. It's like trying to run a restaurant without ingredients.

We've been here before.

Think of that complex IVR system that had to be mapped out, step by step. Who's calling? What do they want? What data powers the experience? The same logic applies to AI - just more complex, with higher expectations.

To move forward, businesses need more than buzzwords - they need concrete use cases that clearly explain what problem is being solved, for whom, and how. And let's not forget: users typically only tap into 10% of Microsoft Office's features. Adoption has always been a challenge - and with AI, it's likely worse.

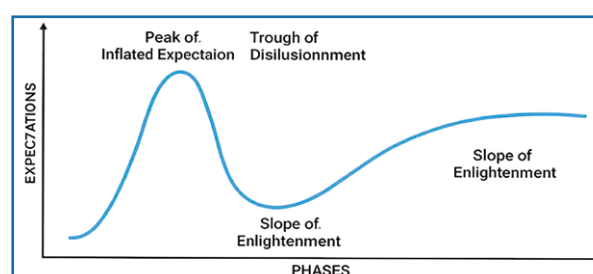
Want to Sell AI? Make It Simple

If you're selling AI, treat it like a band-aid: easy to apply, obvious in value, and clearly better than the alternative. That means:

- Focused, low-risk use cases
- Clear ROI within weeks, not years
- Pre-configured outcomes with minimal setup

Until then, the hype might just be your biggest competitor.

For more information go to:
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Here are the three big reasons why:

1.Buyers Are Confused

Surveys are divided: some say AI boosts productivity; others call it delusional. Many businesses are caught in the middle, unsure of what's real. In any tech adoption curve, most customers are not early adopters. They're risk-averse and wary of

needs structure, data, and a solid plan. Anyone who's ever built a website, an IVR system, or a reporting dashboard knows it's not plug-and-play. AI is no different. Strategy, architecture, and accessible data are prerequisites, and most small businesses aren't ready.

In fact, many don't even have usable data. Even

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Ten channel bosses on how they'd change the industry...

Which channel leader slammed 'most vendors' for being 'too slow'? Find out here, along with nine other insights into what our channel personalities would change about the channel if they could...

Bluecube Managing Director Paul Reames

We need to attract more women into the industry. It's a problem our sector needs to figure out as a community.

Intercity Technology CEO Charlie Blakemore

We need a culture change on security, from the device to the cloud. The cyber threat is going to be one of, if not the most, significant risks to businesses.

Patrick Daly, Managing Director, Amillan

Making systems truly interoperable and user friendly requires unified standards to ensure seamless integration between platforms, tools and devices.

KubeNet Director Fraser Ferguson

Slow down the new products conveyor belt.

PXC CEO James Smith

We need to drive for more diversity, not just for societal responsibility. All the research proves that having teams from a range of backgrounds, abilities and experiences leads to better decision making and innovation.

Auxilion CEO Patrick Jordan

There's a stronger need for eco partners to come together and co-develop solutions, to bring the best of technology and services together.

Arran Kirton, Managing Director, Guru Technology

The supplier channel: 95 per cent of vendors are too poor and too slow. Things need to change.

Everything Tech Group (ETG) founder and CFO Mark Allen

I would get vendors to slow down on the deployment of AI on all their devices and software offerings, and instead focus on helping customers understand the use cases.

Cybit Executive Chairman James Hunnybourne

Medical tech: If we could crack the early warning stuff it would make a world of change.

Vendors urged to be enablers

A signed partner agreement is an important milestone but it's just the start, writes Loucerna Director Louise Grant, who discusses partner onboarding versus enablement and why building momentum beyond the contract is key to mutual success.

Companies often treat onboarding as a one-time event, checking boxes for contracts, access and initial training. But to truly build successful, long-term partnerships, onboarding must evolve quickly into structured, ongoing enablement. But how can we define onboarding versus enablement? Onboarding is the initial process of getting a partner up and running, covering the 'what' and 'who' – contracts, tools access, basic product overviews, key and stakeholder introductions. This helps partners get started but it's a short-term series of actions.

That's where enablement comes in. Enablement is the continuous process of equipping partners with the knowledge, tools and backing needed to successfully market, sell and support a vendor's solution. The first weeks after onboarding are critical. This is when momentum is either built or lost.

Vendors don't need to front-load certifications or advanced training in week one, but they do



Louise Grant

The first weeks after onboarding are critical. This is when momentum is either built or lost

need to provide resources that partners can access immediately. Vendors should also consider partner journeys, guided playbooks, competitive insights, sales tool kits and real world use cases that help partners understand the value proposition and how to do business with the vendor.

One area that's often overlooked or under-resourced is technical enablement. Many companies default to on-request calls with sales engineers, which are not scalable and often reactive. To build confidence and reduce dependency, partners need on-demand technical content – solution walkthroughs, integration demos and access to test environments. Vendors should combine this with on request in-person technical training to ensure relevance and depth.

Enablement should be stage-based and continuous, evolving with the partner's maturity. As their familiarity grows, so should the complexity and depth of available content. This approach keeps partners engaged and aligned as they grow with the vendor's ecosystem.

Onboarding is the first step, not the end goal. The success of a channel is not measured by the number of signed contracts. Continued enablement, especially in the early weeks, is what drives activation, performance and lasting success in a vendor's partner ecosystem.

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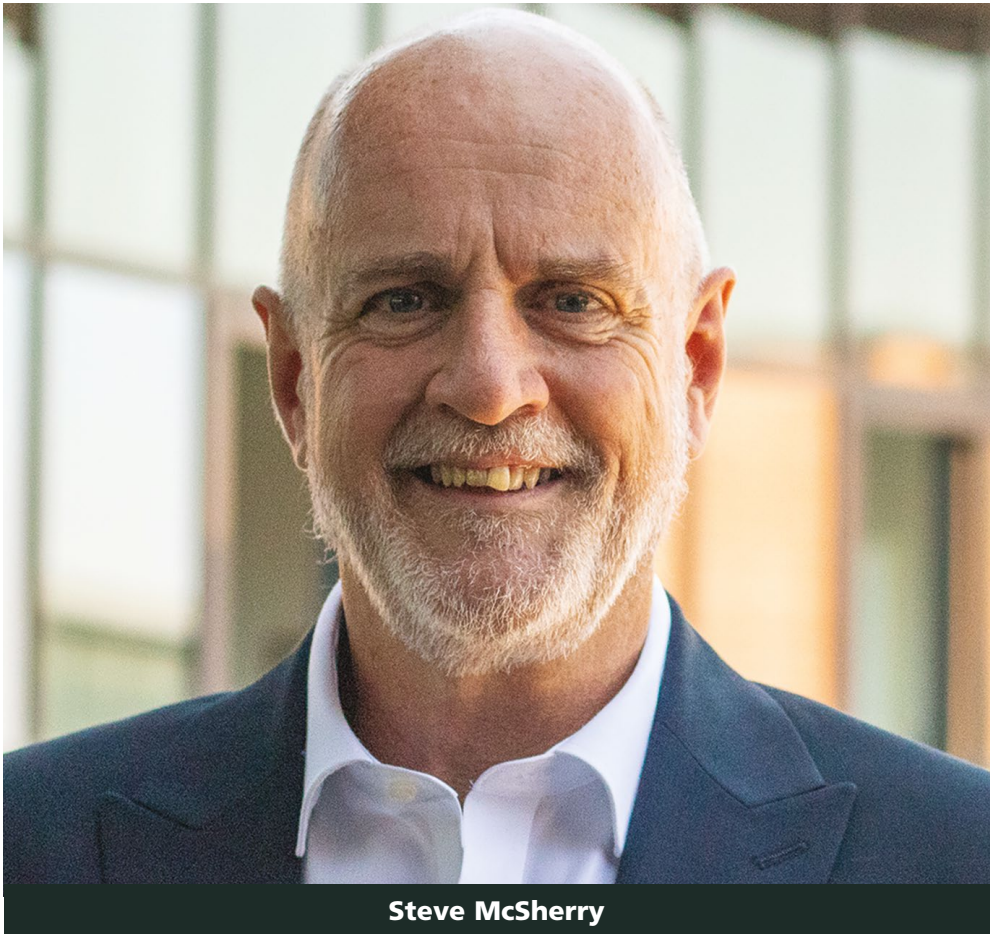
Sales training and development in the CCaaS space is a vital next step for any reseller or MSP with a revenue growth strategy, according to Steve McSherry, CX Director and Trainer, Train to Win.

Following a chance meeting at CCEXPO late last year between experienced contact centre sales specialist Steve McSherry and Train to Win owner Julie Mills, the pair have joined forces to help reseller and MSP sales teams capitalise on the high growth CCaaS market. McSherry is now one of the channel's most knowledgeable contact centre experts with 40 years in telecoms sales under his belt. "During a pivotal 10 year period at Aspect in the 1990s I was fortunate to benefit from a robust training model grounded in the US principle that the customer is king," he stated. "That philosophy has stayed with me throughout my career.

"By understanding not only what my customers want, but also what their own customers expect,

I've been able to craft sales strategies that deliver consistent results. My approach has always been to tailor messaging to the individual, communicating in a way that aligns with their role, their priorities and their language."

