Dos and don'ts in gearing for UCaaS

Success in the provision of UCaaS ultimately boils down to having a full understanding of the market and a specific approach to customers, says Justin Hamilton Martin, Sales Director, Enreach for Service Providers. Here, he lays out the key consideration points he believes should be at the forefront of a reseller's strategic UCaaS thinking...



Justin Hamilton Martin

Do...
Most UCaaS offerings still revolve around PSTN and SIP, but the focus needs to be more on connections within UCaaS to enable users to contact and collaborate through websites and apps, blended with traditional contact numbers. Bringing more social channels into the mix is important, particularly for millennials who are less dependent on voice and email than previous generations. This evolving environment is enabled by APIs which will help resellers to develop specific packages, or even solutions tailored to each business customers.

Do...
The combination of bringing in new communication channels – such as contact initiated or responded to via websites and apps – combined with API integrations and new AI capabilities are a powerful recipe for even more UCaaS innovative services. These new approaches will also give resellers more options to differentiate their offerings. While APIs are about technology they open doors to more OEM business models too, so in other words, a vendor's UCaaS components are used under the hood of someone else's offering.

Don't...
There is a trend towards an agency model, but that has dangers for resellers because they are effectively handing over their relationships with customers to the vendor. We believe that ownership of the customer should stay with the reseller, including the contract, so that they maintain control of how they work with their end users.

Don't...
I would argue that the agency model being pursued by some vendors jeopardises the ability for resellers to achieve that differentiation because they may have to sacrifice flexibility and agility to work within the restrictions of a vendor. For instance, there may be a contractual agreement between the vendor and the reseller that prohibits the latter from taking on competitive products. In this fast changing and challenging marketplace resellers should not relinquish control of their destinies.

If you pass the keys to a vendor you're giving up on your ability to put in place the right solution for the customer, or to decide how you pivot in response to change. Also, by transferring customer support to a vendor resellers will waste the skills and resources they have developed over the years because these assets are no longer needed. However, those assets should be treasured because they can really help resellers stand out from the crowd.

Do...
The mobile UCaaS space is greenfield territory. There are very few mobile UCaaS offerings out there and not many customers using them so far. However, mobile is definitely a big trend. For example, UCaaS doesn't work well when on the move, but add in mobile and the situation transforms. Resellers with experience in UC are ideally positioned to take advantage of mobile UCaaS, versus mobile operators who are traditionally more focused on selling simple voice and data contracts. Plus, resellers have the proximity to a customer that mobile operators often lack.

Do...
Resellers can also be more agile compared to a big mobile operator and depending on the chosen UCaaS platform can flexibly and rapidly devise their own white-labelled attractive commercial bundles. Of course, resellers are going to be competing against other companies who see the same mobile UCaaS opportunity. We expect to see a brand new generation of MVNOs being launched in the coming years. ■

More on UCaaS – page 28