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4 Opportunities...

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By Matt Brunk

Learning not to say “never” isn’t easy in the context of what you won’t do or are willing to face or try. It’s a phrase that has come back to bite me and only the guy in the mirror knows how to avoid it from happening again.



Just ten years ago, who possibly could predict where we are today in telephony? I’ve often asked “where’s James Martin when you really need to get a clearer glimpse of the future.

My buddies over at BCR know I get an itch to beat the drum about Hybrid IP-PBXs and make no mistake- I love selling, installing and servicing them especially when I weigh these gems against pure IP-PBX solutions. Everyone keeps telling me things are getting better but not everyone has been showing me. Besides, the numbers speak loudly and at least for now- Hybrids rule. So for all those VoiceCon attendees wanting to discuss Hybrid IP-PBX solutions... SPEAK UP if you are interested!

But L-Enterprise telephony isn’t an easy row to hoe. Leaning towards a Hybrid may or may not be in your best interest- but then the same is true for hosted, pure IP-PBX and of course TDM. Your process is lengthy. In fact, this process which includes research, decision making and award through implementing would make me convulse into hyper-drive and perform the Curly Shuffle due to the nature of the seemingly slow process to get projects approved, moving and on course.

Today, I do believe there are very cool opportunities- especially for the aging workforce (me) and for anyone else in the business looking to have some fun, grow and even come out profitable.

First, is energy. Energy, global warming, spiraling costs, and pollution and smog are all on everyone’s minds. In Harvard Business Review, April, 2007 Finding Your Next Core Business- the author presents “Seven Steps to a New Core Business.” Step 4 is to identify the full range of options for redefining the core from the inside and from the outside. Telecommunications is an electrical information highway (excuse the cliché) with numerous appliances- ranging from very small to very large. How can the industry address needs to positively impact the environment and still provide effective products and services?

Second is virtual. I’ve been hot on this trail and pushing hard for the past year moving customers into virtual solutions - and keep in my mind that I’m considered an “interconnect” company. Virtual services are viable and range in many forms including basic web sites to full blown CRM solutions and more. The virtual solutions we are adopting compliment existing configurations and on occasion we have displaced servers but more often, we enhance the customer network. Personally, I prefer virtual over a lot of other solutions that have too many endpoints. Virtual at least has a “green” feeling and make no mistake- they can be challenging to manage (you give up a degree of control).

Third is managed access. Okay, I don’t know what else to call it. Remember SDN - “software defined network” and the huge benefit of having the network manage the routing between sites, user authentication, and account reports since the “pipe” was a connection to the nearest AT&T pop. This pipe in today’s terms is SIP trunking. What I envision is the ability of managed access to control the dial plan of L-Enterprise and include the same thing SDN did and more such as embedded features in the network. But this is only one area. The internet according to some is broken. All internet access delivered should already come with a firewall, anti-virus, anti-spam, and anti-spyware- and be manageable via your web browser providing management reports, logs and ADMIN functions. To be clear- internet access that is delivered to the customer should already be clean and free of any threat. What’s increasing is the number of appliances in use today. This adds up to more IP and MAC addresses and for some- too much to manage effectively. Convergence is and can be a great thing and as with anything else, rightly applying convergence to target areas means that change, struggle and benefits will follow. Easy to say, harder to pull off but consider what you can do, what you should do and then what others won’t do. The struggle is simply a migration journey of which we are all partaking- some willing, some not so willing and most at different paces.

Fourth are homing pigeons. Don’t laugh because they are a recognized form of communications and were listed in the manual “Basic Naval Telecommunications & Fundamentals.” (Pigeon Post) Modern day homing pigeons are telephones with built in intelligence that plug into a users home network or hotel room. The phone connects to the corporate IP-PBX, server or hosted solution without any of the extraneous gear we use today.

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