Today, growing adoption of contact centre tools beyond the traditional contact centre environment, and the accelerating migration to cloud-based solutions, are of particular interest, noted McSherry. "Many channel resellers are now looking to capitalise on big opportunities in the CCaaS space, attracted by the potential for higher recurring revenues, stronger margins and the ability to layer on additional value added services," he stated. "However, they face a major barrier when equipping sales



Steve McSherry

There's an old saying that goes, 'a sales person is only as good as their last deal', I'd argue they're only as good as their next one

teams with the right skills to confidently enter and succeed in this evolving market."

Small steps

Without genuine buy-in, noted McSherry, any shift in approach is likely to be met with lip service only. And successful transformation doesn't happen overnight. "Change must be introduced gradually, giving the sales team time to adapt, adopt new thinking and build confidence in a new way of working," he added. "Even top performing sales people, those with a proven track record and a history of consistent success, must evolve. There's an old saying

that says 'a salesperson is only as good as their last deal', I'd argue they're only as good as their next one."

A structured approach along with opportunity profiling is key for resellers and MSPs because the contact centre, when correctly positioned, sits at the heart of an organisation's customer communication strategy. "The right positioning often means that no single individual holds full ownership of the decision making process," added McSherry. "Instead, it's crucial that every member of the management team feels engaged and has a voice in shaping the outcome."

What's also noteworthy is the emergence of a growing market segment populated by businesses that can benefit from certain elements of contact centre technology but are not traditional

Key point...

CUSTOMERS must view sales people as a trusted advisors and sources of knowledge. In cases where the sales person lacks deep experience, credibility can still be established through strong customer references, a collaborative team-based selling approach and ongoing investment in sales training and enablement.



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

aaS revenues

contact centres themselves. "These organisations require advanced communication capabilities without the full scale investment typically associated with contact centre infrastructure," added McSherry. "This is where the concept of a collaborative contact centre becomes particularly compelling.

"By combining the capabilities of CCaaS with UCaaS, businesses can create tailored solutions that align with their operational needs, while also maintaining greater control over costs. These hybrid models allow organisations to draw on the strengths of both technologies, deploying each where it's most effective. The result is a more agile, scalable and future-ready comms environment."

For resellers, it's essential to offer a comprehensive portfolio that spans the full communications spectrum, from traditional telephony through to UCaaS, CCaaS and fully integrated solutions. Just as important is the ability to ensure seamless interoperability between these technologies. "This empowers customers to build a communication ecosystem that not only supports their current operations but can also adapt and grow alongside their evolving business needs," said McSherry.

According to the latest 2024 Contact Babel report, voice, email and webchat still account for nearly 90 per cent of all customer communications within contact centres. While newer digital channels and SMS continue to emerge, their broader adoption as primary communication methods is

more likely to occur within the Collaborative Contact Centre model where technologies like Microsoft Teams and other integrated platforms are beginning to make a significant impact.

AI: Be cautious

"Another key development shaping the industry is the rise of AI, particularly Agentic and Generative AI," said McSherry. "However, it's important to approach this trend with caution. Rushing to offer AI solutions without a deep understanding of the customer's business model and specific use cases can backfire. In fact, presenting AI purely as a cost-saving measure to the wrong stakeholders can kill a deal entirely, especially in organisations where resistance to AI still lingers.

"This is where effective consultative selling becomes critical. Building a compelling, tailored business case for AI in the contact centre, based on measurable value and aligned outcomes, can turn scepticism into support and lead to more strategic, successful deployments."

Positioning sales staff in this way, as experts in

CCaaS, delivers a strategic advantage for providers. It allows them to lead the customer conversation and guide decision making in a direction that aligns with the reseller's strengths. Rather than waiting for the customer or a competitor to set the agenda, it's the salesperson's responsibility to take control of it from the outset. "To do this effectively, salespeople must operate with precision," explained McSherry. "They need the right information, used in the right way, with the right people at the right time.

"While most customers know their own business, they often lack awareness of the technologies that could significantly improve their operations. That's where the salesperson comes in, not just to sell a product but to clearly communicate how their technology can deliver real, tangible value to the customer's business. This consultative, value-driven approach doesn't happen by accident. It requires investment. For resellers, developing this skill set within the sales force is not optional, it's essential for long-term success in the CCaaS space and beyond." ■

McSherry on gaining a lead

BUILDING a portfolio with complementary technologies – like Workforce Optimisation (WFO), secure card payments and speech analytics – alongside the core contact centre solution creates a distinct competitive advantage. By also including collaborative tools such as UCaaS, Microsoft Teams and Business Intelligence (BI) platforms, the reseller can offer a comprehensive solution that meets a range of business needs. Simplicity and alignment in the product offering are key to building trust and closing deals. Furthermore, a customer is not a single physical entity, rather a collection of individuals who, ideally, are aligned towards a common goal. Sales people must recognise these differences and tailor their communication accordingly. One of the most effective ways to support this is by developing a product champion within the opportunity.

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Artificial Intelligence is no longer a distant promise—it's reshaping industries here and now. Telecoms is no exception. At TSI, we've embedded powerful AI tools into our flagship UCaaS platform, Cross Connect, to ensure that businesses of every size—from micro-businesses to enterprise—can harness the benefits of AI without complexity or high costs.



Jack Michalski - Director of Channel Partnerships

Cross Connect now includes integrated AI features like automatic call transcription and real-time sentiment analysis. These tools help businesses understand not just what was said on a call, but how it was said—bringing emotional context to everyday conversations. This isn't just for large contact centres; even the smallest businesses can unlock these insights through our ultra-low-cost, pay-as-you-go pricing model. It's per-user, not per-company, and with no contract commitments—just simple, scalable access to intelligent communications.

Every Cross Connect subscription runs on 30-day rolling terms. That's the kind of flexibility our Partners and customers deserve in a fast-moving world. No matter what sector you deploy in, Cross Connect adapts effortlessly, backed by award-winning infrastructure and full CRM/Teams integration.

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all communication channels—voice, email, and text—regardless of the UC platform in use.

This multi-channel analysis is further enriched by deep machine learning that delivers precise, contextual insights, helping decision-makers act faster and with greater confidence. Multilingual support ensures transcription and sentiment analysis are just as effective for global or multilingual teams.

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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



Comms Vision conference sessions unravel the big issues facing MSPs and the wider channel

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. ■
See pages 16-19

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

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Gaining an outcome and

This year's gold standard Comms Vision Convention (12th-14th November, Gleneagles Hotel) doubles down on the imperative for MSPs to deliver more for less across their own business, while growing, as well as increasing customer value. Here, Greg Jones, SVP of MSP Enablement, EMEA and North America, Kaseya (Comms Vision Platinum sponsor) highlights a number of practical ways MSPs can readily achieve outcome and value bonuses (OVBs), whether it's tailoring client offerings, understanding customer pain points that run below the surface or redefining marketing messages.

MSPs are undergoing massive change, and let's be honest – the MSP space isn't just evolving, it's being rewritten. Clients want more strategic input and more meaningful outcomes. It can feel like a lot to manage. And for many MSPs it is. Meeting rising expectations with limited resources isn't easy. But within that challenge lies a real opportunity – to make small, strategic changes that can have a lasting impact for you and your clients. Doing more with less doesn't have to mean reinventing the wheel. Indeed, many MSPs are already well equipped with the right skillsets, tools, talent and technologies. The

key is focusing on getting the most out of them effectively. At Kaseya, we constantly see how little tweaks can lead to big results. Here's our take on OVBs, with five potential quick wins for MSPs.

1. Take consultancy to the next level

In the MSP world, consultancy can't be a reactive service, something you do when asked. It needs to be at the core of your offering and the very heart of your company DNA. It's no longer enough to simply go through the motions. Today, MSPs must fill bigger, more valuable boots, helping clients to anticipate and prepare for what's ahead. You need to position yourself as a true business partner.

Interacting at the CEO and board level is of course important, but some of the best insights and biggest impacts can be found by working with department heads. Are you in touch with the heads of finance, sales and operations? Do you know what their biggest pain points are? Ask them what's not working, what's slowing them down – then show them how technology can solve their problems. It is through these interactions that MSPs can build trust throughout the entire business, not just at the top.

2. Capitalise on new market opportunities with existing resources

Growth isn't determined by bigger teams or more tools. Most MSPs already have what they need. The real trick is knowing how to get the most out of those existing resources. Start by taking a closer look at your customer base. If you're already serving several clients in the same sector, it's not random – it's direction. But identifying that isn't enough. You need to build a clear and intentional target customer profile.

This should go beyond just simply outlining the industry of focus and typical headcount. It should also include the behaviours and ambitions of those customers. For example, is the customer regulated? Do they have a business plan? Are they working with a consultant? Are they part of a local Chamber of Commerce or a member of the Institute of Directors? These indicators can help identify a genuine buyer intent.

You don't want to build your business around clients that are just coasting. Focus on those ambitious, growing companies that require supportive services. That's where you can add real



Let's be honest
– the MSP
space isn't just
evolving, it's
being rewritten

Greg Jones

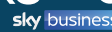


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value and create lasting, impactful partnerships. At the same time, evaluate your service stack. Every MSP should be looking into Compliance as a Service (CaaS) and co-managed IT. These aren't trends or phases. They're genuine opportunities. You're probably doing most of the job already. So, package it up, name it and take it to market.

