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*White Paper*

# *Moving towards convergence*

How Next Generation Networks  
smooth the way

## *The background story*

The advantages of converged voice and data platforms have been discussed by businesses and telecoms providers for some years now. These include:

- Simplified network management and lower costs. With everything running on a single platform, it's much easier to maintain than different infrastructures, which is good news for any bottom line.
- Improved productivity. By being able to offer a workforce innovative IP-based applications and tools, people can work more effectively, and increase competitive advantage too.

### *Why has convergence come of age now?*

Until now, widespread adoption of convergence has been held back for a number of network reasons.

**Issue 1:** *Traditional networks – such as Frame Relay or ATM – just aren't built to run convergence technologies effectively.*

**Answer:** Next Generation Networks (NGNs) are designed to support new convergence technologies from the ground up. They're much more flexible, scalable and cost effective than traditional networks.

**Issue 2:** *After spending years investing in legacy networks, businesses are understandably nervous about the cost and effort involved in replacing these technologies.*

**Answer:** The commercial case for migrating to a converged environment means businesses can no longer afford not to. For example, running separate voice and data platforms is more expensive than combining them into a single one. And with a converged environment, businesses can also start using the new applications their workforce needs to stay ahead.

**Issue 3:** *Lack of faith in voice quality of a converged environment.*

**Answer:** Improved performance guarantees and independent testers such as the MEF (Metro Ethernet Forum) have enabled network providers to improve their latency and jitter targets, resolving these problems for good.

The good news is that with a combination of next-generation technology – and with the right support – businesses have all they need to start embracing convergence with confidence.

Then, adopting new applications such as IP Multimedia, makes it much easier to keep a mobile workforce connected and in touch. Even across multiple locations.

**If every employee used smarter converged technology such as IP Multimedia, they could save up to 24 days a year in the workplace.**

Source: TNS.

### *Next Generation Networks*

The recent emergence of NGNs has been a key step forward in enabling businesses to start using converged applications. By using packet-switched technology, they can route all types of traffic. And the routing itself is more efficient – based on an any-to-any architecture – which in turn requires less bandwidth.

But that's not the only advantages they can offer:

### *Any shape you like*

NGNs can scale up and down much more easily than legacy networks. In fact, any-to-any architectures – such as IPVPNs – make adding or changing sites relatively simple and cost effective. For example, moving office locations or adding new offices quickly after a merger, so you can keep everyone in the loop.

Ensuring you can meet the demands of new bandwidth-hungry applications is much simpler too. In fact, altering bandwidth often becomes just a minor configuration of network equipment – without the need to disrupt services.

### *Take the work to the people, not vice versa*

Rather than being tied to employees' physical locations, NGNs provide the platform for workers to log on anywhere on the network. So they can access the resources they need from virtually anywhere. It's like having everyone linked under one roof, even if they're miles apart or scattered across the country.

### *Support your green agenda*

NGNs can also help businesses contribute toward their Corporate Responsibility strategy – in particular, green targets. NGNs use less power than their traditional counterparts and generate less heat. In turn, this requires less power for cooling, all of which can contribute to cost savings too.

Tools such as Presence, Instant Messaging, video conferencing and application sharing, reduce the need for face-to-face meetings too. So staff can work more productively from home, stay in touch with the people they need to, while reducing the carbon impact of commuting.

### *The easiest way to get there*

Telecoms providers are meeting the changing customer requirements by investing millions of pounds in moving away from legacy networks.

For example, Virgin Media Business has invested £13 billion in the UK's largest national Next Generation Network. With more than 38,000 breakout points, it can reach most commercial premises across the UK without resorting to third parties for the last mile. So it can offer businesses up and down the country a wide range of high-speed fibre-optic options.

But telecoms providers such as Virgin Media Business have also recognised that technical capability alone is not enough. They also need to offer a whole level of support to help businesses manage a smooth and risk-free transition to an NGN environment. And one that has customer service firmly at its centre.

For example, tailoring solutions or providing transparent online billing for a more flexible, personalised service. Or ensuring local support teams are always on hand wherever businesses are based in the UK.

### *Summary*

With the right support, there's no longer any need to delay in adopting a converged network. And there's no need to settle for anything less than a telecoms partner that can:

- Provide a new network platform that can accommodate and support the changing needs of the workforce.
- Build a collaborative relationship with an organisation's operational challenges and goals at the centre.
- Advise on a clear strategy for the future, with an adaptable, flexible network infrastructure that matches business targets, step for step.



*To find out how you can migrate towards converged technologies more easily, call 0800 052 0845 or visit [www.virginmediabusiness.co.uk](http://www.virginmediabusiness.co.uk)*