

IT Company Owners, CEOs and Managing Directors:

How to add **telecom services**
to your portfolio with minimum
hassle and **maximum profit**



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As the boundaries between IT and telecoms blur, it is only natural that you are considering adding telecoms to your business offering.

A telecom portfolio can deliver a highly lucrative new revenue stream, and make it easier to keep key clients – who are probably already expecting you to help them in both areas.

But even if you already run a successful business, entering the world of telecoms can be confusing.

How do you make the most of this opportunity? And how do you add telecom products and services to your portfolio in a way that enhances your company, rather than proving a distraction from your core business – or falling flat?

Here are five steps you need to take, in order to incorporate telecommunications into your business in a way which drives it forward.



There are any number of telecom products and services you could add to your portfolio, but you need to be selective. Each involves a learning curve, and you need to focus, to keep your offering coherent.

So how do you pick the right ones?

Start by looking at your existing client base and working out what will be most useful to them – and easiest to sell.

Factors to consider include: How big are the companies you work with? How many offices do they have? How complicated are their needs? What solutions will be most cost effective for them? What do they already tend to have in place, and where can you fill a gap or answer a pressing need? Are they wholly UK-based or do they travel overseas?

If they work across borders they may need international calls at lower rates or a facility offering roaming with UK numbers. If they have more than one office, suitable solutions may be more complex.

Cast your mind back to recent conversations with clients. What telecom issues have they already expressed an interest in, or frustration about? Those are good places to start.



Tip

Start small

Try offering a few services initially to build up your experience and expertise. As this grows, so too can your offer.

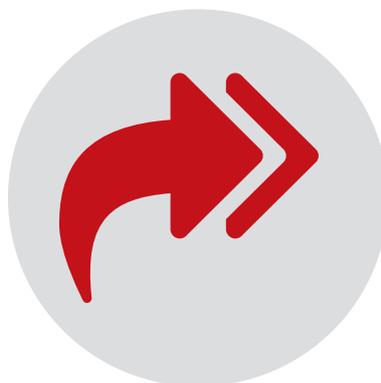
When you offer telecom products and services, you can choose to manage the entire operation yourself, delivering it entirely in-house, or to outsource various parts of it.

Common areas to outsource include:

- **Billing.** This can become quite complex if you don't have end-user billing capabilities. Do you have time to handle billing enquiries? After-sales support? Outsourcing these functions might save you a considerable headache and free up your staff for more profitable ventures.
- **Technical support.** A customer might expect 24/7 flexible support, but if it's beyond your means – or if you don't have the knowledge - you might need to outsource this to a telecom company.
- **Marketing the products and services.** Some IT companies want to sell to their customers themselves. Others do not even want to take this on, and are happy for the telecom company they work with to contact their customers on their behalf.

Outsourcing can help improve your service and streamline your costs, but this is not for everyone.

- Getting the balance right will depend on the size and capacity of your business. In other words – to what extent you have the manpower, knowledge and infrastructure to incorporate this function into your business? And how much time and money do you want to invest to make this work?



This can be tricky. When introducing a new product or service it's not always easy to know how much you should charge. Too much and you'll drive the customers away; too little and your margin will be too slim to make it sustainable.

This is doubly true in telecoms, where some costs – such as free phone numbers for long-distance calls – can change on a daily basis.

You can take two approaches. You can decide on the margin you're looking for and price up accordingly. Or, you can look at the market you're entering, see what your competitors are doing and decide whether you can offer competitive pricing.

You might try to undercut them as a new entrant to give yourself a clear point of difference, but again, remember: costs in this industry change fast. You must be certain that you can make the market price work for your business.

Tip

Compare like-to-like

When you compare your pricing to other providers, make sure it's like-to-like. When products and services are bundled together it can be difficult to tell exactly how each element is priced, and it's all too easy to compare bundles that are similar but not identical – leading to disastrous decisions.



Any new venture can be a benefit or a hindrance to a business. Think carefully about how your new telecom products and services will work with your current offering.

How can you bundle them together? Is there a telecoms area that you can focus on, that is a natural extension of your IT work? Are you going to hire separate staff for the telecom side, or will it fit in nicely with what particular members of your team are already doing?

You want to build one, coherent company, not two separate businesses under one roof.

There will be all sorts of technical issues, not least of which is how billing fits in. If you're like most IT companies, you probably do not have a system that handles call detail records, so you'll need something a little more complicated. Will you be sending the client one bill or two and how will you explain that clearly?



Tip

One company, not two

This new service must not be allowed to become a side-line. Make sure you integrate it effectively into your overall business.

Are you willing to put time in to make this work?

Any new venture will take time and effort. Be honest and decide whether you are willing to put the time in to make this work.

Simply adding telecom products and services to your portfolio and listing them on your website won't move your business forward. You need to learn about them, and you need to be proactive about selling them.

Of course, a good telecoms company can work with you closely, giving you all the support and guidance you need. They can even take much of the work off your hands, leaving you with just one job: Selling the services.



Now add telecom products services to your own IT business

So now you know what you need to think about, in order to make telecoms truly profitable for your IT business. But entering the world of telecoms can still be daunting.

Here at Swiftnet, we have more than 20 years experience running national and international telephony services. We can guide you through the process, providing all the support you need to come to market within weeks rather than months. And we can work with you at every stage of your development to ensure the entire project is a success – from helping you verify the initial proposition to supporting you in the final market implementation. **We make it easy for you.**

If you are serious about adding telecoms to your business, click here to book a telephone consultation. We'll discuss your needs, map out how telecoms can work for your business, and answer any questions you have. Before long, telecoms will be adding significantly to your bottom line.

Warm regards,

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