# Virtual Access Partner Testimonial

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| Partner: | Corporate Communications Ltd |
| Industry: | Telephony services, integrated communications |
| Customers: | Multi-site organisations: retail, financial services, commercial |
| Geography: | UK |

## Is Convergence the Key to the Future?

One of the most interesting aspects of the telecommunications' industry's dramatic growth in the last two decades has been how complicated the delivery of its services has become. The growth of Internet Service Providers, least-cost service providers, virtual telcos, wires-only MPLS network providers, and a host of new mobile-based services has introduced so many layers to the industry that even the most experienced telecommunications manager can be forgiven for becoming confused.

Where there is confusion, opportunity knocks, and it was foreseeing this situation that led Suresh Punjabi to form Corporate Communications in 1996 to advise companies on their best options, and provide an independent consultancy that would help them steer their way safely through the communications minefield.

## Best of Breed Solutions

The company's approach from the outset has been vendor-agnostic, allowing it to choose best-of-breed solutions for all its recommendations. This approach soon earned it a reputation for unbiased, honest and effective advice, and the company's client list now looks very impressive.

Alongside retail groups including Arcadia; Wyevale Garden Centre, Wyevale; Dreams; and Blacks, sit financial services giants like the Lloyds Banking Group, Alliance & Leicester, and Britannia, together with a host of well-known public companies across most business sectors.

"When we started, consultancy was the core of our business," comments Raj Dave, the company's CTO, "but it didn't take very long before we started to be asked to implement our recommendations as well. We recognised from the outset that the real growth potential lay in a service-based approach, rather than just providing an infrastructure."

Today the company focuses on three core areas: call centres and telephony services, telecommunication services, and managed network services, and it has built a unique business proposition that includes consultancy, implementation and support.

## Service is the Key

The key to all of Corporate Communications' activities is the provision of services, as Raj Dave explains. "We win business because we build long-term relationships with our customers based on exceeding the Service Level Agreements we give them. We use the same approach in selecting partners, and Virtual Access is a prime example.

"Because we work to such high technical standards, we enjoy Platinum Partner status with many of our vendors, so we are often approached by companies seeking to sell us a technology they have developed," he continues, "but there's much more than just the technology at stake. For example we need to be confident that the company can support its products, that it will deliver on time, that it will react immediately if we have a problem and not keep our customer waiting.

"Virtual Access, on top of offering technological uniqueness, is supported by a service that matches, and exceeds, all those criteria."

As an example, Raj cites how Virtual Access automates the process of deployment, provisioning and life-cycle configuration management of customer premises routers used in large-scale broadband deployment.

"This solution is unique, and fits ideally with our requirements, because it enables our provisioning staff to deploy and manage the configuration of the routers we need to provide centrally. Additionally, the 'Zero Touch' service provisioning capability allows us to roll-out large scale broadband installations without having to use highly-skilled specialist engineers at customer premises. Not only does this save us the headache of configuring every router individually, we can also automate our processes and reduce our installation costs substantially.

"This is further enhanced by Virtual Access' support to Corporate Communications' first- and second-line support teams, which gives them the ability to remotely diagnose the nature of a problem, to a very detailed level."

If no solution can be found using remote diagnostics, the support teams can call upon Virtual Access third-line support and logistics services, who can provide the end-customer with an 'on site' unit replacement of a router in as little as four hours. This means the customer is spared the laborious process of going through diagnostics, an area that is often outside their day-to-day experience.

For Raj Dave, this is a very satisfactory arrangement, "It lets us guarantee support and service levels with minimised costs and inconvenience to both the customer and ourselves."

## Nimble and Responsive

Most recently Corporate Communications has also benefited from what Raj describes as "Virtual Access' ability to be much more nimble and responsive than the bigger players" in a major infrastructure refresh project for one of its large retail customers.

As part of a corporate refresh, which covers re-branding and in-store systems upgrade, the customer has recently rolled out a new broadband infrastructure across its estate, much of which is in rural areas, and holds substantial stocks of high-value goods.

One downside of its locations is that they are prone to intruders trying to get into the company's outlets, no doubt with intentions of getting away with high-value goods. While doing so, they often cut the telephone lines before trying to gain entry. As a result, whether or not their intrusions succeed, the store is unable to trade the next day because the EPOS systems cannot communicate with Head Office.

To overcome this problem, Virtual Access has developed a family of ADSL routers with 3G failover capabilities that will switch traffic to the cellular network if the copper is down. From the customer's perspective nothing changes, they can still do business, and a business-critical service is maintained.

## Major Differentiator

As Raj comments, this is a major differentiator between Virtual Access and its competitors. "This is a classic example of what we value from them – a willingness to work with their partner to provide the technology which enables us to respond to our customers' needs.

For the future, Raj Dave sees substantial opportunities for Corporate Communications and Virtual Access to expand their work together. "We have built a global business called Worldstone, which brings together AVAYA premium partners around the world to provide a single point of contact for multi-national companies looking to standardise their global communications infrastructures.

"This is proving to be a very attractive proposition to many organisations, and is the first organisation of its kind. Just as we found with the UK business, we are seeing opportunities opening up around the world to deliver multi-layered services through the Worldstone network, and I would certainly say that based on the quality of both their technology and the outstanding service they offer, the Virtual Access solution will play very well into the evolving needs of those companies."

## True Partners

Looking back over how the relationship between the two companies has developed, Raj Dave feels that the secret of its success is down to the fact that both companies approach it as a partnership. "The way that you work with a partner is critical – Virtual Access doesn't just help us acquire new business, more importantly, they can help us retain it.

"It's down to the mindset of the two businesses being in harmony," he continues, "we have a holistic approach to providing our customers with solutions, which means we don't sell on cost or cheapness, we deliver value. Our customers don't measure that value in terms of the technologies, but in how well we enable them to enhance their customers' experience, which in turn helps them to do more business.

"That's exactly what we get from Virtual Access – the ability to enhance our customers' experience of doing business with us – and why they have become such a valued partner," he concludes.

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