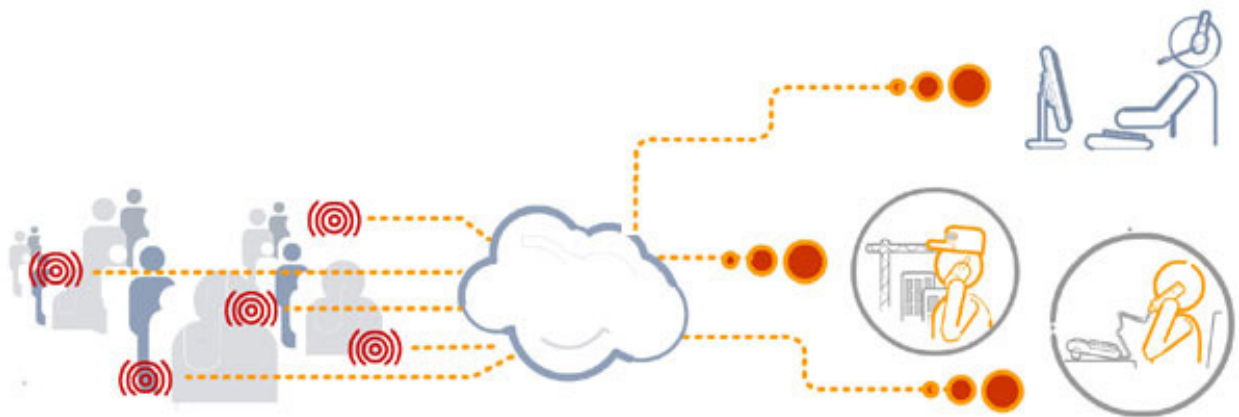


Packaging and Marketing Hosted Enterprise Services

A Gintel White Paper





White Paper

March 2009

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
INTRODUCTION	4
THE SOFTWARE AS A SERVICE OPPORTUNITY.....	5
VOICE AS A SERVICE	5
MOVING TOWARDS SAAS.....	6
Packaging and Marketing Centrex Offers.....	6
Subscription Models are not New	7
Segmentation	7
Centrex Packages.....	8
<i>Call Management Capabilities.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Inbound Call Handling</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Outbound Call Handling.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Switchboard Capabilities</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Centrex Optional Capabilities.....</i>	<i>9</i>
SELLING A SAAS PRODUCT.....	10
Direct or Indirect Sales?.....	10
Selling Models	10
LESSONS FROM SOFTWARE AS A SERVICE MODELS.....	11
KEY REQUIREMENTS FOR A VOICE AS A SERVICE OFFER.....	11
AFFORDABLE MASS CUSTOMISATION	12
THE GINTEL ADVANTAGE	13
CONCLUSION.....	14
ABOUT GINTEL.....	14
REFERENCES	16
GLOSSARY	16

Executive Summary

Interest in hosted business solutions from the enterprise community is growing rapidly. Collectively, the model through which such applications are delivered by a hosted provider is known as “Software as a Service”, or SaaS. Applications such as Centrex can be viewed simply as another SaaS offering in which voice is the service. Moreover, Centrex presents a clear opportunity for CSPs to build a bridgehead to the enterprise and develop a broader portfolio of products that offer complementary capabilities.

SaaS confers many benefits. Perhaps the most important of which is provided by the subscription-based model, which allows enterprises to control their capital costs as they ‘rent’ services from a hosting service provider on a monthly basis. Operating cost reduction and optimization can also be achieved, as fewer resources are required for managing IT / voice infrastructure, and superfluous resources can be redeployed into more productive areas.

However, many operators are unsure about investing in this potentially profitable marketplace. An emerging set of “Over The Top” service providers presents a direct challenge and threaten future business success of CSPs. Why have CSPs not rushed to embrace the opportunity to directly address the enterprise via Centrex versions of their core voice product portfolio?

A key consideration is the packaging and marketing of the service itself. Entry into the hosted market may also require an operator to rethink some of its approach to customer relationships. It is essential, therefore, that CSPs deliver a simple product that can be readily understood by enterprise buyers.

A successful Centrex offer should consist of a range of packages that can be presented to different customers. To accomplish this, CSPs need to understand the needs of the different markets and segments they are targeting with the Centrex offer. Horizontal segmentation allows the CSP to consider the needs of different-sized businesses.

