



## INDUSTRY INTERVIEW

# Talking global transformation

Firms are embracing new process and productivity opportunities with game-changing platforms such as Microsoft Teams. It's time they also addressed the consistency and efficiency of their ageing telephony – and the only way is cloud, argues Rob Jardine, chief marketing officer at LoopUp

**B**riefing's research with LoopUp in November 2020, Cloud calling, saw almost two-fifths of law firm technology and operational leaders reporting that they were actively considering migrating their telephony system across to the cloud – and a fifth had already selected Microsoft Teams for that purpose. Of course, many of these firms had taken a serious turn toward Teams early in 2020 (if they hadn't done so even earlier) to enable the effective collaboration of their widely dispersed employees on all manner of legal and business projects. Now, with the vast increase seen in video meetings, instant messaging, and more, it made strategic sense to bring calling into the fold as well from both an individual productivity and a cost management perspective.

Rob Jardine, chief marketing officer at the cloud voice specialist LoopUp – a certified

Microsoft Gold partner, and with deep domain expertise in its solutions developed over more than a decade – says the argument for the unification of cloud communications should be particularly compelling for law firms that are already based in multiple jurisdictions, or with plans to expand internationally. “There's one big difference between the rapidly converging IT ecosystem in general and the telecoms world,” he says. “Telecoms is really highly regulated. Service providers must undertake a highly complex process of obtaining regulatory approval to establish a presence in each country they want to operate in.”

The process of doing this is often not only onerous, but also really expensive, he explains. Providers have therefore tended to restrict themselves to a few, mostly large countries. And for international law firms, that means negotiating arrangements on a

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*Rob Jardine, chief marketing officer, LoopUp*

country-by-country basis – a recipe for inconsistency as well as inefficiency.

As dispersed working suddenly became the norm through the disruption wrought by Covid-19, LoopUp was quick to see an opportunity here. It has been busily establishing itself as a regulated telephony provider in some 60 countries, says Jardine. “In countries where we don’t have a presence, we can partner with local carriers to offer Teams Calling. And that means, however dispersed the employees, we’re always able to support a global law firm with a single managed services contract.” Combined with deep expertise in the evolving set of Microsoft Teams collaboration opportunities, he says LoopUp is in an unparalleled position as a Microsoft Direct Routing partner to help future-proof firms’ global business communication needs as new ways of working now continue to roll out.

“We now have a unique combination to offer the market, blending the best of both worlds – our expertise in Microsoft voice with the global infrastructure to provide firms’ voice services. Most other Microsoft voice specialists can manage the setup, but not the service provision, while most carriers don’t have the depth of Microsoft voice expertise to advise on strategy.” By building out a managed services offering, LoopUp has effectively set itself up as a “one-stop shop” for this move, he explains – encompassing needs assessment, solution design, implementation and ongoing support. And with the global law firm’s user base all on a

single contract, there is only one bill to manage and pay.

### Answering the call of agility

The fundamentals of the case for a cloud telephony experience of some description are solid to say the least. Why continue to maintain cumbersome, office-based equipment for making and receiving phone calls, when people have shown just how well they can work at their laptops from almost anywhere? And why not enable all the aspects of unified communications within the same environment, with appropriate control, visibility and access to other systems? Different firms may now set down different approaches for reviving ‘office life’ when vaccination success allows, but it’s clear how far the past 18 months have moved the dial on the potential inventiveness of agile working.

Now that law firms are exploring other avenues for making more effective management choices with Teams, Jardine says the time is ripe to consider whether calling could benefit from more creative thinking.

“Firms often question whether cloud telephony can replicate the processes of the old system – but another worth asking is: What could it do differently?”

For example, he explains, a user no longer needs to be sat at their desk to answer any incoming call. “This means traditional call flows around the firm – comprising reception, PAs and hunt groups – can all be analysed and reimagined to improve both efficiency and client experience in the age of agile working ahead.” ▲

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