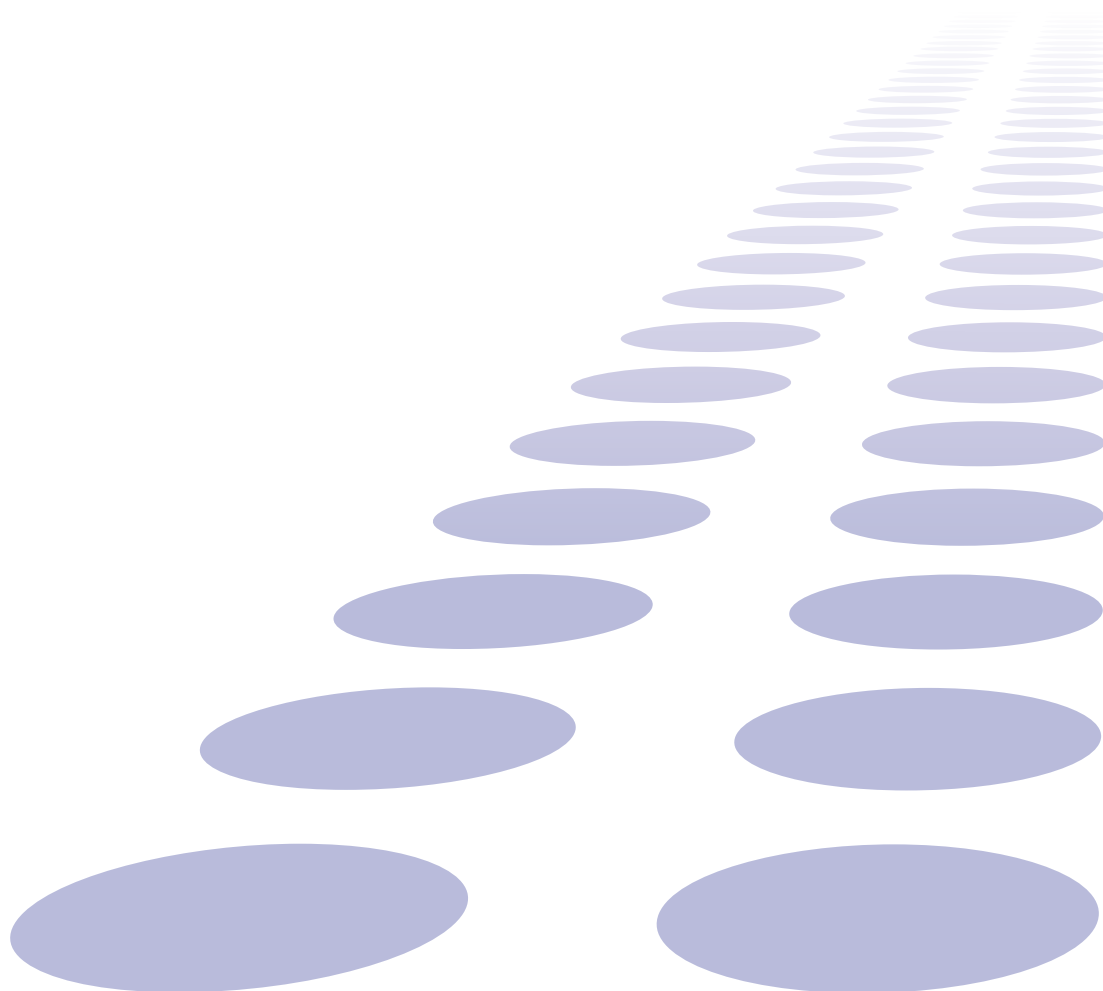


Say Hello to Telecoms 2.0



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Ever feel like you're banging your head up against a brick wall? That your telecommunications provider just simply doesn't understand you, your organisation or what you're looking to achieve? Chances are you're not alone. Legacy telco attitudes have very much been based on a 'one network fits all' mentality. This has been an ongoing source of frustration for organisations that want to work on a consultative basis with their telecommunications provider to design a network that meets their specific, and often complex, requirements.