Recognition of this allows CSPs to develop value propositions that address the needs of different vertical and horizontal markets and segments, but which leverage the same common components and elements. A typical Centrex product will include a core set of capabilities, to which may be added additional features and functionality.

A Centrex product can be attractive to a wider audience of companies, including the small to medium enterprise (SME) market. To boost market share, CSPs may need to consider both direct and indirect sales models. To be able to support both resellers and ASPs, the CSP must ensure that its Centrex product can support multiple tenants, and the white labelling of services under different brands.

Establishing a customer relationship is a vital element of the SaaS value chain. This is an area in which the SaaS provider can achieve differentiation, balancing the need to increase sales profitability with the need to ensure excellent customer relationships through active account management. But, as SaaS has shown, more is required to build a successful business.

Gintel's Easy Virtual PaBX solution allows operators to deliver hosted telephony services to enterprise customers across any network. But it also includes a toolkit that allows service customisation and creation: the Easy Composer suite, enabling mass customisation profitably and at the required scale. Customisation is the critical element in building a differentiated, sticky service offer.

Finding a technical solution for delivering a Centrex product is just a small part of the challenge. A successful solution needs to be presented and marketed in innovative ways to capture audience attention and market share. A lasting relationship should be forged with customers. Of course, a trusted technology partner can help Centrex deployment plans to succeed: Gintel can fulfil that role in partnership with any CSP.

Introduction

Interest in hosted business solutions from the enterprise community is growing rapidly. There are many examples of enterprise applications that can be delivered from a hosted environment, including Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), data warehousing, word processing and spreadsheet packages, and fax. Collectively, the model through which such applications are delivered by a hosted provider is known as "Software as a Service", or SaaS. There is now a growing awareness that SaaS represents a considerable market opportunity, both for traditional IT vendors and for Communications Service Providers (CSPs).

However, the ability to deliver the SaaS model does not require a radical departure for CSPs from their traditional business models or products and services. One example of a traditional CSP service is Centrex, in which an operator provides PBX capabilities to enterprises, but the switching equipment is based in the operator network rather than on the enterprise premises. In other words, the CSP hosts the PBX on behalf of multiple enterprises. Applications such as Centrex can be viewed simply as another SaaS offering. Moreover, Centrex presents a clear opportunity for CSPs to build a bridgehead to the enterprise and develop a broader portfolio of products that offer complementary capabilities.

However, although the market opportunity may be clear, many CSPs are unsure about investing in this potentially profitable marketplace. There are a number of factors that may be inhibiting the decision making process. This paper will review and explore these factors as a guide for service providers seeking to enter this promising market.

The Software as a Service Opportunity

The SaaS business model, through which enterprises rent particular services from hosted providers rather than investing in an on-premise version, has gained considerable momentum in recent years.

US market research firm Gartner has predicted that total worldwide revenue for SaaS products will reach \$11.5 billion¹ by 2011. Recently, research from Saugatuck Technology suggests that 65% of business with more than 100 employees will have adopted at least one SaaS solution by 2011². Furthermore, in light of the current economic climate, the SaaS model is likely to grow in popularity among enterprises rather than decline, as it allows businesses to access new services and applications without the need for significant capital investment of their own.

The success of US CRM specialist, Salesforce.com is often held as a prime example of the potential opportunity offered by the SaaS model. Today, many other IT vendors have embraced the model and have launched SaaS products. This growing industry contains many well-known players such as VMWare, Citrix, Oracle, as well as a host of smaller, specialist companies, such as Netsuite, Batchbook Software, Sightspeed and others.

New entrants are joining the market all the time. For example, Saugatuck Technology predicts that 40% of traditional independent software vendors will have brought a SaaS product to market by the end of 2009, with the figure rising to 80% globally by 2012².

SaaS confers many benefits. Perhaps the most important of which is provided by the subscription-based model, which allows enterprises to control their capital costs as they 'rent' services from a hosting service provider on a monthly basis. Operating cost reduction and optimization can also be achieved, as fewer resources are required for managing IT / voice infrastructure, and superfluous resources can be redeployed into more productive areas.

