

Under the Bonnet

Comms Business Magazine goes 'under the bonnet' at HIPCOM with CTO James Brind and Strategy Director Paul Aabryn, both co-founders of the business, to find out why their product offerings are vendor independent



HIPCOM's CTO James Brind and Strategy Director Paul Aabryn were 'old hands' at hosted telephony when they formed the company and both knew that you can't just take a switch, plug it in to the network and expect it to be a fully functional and channel ready offering.

"You need to disconnect the user from the technology behind the services. Therefore we needed a service delivery platform (SDP) for our wholesale customers – we have never sold direct to users -that is flexible and adaptable to their needs. Some suppliers have put their focus on to providing portals but in our opinion all that offers is a presentation layer rather than a complete and unified all-in-one single workflow engine capable of handling all services regardless of the vendor - SIP trunks and telephony etc. The cost of entry for a service delivery platform such as ours is significant and generally speaking it can only be afforded by the large telco's. This to a large extent explains why most suppliers in the UK have not deployed such technology.

As a result we therefore have a carrier grade operational support system (OSS), as used by Tier 1 carriers, that is not just a 'skin' or flashy overlay but an OSS that allows us to do the things we want to do when we want to do them. We acquired the code for OSS last year and have in place our own team of applications developers which means we have our own product and services road map for the future that is vendor independent.

Comms Business

For our channel partners this brings many benefits. For example, our service delivery platform allows them to differentiate their offerings by easily integrating their own applications and networks in to the overall services bundle they present to their own customers. So they have their own provisioning, ordering and marketing information system where they can choose to use their own presentation layer (portal) at an API level. Or of course, they can use ours.

For partners that have already have their own service fulfilment systems, HIPCOM can plug into this environment using our orchestration API leaving the partner in the driving seat. Such is the sophistication of our service delivery platform we can flow through and support the whole business process stack from provision to supply and even billing – it's a real B2B platform for partners."

Grinding Out Orders

Brind and Aabryn point out that one aspect that partners particular like is that they do not have to constantly come to HIPCOM for anything once they have access to the service delivery platform.

"At the outset our Partner Team asks what the partner wants and how they plan to go to market. They then design the solution by setting up the platform accordingly instead of providing the type of canned service that other companies offer as a one size fits all.

This is a complete HIPCOM hands-off process which places reseller in control of their own customer service delivery rather than having to contact a HIPCOM internal ordering team hand cranking out their individual order requirements."

Another example of the flexibility of the platform is say where a partner is highly Cisco centric and need to maintain volume discounts with their supplier. Here the platform can be set up to only present Cisco IP end-points from amongst the list of over 160 devices of all manufacture types suitable for use.

"There are other BroadSoft platforms out there where the portals only present the reseller with their own native applications whereas we do not proscribe other applications but instead have the flexibility to seamlessly integrate with them."

Investment

HIPCOM says they have committed significant sums in to their 2012 services development plan.

"Last year we hired several of the key original code writers for the OSS as developers of new applications and services which means we are now fully geared up for increased innovation and change this year. This is exemplified by our approach to SIP trunks and the enhanced SIP services we can overlay on them. Not all SIP trunks are equal and we aim to explain why shortly."