

NEWS

The Support Column: The channel's 2021 opportunities start here

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I won't waste your time telling you what you already know about 2020. Covid. Uncertainty. Lockdown. Disruption. Suffering. Fear.

But is negativity the whole story? I hesitate to ask in case of upsetting anyone, but it's a very valid question: "Has this year been ALL bad?"

Well, in terms of our industry as a whole, no it hasn't. Together we have been sorely tested. But together this comms community has found deep reserves of resilience it never knew it had.

And in the year we mourned the passing of Dame Barbara Windsor, it is as if we've collectively made a feature-length big screen tribute of our own: Carry On Communicating!

That's what we've all been doing for the UK economy – ensuring the heartbeat of business is pumped with the lifeblood of communications.

This is critical because, once growth returns in spring and summer, there will be huge opportunities to ramp up sales and help customers accelerate their digital transformation.

Just 12 months ago, market understanding of cloud-based UC technology was light years behind what it is now. Since then, business customers have been adopting it in droves.

But comms resellers haven't been having it all their own way. There is increased competition from IT-centric partners (e.g. with Microsoft background) for whom telephony is the missing piece of their puzzle.

My top prediction for 2021 is that the chief beneficiaries of all this growth will be providers and partners with the flexibility to innovate their businesses at pace and scale.

Here's how Support to Win believe they will achieve it in the coming year:

An ambitious, sustainable sales strategy

Sales teams need a clear, compelling offer for potential customers, and rich new services to upsell the existing base. They need confidence that the orders they book are rapidly and efficiently converted through greater use of automated and remote/virtual processes in data discovery, onboarding and provisioning.

More technical expertise where it counts

Digital transformation is top of the business agenda, so being able to speak the language of technology in the context of business objectives is critical. The output is invariably a need for integration expertise and a strong capability in project managing complex implementations and migrations – particularly as it relates to the Microsoft universe. Challenging technical requirements should be embraced as a great opportunity, not an obstacle to collecting revenue.

Relentless customer-centricity

Customers are looking for a high-quality service experience that begins the moment they sign up. Churn is a constant threat, so service levels, training and in-life support should be thought of as profit centres rather than cost centres.