Again, you don't have to reinvent the wheel to grow. Sometimes, it's simply a case of identifying what's already working and doubling down. When you start to see your current teams, tools and customer base through a lens of opportunity, you'll quickly find several growth opportunities that had been hiding in plain sight.

3. Boost operational and GTM efficiency

It's all well and good reducing friction to boost operational efficiency and effectiveness. But if you really want to grow, you also need to focus on improving how you go to market. The fastest growing MSPs all have one thing in common – they obsess over their go-to-market strategy. They prioritise it. They invest in it. It's not an afterthought – it's front and centre. You might have the best service delivery engine in the world, but if your sales and marketing are lacklustre then your growth will always be limited.

Improving GTM starts with client mapping. What does your ideal customer look like? What really resonates with them? Take the time to build campaigns that will land, and measure effectiveness throughout the entire customer journey. Success will depend on sales, service and operations all being aligned. However, you will also need to focus on operational integration. Most MSPs have the right tools, but they're not connected. To gain a holistic view of issues, and fix them accordingly, you'll need to ensure your systems are working together, providing insight into your data, tickets, financials and pipelines. This isn't about working harder. It's about working smarter. If everyone and everything is pulling in the same, cohesive direction, you'll naturally move faster and deliver more.

4. Realise your people and team potential

It's often said that a company's team is its most valuable asset, and that's undoubtedly true. But are you making the most of yours? A great person in the wrong role can become frustrated and unproductive. Shift them into the right place, and suddenly they shine. Building and maintaining great teams depends on active management. MSPs should take the time to assess departmental structures and



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

Most MSPs already have what they need. The real trick is knowing how to get the most out of existing resources

development channels. I always recommend implementing a job shadowing programme. Let your staff explore other departments and see how they work. Not only is this a great way of building inter-company empathy, but it can also help to improve communication.

At the same time, MSPs need to ensure they provide a springboard and a speakerphone for the next generation. A fast-changing business world requires fresh perspectives, so give people the chance to bring new ideas forward, to challenge norms and question routines. Those forums and that culture really fuels innovation. Supporting your teams and embracing their ideas will really make them feel they're part of something. And in return, they'll give you their very best.

5. Differentiate in a saturated market

Most MSPs are still selling themselves on speeds and feeds. They lead with how many years they've been in business, how great their customer service is, or how qualified their teams are. The truth is, everyone's saying the same thing. Your prospects don't care how long you've been around. They care about how you're going to help them grow.

My advice is to think differently. Don't focus on your own achievements – focus on your clients. What's keeping them up at night? Where do they see themselves in one, two or five years? Put yourself in their shoes, hear them and speak directly to their concerns. Equally, don't be afraid to be bold. Carve out your specific niche and hold that space. Whether that's a particular vertical, a unique approach to service, or a commercial model that makes sense to your clients. And then tell that story consistently across your website, social media, sales calls and events.

People don't buy products – they buy outcomes, they buy confidence, they buy relationships. Stop talking about what you do and start talking about the impact you have. That's how you differentiate in a market where everyone else is just blending in. ■



Beyond transactions: Unl

Achieving the ability to provide more for less requires strategic change, but developing the operational capabilities needed to deliver Outcome and Value Bonuses (OVBs) is a challenge for the channel. Here, Sky Business Wholesale Managing Director Damian Saunders (Comms Vision Platinum sponsor) addresses the key issues and opportunities, and discusses how to deliver greater outcome-led value while balancing efficiency with sustainable growth.

The UK channel is facing a new strategic equation: How to deliver more outcome-led value to customers while simultaneously boosting operational efficiency and long-term growth. At the centre of this challenge is the emergence of Outcome and Value Bonuses (OVBs) — an emerging benchmark for service delivery. This year's Comms Vision agenda rightly zeroes in on this theme, asking whether the traditional channel model can still deliver what customers demand — or whether reinvention is now imperative.

At Sky Business Wholesale, we're not only watching this shift — we're actively engaging with it. Our partnerships with MSPs are evolving beyond transactional engagement into deep collaboration, underpinned by shared insight, automation and joint planning - enabling both sides to grow smarter through better decision making, faster through streamlined processes, and more sustainable by focusing on long-term value over short-term wins.

As customer expectations grow and operational complexity increases, the ability to deliver more for less has become the defining challenge of our time. Consultancy is no longer an added value — it's the core value. As customers demand deeper ROI, MSPs must be equipped not just with products, but with insight, foresight and the confidence to challenge their clients' thinking. That's why the concept of OVBs resonates so strongly. It reflects the growing demand for solutions that drive tangible business results — from streamlined provisioning and seamless switching to long-term partnerships that reduce operational burden and enable scalable growth across the chain.

Sky Business Wholesale sees this shift playing out daily. Our partners are looking not just for products, but for ideas, support and collaboration that helps them adapt and thrive. The 10-point



Damian Saunders

As customer expectations grow and operational complexity increases, the ability to deliver more for less has become the defining challenge of our time

action plan at the heart of this year's Comms Vision event provides a practical and thought-provoking framework - here's how we're helping our partners take four of those points to the next level.

1. Elevating consultancy to strategic partnership

The days of transactional selling are behind us. MSPs are increasingly expected to operate as strategic consultants - bringing insight, understanding, and tailored thinking to the table. At Sky Business Wholesale, we've invested in building a team that's both technically strong and commercially aware. Our account directors work closely with partners to understand their business models and co-create solutions that deliver measurable outcomes. We don't take a one-size-fits-all approach, because no two partners are the same - and their customers aren't either.

This shift toward consultancy isn't just about knowledge, it's about trust. The partners we work most effectively with are those where



locking sustainable value

the relationship feels like an extension of each others' teams. That takes time, consistency and a shared understanding of the end goal. To support this, we're continuing to invest in the tools, training and market insight that help partners grow their own advisory capabilities. Because as the market matures, we believe it's deep expertise - not just deep discounts - that will set businesses apart. Operational excellence is becoming the new battleground for margin protection. Yet, as automation scales, the question is: Are MSPs leveraging technology strategically enough to eliminate friction at every step?

2. Driving operational and go-to-market efficiency through automation

Efficiency used to be a secondary benefit. Now, it's often the deciding factor. From simplifying integrations to speeding up provisioning, we're focused on helping to reduce friction across key parts of the partner journey. We've made automation a priority - not just to improve our internal processes, but to help partners get to market faster and operate with less overhead. Our platform is designed to support straightforward system integration, helping partners reduce manual work and improve process efficiency - so partners can focus on growth, not admin. And our Mean Time to Provide (MTTP) proves that automation and agility can go hand-in-hand.

As MSPs expand their role in a complex value chain, traditional partner boundaries are blurring. Strategic collaboration must now mean shared innovation, integrated execution and joint accountability for delivering customer value. Ultimately, the goal is to make doing business as easy as possible - and we're continuing to ask ourselves how we can simplify further.

3. Empowering through strategic partnering

No one wins in isolation. In today's interconnected ecosystem, strategic third party partnering is critical, not just for delivery, but for long-term innovation. Our partnerships with organisations like Giacom and ITS reflect this mindset. Rather than simply providing services we work together to co-develop solutions, align on go-to-market strategies, and solve shared challenges.

With 'good enough' becoming the default in connectivity, differentiation can no longer rely on price or parity. The real question is: What does true service differentiation look like in a commoditised market? We understand that being a good partner means more than offering good products. It



During Comms Vision 2024 Sky Business Wholesale hosted an inspirational interview with British rower and four-times Olympian Helen Glover MBE

Our partners aren't just looking for products – they're looking for ideas, support and collaboration that help them adapt and thrive

means being available, being adaptable and bringing added value through commercial flexibility, responsive support, and technical expertise - underpinned by reliability.

4. Differentiating in a saturated market

Connectivity is often seen as a commoditised space — but we believe there are still powerful ways to stand out. A good example is our Easy Switching functionality, developed to support mass migration ahead of the PSTN switch-off. It simplifies the customer transition to our all-IP broadband portfolio, and is a clear example of how differentiation claims can be backed up with real-world capability. And it's not just about today's win. Our partners are increasingly focused on long-

term scalability and resilience – choosing solutions that evolve with their needs, not just meet them. This future-fit mindset shapes everything from how we build our roadmap to how we listen, adapt and improve through ongoing feedback.

Final thoughts

As Comms Vision sets the stage for bold conversations, one question stands out: How do we balance reinvention with reliability, speed with strategy, value with vision? The 10 point action plan put forward by Comms Vision this year highlights some of the most urgent and exciting priorities for the channel. And we're looking forward to the conversations and connections Comms Vision will bring. ■

The Big Goal: A ready-made

Former footballer Keith Mabbutt, CEO of the Street Soccer Foundation and co-founder of The Big Goal, is in no doubt that the initiative he launched alongside Comms Dealer and Giacom two years ago is the biggest and best CSR programme in the UK and will, in time, become a global powerhouse fighting the tragedy of homelessness. Here's his story...

