

# Why You Should Sell UC As A Managed Service

Many VARs and MSPs have seen VoIP (voice-over-Internet- Protocol) become a 'race to the bottom' with regard to profit margins. Selling UC (unified communications) as a managed service is a whole other matter.

BY JAY MCCALL, NETWORKING AND MANAGED SERVICES EDITOR, BUSINESS SOLUTIONS MAGAZINE

Sometime within the past couple of years, the term 'VoIP' has gone out of vogue. With so many VARs experiencing shrinking profit margins, IP telephony vendors were wise to focus the discussion on convergence, unified communications, and other services. I recently spoke with Adam Cole, CEO of Votela, which is a unified communications vendor as well as a combined carrier and North American distributor of Siemens OpenScape Cloud Services. Votela offers UC solutions as a service, which are geared toward VARs and MSPs selling into companies with more than 50 seats. I asked Cole some probing questions to help you determine whether this is something that you should take a look at.

## How is a UC-as-a-Service solution different from other solutions?

It enables resellers to get in the business of selling UC and cloud services without having to make a huge infrastructure investment. We partner with Siemens, which has two redundant installations of its OpenScape UC Servers running in each of its four geographically distributed data centers. Siemens also provides the desk or conference phones and we bundle Votela's software and services, which automates the billing, carrier provisioning, and taxes. Plus, we offer five levels of services, starting with Voice SIP (session initiation protocol) which is just basic phone service and ending with UC Advanced, which includes HD UC, web collaboration, and voice conferencing in addition to features such as simultaneous ring, find-me, follow-me, and call prioritizing/routing by number.

Of note, is that through Votela, solutions providers can maintain full control of their subscribers and customers, and realize increased margins and an almost immediate ROI. In addition, only Votela offers the sole tier-1, carrier-grade solution for the enterprise that is designed specifically for a distributed reseller network, and that is built entirely by a single manufacturer.

## What kinds of skills/qualifications do VARs/MSPs need to sell this?

There are four things we require for a reseller to qualify to sell our services:

- Become Siemens OpenScape certified. Resellers need to have their sales and engineers certified. There is no charge to become certified, but it does entail completing four tests, followed by a certification test, which is approximately a 20-hour investment per person. The certification test can be taken on demand, so there are no travel requirements to become certified.

- Demonstrate last-mile network competence. The VAR/MSP is responsible for providing the last-mile WAN (wide area network), so it's important that the reseller understand the bandwidth requirements as well as have the appropriate QoS (quality of service) solution in place to ensure the voice packets receive priority on the customer's data network

- Helpdesk support. It's important that if the end customer runs into a problem with their UC solution, they have access to a ticket system that can be escalated as appropriate and the VAR/MSP can troubleshoot any problems in a timely manner.

- Separate sales and support team. In other words, the same person who sells the solution is not the same person who would service it

## What's the best way for a VAR/MSP to sell this service?

Most of the successful VARs we work with already have a networking and/or managed services offering, such as BDR (backup and

disaster recovery), for example. A reseller could bundle its managed desktop, storage, and other applications with our voice offering. The end customers pay only for what they use. We provide a billing platform, which is a carrier billing platform at its core. Resellers have the potential to earn 50% to 60% profit margins by bundling our UC offering with their existing managed services offerings. ●



ADAM COLE



Adam Cole is CEO of Votela, a unified communications-as-a-service vendor and a combined carrier and North American distributor of Siemens OpenScape Cloud Services. He can be reached via [www.votela.com](http://www.votela.com).