While there are many applications that lend themselves to delivery via SaaS models, it is important to recognise that the model itself is not new. In fact, CSPs have long been involved in the delivery of hosted services, principally through the deployment of Centrex solutions. Fundamentally, voice is a service and Centrex, or hosted telephony services, can be considered as an example of a SaaS product.

Voice as a Service

The SaaS market opportunity is steadily being recognised by CSPs, with many beginning to offer Centrex solutions based on IP technology. This interest has been supported and, arguably, made possible by tremendous growth in the uptake of broadband access connectivity, particularly in the business community. According to a recent report from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

(OECD), the two years to 2007 saw 88% growth in broadband connections³. This means that business users increasingly have access to fast, reliable connections to service providers. For hosted voice services to deliver or exceed a satisfactory level of performance, broadband is crucial.

Growth in terms of Centrex deployments might be assumed to have an impact on growth of traditional premises-based PBX solutions. Market analyst company ABI Research recently forecast that shipments of hosted IP PBX lines – in other words IP Centrex – will exceed those of premises-based IP PBX solutions by 2012⁴. Furthermore, there are replacement cycles in progress, whereby traditional systems are gradually retired from service and replaced by newer IP-based technology. This creates a much wider pool of opportunity. A recent report from consultancy firm Arthur D Little forecast that 20% of all business lines would be based on IP Centrex by 2010, which translates into 28 million IP Centrex lines in Europe alone⁵. This growing body of data suggests that business and enterprise customers present a significant opportunity for CSPs to deliver hosted voice services, specifically some form of IP Centrex.

Voice is only one aspect of a hosted service portfolio. As CSPs move into the SaaS market, adding new functions to the portfolio will help broaden the attractiveness of the offer and increase the likelihood of retaining customers in the face of competition. Voice could act as a bridgehead to a host of additional services, furthering the financial goals of CSPs.

However, notwithstanding the apparent potential of the market, many CSPs are still confused about how to launch a Centrex product and take advantage of the SaaS opportunity. This presents a risk, as a new class of competitor has emerged. So-called “over the top” (OTT) providers, which provide applications accessible over the Internet, have the potential to bypass operator networks and offer services directly to enterprises. While the majority of these solutions are orientated towards IT services, there is no reason why Centrex should remain the preserve of CSPs. This presents a direct challenge and threatens future business success. Why have CSPs not rushed to embrace the opportunity to directly address the enterprise via Centrex versions of their core voice product portfolio?

Moving towards SaaS

Packaging and Marketing Centrex Offers

There are a number of factors that might account for the relative immaturity of the Centrex marketplace in comparison to the on-premises market. First, a key consideration is the packaging and marketing of the service itself. Secondly, the development of the SaaS industry provides lessons regarding the way in which such services are actually sold. Finally, entry into the hosted market may also require a CSP to rethink some of its approach to customer relationships.

Although many CSPs have long established enterprise-facing businesses, serving the needs of corporate customers, a Centrex service presents some new and interesting challenges. In contrast to connectivity solutions, in which the primary differentiation is two dimensions – the rate and capacity of the connection – there can be many different features of a Centrex solution. Traditional PBX vendors confronted this issue by presenting enterprise customers with complex menus of standard features, optional features and product extensions, leaving some customers confused about the utility of the solution they ultimately purchased. It is essential, therefore, that the CSP delivers a simple product that can be readily understood by enterprise buyers.

Subscription Models are not New

In consumer markets, CSPs have long-established models through which they sell packages of voice minutes, connectivity and other capabilities. For example, a typical mobile post-paid monthly package might include a given number of minutes, a fixed number of short messages, and so on. Arguably, a mobile bundle is representative of a classical SaaS offer in that services are obtained and rented on a monthly basis. In principle, a Centrex offer should be no different.

Segmentation

A successful Centrex offer should consist of a range of packages that can be presented to different customers. To accomplish this, CSPs need to understand the needs of the different markets and segments they are targeting with the Centrex offer. Horizontal segmentation allows the CSP to consider the needs of different-sized businesses. For example, businesses with fewer than 25 employees will have different requirements from those with greater than 250. Meanwhile, vertical segmentation can lead to the development of different value propositions for different industries. It is important to consider these needs, as a company in the healthcare industry is likely to have very different requirements from a business in the oil and extraction industry, for example.