Ex-professional footballers can be disorientated when seeking new careers after their playing days are over, but Mabbutt's laser focus is set on a single target, ending youth homelessness through the power of football. His optimism and enthusiasm is infectious – and members of the Big Goal campaign within the ICT industry will testify to that. "Football is the world's biggest sport and brings people together," said Mabbutt. "I have no doubt that the early success we have achieved with The Big Goal in the ICT sector will ultimately create a template for expansion across the world. We have already had offers to take the concept to America, Africa and Singapore." Global ambitions aside,

Mabbutt is a realist and knows he has more people to convince that The Big Goal concept is a sure-fire winner. But with the likes of Lord Shaun Bailey, the Football Association, The English Football League and the International Federation of Corporate Football (FIFCO) behind his ideas, you have to take his determination seriously. "The Big Goal can be profoundly misunderstood," he added. "Some people see it as a fun exercise giving staff a chance to play football, but it is so much more than that. It embeds into a company's culture and creates enormous social impact value."

"Companies these days must have some sort of CSR programme in place. Shareholders, partners, staff and potential employees



Keith Mabbutt

I have no doubt that the early success we have achieved with The Big Goal in the ICT sector will ultimately create a template for expansion across the world

demand it. The Big Goal is a ready-made programme that we supervise and run on behalf of companies which motivates staff and genuinely helps disadvantaged young people in their local communities."

The Street Soccer Foundation is the engine behind The Big Goal. The concept is simple. When a company signs up, it is entered into The Big Goal national five-a-side tournament which takes place every year, culminating

in a National Finals event at St George's Park – The Home of England Football. This year the winners will go on to represent England in the FIFCO World Cup in Morocco in October, an undeniable morale booster for staff.



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But, more importantly, member organisations sponsor homeless and disadvantaged young people through the Street Soccer Academy programme, delivered in partnership with professional football clubs all over the country through their community coaching teams. The Street Soccer Foundation runs these 12 week Academies at these organisations throughout the year giving young participants the chance to bond by playing football and learning crucial social and life skills in focused group sessions.

"These young people can be extremely vulnerable without family support and need basic life skills to get off the streets and hopefully into some kind of work," stressed Mabbutt. "All young people need is a chance to shine and we give them that. In the decade the charity has been running we have had some incredible success stories. Take Jordan, 19, who joined the Street Soccer Academy in Leicester. Having battled periods of homelessness and severe anxiety, Jordan credits the programme — and the team that supported him through it — with helping him rediscover confidence and purpose. He now volunteers as a youth mentor in his local community.

"Or Maya, 23, who came through the London Academy with Crystal Palace after fleeing domestic abuse. Thanks to the programme's focus on life skills and personal development she's secured a college place to pursue a career in STEM. These stories are the heartbeat of The Big Goal. And they're made possible by the companies who stand behind the campaign."



Giacom CEO Tez O'Brien and Keith Mabbutt

All young people need is a chance to shine and we give them that

The social impact ICT companies get from their involvement in The Big Goal is also on the record. To name a few, staff from Focus Group, Onecom, Welcomm Communications, Elite Group, Giacom and Utilize have all visited and engaged with young people at the Crystal Palace, Portsmouth, Leicester City, Everton, Hull City and West Ham United foundations respectively.

Powerful inspiration

"This is the power of The Big Goal," enthused Mabbutt. "I'll never forget the inspiring talk Martin Flick, the former CEO of Onecom, gave at Portsmouth and seeing staff from Focus Group mingling

with homeless young people on our Academy programme with the Palace for Life Foundation. Employees, managers, directors and shareholders can see for themselves the social impact The Big Goal creates. And it's alongside their local professional football club which is a tremendous bonus."

Young people can easily fall down rabbit holes and end up on the streets and a life of alcohol and drug abuse. Ironically, it was a real rabbit hole that virtually ended Mabbutt's football career. He was a fleet-footed tricky winger on the edge of first team fame with Charlton

Athletic and latterly Millwall when the ligament injury he sustained on a cross-country run took the edge off his skills. "That pothole injury meant my game changed as I'd lost the pace I had before, and my confidence took a dive," he recalled.

His football career ended when he was released by Gillingham FC and a rainy evening in the car park at Dulwich Hamlet FC was a seminal moment. "I thought I could get back by playing semi-professional football, but on that winter night I was sitting in the car and just couldn't make the journey to the dressing room. My confidence was gone and I thought this isn't for me. My heart just wasn't in it anymore."

Just the job

Not an entrepreneur by nature and with no tangible business skills, Mabbutt set about building from scratch a recruitment business and invented a software programme that paired graduates with relevant job openings. "In short, after my footballing days ended I started a business and later sold that company and the programme I'd built, within five years," he explained. "I could have made more money, but I had enough to enjoy a cosy retirement in my thirties. In truth though, I was totally bored. So I thought... how can I combine my knowledge of football with what I had learned in the recruitment game?"

A visit to the West Ham United Foundation gave him the inspiration and support Mabbutt needed to launch a programme that supported troubled and homeless young people

through the 'community' of football — and the Street Soccer Foundation was born. The Big Goal is essentially a spin off that works in the corporate world. With the support of Giacom as headline sponsor and Comms Dealer as media partner, the initiative has already raised more than £100,000 and put 462 young people through Academies at clubs all over the UK, but Mabbutt believes this is only the start of something much bigger.

"If we can get 100 companies from this industry taking part in the 2026 campaign, we can then take the template into other industries and other countries. My message to company directors in this industry is simple. Go to The Big Goal website, www.thebiggoal.co.uk, watch our videos and see what companies have gained from participation. As I've said before, The Big Goal is a ready-made CSR programme which is accountable and affordable via our menu of pricing options. This is your opportunity to put something back into your communities, inspire your staff and change the lives of young people. That is The Big Goal."

Why CSR is key...

- Build stronger brand loyalty.
- Attract and retain top talent.
- Improve access to capital.
- Reduce risk.
- Outperform competitors over the long-term.

The Big Goal is resonating with companies across the ICT sector, providing a meaningful, measurable way to engage with CSR — without the bureaucracy or complexity. www.thebiggoal.co.uk

Two years of social impact

THANKS to the support of corporate sponsors involved in The Big Goal, the Street Soccer Foundation delivered 44 Academies across the country in 2024 alone, supporting 462 vulnerable and homeless young people — a 96 per cent year-on-year increase from 2023. Based on a detailed analysis of cost savings to public services compared to delivery spend, the Social Return on Investment (SROI) for the programme in 2024 was calculated at £36 for every £1 invested. That's £12.1 million in social value created, and a powerful demonstration of what's possible when business and purpose come together. To find out more visit: www.thebiggoal.co.uk

Taylor drives telco to tech

Voiceflex has marked its 20th year in business with a reaffirmation of its core channel strategy and commitment to accelerating the roll out of new applications, according to Chief Commercial Officer Paul Taylor who continues to drive the company's evolution from telco to techco.

Knocking on opportunity's door is a trait Taylor has consistently displayed throughout his career, going back to his first job door knocking to sell life insurance, to when he established Voiceflex in 2005, to now as he pushes against open doors with new AI-based applications for channel businesses to sell. Rewind the clock 20 years and Voiceflex was born out of a need for Swyx (the vendor Taylor was working for at the time) to have SIP connectivity. Frontier Systems was the UK support arm for Swyx but it couldn't deliver, so the vendor's owner sought to develop a SIP server and Taylor moved to Frontier, which later became Voiceflex, to also lead the development and sale of new products.

"Companies like BT, Gamma, Vodafone and Colt were selling applications

long before Voiceflex was established," stated Taylor. "Now, Cavell Group has placed us in the top five, based on Voiceflex being the only independent SIP service provider and probably UCaaS SIP service provider in the UK. We started with no products and no customers. Today, we go toe-to-toe with the big providers. Our agility enables us to move quickly and take market share from the much larger players."

Voiceflex achieved its 2024 objectives and is on target to do the same this year, driven in large part by the UCaaS application that rolled out three years ago. "It's not going to outpace the number of SIP trunks we sell but it's a strategic move forward and we continue to develop applications around this UCaaS product," explained Taylor.

The company now employs



Paul Taylor

We go toe-to-toe with the big providers: Our agility enables us to move quickly and take market share from the much larger players

53 staff and generates circa £10.6 million revenue, with more than 10 per cent turnover growth witnessed during the last two years. "We're aiming to do the same again in 2025," stated Taylor. "Our longer term plan is to hit £20 million turnover. It's achievable with the number of channel partners we have

and by developing new products and applications to bring to market."

AI applications

He pointed out that the number of people using traditional applications for voice is reducing significantly by the day, so Voiceflex's response is to introduce AI applications like WhatsApp

for Business to enhance the existing application. AI Meeting, AI conversational IVR and AI sentiment analysis are on the roadmap. "The opportunity is vast," emphasised Taylor. "For telcos, it's seven to 10 times turnover. For tech companies it's 10 to 14 times turnover or 9.5 to 14 times EBITDA." Taylor reiterated that



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hco transformation

Voiceflex is transforming from a telco to a techco and has made big investments over the last year towards becoming a tech company with far more growth potential. "The market is buoyant and our biggest opportunity is moving into the Zoom, Webex and Operator Connect space," stated Taylor. "They will take the lion's share of the traditional market so we need to be aligned with them in our portfolio. Notably,

Every time there's a new entrant, such as Zoom, Webex or Operator Connect, we connect our applications to them

on-premise SIP trunks accounted for 44 per cent of our SIP trunks 12 months ago, they now account for 34 per cent. There's a big opportunity to go after."

