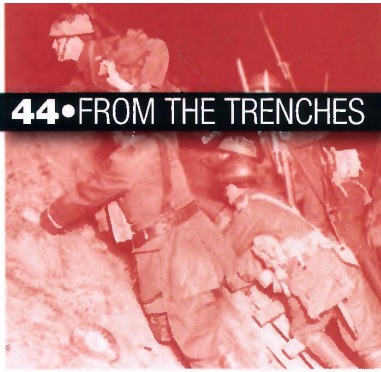




44 • FROM THE TRENCHES



# Reseller *profile*

Reseller Ashgoal is looking to score with convergence



Technical Director at Ashgoal, Nathan Lownds

Established in 1979 and based in Barnet, Ashgoal is one of Sage's oldest and most successful resellers. Building on its roots and expertise in accounting software support and implementation, then moving into hardware and IT support ten years ago, the company has recently diversified by adding a telecommunication division, including IP telephony and convergence, into its business portfolio.

## Key Challenges

"The challenges the company faces are similar to those facing many other resellers at this time - creating diverse and repeatable revenues streams," says Technical Director at Ashgoal, Nathan Lownds. He describes the problem, "The market in the UK is becoming more service rather than product-orientated, and we are finding that our clients are more demanding in what they want from us. Furthermore we do not want to rely on a single product revenue 'hit' we want to work with our clients to develop their IT and communications operations as an on-going partnership.

In order to achieve this objective the company has been prepared to move out of its traditional 'comfort zone' of software supply and deployment and has added a complete range of telecommunications services including broadband and mobile service provision, a range of PBXs and other supporting hardware. According to Lownds, the business strategy will be driven by consultancy, based on convergent solutions that will wrap around all of their business solutions.

## Capitalising on Convergence

Lownds explains why he thinks the time is now right to exploit this rapidly growing opportunity, "We have been in business for over 25 years, targeting SMEs in the 5 -50 plus users sector, therefore we know this market very well. One of the major headaches these businesses face is managing the multitude of different suppliers required to manage the communications within their businesses. For example, when something goes wrong, typically they have 4 or 5 different suppliers all pointing the finger at each other, this causes not only a high degree of frustration but also distracts them from their core business activities. We wanted to

turn this issue into an opportunity, not only for ourselves, but also for our clients. Quite simply using this method of procurement they were not getting anything like the value that they could from their technology and it was costing them more money than they needed to spend."

He continues, "We recognised that by using technologies such as Swyx's pure IP P&X technology which can integrate directly into a converged data and voice network we could enhance the value of their entire system and provide them with a single point of contact for supply, deployment and on-going support."

The beauty of solutions such as Swyx, is that it allows us to consolidate all of our delivery technologies into a single easy to understand solution and because it is software-based we can continue to add value such as remote access, mobile integration and so on. This is where we want to be - we can establish a longer term partnership with the potential to offer future benefits such as integration with their other systems including their accounting applications and their customer database."

Lownds concludes, "Like many resellers we want to make our clients more 'sticky' we believe we can do this by offering innovative and integrated business solutions customised to our customers' specific requirements".

More Information: [www.ashgoal.com](http://www.ashgoal.com)

The new telecommunications division at Ashgoal is growing rapidly and the company is on track for passing £1 million in sales this year. At present, the company is very optimistic about the future and will continue to build its consultancy led business by adding new technologies as and when they fit the business demand.

