

5G: A major threat or amaz



5G services for businesses are becoming a reality with BT's EE and Vodafone having launched the technology across the UK's major cities with lots more in the pipeline.

Controversially, Vodafone has said it won't charge customers more for its 5G plans, keeping them the same price as 4G plans. It claims an unlimited plan will only cost £26 per month with a max speed of 10Mbps, which will be able to handle video calls and video streaming.

So, is 5G a worrying threat or a massive opportunity for the channel? Will customers ditch traditional hard-wired telecoms in favour of smart phones which offer an array of collaboration tools and apps and drive work anywhere polices? Will the desktop phone be confined to a museum in a matter of years?

5G will certainly drive the Internet of Things (IoT), reshaping the way people interact with each other and conduct business. It will revolutionise the retail industry for example because so many retail interactions now take place on mobile devices. 5G technology will empower personalized digital signage, augmented reality, virtual reality, video and pattern recognition of shoppers and interactive mobile apps.

And in the hospitality industry, hotel guests could use keyless entrance into their room using a cell phone connected to the hotel's wireless network, saving money and the environment by reducing the need for plastic room keys plastic, plus, no more lost keys! Once inside their room, guests could even adjust temperature, window shades and lights with the touch of a button on their phone or a user-friendly tablet.

For the channel this is all about a change of mindset and possibly their own business models. With the right 5G partners, resellers have the opportunity to change customer paradigms and give customers the joined-up solutions they will be seeking in the new digital world. Fortune will favour the brave.



SIMON FORT
9 GROUP

WHAT IS YOUR OVERALL OPINION ON THE 5G ROLL-OUT?

It makes sense to launch in the major cities first where the benefits of 5G can be realised with greater numbers of people. 5G delivers higher data speeds and reduced network congestion in over populated areas.

DO YOU SEE 5G AS A THREAT OR AN OPPORTUNITY?

It's a significant opportunity for the channel to introduce new ways of tariffing and could also deliver potential new revenue streams. 5G has the potential to consume a 'normal' data allowance within minutes, so we'll have to move away from traditional data bundles in order to service 5G customers adequately. Key for us will be how the networks support channel partners to maximise 5G revenues.

WILL SMARTPHONES TAKE OVER IN BUSINESS?

Yes and no. For some business customers there will always be a need for fixed line comms to limit what end users can do and to take advantages of the many features offered by hosted platforms (i.e. hunt groups, call pickup groups, etc).

IS THERE A FUTURE FOR DESKTOP COMMS DEVICES?

There will always be a need for large screen devices with greater processing power. The question is how these will connect to the internet in future. An eSIM in every desktop device would make wireless connectivity more ubiquitous.



FREDDIE HAWKER
BEST4BUSINESS

WHAT IS YOUR OVERALL OPINION ON THE 5G ROLL-OUT?

I think the roll-out of 5G has been at a bit of a slow pace with minimal enthusiasm within the marketplace. Currently 4G offers a viable solution to the consumer and business market.

DO YOU SEE IT AS A THREAT OR AN OPPORTUNITY?

Every new development in technology offers opportunities. Rapid deployment of high-speed and reliable data circuits is always a welcome solution by businesses. We will now be able to deploy high-speed solutions without lengthy waits, bridging the gap between lease lines

WILL SMARTPHONES TAKE OVER IN BUSINESS?

I think that this is a very true and real possibility. We are seeing users within the marketplace wanting the flexibility of being able to use a smart device for all their communication. A piece of plastic on the desk is not quite as portable as a smart phone after all!

IS THERE A FUTURE FOR DESKTOP COMMS DEVICES?

Integration with CRM is going to be the next big thing, with built-in diallers. I seriously think that the developers are going to have to have close relationships with the likes of Salesforce dynamics with the ability to add widgets to carry the calls and features.



DEAN BURGIN
BOXX COMMS

WHAT IS YOUR OVERALL OPINION ON THE 5G ROLL-OUT?