Future growth will come from the 1,000 partners selling new product sets into a market that already knows Voiceflex, has a contract with it and is familiar with its billing platform. Underscoring this familiarity is Voiceflex's channel strategy which has remained fairly constant over the last 20 years, and Taylor does not expect big changes to the proven formula. "We're 100 per cent channel," he emphasised. "We have never sold direct because we're not geared up

to. We don't want to tread on the toes of organisations who are and that strategy isn't going to change. We want to onboard more partners and increase their spend. We'll work with any sized partner. They all provide us with additional revenue and help us grow our base."

MSP focus

Taylor also noted that Voiceflex aims to move more into the MSP space. "Microsoft is one of the largest growing areas and is a target market," he observed. "We added voice connectivity onto the back of the Microsoft Teams application with Operator Connect. There are several products in the market that bring voice and Teams together so we're definitely moving into the age of Microsoft and Webex. It's a world where partners can gain more ARPU per customer with wraparounds."

Another important trend that has caught Taylor's eye is the growth of multi-tiered applications. He calls it 'layer caking'. "We take standard applications and provide additional apps around the service," explained Taylor. "But we need to ensure everything we sell works correctly. Nowadays, if someone downloads an app from the App Store and it doesn't do what they want within five minutes they delete it. Our products have to grab people immediately so they can work out what the features and benefits are for themselves, and understand the ROI. If they don't you're out of there."

This trend has, in part, prompted Voiceflex to focus more on its direct marketing strategy, especially to end users, to more effectively help generate leads it can pass to partners. "The way people engage has changed with technology, so we've had to adapt our communication methods," commented Taylor. "It's no longer just about picking up the phone. You now need to reach people through email and platforms like LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook. It's about finding the right way to explain what we do and where we add value, using the channels people are actually paying attention to."

Voiceflex is also a big educator of partners, which is why it runs so many webinars. "And we understand that if we bring a product to market it's going to take one or two years to properly embed into an application," stated Taylor. "One example is our AI meeting application which is a puppy dog sell, but people can be sceptical of something they haven't used before. We say try it free for 60 days, if you like it we move forward, if you don't there's no hard feelings."

Taylor's primary aim is for Voiceflex to sell more products per partner, and he says the big go-to-market evolution is around taking an existing platform and adding extra products around it. "We either develop the products ourselves or buy them in to move the process forward as quickly and smoothly as possible," he commented. "Every time there's a new entrant, such as Zoom, Webex or Operator Connect, we connect our applications to them." ■

Just a minute with Paul Taylor...

Role model: Richard Branson. When he established Virgin Atlantic he had just four planes but nevertheless went head-to-head with British Airways which had about 400. That struck a chord with me. Voiceflex has a similar David versus Goliath approach.

Three ideal dinner guests: Jimmy Carr, he'd have everyone in stitches; Gareth Edwards, one of best rugby players ever; and Margaret Thatcher, a remarkably strong woman. It would be fascinating to hear her take on today's world.

If you weren't working in the ICT sector what would you be doing? I'd be a ski instructor. The Voiceflex ski incentive trip is one of the highlights of my year.

Best advice you have been given: Never make enemies when you're working your way up in business – you never know when you might need them on the way back down.

What talent do you wish you had? To see the future and stay ahead of the game.

Tell us something about yourself we don't know: I represented England at school running events in 100 and 200 meter races.

If you could change any aspect of the tech revolution what would it be? Number porting: It's antiquated and could be so much simpler.

Today's top leadership priorities: Ensure everybody in the business knows the direction of travel. And always have time to listen to whoever might need you.

What do you fear most? Retirement: I hate not being busy. If I did retire I'd probably be as active as I am now.

Your biggest career achievement: Taking Voiceflex from zero to £10 million turnover, with zero investment, no borrowings and without buying companies.

One example of something you have overcome: A fear of flying. I had a strong word with myself, attended therapy and last year took over 30 flights!

The biggest risk you have taken: Starting Voiceflex when we had absolutely nothing but a vision and a server with two bits of string connected to it.

Your favourite comedian: Jimmy Carr is fantastic and razor sharp.

In hindsight: I would have moved into UCaaS a few years earlier, set up as an ISP and sold mobile.

What are your biggest strengths and what could you work on improving? My greatest strength is determination, along with strong time management and planning skills. But I could work on being more lenient. I've always held very high standards and in the past when those weren't met I may have been too critical.

How do you relax: Playing golf. I'm also into car detailing so I've taken some courses and it allows me to disconnect from what I'm normally doing for work.

Top tip for resellers: Always trust and back yourself. And never be so caught up in the day-to-day that you miss what's coming next in tech.

If you were to write a book what would it be about and why? Selling 123 – selling is simple if you follow a process. Many sales people never learn that procedure, or how to implement it.

How Dancy will take Ryd

Rydal Group Managing Director Steffan Dancy has got the ball rolling on a solid growth strategy to hit £30 million revenue by 2028 supported by a multifaceted business model with AI at its core. Here's the plan...

Dancy kicked off Rydal Communications (now part of Rydal Group) in 2008 at the age of 24, working from home on his own helping local businesses with mobile and fixed line services. His earlier years were spent chasing a football career, playing at a good level until he was 22. "It was never quite enough to reach where I'd hoped, but I was able to live on the small income from football at the time," stated Dancy. "After moving into non-league football and accepting my dreams of being a pro had diminished, I worked briefly at Virgin Media, then for an independent mobile firm where I realised I could do this myself."

"The owner was a strong sales person and I learned a few useful things, but he didn't deal fairly with the team. There were broken promises and staff often weren't paid on time. That left a lasting impression. I knew I could build something better based on honesty and reliability and bring the

good parts of that business model with me – without the chaos. So off I went and I've never looked back."

The Rydal Communications name came from the street Dancy grew up on, Rydal Court. Today, the company supports more than 2,500 businesses and works with a growing network of wholesale partners who buy its services. "Growth has come from a combination of steady internal development and acquisitions," added Dancy. "Organic growth takes time, grit and consistency – we've done that well. This helps with our channel business as I can genuinely help partners in this space – I've been there and got the T-shirt. We've also completed 14 acquisitions focused mainly on expanding our IT MSP capability and strengthening our customer base. That's helped us scale while keeping control of our operations and maintaining service standards."

Rydal remains low debt and self-funded and employs



Steffan Dancy

Efficiency is no longer about doing more, it's about doing the same or better with less. Those who find the right tools and processes to adapt will stay ahead

over 90 staff across three UK offices. The business is now structured across four core divisions – Communications, IT, Wholesale and Value Added Services. The latter includes security solutions such as CCTV and alarms, as well as energy contract switching for business customers – all areas that continue to see strong demand as clients look for bundled, reliable support.

The MSP's offering also spans managed IT support, business grade connectivity, hosted VoIP and next-gen telecom solutions with AI at the core. For wholesale partners, Rydal delivers white labelled services with access to major UK networks, a resilient DC and ISP, automated provisioning tools and support that removes the technical burden of delivering services at scale.

"We also operate a fast growing consumer broadband arm alongside our B2B services," added Dancy. "With full ownership of our ISP and data centre we're in a strong position to offer resilient connectivity, private cloud and hosting services to direct SMB and mid-market clients and partners."

In terms of scaling up, Rydal has recently completed four

al to £30 million by 2028

Rydal's 2025 run rate currently sits at £16.5 million and Dancy expects this figure to increase by year end. "Our next milestone is £25 million revenue and the roadmap is already in motion," he stated. "By 2028 we expect revenues to exceed £30 million and Rydal will be a leading national MSP with over 150 staff. We'll continue to scale both our direct and partner channels, invest in automation, AI and software that drives client efficiency, and build on the trust we've earned by delivering services we own, support and control end-to-end. As we head towards the end of the year more of our clients will start to benefit from stronger technical engagement."

Driving value

Another core aim is to drive value through cross-sell, automation and AI-led service delivery. "SME interest in AI is no longer a trend – it's embedded," noted Dancy. "But the value lies in how businesses apply AI to existing operations to improve output, reduce manual effort and maintain service levels with fewer resources."

This is key because with macroeconomic pressure mounting, higher inflation, fewer job vacancies and rising unemployment – businesses are tightening their budgets. "Efficiency is no longer about doing more, it's about doing the same or better with less," said Dancy. "Those who find the right tools and processes to adapt will stay ahead."

Dancy has especially witnessed strong growth in VoIP, broadband and IT support, with over 15,000 VoIP users, 4,000 IT users supported and

Do a good job and you earn the right to take on IT support, cyber, telephony and more – that's the growth path we see every day

500-plus new consumer broadband connections being added monthly. "For our direct B2B business, cyber is a core growth area alongside IT support as we continue to position ourselves as a full-service MSP," stated Dancy. "We're also rolling out AI-driven telephony enhancements and omnichannel platform upgrades to improve how clients communicate and engage with their customers."