This level of segmentation may represent a new departure for a CSP; however, although there may be many different consumer bundles, they differ only at a macro level. Segmentation in the enterprise may suggest product differentiation at a micro level, and this may be unfamiliar territory. But, does a CSP need to be able to achieve this level of product differentiation?

When examined closely, the differences between product requirements may not appear as great as first imagined. In fact, it is the presentation of solutions towards different markets and segments that becomes challenging, not the basic product offer itself. CSPs need to develop value propositions that address the needs of different vertical and horizontal markets and segments, but which leverage the same common components and elements. Understanding that differentiation may be a matter of presentation and messaging rather than significant substance is essential in order to present a clear case to the enterprise community. This is a subtle distinction. Of course granularity in terms of features may be expected, but recognition of the fact that common needs should be presented in ways in which

differentiated benefits are exposed may prove to be a difficult lesson, inhibiting CSPs from presenting the Centrex offer in the first place. This is a marketing, not a technical challenge, and needs to be overcome in order to be successful in the enterprise marketplace.

Centrex Packages

Call Management Capabilities

While marketing can help address the issue of segmentation and allow a CSP to position its offer successfully to different market segments, it is still essential to ensure that the Centrex solution incorporates all of the features that may be required by different customers. At its core, a Centrex product consists of three primary functional areas:

- Inbound call handling;
- Outbound call handling; and,
- Switchboard capabilities.

A Centrex product needs to consider each of these and deliver a core set of functions that offers value to customers. Although specific features may vary, fundamentally it is these core functions that constitute the Centrex proposition. There are critical features that are required for each functional area.

Inbound Call Handling

Inbound call handling determines how calls are treated on entry to the system. Users can be reached either by dialling the main office number or by dialling individual user extensions. The system must manage different behaviours, such as call routing to available employees, registration of availability, and work teams that can be reached in a sequential or parallel fashion (usually known as “hunting”). Typical features include:

- Corporate main number(s)
- Direct individual numbers
- Call queuing
- Call barring
- IVR assistance
- Call transfer
- Do not disturb, with missed calls notification
- Hunting with sequential ringing and optional parallel ringing
- Divert to voicemail, secretary or switchboard
- Statistical records for the service provider and user
- Call Forwarding

The Centrex product can offer more than these features, or just a subset, but it is essential to ensure that all options are clearly defined and documented for users to enjoy maximum benefit.

Outbound Call Handling

Outbound call handling provides the rules and features that allow employees to place calls to external numbers or to their colleagues as part of the enterprise network. This functionality must include short-code dialling to any user connected to the enterprise network. Key features include:

- Private numbering plan
- Short code numbers
- Call barring
- Different tariffs
- Conference calls

Switchboard Capabilities

The switchboard is a key element in any company, providing the opportunity for multiple “moments of truth” interactions between callers and the switchboard attendant. The switchboard capabilities that are included within a Centrex package, whether automated or operated by an employee, are therefore critical to the creation of a favourable impression. A Centrex solution should allow both automatic and manual options, and also provide the opportunity to choose between a web-based switchboard console, and software that can be deployed as client software and integrated with third-party solutions, such as CRM applications. Important features might include:

- Enterprise or web-hosted switchboard console
- Company Main Number
- Distributed switchboard operators
- Configurable routing options
- Web-based configuration tools
- Call screening capabilities
- Call transfer to any employee or valid number
- Call parking or hold
- Performance statistics, real-time monitoring and correction measures
- Interfaces for third party integration
- SMS notification
- Agent registration via web or phone

Centrex Optional Capabilities

A typical Centrex product will include a core set of capabilities, to which may be added additional features and functionality. For example, voicemail can be offered as a standard capability, or it could be an optional extra. Similarly, outbound call transfer capabilities, such as forwarding can be inclusive, or otherwise considered additional items. The features that are offered as extras may also depend on the CSP network in which the solution is to be deployed. For example, a mobile operator would wish to ensure that call forwarding to mobile users included in the numbering plan would be

normal functionality, but a fixed operator with no mobile assets might wish to apply charges to such behaviour.

When planning a Centrex service, the CSP must pay particular attention to the minimum feature set that is expected and produce packages that reflect this. However, it is equally essential to ensure that features beyond those included in core service offers can be made available if customer demand exists. Hence, Centrex products create two additional considerations:

- A clear sales strategy; and,
- A deep customer relationship.

