

# A Hosted Shopping Basket

David Dadds of VanillaIP says that voice is just one of many business applications that his company can provide to resellers and that this is the route to driving up average revenues per customer.



David Dadds, Managing Director of VanillaIP

VanillaIP has been running a hosted service on their BroadSoft platform since 2005 but Managing Director Dave Dadds says that his provisioning and billing systems are being constantly updated, improved and responding to market conditions.

"We see ourselves as a supplier of an ever growing range of hosted business applications – not just hosted voice telephony. So whether it is voice, SIP trunks, hosted exchange and email, call recording, IM, broadband, WLR lines and more, all of this can be provided to the reseller customer via our own in-house developed provisioning and billing system.

This is of great benefit to the reseller and is a huge differentiator when compared to the "off the shelf" provisioning services available from other

hosted telephony suppliers. The development of our provisioning and billing portal has been carried out in the UK and India we have just taken on two more staff to ensure we stay ahead of the competition and take provisioning to the next level for our reseller partners and their clients.

## End to End

As we see it the quality issue is no different to putting in a traditional telephone system in as much as you have a number of supplier dependences including the carrier/ISP. However, because broadband today is such a cost effective service many customers will have two or more circuits to their premises with automatic failover with larger companies typically using leased lines. The quality of service is dependent on our core – but that core has been built for business to business so the only quality issue now centred on the last mile delivery over DSL - if it has not been configured correctly."

## Working with Partners

It has been a busy year for VanillaIP as far as reseller recruitment is concerned. This month for the first time the company has had to lay on two instead of the normal one three-day reseller training courses as demand for their services increases.

"Getting the resellers up to speed is very important. There's more to hosted services than resellers would normally imagine. It's not simply a case of ripping out the PBX and replacing it with a few hosted handsets. The learning curve is a little longer than many would imagine and time spent early on in getting to grips with the issues pays off in the longer term. However, we have all the back up and systems in place to help resellers, especially with their initial orders.

Many of the Provisioning enhancements have come from Reseller feedback, which is put into our software roadmap. That said if a fix is a no brainer and can be added in quickly we have been know to build in updates with a couple of days.

## Reseller Advice

I tend to look at the challenges and issues that face resellers. This whole aspect of, 'yes you can get a phone up and running so why hasn't hosted taken off faster?' I think is down to the back end process of correctly preparing and building solutions. Resellers should, when considering taking on the hosted application model, establish if the proposed supplier solution is a well thought through end to end process from dial tone on the customer desk to back end automated billing and also ask for named case studies that cover both small and large deployments as many system can deliver the one of two handsets solution but try finding platform that are capable of running 400-500 user to a clients satisfaction.

It's these back end issues that stop people expanding – they get caught up in knots, do a few sales, the bills go out and then the reseller finds it hard to manage and any profit they do make is lost in administration costs. We have simple, easy and proven solutions that work for resellers.

This is why VanillaIP can uniquely offer 30-day service contracts and pre-pay contracts that allow hosted to be sold like traditional PBX with Sales People getting paid all the GP upfront. One of the big killer applications for hosted telephony is the flexibility of provisioning. We add to that inherent benefit by enabling our users to opt for 30-day contracts which means they can provision their comms to cope with anticipated demands and then scale back down again when the rush is over. We also offer rental or purchase of handsets within the same user contracts."

Dadds concludes, "Price points are reducing for hosted telephony but what is happening is that more and more applications are being offered meaning that average revenues per user is rising. We've had quite sophisticated applications for some time in the traditional PBX market but resellers are confused by what is involved to get them running so don't sell them. With our portal these applications are a click away; provisioned quickly and pain free for the reseller."

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