More speed, better latency and high availability of bandwidth can only be a good thing. I understand that the penetration through buildings may not be as good as 4G though hard to say how much of an impact that will have in practical terms. It's certainly exciting.

DO YOU SEE IT AS A THREAT OR AN OPPORTUNITY?

An opportunity, absolutely.

WILL SMARTPHONES TAKE OVER IN BUSINESS?

Perhaps the very small businesses yes, but when there are multiple users, sites or any form of contact centre it's unlikely. I don't believe 5G will influence business customers to exclusively use smart phones either. Bandwidth and speed aren't a barrier to businesses exclusively using mobile. It's more a case of functionality, familiarity and ultimately choice that keeps the desk phone alive. We haven't needed desk phones for many years, but most businesses still prefer them. It's very rare we find a business which is truly mobile only. I believe that we won't see the end of the desk phone any sooner than we see the end of the steering wheel.

IS THERE A FUTURE FOR DESKTOP COMMS DEVICES?

Desktop applications will undoubtedly be more and more popular. They're easy to adopt and deploy and can add a lot of value.



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izing business opportunity?



MATTHEW DALY
DALYCOM

WHAT IS YOUR OVERALL OPINION ON THE 5G ROLL-OUT?

5G will hit the cities as expected, however that will be great for the static or metropolitan users, but what will happen to the areas where Openreach don't seem to want to invest in FTTC/P, will the mobile Operators invest in 5G in these areas?

DO YOU SEE IT AS A THREAT OR AN OPPORTUNITY?

As an opportunity if it covers the areas in the counties, it is another form of connectivity. As one technology starts to come to its end of life (ISDN) another one starts.

WILL SMARTPHONES TAKE OVER IN BUSINESS?

Yes. BYOD was meant to be the start of that trend. When business apps can be administered easier for a SME then it will be the norm for a new employee to have the company apps (voice, email, messaging, CRM) installed on their smartphone.

IS THERE A FUTURE FOR DESKTOP COMMS DEVICES?

Desktop communications will always be there, but where will your desktop be? A mobile worker won't be called a mobile worker, they will be a millennial worker whose desktop can be a laptop, home PC or a smartphone/tablet, communicating with various applications, from various locations, and at various times.



RYAN KERSEY
NSN

WHAT IS YOUR OVERALL OPINION ON THE 5G ROLL-OUT?

I am sceptical at the moment as it's so new. I really need to see how it pans out. Early adopters will find that it's very expensive both for the service and for a 5G compatible device and connectivity will be limited and patchy for now.

DO YOU SEE IT AS A THREAT OR AN OPPORTUNITY?

Initially no threat, once it's more cost effective and more readily available then this will be a massive opportunity. At NSN we are used to such a fast-moving industry and having to adapt quickly, this will be no exception.

WILL SMARTPHONES TAKE OVER IN BUSINESS?

100% and NSN are already geared up for this, we have seen a massive take up recently of our new mobile app for our hosted telephony users and this is only set to grow.

IS THERE A FUTURE FOR DESKTOP COMMS DEVICES?

At some point in the future (not sure when), I do see a decreasing need for desktop solutions. There will always be staunch customers who won't give up the desk phone and PC/laptop, but we will see a massive swing and the deployment of fully mobile-only solutions will become much more prevalent.



CHRIS MORRIS
FOCUS GROUP

WHAT IS YOUR OVERALL OPINION ON THE 5G ROLL-OUT?

Technology moves on. For a society wanting connectivity on the move, with handheld devices and IoT device usage exploding, 5G is just another milestone in the 'above ground' journey.

DO YOU SEE IT AS A THREAT OR AN OPPORTUNITY?

5G represents another string to a well-balanced telecoms company's bow. For data backhaul in the WAN, specifically in SD-WAN, 5G gives us a connection into the sky, alongside a connection into the ground, the perfect combination of speed and resilience. IoT devices need to be connected and more stuff being connected means more opportunity, albeit in a new device landscape.