Selling a SaaS Product

Direct or Indirect Sales?

Although many CSPs have existing business relationships with larger enterprise and corporate customers, a Centrex product can be attractive to a wider audience of companies, including the small to medium enterprise (SME) market. A SaaS product depends on scale and penetration in order to maximise profitability. This means that CSPs must consider the requirements of bringing Centrex to the widest possible audience in their respective markets, which may be somewhat different from the close relationships that have been established with large corporate accounts. To boost market share, CSPs may need to consider both direct and indirect sales models.

Channel partners can help to ensure that CSPs reach all segments and levels within the enterprise marketplace, increasing the effectiveness of the overall sales team. There is also another means through which the CSP can increase its sales exposure – virtual partners. Application Service Providers, or ASPs, can effectively secure a partition of the Centrex solution and sell products under their own brand to their own customers. This model is similar to the Mobile Virtual Network Operator (MVNO) approach, in which the MVNO rents capacity from the CSP's assets, although in this case the asset is the Centrex application and the network through which this is delivered. To be able to support both resellers and ASPs, the CSP must ensure that its Centrex product can support multiple tenants, and the white labelling of services under different brands. This can create a diverse ecosystem of sales and ASP partners, enabling the CSP to dramatically extend its reach.

Channel and ASP models can be highly effective as a complement to direct sales efforts, as they can assist the CSP in reaching a wider number of customers without large additional investment in direct sales teams.

Selling Models

SaaS models depend on scale. To support this, customers need to be able to access products easily and begin using them quickly. As payback for a SaaS product may be spread over a number of years, customer self-help and auto-provisioning need to

be promoted. It should be simple for a customer to obtain, provision and manage the service, and to be trained in its usage. All of this should be accomplished with the minimum of involvement from the CSP. It may adversely impair profitability if direct involvement from the CSP is required to train the customer in all aspects of the service in each and every sales opportunity.

Centrex, like all SaaS offerings, is essentially a subscription-based service. Typically, customers pay a monthly fee for a given bundle of services. Additional capabilities may be added to the basic bundle. It may also be desirable to incorporate call minute packages to the bundle, as is common with mobile subscriptions. Calls that exceed the minutes allowance can be billed individually. Rather than provide fixed minute allocations per user, a CSP may provide a package for all licensees within a particular enterprise. This pool of minutes can then be shared more effectively between employees, spreading value across the organisation. Higher value packages with additional features can attract a higher monthly subscription rate. For example, some CSPs deliver web-based access to the switchboard as a standard accessory, but make a charge for direct delivery of the software application to the enterprise. Similarly, some may make connection or activation charges, or add non-voice related services, such as fax, for additional monthly subscription fees. There are many options for the billing model and there is no optimum model to follow, just the potential to access additional revenue streams and to build on the bridgehead created by rental of the basic service. What matters is that the CSP delivers the required features and functionality in a competitive and profitable manner, the mechanics of which may vary from market to market. Underpinning the Centrex offer must be a solution that enables such flexibility to be adopted.

Lessons from Software as a Service Models

Establishing a customer relationship is a vital element of the SaaS value chain. At first, this might seem counter-intuitive, given the need to streamline the selling process and to automate as much of each transaction as possible. However, the requirement translates into a recognition that customers can (and should) expect a lasting relationship with their CSP, including interaction with its agents when necessary. With SaaS, there can be a temptation to automate all aspects of pre- and post-sales customer care. It is possible, however, to automate the delivery process, while simultaneously ensuring that customers can reach a personal representative when required, for example. This is an area in which the SaaS provider can achieve differentiation, balancing the need to increase sales profitability with the need to ensure excellent customer relationships through active account management.

Key Requirements for a Voice as a Service Offer

A successful Centrex product depends on a range of factors. It is necessary, but not sufficient, to offer the right product ingredients. This means being able to develop packages based on selected combinations of available inbound, outbound and

switchboard call handling functionality that can be clearly understood by customers. But, as SaaS has shown, more is required to build a successful business. The CSP must develop deep understanding of the enterprise marketplace in their territory. It must be able to deliver products at scale, but in a profitable fashion. It should be able to build a diverse ecosystem of alternative delivery partners, such as resellers, agents and ASPs. It should deliver as much automated control and provisioning capabilities to its customers and partners as possible, not only in order both to alleviate its own resources (and increase profitability), but also to create a sense of empowerment and control in its customers and partners. It must provide excellent customer service and build lasting relationships.

