



PRESS RELEASE

Tellumat
February 09 , 2011
Page 1 of 2

Unified communications saves money, prevents IT failure by cutting complexity

Sessions blames IT complexity. "Complexity has a linear relationship with system failure," he notes. "It increases the difficulty of working with a system and the cost of operating, servicing and supporting it. Thus complexity must be eliminated in systems and solutions design, to decrease risk of failure."

Few vendors can afford simplicity

But while it may be easy to finger complexity as the cause of the trouble, it's another story altogether to be rid of it. "Few vendors have the will or wherewithal to start over and put their solutions on a simpler development path," Sessions notes. "Many continue to re-engineer their legacy technologies, merely adapting them to provide new capabilities. This makes complexity inevitable."

In such a scenario, change is more likely to come from new players entering or emerging in the market with fresh thinking, he says. US-based ShoreTel is one of several technology providers that address complexity in this way.

ShoreTel – simple products

Simplicity of design, operation and support is a principle that drives ShoreTel's "brilliantly simple" business communication solutions.

The vendor started with a clean slate, building a solution that leverages IP communication and collaboration from the ground up. Thus it is easy to deploy, manage and scale (across sites and geographies), as well as intuitive to use for end-users and administrators alike.

ShoreTel's open architecture means saving on capital costs, network upgrades, implementation, training, MACs, system management, long-distance charges and energy consumption. It easily integrates with existing infrastructure, business applications and processes.

Calling all channel partners

Tellumat is the South African distributor of ShoreTel's business communication systems. The company encounters growing opportunities for potential channel partners to take ShoreTel's solutions to market, and intends to take a significant market share in line with ShoreTel being the fastest-growing vendor in unified communications and IP telephony, says Bennie Langenhoven, managing executive of Tellumat Communication Solutions.

"Resellers, service providers and operators across Southern Africa with voice and IT expertise as well as an interest in providing UC solutions can apply."

Reseller benefits

Langenhoven says the ShoreTel pledge of brilliant simplicity has several benefits for the reseller channel. "Bringing unified communications to customers can be terrifyingly complex when done the traditional way," he says.

"Multiple separate servers to host various UC applications including presence, collaboration, unified messaging, mobility, IP telephony and audio conferencing, as well as a range of office productivity apps



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Tellumat
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Page 2 of 2

and infrastructure elements, make for a nightmarish deployment, provisioning, administration and user experience," Langenhoven explains. "Because of this, the uptake of UC has been lower than expected." With ShoreTel's solutions, resellers will benefit from a low initial investment and low training, staff and maintenance costs. ShoreTel's world-class customer satisfaction programme will make sure customers have an exceptional experience, giving resellers high credibility, Langenhoven said.

"The key is remote support to maintain efficiencies and allowing customers to attain profitability. In addition, resellers can differentiate themselves to customers by developing specialised applications for specific vertical segments."

A new wave

Whether a customer or prospective partner to ShoreTel and Tellumat, any organisation has compelling reasons to adopt the vendor's solutions.