

# A hosted ecosystem

VanillaIP now in its fifth year as a hosted telephony supplier has found that the overhype of the VOIP market is now starting to show some serious business uptake and the opportunity for cross sales of products is very exciting. David Dadds of VanillaIP says they have learnt a lot about what makes for a channel friendly offering.

“One of the key areas in which we are strong is in the ‘back end’ provisioning system. Here we are continuing to develop a system that reflects our view of exactly what a hosted solution should comprise. Yes, of course we offer the “front end” client applications based around our various platforms including Broadsoft and Cosmcom but our view is that VanillaIP is an ‘aggregator’ of all the services that are required to deliver a complete hosted service both front and back end from provisioning, WLR, ADSL, numbers and billing.

Using our own in house software team, and over the course of the last five years, we have developed UBOSS (Unified Back Office Support System). Hosted telephony is more than just a PBX replacement. In a properly designed portal you can take out a lot of the aggravation for the reseller that is normally associated with supplying a PBX.

UBOSS is a multi-product, multi-service and multi-level (user/reseller/service provider) provisioning system. So, this means that we, the reseller and or the Customer can for instance provision a murphx DSL circuit on the portal in real time alongside 10 hosted users, WLR3 Lines and 10 handsets. The portal interfaces seamlessly and directly with all the different system using XML/API interfaces to delivery services in real time. At the end of the month the invoice for both services and calls is automatically generated without any additional keying of data.

Flexibility for resellers is a key issue so therefore UBOSS enables resellers to list their own preferred devices – end points and routers etc – on the system and their chosen suppliers such as Polycom, Nimans etc. They can of course also opt for the VanillaIP options available.

UBOSS is a whole supply ecosystem for the reseller including device fulfilment. This also includes telephone numbers, international, 0800 and non geographical numbers and exchange mail boxes, all can be provided to the resellers customer within minutes.

There’s an analogy that could be made with iTunes in that people now understand and value self provisioning tools. Likewise companies such as Amazon and the travel sector have helped users get in the habit of organising services online and once in the habit people will rarely go back.

So what does this mean to the reseller looking to find a professional hosted telephony provider partner?

Firstly, UBOSS is a single portal to enable all of the services delivery for their customers. It’s therefore highly efficient. This means that it is able to help resellers scale their operations. ‘Truck roll’ is all but eliminated and because it is self service it means your clients can be ordering applications and hardware 24x7. At the same time the system looks to protect the reseller from the ever present threat of toll fraud and non paying customers.

Toll fraud via back door entry to phone systems has been gaining a lot of high profile attention this year and UBOSS has a neat and effective solution by being able to set cost based user limits on the amount of traffic that can be carried in a given time frame and automatically bar the clients phones if this is exceeded

Most significantly UBOSS is the same portal for provisioning as it is for using the applications such as call recording, call playback, call logging and invoicing including call charges so its familiarity makes it very easy to use.

Dadds says, at the end of the day resellers are looking for products and services that allow them to sell into and retain clients on an ongoing and profitable basis. Hosted provides this and many resellers are starting to see just how big the opportunity really is. The days of hosted being seen as just a replacement PBX is long gone.

David Dadds, Managing Director of VanillaIP describes why a provisioning system for hosted telephony should be more than just a ‘how many seats do we want’ tool. It should be a whole hosted ecosystem that enables simple and effective application delivery for the reseller and their client, which in turn ensures a growing and profitable business for the reseller

