



Universe

How to sell voice

Selling voice

Firstcom enables organisations of any size to unite employees on one easy to deploy platform regardless of location.

Our simple cloud-based system delivers professional telephony features on a scalable subscription-based basis.

The opportunity

It is estimated that the UK telecoms market is currently worth £35 billion a year and growing.

In 2015 BT formally announced that the UK's ISDN telephone network will be switched off in 2025 and that they will be migrating all ISDN customers onto their IP Network.

But not all customers will wait for the migration to occur and this represents an opportunity for SIP and VoIP providers to challenge BT for a share of these 3.2 million ISDN channels.

The Cloud – what has changed?

Every business needs a phone system of some sort, and traditionally this meant a PBX box in a communications room.

A PBX (Private Branch Exchange) switches calls between users within an organisation and allows all users to share a number of external phone lines.

Features of a PBX are typically menu systems, call recording, call transfer, IVR (Interactive Voice Response), multiple extension numbers and many more.

The problem for small and medium sized businesses is that an on-site phone system requires up-front capital expenditure and requires maintenance and support from a dedicated resource – either in-house or outsourced.

Other drawbacks are that a PBX will need replacing after ten years when replacement parts become increasingly difficult and pricy to find and cabling issues can make the actual phones difficult to move.

What is more, with a legacy phone system if the site is hit by a power cut or flood for example, the phones stop working and the business loses money.

Once a business decides to replace their phone system, they should consider a cloud solution. Social media, the cloud and mobile communications have changed the way we work.

Small to medium sized businesses now need to be more available and responsive to remain competitive. The challenges facing SME's and Start-ups often revolve around resources, time and budget.

A modern cloud-based solution offers them the following benefits:

Agile communications when on the move in the form of mobile apps, voicemail to email, and company -wide extensions and short dials.

Streamlined communications as employees share one phone system that resides in the cloud and works wherever they are.

Reduced outlay for hardware and set-up; maintenance costs are eliminated – crucial for start-ups and SME's alike.

Professional features like auto-attendant and music-on-hold that were previously only available with larger on-site systems allow them to project a bigger company image and more importantly never miss a call.

Scalability Your clients can add users as they expand, and subscription-based billing makes this an affordable and flexible solution for growing businesses.

When looking for a cloud-based solution for your product portfolio make sure you find one that gives you access to a wide range of features, in particular mobile integration which is a lifesaver for the small business.

Keys to unlocking the cloud opportunity

To successfully sell and profit from cloud-based solutions, IT and Telecoms partners need to focus their efforts in three areas:

Finding the right customer

The ideal customer is one that not only depends on communications solutions but is also looking for a flexible solution that will grow with the business.

Fundamentally they take a proactive approach as they know that investing in IT will improve employee productivity.

Customers who see IT as an investment rather than a cost represent a strong selling opportunity.

Selling to the right need

Even the right customer with a proactive mind set may not be willing to move to the cloud if the business drivers are not there.

End-of-life equipment is the most important factor driving business telephony into the cloud along with an unwillingness to make the capital investment to replace the system.

Selling the right value

Focusing on industry jargon and acronyms could cause customers to shy away from the cloud. Most of your clients don't care about the technical details of a specific technology, what you really need to get across is the real-world benefits of cloud-based communications services.

Whilst customers have unique business needs and pain points but there are some common benefits that will apply to all, like eliminating unnecessary capital expenditure and empowering users to boost productivity and collaboration.

How the cloud shaped the way we do business

With most business owners and IT Managers supporting the cloud, there is a strong opportunity for IT and traditional telecoms companies to generate revenue from high margin services which can also lead to more profitable long-term business relationships.

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Subscriptions are the future

Dropbox and Salesforce are great examples of where a product is delivered as a service and where new subscription-based billing is replacing the old way of invoicing.

Customers want convenience and simplicity and delivering telephony as a subscription-based service gives them just that; one monthly bill per user where they know their costs upfront and get no nasty surprises in call fees.

IT and Telephony go hand-in-hand

The role of telephony in businesses is evolving.

In the past an organisation purchased an expensive on-site system that was managed in-house or outsourced to a PBX maintainer.

The cloud has made these systems outmoded in that no initial outlay is required for hardware, and the service provider bears full responsibility for its running and updates via the Internet.

For the business, voice becomes just another IT application, simple and easy to deploy much like email systems and firewall configurations. IT Resellers not selling voice as another application are missing out on the opportunity to increase their revenue by doing what they already do.

Traditional telecoms resellers might want to consider upselling other IT applications alongside voice since they will increasingly find themselves selling to the IT Manager.

Businesses care about Benefits not features

Of course, your customers want to know what features they get but what they're really interested in is how it will make their life easier and benefit their business.

The IT Manager will be looking for reassurance about ease-of-use, uptime, resilience and call quality. Business owners will listen if you talk about improved productivity and cost savings in the form of the ability to manage the system in-house and plug-and-play simplicity.

Mobility is a business driver

Businesses today rely on the ability to communicate effectively from any location on any device. Your customers are likely to have remote workers, sales staff on the road, or employees who travel for business.

Mobile integration is at the heart of their business communication needs and should be positioned as an integral part of the system rather than an extra.

Flexible, cost effective and up-to-date

Customers no longer want to shell out for an expensive piece of equipment that is likely to need replacing or upgrading in five to ten years.

Not only does the cloud make for easy budgeting in the form of a fixed ongoing monthly bill, it also brings the latest technology and functionality to your client base as part of the package.

If your customer is small, they can start out with a couple of subscriptions and scale up on demand as they grow.