If you recognise this scenario, then the good news is that a new mindset is emerging to tackle the challenge. One that takes a customer-centric approach and recognises that telecommunications is an enabler of change, not a barrier. ntl:Telewest Business recognises that next generation capabilities have to be supported by a collaborative can-do attitude, and believes it is these attributes that combine to create the concept of Telecoms 2.0. But what does it mean for your organisation?

The current communications landscape is changing as organisations need to become more agile and competitive. To gain competitive edge and drive efficiency, they are now utilising an increasing number of media-rich tools and interactive business-critical applications, which require a large amount of bandwidth. In simple terms, they are bandwidth hungry and happily guzzle network capacity. But it's not just applications that are causing legacy networks to creak. The speed at which organisations operate means that they can't afford to be let down by their network failing to keep pace. This means networks need to be able to support the transmission of high volumes of data at speed – and traditional networks are struggling to do this as business requirements evolve.

Telcos therefore have to respond to the technological change by ensuring they have the ability to deliver new services in a faster-paced market. This has led to the emergence of Next Generation Networks (NGNs). By breaking down the technical barriers associated with supporting the agile enterprise and providing the desired speed, NGNs offer organisations the connectivity and resilience options they require. However, NGN technical capabilities alone are not enough. Only when the capabilities are combined with a next generation mindset can an organisation truly achieve its communications goals.

Why is Telecoms 2.0 needed in the UK today?

The landscape in which organisations, both in the private and public sectors, operate is constantly changing. In order to innovate and compete they've had to adopt new operating models, and the applications and systems that underpin them. This has fuelled the requirement for converged networks and multimedia platforms, which necessitates structural change, something that can be a daunting prospect for even the most hardened of CIOs. Whilst the advent of NGNs has meant that these applications and services can be readily supported, organisations are looking to their telco to help them navigate the challenges associated with migrating to this new backbone.

However, the telco industry hasn't reacted well to this need. Traditional attitudes of a 'one network size fits all' have remained the norm, rather than the exception. Many continue to operate in the belief that once they have delivered what is in the contract, then the 'job is done', leaving organisations wondering how everything fits together. Organisations might have the technical capability, but if you can't align the technology with the business strategy, then achieving economies of scale is a pipe dream.

Legacy telco providers are technically and operationally restricted in their ability to adopt a collaborative customer approach, preferring to keep customers at arms length. ntl:Telewest Business is challenging convention by adopting a customer centric-attitude that is driven by its customers' needs. Telecommunications has huge potential to drive and support organisations, not just now but in the future. However, this can only be achieved through customer collaboration, extending services beyond contractual obligations, and delivering solutions based on commercial drivers. ntl:Telewest Business believes that by embedding these attributes into the company's very DNA, it will be better placed to give organisations the confidence that their network will scale with their requirements.

For UK businesses and the public sector, Telecoms 2.0 has arrived not a moment too soon.

Where Capability and Mindset Meet

As we've said, Telecoms 2.0 isn't just about a NGN. It's also about mindset. By aligning the two, telcos can address customer frustrations at a fundamental level. It may sound like a simple concept, but it requires a complete operational overhaul that few are prepared to invest in.

ntl:Telewest Business has an established NGN across the UK - at a cost of £13 billion it is an enormous investment but one that brings a high-capacity fibre optic infrastructure to more than 38,000 street cabinets across the country. As a result, the most advanced of the UK's two national networks is within close proximity to most commercial addresses. It features 330 Points of Presence (POPs) for delivering high-speed Ethernet and Internet Protocol (IP) services nationwide, a capability unrivalled by any other telco. Although development of the network will be ongoing, with a continuous investment in additional capacity to meet growing bandwidth demands, its NGN construction project is complete. This means that as well as being able to gain technically superior applications and services, customers also have the higher degree of control and assurance that comes with their network resources being wholly owned by one telco. They no longer need to piece together a jigsaw of network assets from different providers, across the UK.

ntl:Telewest Business was created through the ambitious merging of local cable franchises around the UK, consolidating to create a single nationwide telco. Today, demonstrating the Telecoms 2.0 mindset in action, ntl:Telewest Business is putting its money where its mouth is by investing £7 million in enhancing its customer ordering and fulfilment capabilities. The initiative, National Workflow, is part of the company's long-term *Drive To Provide* improvement programme and will standardise all provisioning practices, services and tools across the UK.