As part of its AI strategy, Rydal's wholesale division has secured global channel rights for the Callytics product, which provides AI-driven call analytics and reporting, works with any phone system and gives partners a tool to add insight and intelligence to customer conversations.

The introduction of Callytics forms part of Dancy's broader partner enablement approach. Meanwhile, IT services are delivered through the dedicated brand Rydal Infotech which supports circa 4,000 endpoints. "This side of the business continues to expand with a focus on automation, security and full-service MSP delivery," explained Dancy.

"For our direct business, becoming the managed service provider of choice is critical. Once you supply the connectivity and services like Microsoft 365 licensing it opens the door to everything else – so long as you deliver well. Do a good job and you earn the right to take on IT support, cyber, telephony and more – that's the growth path we see every day." ■

Dancy on his distinctively successful leadership style

I'M A HANDS-on leader. I like being close to the detail, working alongside my managers and supporting them directly on the journey. Culture plays a huge part in our success and that starts from the top. We run structured weekly check-ins with the leadership team where everyone shares their wins, challenges and where they need support. This keeps communication open and alignment tight.

I empower people. Leaders at Rydal are encouraged to take ownership of their areas, lead projects and have the space to get things wrong. That's part of learning. We don't waste time pointing fingers. We fix it, move on and improve. I like to think people enjoy working at Rydal – that's where the momentum begins. Success comes from backing your people, creating a clear rhythm across the business and being visible, not just managing from a distance. ■

Just a minute with Steffan Dancy...

Role models: My Dad and David Beckham.

What do you fear most? Complacency.

What talent do you wish you had? To sing.

Best piece of advice you have been given: Fail to prepare, prepare to fail.

Your greatest strength and what could you work on? My main strength is strategic vision and tenacity, but I could work on being more patient.

Your biggest career achievement? Knowing we've built a financially strong business that supports the livelihoods of our team. Growing something from nothing that helps people pay their mortgages and build their lives means more than any headline number.

How would you change the industry? Telecoms billing is an issue in every base we acquire. It's not an easy art and I wish the big fish simplified this market.

In hindsight: I'd have accelerated investment into our IT arm and acquired IT and comms businesses earlier. Organic growth was a huge success, but there was a lot of tough nights along the way.

Three ideal dinner guests: Matthew McConaughey, Will Smith and Paul Gascoigne.

The biggest risk you have taken: Quitting a full time job to launch Rydal from home.

Your favourite comedian: Lee Evans

If you weren't in comms what would you be doing? I'd be a football manager.

The biggest challenge you've overcome? Cashflow when the business was smaller.

Top tip for resellers and MSPs: Package your value, not just your product.

acquisitions comprising three client base purchases and one full share purchase.

"Our immediate focus over the next 90 days is on integrating these acquisitions and identifying white space opportunities for cross-selling," explained Dancy.

"We're also preparing to launch our new wholesale portal which automates phone system orders, broadband and DIA provisioning, plus mobile SIM ordering. Two major partners are currently onboarding into the portal to enable the mass migration of several thousand broadband connections. This is a major operational milestone."

High impact summit elevates

According to the well known adage, a picture can be worth a thousand words, so we've decided to tell the story of the UK Partner Week Summit (July 9th, Convene, London and attended by 130 channel partner/MSP organisations) with a selection of photos that perfectly illustrate the energy and knowledge sharing atmosphere of what proved to be a remarkably collaborative, successful, business leader and team-focused channel event.

It's no secret that the development of personal and business growth is nothing without innovation, ambition, future leadership and team power – and against a backdrop of industry change and technological disruption it is more critical than ever to jumpstart each of these growth drivers and unleash the full potential of channel organisations and the people working within them.

These overarching themes were fully explored in the main UK Partner Week Summit conference room, while breakout sessions provided an environment for delegates to immerse themselves in discussions that fostered, supported and enhanced knowledge sharing across three pivotal and complementary Tracks focused on Sales, Marketing and Technology. The summit also showed how each element forms part of an interconnected whole that will help you formulate a renewed team, business and leadership growth strategy.

During the course of the summit it quickly became clear that business and personal growth cannot be separated from having the ability to be creative and innovative on both an individual and organisational level – with team dynamics being the engine of progress. This means embracing a change mindset, which requires bravery if we are to break away from traditional ways of doing things to try something new and different, helping us to inspire customers.

Another significant aspect of this growth equation is ambition, and ambition management, all boosting impactful team outcomes that are optimised when aligned and integrated with leadership vision, company perspective, and driven forward by inter-team collaboration and a shared sense of purpose. These feed into the traits of high impact teams, empowered further by the collective strength of a thriving culture, diversity of thought, team members able to be their authentic selves, displaying brilliant curiosity and brilliant creativity.



It's a win-win scenario that Karen Blackett OBE, former President at WPP, says is the solution to sustained individual and business growth.

The challenge is maintaining and accelerating that growth momentum, which can only be achieved through the constant revision and careful development of the success factors surfaced during the summit's insightful main stage sessions and breakout symposiums.



ates best practice agenda



Pickering leads dbfb into

dbfb's acquisition of Milton Keynes-based Totally Converged Solutions (TC Solutions) is a vital step in the MSP's journey towards becoming a £35 million revenue business within three to five years, explains Managing Director Simon Pickering.

The TC Solutions deal builds on a year of strong progress for dbfb in 2024, hitting revenue and growth targets, securing Santander as its capital funder and positioning for the next stage of growth. "2025 started with political and economic uncertainty but we've maintained momentum, renewed major contracts, increased revenue and profitability, and completed the aforementioned acquisition," he said. "The deal reinforces our regional presence and deepens our ability to deliver consistent, customer-first service at scale.

"Long-term it's about sustainable growth through a scalable platform that allows us to serve SME, enterprise and public sector customers in the way they want to be served. Investment is going into people, systems and customer experience. We also continued to advance our sustainability strategy, taking measurable steps to reduce

our carbon footprint across operations, procurement and supply chain. As we grow, sustainability will remain a core commercial and operational focus."

dbfb was founded in 1998 with a clear objective to offer customer-first connectivity and telecoms services. The business started life in Northampton and over the years has evolved from being a traditional telecoms provider into a full managed service provider across IT, connectivity, mobile and telephony. "What's stayed consistent throughout is our focus on people, relationships and doing the right thing," stated Pickering. "My early career in tech and customer service taught me what good service looks like and the importance of treating people like people. That mindset continues to shape how I lead dbfb."

Today, the MSP has a 70-strong team supporting over 1,500 customers,



Simon Pickering

Long-term it's about sustainable growth through a scalable platform that allows us to serve SME, enterprise and public sector customers in the way they want to be served

from single site SoHos to enterprise clients with 500-plus seats, and public sector organisations. "Our ambition is to grow to £35 million in revenue and £5 million EBITDA within the next three to five years, through

sustainable, scalable growth," explained Pickering. "We're well placed to help mid-sized organisations consolidate, simplify and secure their IT and communications. Our joined-up, service-led model is where we add

the most value and make the biggest difference."

Key partners

To reiterate, dbfb supports customers across mobile, connectivity, IT and telephony, delivering fully



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managed integrated solutions that simplify operations and reduce supplier friction. Its strategic partnerships include Microsoft, Cisco, 8x8, Gamma, O2 Wholesale, EE Wholesale, CityFibre, Westcoast, Giacom and Yealink.

"We're also seeing rising demand for emerging technologies like satellite

As we grow, sustainability will remain a core commercial and operational focus

connectivity, SD-WAN and enhanced cybersecurity – particularly in response to recent high profile security breaches," added Pickering. "As those needs evolve we continue to expand our offer to ensure resilience, flexibility and long-term value for customers."

Inbound demand

Pickering also observed that dbfb is seeing strong inbound interest due to its reputation in the market, with Teams telephony, managed IT, mobile and connectivity being big growth drivers. "Bulk SMS is a newer product that's opening fresh opportunities, especially for customers that need quick, direct communication," he added.

Pickering explained how dbfb is evolving its sales and GTM strategy, adopting a more consultative, value-led sales approach. "We focus on long-term relationships even if the customer isn't ready to buy," he added. "We also walk away if the fit isn't right. And our ability

to write flexible contracts is a real differentiator in today's uncertain market.

"Furthermore, with customer expectations increasing, speed, clarity and trust are essential. That's led us to invest in better systems and automation while keeping the human element. Our regional strategy ensures we stay close to customers, building relationships that go beyond the transactional."

Pickering is also witnessing a shift in priorities from the next generation of decision makers and workforce entrants. "CSR and

sustainability are becoming key differentiators, not just nice-to-haves, but real drivers of choice," he commented. "That's why we're embedding ethical practices and environmental accountability across our operations, partnerships and supply chain. As we evolve, these values are shaping how we show up, who we work with and how we grow."

Productivity is another top priority for most businesses. With rising costs and fewer resources, organisations are turning to tech that helps them get more from what they already have. Pickering is also watching AI closely, particularly where it can deliver gains in automation, diagnostics and service.

"The market is flooded with new tools but without the right support they can do more harm than good," he warned. "Our focus is on helping customers use them in practical, effective ways. Our job is to keep it simple and stay grounded."