However, although all of these are essential ingredients for a successful Centrex SaaS offer, there is an additional attribute that could create further differentiation for a CSP. It is a contentious issue, because it appears to go against the grain of the SaaS model: mass customisation.

Affordable Mass Customisation

It is clearly a goal of SaaS models to provide the same product to as many people as possible, streamlining the delivery and support procedures to reduce costs. According to conventional views of SaaS, profitability will be achieved at scale. This is predicated on classical production theory, which identifies two extremes – one-off and mass production. In this model, customisation is incompatible with mass production, enabled by SaaS.

However, although it is accepted that mass production leads to uniformity, with endless rounds of identical goods being stamped out on the production line, it is generally recognised that not everyone will accept this. People increasingly want customisation in the goods they purchase. In a recent paper by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, it was stated that “the emphasis on increasing product variety and individualisation has created a strong demand for a new strategy of Mass Customisation Manufacturing (MCM). A competitive and flexible manufacturing system must be developed to respond to small batches of customer demand”⁶.

Although written in the context of the manufacture of physical goods it could equally apply to services. In the past, it has not been economical to customise services that are deployed en-masse. Service customisation has been dependent on traditional software development models, with a limited pool of resources capable of undertaking development. Hence, many SaaS offers have tried to impose uniformity and adopt a “one size fits all” approach.

If a customer buys a PBX for deployment on their premises, there is the expectation that the product that is delivered has some degree of customisation, even if only in the range of services that they choose to select. Traditional Centrex solutions have depended on providing a much smaller range of options and the expectation that users will select directly from the menu of available features. Although this model is

valid, it does not necessarily provide the platform for long-term growth that CSPs require. However, there is an alternative approach.

Qiao *et al* describe a model in which various levels of MCM can be defined⁶. The ultimate realisation of an MCM approach is described as “Level 2”, in which production strategy derives from two fundamental ideas:

1. We cannot accurately predict who our customers will be; and,
2. We have the ability to provide demanded services.

In other words, CSPs cannot necessarily know what customers want, but should be able to deliver it. This sounds like an unattainable goal. Is it possible to introduce mass customisation into SaaS market places, specifically for a Centrex service?

The Gintel Advantage

Gintel's Easy Virtual PaBX solution allows operators to deliver hosted telephony services to enterprise customers across any network. But it also includes a toolkit that allows service customisation and creation: the Easy Composer suite.

In contrast to previous service creation models, Easy Composer can be used and managed by front-end staff, without the need for highly trained network engineers. This means that services really can be tailored to individual customers. The ambition of creating new services cheaply and quickly is nothing new, but the reality has never matched the ambition. In the past, where flaws have been identified with the SaaS model, it may be because the solution has been based on legacy or monolithic software solutions that do not lend themselves to an MCM approach.

With Gintel, however, the economic impact of service customisation can be reduced to such a level that a CSP can use this capability to achieve differentiation for a service with many thousands of customers. It is also illustrative of the concept that old ideas should be left behind in order to compete in today's fast-moving business environment.

Furthermore, according to Qiao *et al*, the input, operations and output of such services have traditionally been ranked more important than sales and marketing, and customer service. Thus, the customer appears to be at the end of the chain. In a new conceptualisation of the MCM system model, sales and marketing are at the start of the model, followed by customer inputs, which reflects the importance of customer preference, expression and desire in the process. A design tool is used to combine this input and a configuration tool provides output for the resulting system. Gintel's Easy Composer suite offers this capability: sales staff can work with prospective and existing customers to design a service that can then be deployed in real time. Mass customisation is not easy, and not necessarily universally desirable, but Gintel's Easy Composer allows operators to pursue this goal.