WILL SMARTPHONES TAKE OVER IN BUSINESS?

I foresee a time when the relevant thing is the software client, not the hardware device. A 'phone' client can be many form factors, it can sit on a handheld device, a desktop device, or something in between. We don't know what form factors are coming down the line, so there are bigger influences than the speed of the network.

IS THERE A FUTURE FOR DESKTOP COMMS DEVICES?

5G represents a speed of delivery upgrade and resilience upgrade for telecoms providers. Multiple technologies, with high bandwidth, penetration and reliability, represents good customer choice for carrying data.



NEIL BARRALL
TELECOMS WORLD

WHAT IS YOUR OVERALL OPINION ON THE 5G ROLL-OUT?

I think it will be fundamental to the evolution of technology, but for now it's not a game-changer in terms of speed and connectivity. It will take a long time to reach all parts of the UK as they will need new aerials, more power to run the aerials and fibre connections.

DO YOU SEE IT AS A THREAT OR AN OPPORTUNITY?

It is definitely an opportunity, especially for mobile business who require a stable, fast data connection, nomadic workers, and for IoT.

WILL SMARTPHONES TAKE OVER IN BUSINESS?

No, the residential market will, but not businesses who will still require a stable data connection with failover back-ups and encrypted connections

IS THERE A FUTURE FOR DESKTOP COMMS DEVICES?

There will always be a requirement for desktop communications in the office, but I don't think so for the home office.



ANDREW DICKINSON
JOLA

WHAT IS YOUR OVERALL OPINION ON THE 5G ROLL-OUT?

Jola already enables 500+ resellers to control and differentiate selling 4G data. When the MNOs launch a 5G wholesale product Jola will be one of the first to offer it to the channel.

DO YOU SEE IT AS A THREAT OR AN OPPORTUNITY?

With solid high-speed connections delivered same day with minimal provisioning and support overhead, how is 5G anything but a massive opportunity for resellers? Mobile data costs have not reduced, so any unlimited product relies on assumptions about wastage, and traffic shaping, in order to make a profit for the MNO. One thing is for certain, resellers do not want to start selling a consumer retail product and the equivalent business unlimited SIM from Vodafone is £41.67 +VAT a month. Also, these unlimited SIMs are locked to the router supplied by Vodafone. An unlimited reseller price of say £30 is still above the current industry average ARPU.

WILL SMARTPHONES TAKE OVER IN BUSINESS?

No, not in the foreseeable future.

IS THERE A FUTURE FOR DESKTOP COMMS DEVICES?

Microsoft Office365/Teams is a threat to resellers wedded to hosted/PBX but the desktop generally is a big opportunity for resellers selling connectivity (direct routing and 5G).



JOHN MCKINDLAND
NIMANS

WHAT IS YOUR OVERALL OPINION ON THE 5G ROLL-OUT?

5G is inevitably a good thing but due to a very limited roll-out across only the major cities, its impact is limited for now. In some places there still isn't 3G!

DO YOU SEE 5G AS A THREAT OR AN OPPORTUNITY?

It's a massive opportunity in many ways. Mobile convergence with landline telephony or traditional PBX is fairly common so anything that speeds up the communication process will have a very positive impact. It will lead to more applications and create more sales opportunities.

WILL SMARTPHONES TAKE OVER IN BUSINESS?

I think we are a very long way away from that. In theory, fixed data could one day be replaced by mobile data particularly with the arrival of technologies such as 5G, but the desk phone is still playing a leading role in office communications.

IS THERE A FUTURE FOR DESKTOP COMMS DEVICES?

Agile working is fairly commonplace, and a transition continues to gather pace. The opportunities are for applications vendors and PABX manufacturers to create more integrated solutions between desk phones and mobiles.

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