

MODERN CONFERENCING

Stand First: Conferencing means different things to different people and the market has come a long way from its roots when it was reserved for big corporations with big IT budgets. A wide variety of businesses are now looking to enjoy the collaboration benefits of modern conferencing, here we talk to some of the key players in the market to see the latest trends and top products having an impact in the Channel.

The concept of the workplace has gone through a monumental shift in the past five years. Employees expect to be able to work how they want when they want. In the UK every employee has the right to ask for flexible working arrangements and many employers see the benefits. Reduced cost of office space, happier staff, and a more productive workforce generally are just the tip of the iceberg. This continuing trend has sparked growth in the unified communications market and in particular conferencing, along with its collaboration benefits, has become a great way to get things done.

Dave Dadds, MD at VanillaIP, commented "The trend toward decentralised workplaces, with home and remote working, has led to profound changes in the way our users are consuming technology products, none more so than conferencing. In the industry when we talk about the Collaboration part of UCC, we often mean desktop sharing and presence, but in our experience audio conferencing is the most deployed and used collaborative feature. The sweet spot for us is remote and home workers."

When we asked Jeff May, Sales Director at Konftel, where he thought the 'sweet-spot' is currently for partners he said, "Mobility. This means wireless devices that can be used on any



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Jeff May,
Sales Director at Konftel

network. Customers are familiar with conference solutions for Board rooms and whilst this is a growing market, it typically accounts for only a small percentage of the remote meetings that staff hold.

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Julien St.John-Dennis, Chief Product and Marketing Officer, Gradwell Communications commented, "Gradwell Communications have seen that online conferencing is an area which has grown significantly over the

past few years. Businesses are looking to do more work remotely, to save costs and along with online conferencing has enabled thousands of companies to cut down on travel and expenses.

Most of the customers our resellers work with use video conferencing in one of two ways. It's either for web based sales meetings – where actually most ditch the video and use screen share and audio conference. Or it's for team meetings with remote people. At Gradwell we run an offshore software

development team and do daily Skype4Business calls with them."

Edward House, Sales Director Video & Collaboration at SIPHON part of the Nuvias Group, says "The growth in demand for a truly collaborative working environment between office hubs and satellite home offices, is being underpinned by developments across platforms from Microsoft Skype for Business to multi-vendor environments that include BroadSoft. The addition of video to augment the collaborative experience, improve productivity and drive more effective outcomes is fast becoming a table-stakes consideration for any meeting room. Resellers may believe that they can stay innovative by adding video to their portfolio – in fact it won't be long before offering video and collaboration merely allows them to stay in the game."



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