

# Support firm bolsters base

Comms-care has experienced steady growth since it was established in 2002, but a sharpened focus on data centres will catalyse a new level of expansion, according to Managing Director Ben Davies.

Comms-care was established as a purely channel-focused IT services organisation. "We started Comms-care as a channel only business and that has not changed and will not change," affirmed Davies. "Our business enables our partners to sell services which they may not be able to provide internally and enjoy new margin opportunities and customer retention. Over the last 18 months we have invested heavily in quality and services based certifications and are proud to retain ISO27000, ISO20000, ISO14001 and ISO9001. These certifications are a real differentiator for both Comms-care and our partners when entering the bid environment."

Comms-care's growth projection is to double turnover over the next three years with headcount increasing by approximately 60 per cent over the same period. Davies added: "To help Comms-care achieve this goal, and accommodate the increase in staff, we are in the process of tailoring our new head office and service desk operation which we will be moving into towards the end of 2011."

Comms-care's portfolio and IT services has assisted its partners in acquiring bigger contracts, such as the recently announced joint venture with long-term partner ADA Networks to support the BBC. The contract, which is for the supply of support services for Broadcast Hardware and Operating Systems, is anticipated to be worth in the region of £4.5 million over the next three years. Davies noted: "What differentiated Comms-care was the fact that we have applied the fundamentals of ISO 27001 (IT security management) across their entire business and not just a number of individual support contracts."

The main emerging market trend Comms-care is focusing on is data centre technologies. The technologies in this segment are becoming increasingly converged, and with the emergence of vBlock (VCE) and FlexPod there are multiple collaborations taking place that mean a channel organisation has to be proficient in many different technologies to design, implement, and support data centre technologies. Comms-care is implementing

a strategy to support partners in this growth marketplace.

"Comms-care is embarking on the new Data Centre Cisco Specialisation as a catalyst to driving new skills through the business and into VARs and partners," commented Davies. "This aggressive approach to embracing new market trends has been successful for us in the past. We are developing new ATS (Advanced Technical Services) teams. In parallel, we will be assisting our partners with all the necessary tools to market and sell these services to their customer base."

## Growth markets

All data centre and storage technologies have seen a huge growth and Comms-care expects continuing double digit expansion in these markets with the rapid uptake of cloud based services. These services generally require high throughput, resilient, high capacity storage and switching capabilities, and this is where Davies says the real growth will come over the next 12-18 months. Another growth highlight is the uptake of Cisco's UCS product range. "The B-Series Unified Computing platform is definitely a product



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Comms-care will focus on, along with VMWare and NetApps to include vBlock and FlexPod," added Davies.

Despite rapid growth Davies says Comms-care's is still a flexible organisation and will launch new service offerings and widen existing offerings to support the demand of the reseller channel. "In addition to this we provide our partners with free bid support, pre sales and marketing services to ensure we genuinely help our partners maximise their opportunities," he added. "One area we will be moving in to over the next 12 months is Cisco Training. We will be offering it as a value add to our partners and internal staff."

Davies launched into a passionate harangue to reaffirm Comms-care's channel commitment, emphasising a high level service ethos with guaranteed fix times. "We minimise downtime and business

impact rather than a traditional response contract which give no guarantee of return to service," he added. "We strive to offer tailored support contracts that suit the business needs and offer regular reporting and advice on best practice. Our partners benefit from healthy margins in the support offering, new service and equipment opportunities, recurring revenue while still maintaining ownership of the relationship with their end user."

All businesses have to be in complete control of their costs in the current climate. This is both a challenge and an opportunity for those who retain an efficient well run business to gain market share against their competitors. "Comms-care can assist partners by ensuring these efficiencies are increased as we look to make significant reductions in their end users' IT spend, enhancing both customer retention and profitability for the partner," added Davies. ■