Conclusion

There is a growing appetite for the Software as a Service delivery model, which offers a significant opportunity for hosted solution providers. Voice, in the guise of IP Centrex, is a classical SaaS product. Currently, CSPs have an opportunity to exploit Centrex as a SaaS service, however they must do so before this territory is colonised by OTT and other providers. But, finding a technical solution for delivering a Centrex product is just a small part of the challenge. A successful solution needs to be presented and marketed in innovative ways to capture audience attention and market share. A lasting relationship should be forged with customers. In order to help CSPs bring a successful Centrex product to market, particularly in the face of increased competition, there are a number of issues they need to consider:

- Clearly define a simple product.
- Package the product for different sizes of company and different vertical segments.
- Differentiation is a function of marketing messages, not just the underlying technology.
- A deep relationship with customers is required, in order to be responsive to new demands.
- Breadth of sales model and channel / hosted partner ecosystem.
- Customer needs are paramount at the beginning of a relationship.
- Leverage tools to support profitable mass customisation, but only when required.

By taking account of these issues, CSPs can deliver cost effective, innovative Centrex services and stake out a claim to the growing SaaS market, while meeting the evolving needs of customers. Of course, a trusted technology partner can help Centrex deployment plans to succeed: Gintel can fulfil that role in partnership with any CSP.

About Gintel

Gintel AS from Norway is an expert in the field of Centrex and Hosted Mobile PBX. Its products have been deployed by Tier One and competitive operators to help them differentiate their customer solutions for the business community. Gintel offers a Mobile PBX application, Easy Virtual PaBX, which meets all of an operator's needs. It provides full PBX functionality and, because it is a software application hosted by the operator, it allows any connected device, including mobile handsets, fixed terminals and softphone clients, to register and experience the same feature set as a traditional fixed PBX station device. Easy Virtual PaBX provides full switchboard capabilities, offering both a web and client console that can be used to manage user

mobility and status, with self-provisioning options to ensure that the system is updated at all times to reflect user preferences.

Easy Virtual PaBX provides complete transparency, allowing any user on any network to connect to the platform. It does not require any upgrade to handsets, as it is a truly network-centric solution, and merely requires users to be registered for the service. Users can change their preferences via a web interface. It conforms to the emerging IMS service architecture, as it leverages application servers for the execution environment, allowing CSPs to easily incorporate it into any future network architecture. Most importantly, it includes a powerful service composition tool, Easy Virtual Composer.

Easy Virtual Composer enables CSPs to customise existing services and rapidly create new offers that enhance differentiation and increase customer stickiness. Services are assembled from a comprehensive palette of core capabilities, allowing CSPs to focus on meeting the demands of existing subscribers and supporting innovation to win new ones.

Easy Composer is revolutionary. New services can be designed and assembled “on-the-fly” within hours, not days or weeks, greatly reducing time to market and enhancing operator agility. It allows operators to innovate within their markets and respond rapidly to user demand and competitive threats. New services can be launched rapidly and at low cost, reducing the risk of service delivery. It also helps operators to develop richer customer relationships, based on co-operation and support.

Easy Composer complements Gintel’s other applications, allowing continual innovation and service differentiation. Gintel’s unique capabilities allow CSPs to launch shrink-wrapped applications, such as Easy Virtual PaBX, and to supplement these with tailor-made features and services to meet the needs of specific customers. This provides the additional differentiation that they need to carve out a niche in their market and to build a platform for growth.

References

1. “SaaS Demand Set to Outpace Enterprise Application Software Market Growth”, Gartner, 2007.
2. “Enterprise Ready or Not – SaaS Enters the Mainstream”, Saugatuck Technology, 2008.
3. OECD Communications Outlook, 2007.
4. “The Evolution of Enterprise VoIP”, ABI Research, 2007.
5. “The Battle for the Business Customer”, Arthur D Little, 2006.
6. “Process Control and Logistics Management for Mass Customisation”, Qiao, G. Lu, R. and McLean, C., National Institute of Standards and Technology, 2004.

Glossary

ARPU *Average Revenue Per User*

AMPU *Average Margin Per User*

ASP *Application Service Provider*

CAPEX *Capital Expenditure*

COTS *Commercial, Off-The-Shelf*

CSP *Communications Service Provider*

IP *Internet Protocol*

MCM *Mass Customisation Manufacturing*

MVNO *Mobile Virtual Network Operator*

OPEX *Operational Expenditure*

PBX / PaBX *Private Branch Exchange*

SaaS *Software as a Service*

SIP *Session Initiation Protocol*

SME *Small / Medium Enterprise*

TDM *Time Division Multiplexing*

