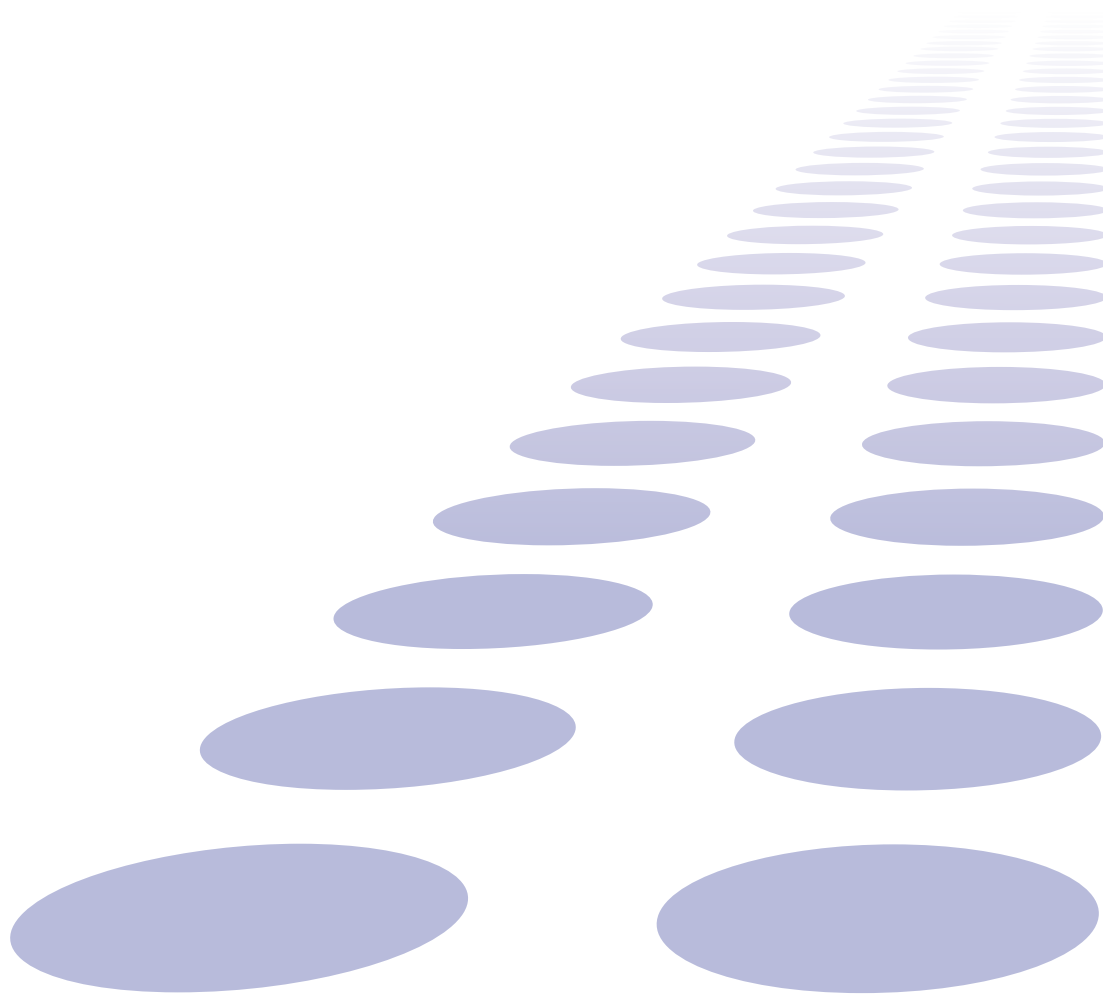


Change has Changed



Change has Changed

In the mid-1990s, when the internet was beginning to gain a foothold within UK businesses, the telecoms community voiced the benefits it would bring to business practices. The ability to communicate and trade online lived up to its promise and improved business communication forever. While businesses have always undergone change – the internet accelerated the process. With next generation telecoms now bringing richer and more powerful communication services to businesses, change will become ever more rapid. To support this, telcos are fusing their next generation capabilities with progressive, service-driven mindsets to transform themselves into organisations that provide businesses with the assets to change.

The relentless pace of business change today is mind blowing. Management teams can no longer undertake annual reviews of their businesses to make steady transitions towards increased competitiveness. Instead, they must make rapid, informed decisions in steering through the choppy waters of near-constant change. For many organisations today, failure to embrace change means they will be left behind the competition in the short-term; in the long-term they could simply become extinct.

Change can take many forms, but its impact can be wide-reaching. Ultimately, today's successful management of change means that companies have to look closely at the areas that are least flexible. Any service or obligation that binds the business to operate in a set way for a long period of time can threaten an environment that needs to be constantly evolving.

Flexible Business Environments

Information is the lifeblood of the modern business. The way in which it is gathered, stored and utilised can drive competitive advantage in many market sectors and if organisations are unable to exploit information resources, then competitive pressures are likely to increase. Equally, companies that are best able to utilise their information assets typically find it easier to fuel growth.

Maintaining continuous communications throughout the process of changing physical office locations is critical in order to protect these information assets. The need for greater flexibility in how commercial premises are procured, managed and utilised has seen the commercial property market go through substantial changes in the UK, in the past decade alone. And in line with this, the trend towards smaller premises, more flexible working practices and less binding lease agreements has meant that telecommunication services need to be more flexible.

UK telcos have responded by investing billions of pounds to enable the move away from the limitations of legacy networks, such as ATM, Leased Lines and Public Switched Telephone Networks, which carry data and voice over separate networks. The result has been the emergence of Next Generation Networks (NGNs) which deliver more powerful communication services that can accommodate data, voice and video traffic over a single network to offer organisations true flexibility.