Any telco could set out a desired mantra for a service-led mindset and attempt to stamp it across its employee base, but ntl:Telewest Business has sought to nurture a highly skilled, committed team and then support it with the tools and senior management drive required to make this approach successful. The outcome for customers is the ability to fully exploit the potential of a NGN in order to take their communications forward. The intricate alignment of capability and mindset gives them the control, choice and personalisation of telecoms services that they need to make themselves successful.

What Customers Want

So how does ntl:Telewest Business presume to know what businesses and public sector organisations want from their UK telco today? In short, we listened to the feedback from private and public sector organisations when asked how they wanted to work with their telecommunications provider. From these discussions we realised that technical capability wasn't enough. Organisations want to work with a telco that can bring both NGN technology and a next generation attitude to the table.

There are many demands placed upon the modern telco in its relationship with a business customer, but ntl:Telewest Business believes they fall into these five categories: performance, flexibility, reliability, accountability and accessibility.

Performance is clearly a pressing requirement, given the growing bandwidth demands that business and residential users are now placing on the UK's telecoms networks. There is an increase in the use of content-heavy multimedia and video applications in the workplace, plus a need to move vast volumes of data, as operations are digitised and the need for information to be made more resilient increases. Combine this with the need to deliver powerful communications across the whole organisation and it is clear that telcos have to increase network performance. The ntl:Telewest Business NGN is already answering this call with an extensive fibre footprint across the country, and a core network delivering capacity in multiples of 40 Gigabits-per-second, scaling with demand.

The **flexibility** requirement has two elements. Firstly, telco networks must have flexible architectures to bring next generation solutions to every location within a business. Secondly, there is a need for service flexibility. Telco teams must be fully responsive to their customers' changing needs and sufficiently agile to help them deliver the right types of applications and services for today and for the future. In particular, ntl:Telewest Business believes that this proposition and level of consultancy should be delivered to mid-size organisations as well as larger multi-nationals and Government departments.

Reliability, meanwhile, is a factor that has long been a thorn in the side of the telecommunications industry. It remains a fact of life that faults can – and do – happen, but reliability issues also arise due to the increasing pressures being placed on the UK's network infrastructure. To reduce the number of faults on their networks and increase reliability, today's telcos also need to increase their proactive network management. By constantly monitoring network performance, ntl:Telewest Business ensures that potential problems can be identified before they become an issue.

In terms of **accountability**, having a collaborative and open relationship between the customer and the telco ensures that customers know the people involved in providing their service and have clear procedures in place for ordering, requesting service changes and resolving faults. Technical personnel, with intimate knowledge of the customers' network architecture and features, should also be on hand to support and assist organisations when required. ntl:Telewest Business has invested in its people in order to add value in each and every customer interaction.

Finally, **accessibility** is achieved by being closer to our customers, both physically and in terms of our relationships. With customer teams in more than 40 locations across the UK, we understand business drivers at a local as well as a national level.

Customers want to know the people who are managing their communications and want them to be contactable whenever they're required. The ntl:Telewest Business team is structured to deliver exactly that kind of service

Conclusion

Let's be clear. Telecoms 2.0 is not a service, product or application. It's about bringing together next generation technologies with a next generation mindset. ntl:Telewest Business believes that this alignment is the future of telecommunications. In a fast-paced world, legacy attitudes are no longer acceptable. The relationship with your service provider should mean working together to deliver solutions based on commercial drivers. It is about having absolute confidence that your network platform can support the needs of your flexible workforce, both now and as your organisation evolves.

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