Just a minute with Simon Pickering...

Role model: Sir Ian Botham: He believed anything was possible and never backed down.

What do you fear most? Not being good enough.

One example of something you've overcome: Controlling the fear of failure.

Best piece of advice you have been given: The people who do the work know where the problems are. Ask them and make it safe for them to tell you.

Your greatest strength and what could you work on? My main strength is a boundless belief in what's possible and developing people. My weakness is that I always want things done at speed.

Your biggest career achievement? Taking a huge risk to acquire dbfb, backing myself, and building a business with staying power. Spotting unpolished talent and giving people the belief to grow is something I'm really proud of.

How would you change the industry? Clear pricing, honest SLAs and transparency should be standard.

Tell us something about yourself we don't know: I'd love to be an F1 driver.

What talent do you wish you had: Remembering peoples' names.

Today's leadership challenges: It's about people, service and sustainability. Leaders need to set the tone, create space for talent to grow and make sure values scale with the business.

In hindsight: I waited too long to make tough decisions, whether around systems, partnerships or people.

Top tip: Cash is king. Know your numbers. Customers come first. Be prepared for setbacks but never lose sight of why you started.

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The 2025 finalists have been announced, making now the perfect time to secure your place at the ICT channel's must-attend networking event of the Autumn.

Now in its 24th year, the Comms National Awards is the ICT channel's



most respected and coveted awards programme. It celebrates the achievements of UK resellers and the suppliers who support them in delivering outstanding solutions to both public and private sector customers.

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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



At TSI, we believe in recognising the dedication and vision that fuel the UK's communications sector. The Comms National Awards do just that – highlighting the partners and pioneers delivering outstanding results. We're proud to sponsor this prestigious event and celebrate the people and businesses shaping the future of our industry.

Jack Michalski, Director of Channel, TSI



After-party sponsor announced!



BT Wholesale are delighted to host the Comms National Awards after-party for a third successive year, which in 2025 will feature Rockeaoke – so come on, unleash your inner rock star and join us and sing with a live band!



CHANNEL CHAMPIONS

3rd July 2025, Regents Park

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Wildix scoops Channel Champions top team award



Hats off to Wildix's Executive Leadership Team which collected the coveted Team of the Year prize as well as two more trophies at the al fresco Channel Champions awards celebration (Regents Park, July 3rd).

The event also marked the start of UK Partner Week, a UK-wide festival of events and initiatives launched by BPL Business Media (July 3rd to 10th 2025) designed to elevate partner-led growth, leadership and talent in the ICT channel.

The awards were hosted by sports presenter and TV host Mike Bushell and recognised all team functions in channel organisations, including sales, marketing, technical, sales support, finance, executive leadership and culture. Special awards also recognised excellence in event management, apprentice schemes and charity work.

Congratulations to ANS, Fidelity Group and ProVu Communications which also scooped a hat-trick of gongs.

"Channel Champions continues to be a superb date in the industry calendar thanks to the hard work of our entrants, judges and sponsors that make such an event possible," said BPL Business Media MD Michael O'Brien. "I can't think of a better jumping off point for UK Partner Week which will build on the atmosphere of celebration and collaboration built in Regents Park, providing ample opportunity to spotlight the amazing teams in this industry."



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Roll of Honour



Reseller Sales & Account Management Team
(sponsored by ALLPOINTS FIBRE) – FOCUS GROUP



Reseller Marketing Team
(sponsored by Voiceflex) – ALFONICA



Reseller Technical Support & Engineering Team
(sponsored by BT Wholesale) – FUTURE VOICE



Reseller/Service Provider Executive Leadership Team –
Fidelity Group



Reseller Billing & Finance Team
(sponsored by Gamma) – Fidelity Group



Reseller HR, People & Culture Team –
FOCUS GROUP



Vendor Sales & Account Management Team –
WILDIX



Vendor Marketing Team –
VELOXSERV



Vendor Technical Support and Engineering Team –
TSI



Vendor Sales Support Team –
VOIP UNLIMITED



Vendor/Distributor Executive Leadership Team –
WILDIX



Vendor HR, People & Culture Team –
PXC



Service Provider Sales & Account Management Team
(sponsored by PXC) – ANS

Roll of Honour *cont'd*



Service Provider Marketing Team
(sponsored by Voiceflex) – LUMINATE WHOLESALE



Service Provider Engineering and Technical Support Team
(sponsored by BT Wholesale) – OPUS TECHNOLOGY



Service Provider/Reseller Sales Support Team
(sponsored by Pangea) – CHROME TELECOM



Service Provider Billing & Finance Team
(sponsored by Gamma) – FIDELITY GROUP



Service Provider HR People & Culture Team – ANS



Distributor Sales and Account Management Team
(sponsored by Allpoints) – PROVU COMMUNICATIONS



Distributor Marketing Team
(sponsored by Voiceflex) – NETXL DISTRIBUTION



Distributor Billing and Finance Team
(sponsored by Gamma) – PROVU COMMUNICATIONS



Distributor Technical Support and Engineering Team
(sponsored by BT Wholesale) – PROVU COMMUNICATIONS



Apprenticeship Champions – ANS GROUP



Event Champions
(sponsored by ANS) – GIACOM



Charity Champions
(sponsored by ANS) – FOCUS FOUNDATION



Channel Champions Team of the Year
(sponsored by Giacom) – WILDIX EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM

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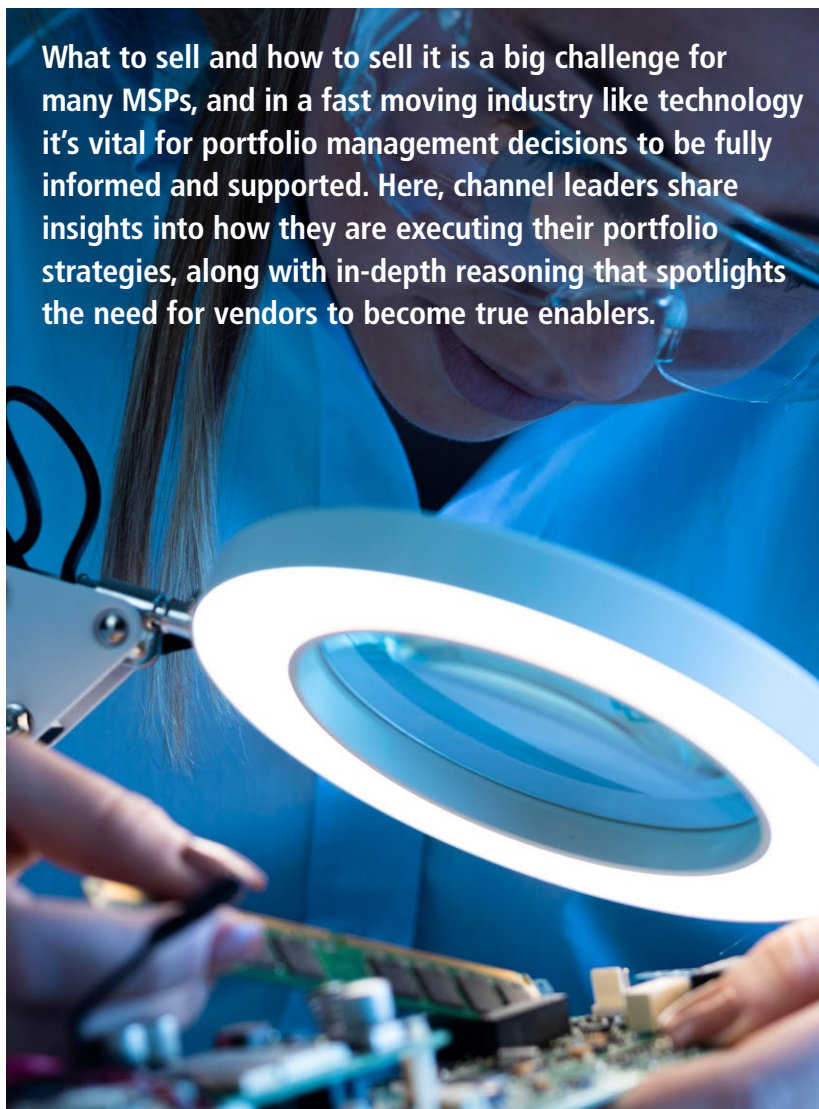
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Vendors under scrutiny as

What to sell and how to sell it is a big challenge for many MSPs, and in a fast moving industry like technology it's vital for portfolio management decisions to be fully informed and supported. Here, channel leaders share insights into how they are executing their portfolio strategies, along with in-depth reasoning that spotlights the need for vendors to become true enablers.



CRAIG ASTON
CEO
CELERITY

TIME to market is the key factor for our portfolio strategy. If a product is going to take more than two years to get to market, it is too long and needs to be contributing value in the next 12 months. The second factor is availability of skills, as without the requisite skills there is no point in developing the product. We are looking to somewhat widen our portfolio, but working with the core that we currently operate. We are looking to embed AI in all our product offerings, whether off-the-shelf offerings or self-developed IP. Vendors could give more thought to how their solutions fit into the specific partner product set. Most vendor offerings and campaigns are too generic.