NGNs alone, however, are not enough to ensure that information assets are readily available during organisational change. No organisation is static and it will require changes to how its information is delivered in order to support its wider objectives. Telcos must provide a flexible infrastructure, coupled with an open-minded attitude, in order to support these changes as and when they occur. This alignment of technical capability and a 'can-do' mindset make up the attributes of a truly Next Generation Network operator, a concept that ntl:Telewest Business calls Telecoms 2.0.

As organisations grow in a 24/7 culture, making changes to telecoms services, even during the minimum period of a commercial contract, is essential. Organisations need to be able to adapt quickly to accommodate changes and a telco should now be seen as the agent of change, rather than a stubborn hindrance.

How Change Impacts Telecoms Requirements

Organisational change is typically created by the need to open, move or downsize premises; the introduction of a mobile working policy, or a strategic business change (see scenarios below). In turn, networks must be scalable and flexible enough to accommodate these new requirements.

- **Moving/opening office:** services need to be transitioned to the new premises, ensuring that all personnel are up and running within the overall communications environment
- **Consolidation:** bringing lots of offices together, requires network migration
- **Enabling a more mobile workforce:** a mobile workforce will need telecoms services that enable staff to work as normal, regardless of location
- **Merger or acquisition:** the partial or radical reassessment of communications services normally occur in transitional phases, as the new organisation evolves
- **Strategic change:** a decision like moving to a call centre-based customer service model requires new technology to change the way organisations interact with their customers

The ease by which NGNs can be upgraded means that they are far more adaptable to organisational change requirements. In particular, environments based on any-to-any architectures, such as Ethernet or IPVPNs, make adding/moving site locations, or changing bandwidth requirements relatively simple and cost effective, particularly when compared to legacy environments like ATM or Frame Relay.

The nature of NGNs – that they enable wide-area private networks that function like a ‘giant’ office network – means that customers have far greater control over how their communication services are delivered to support their employees in doing their jobs every day. Business change can often result in personnel change, regardless of location or function. Meaning in a fast-changing commercial environment, communication must be agile and adaptable, rather than a barrier to change. With a Telecoms 2.0 attitude and the delivery of NGN capabilities many of these changes can be provisioned dynamically, or with very little disruption to ongoing communications. A telecoms company with a service-driven mindset will allow its customers a greater degree of control, through offerings such as online portals, which give information on network performance, fault resolution, billing, etc. This allows customers to access this information in their own time, rather than when a service manager is available to them.

A Collaborative Approach – Working Closer with the Customer

Network power and flexibility merely provide the technology platform for a company to manage business change. A higher level of consultative input at the stage of designing new network infrastructures, combined with advice on the latest applications and services, is required to truly support today’s businesses. To design the most appropriate network with the right levels of business resilience requires a telco that is prepared to sit down with companies of all shapes and sizes. The most appropriate applications need to be selected to suit the people within the business. For example, designing a service for geographically dispersed teams would require an any-to-any network, such as an IPVPN and Ethernet VPN, as it provides the most efficient platform to run collaborative applications like IP Multimedia.

ntl:Telewest Business believes that organisations are best placed to manage the outcomes of change when they are able to deal directly with experts who understand their requirements and are on hand to help with the transition. The majority of UK telcos only offer a close-knit service team to their largest customers, who have very large communications budgets. ntl:Telewest Business offers a consultative and technologically-savvy service team to organisations, from large enterprises right through to smaller organisations. Mid-sized businesses in particular find this invaluable in assisting their change management, as in today’s dynamic market, their requirements are not dissimilar to those usually associated with large corporations. This personal attention is the most effective way to ensure that the network is always configured in line with business need. It also has an important bearing on the applications that run across the network, so that the most appropriate communication technologies are being used at every level within the company.

Service teams that are closer to their customers through a strong collaborative approach will truly understand their telecoms needs. This understanding comes with intimate knowledge of how they operate and being kept abreast of how they are changing. When this next generation service ethos is combined with a NGN platform, businesses can benefit from the assurance that communications will always be in step with business change.

Next Generation Telecoms 2.0: A New Approach

ntl:Telewest Business has the most advanced of the UK's two national communications networks. It is the only one with a next generation architecture, capable of supporting next generation applications and services. Yet it is not just the network that is next generation - the capability and mindset of its people is equally important.

Managing change in a dynamic evolving business environment can be a minefield - but it doesn't need to be. With next generation telecoms, the communications elements of rapid change have become far less inhibiting and telecoms can now align directly with the requirements of businesses, meaning that they no longer have to dedicate the amount of time and resource to changing their telecoms arrangements as in the past. By fusing technical capabilities and a progressive service-driven mindset, ntl:Telewest Business is the only UK provider delivering on the promise of Telecoms 2.0 and ready to help businesses transform.

To find out more call **0800 052 0845** or
visit **www.ntltelewestbusiness.co.uk**

Part of the Virgin Media Group.

ntl:Telewest Business endeavours to ensure that the information in this document is correct and fairly stated, but does not accept liability for any error or omission. The development of ntl:Telewest Business' products and services is continuous and published information may not be up to date. It is important to check the current position with your local ntl:Telewest Business office. This document is not part of a contract or licence save insofar as may be expressly agreed in writing. ntl:Telewest Business, Media House, Bartley Wood Business Park, Hook, Hampshire, RG27 9UP. DX2020WP0708



When you have finished with
this document please recycle it