SIMON FOGAL
HEAD OF UC &
CONNECTIVITY
ALFONICA

I'm currently shaping our portfolio strategy for the rest of 2025. This involves balancing customer expectations, making cost-conscious decisions and adapting to the shift towards cloud and AI-enabled services. We're taking a balanced approach by consolidating legacy offerings that no longer deliver value, and selectively expanding into areas like managed security, UCaaS and AI-powered collaboration tools. These are where partners are seeing long-term demand and sustainable margins. What I need from vendors is greater transparency on product roadmaps, consistent support through enablement and training and commercial flexibility that reflects sector trends. Stronger co-investment in joint marketing campaigns and lead generation, along with clearer product differentiation, would significantly strengthen our go-to-market efforts.



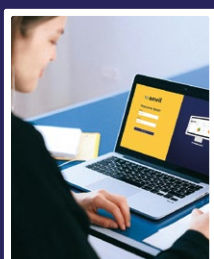
STEVE HARRIS
CEO
CLOUDCLEVR

WE'RE not chasing breadth, we're building further strength into our six technology pillars. That means deepening existing capabilities, refining how we go to market and ensuring every proposition contributes to a stronger, more scalable business. We're focused on sustainable, profitable growth, which means aligning our offerings with the challenges our customers face now, not just the ones we anticipated last year. Evolving our business profile means making intentional choices and asking more of our vendor partnerships. We want true collaboration, not just commercial alignment. Vendors who understand our strategy and invest in joint success will earn a bigger role. We're cautious about over extending, but ambitious about where we're heading.



PETE WATSON
CEO
ATLAS CLOUD

AI is the biggest factor shaping our portfolio strategy. We're not looking to dramatically widen or shrink our service offering, but to refine it by embedding AI into what we already do to deliver faster, higher quality outcomes. In the short-term, that means using AI to streamline core operations like support, cyber threat detection and onboarding. We're exploring opportunities to build and manage bespoke AI agents that solve specific challenges for our customers, particularly in regulated sectors. We're keen to hear how suppliers can help us apply AI practically, especially around integration, security and cost transparency. The value will lie in AI that works in the real world, not just as a demo. Vendors who can get us there faster will get our attention.



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s MSPs rethink portfolios



LUKE STANTON
SOLUTIONS SALES
MANAGER
WELCOMM
COMMUNICATIONS

OUR focus is on smart expansion. We're moving PSTN services to digital alternatives and bringing UC and IT closer together to offer a more seamless managed service from connectivity to end user applications and support, with resilience and security at its core. Additionally, we're expanding our physical security proposition, including access control, asset tracking and smart CCTV. We're growing our portfolio to offer a more joined-up, consultative service that better meets the evolving needs of businesses. To support this, we need vendors to make their solutions easy to consume with APIs for procurement and management, and strong channel support.



ROY SHELTON
CEO
CONNECTUS GROUP

RATHER than product-based we need to continue to drive an outcomes-based portfolio for our customers, adding value and accelerating their ROI. We will focus on becoming closer to their businesses and understanding their strengths, weaknesses, strategies and cadence. Areas we will invest in include cyber-as-a-service, which is growing as companies do not generally have the skills to prevent and manage a major cyber incident. AI-as-a-service is also growing because companies are struggling to balance the excitement of new opportunities with the associated security fears of deployment. Vendors must continue to support partners with education, training, pre-sales and marketing support.



RORY MCEWAN
DIRECTOR
DUNEDIN IT

IN areas such as connectivity it's becoming increasingly difficult for vendors to differentiate. Portals have evolved and commercials sharpened as they all sell access to the same carrier networks. Our priorities are cybersecurity and Low-code/No-code development, and how to monetise these. This is where we see most vendor choice, and while we look to build the most effective stack for customers we need market leading solutions at our disposal. Demand is driving the need for operational optimisation/efficiency so we're engaging with vendors that can simplify our ability to deliver technology that helps them do that. It is critical that vendors offer tools that provide slick provisioning, management and billing/reconciliation as these are areas where we experience significant cost.



MARTIN PATTERSON
HEAD OF INNOVATION
AUXILION

OUR portfolio strategy is driven by market factors, evolving customer expectations and emerging technologies. 2026 strategies are being reimaged by our target audience because of global events driving a focus on cost optimisation, demand management and robust digital capability offerings. The need for business strategy alignment is creating demand for AI, automation and business process optimisation. Compliance pressures (like DORA, NIS2) are intensifying the focus on cybersecurity. How we build our portfolio is informed by the direction of IT managed services, shifting from firefighting to preventing and protecting, with AI embedded in all levels of service delivery and a focus on business performance leveraging process orchestration, optimisation and operations.



FRASER FERGUSON
FOUNDER AND
DIRECTOR
KUBENET

IN December 2024 we audited our full portfolio and it was clear we were working with too many vendors. We've successfully realigned and where we had similar products, we've gone for best in class. With tech, it's important that vendors stay with what works and not look to continually onboard the next big thing – engineers will thank them. Cyber, cloud, IoT and subscription services have been driving our portfolio strategy across MSP clients with a major push over the next two quarters to our wider base. Traditional services margins, including ethernet, continue to get squeezed, so products including Microsoft Teams calling and VM are increasingly important as we utilise capacity and increase our portfolio offering across our core network.



CHERIE HOWLETT
CMO
JOLA

MSPS we partner with plan their portfolio based on the needs of their customers and their own financial and strategic objectives. Vendors who advise on new solutions to existing problems help MSPs to win bids by understanding the needs of their customers and also saving them money. Working closely with MSPs and their end users during the sales process is critical when developing new solutions. Experts can customise solutions based on first-hand requirements and be on hand during the roll-out to ensure satisfaction. Vendors who work with MSPs to identify requirements and help put together bids backed up with testimonials help MSPs to improve their win rate.

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CloudClevr in key CFO hire



Tony Barker

CLOUDCLEVR has added 20-plus years finance leadership experience with the appointment of Tony Barker as Chief Financial Officer. He most recently served as CFO for Pelican Capital backed MSP Atech Cloud. During his tenure there Barker played a key role in helping scale the business from £15 million to £40 million revenue, supporting three acquisitions and leading the company through a sale to iomart Group. His experience spans complex carve outs, post-merger integrations and building finance teams across enterprise scale businesses and PE-backed environments. CloudClevr CEO Steve Harris stated: "Tony's experience in scaling acquisitive technology businesses, leading integration programmes and delivering transformation across finance and operations will be instrumental in helping us deliver for our customers, our teams and our investors."

Principle pulls in tech chief Beevor

FORMER Zscaler UK&I Partner Chief Technologist Mike Beevor has joined IT services provider Principle Networks as CTO. He brings 20-plus years experience in technical security and global strategic roles across a range of technology organisations including start-ups, critical infrastructure, physical security and smart cities.

Principle Networks founder and co-CEO Russell Crowley said: "Over the past 12 months we've welcomed several new clients including major projects with Hill Dickinson LLP and Buzz Bingo, and increased our revenue by 50 per cent. We have bold plans to continue this trajectory and double revenues over the next two years, and Mike's leadership will be instrumental in helping us achieve our goals."



Mike Beevor

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Maximising on awards momentum

Embracing awards success can boost both contract and recruitment wins, and supercharge staff motivation, according to thought leaders at Comms Dealer's recent Channel Forecast session, which discussed long-term marketing strategies that realise competitive advantages far beyond the ceremony.

This process begins before the awards night, according to Elizabeth Sparrow, Founding Director of Blabbermouth Marketing. She said: "From the moment that you're shortlisted, incorporate the logo in all of your messaging because you are letting potential customers know you are amongst the elite for the services you provide."

tangible impact of proper marketing, including winning new business. Paul Hooper, CEO at Uplands OneTelco shared news of a contract win that came from an SMB seeing Uplands OneTelco's Reseller of the Year win at the 2024 Comms National Awards. He said: "We did no outbounding to this company, but they saw our winners logo and decided to pick up the phone and learn more. That company is now a wonderful client for us." Likewise, Richard Scott, Sales Director at Start Communications used his Comms National Awards trophy as prop in a sales meeting to help win a contract. He said: "We detailed the case study that won us that trophy, demonstrating how we helped a business like theirs."



Gareth Pritchard, Head of Comms, PR and Events at Giacom echoes a wholesale marketing approach with awards collateral. "Feature wins and nominations prominently on your website, in sales material and use it to anchor email campaigns," he said. "You can also use it as the basis for thought leadership articles as a win authenticates your authority in the space. In other words, shout about it as much as you can!"

Our Channel Forecasters all validated the

Awards success also resonates at a human level. Firstly, putting your wins into the world can bring recruitment benefits, according to Julie Mills, CEO at Support to Win. She said: "People in the industry will recognise the prestige of these awards and be attracted to you. Generally, people want to work for an award-winning company!" Furthermore, a win communicated correctly internally can supercharge morale. Candice Cunliffe, MD at F6 Agency, said: "Teams get validation of their hard work and it elevates their trust and sense of credibility."

To enter the awards go to:

<https://www.channel-champions.com/>

<https://www.cnawards.com/>

<https://fibreawards.com/>

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