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Prodial: the new kid on the IP telephony service block

by Stuart Comer

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Perth-based Prodia has launched into the market for providing IP communications and virtual IP PBX services to medium & large businesses, claiming to be the first and only Australian company to offer wholesale business-grade virtual PBX and IP enabled communications services tailored to existing site infrastructure."



The company has appointed VoIP industry veteran Bill Marlow as its managing director (based in Sydney) and is now seeking to appoint a handful of channel partners to help it capitalise on what it believes to be a burgeoning business telephony market.

Marlow was general manager for Australia and New Zealand of VoIP technology pioneer VocalTec in the mid 90s and more recently headed up local VoIP provider TalkNet after a stint as general manager of business solutions at Chi-Telecoms, an international Hong Kong-based telco that supplied Internet voice and fixed line termination services worldwide.

He told iWire that Prodia was aiming at a market at the low end of the enterprise market, upper end of the SME market with between 15 and 150 employees, where he believed there to be a gap in the between the market into which residential VoIP providers are trying to move, and

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the higher end dominated by Telstra, Optus and, lower down by the likes of Macquarie Telecom and AAPT.

Prodia, he said, would offer a range of services starting with a basic offer that promises no capex and no contracts for communications services with the added advantage of giving customers in-house monitoring and management of their service through a web portal. It can interface to an existing TDM telephony system, IP PBX or for those customers that require it, provide a fully outsourced virtual IP PBX service.

At the core of the Prodia network are dual VocalTec softswitches to provide full redundancy. Prodia resells the TPG broadband service to provide DSL access to its customers and works with Soul (the other half of SP Telemedia) for call collection and delivery within Australia.

According to Marlow, one of Prodia's key advantages over competing, VoIP service providers is the strength of its network - its agreements with other carriers for termination of overseas calls.

Another key selling point is Prodia's iPhone client which enables an iPhone to be used anywhere in the world to make calls without roaming costs via any accessible WiFi access point. So long as the iPhone has WiFi access it can also act as an extension of the client's phone system, again without roaming costs.

Prodia has already appointed four channel partners: Nortec IT, SpliceCom, J2G and Lorem and Marlow said the company was looking for a number of others -systems integrators, ISPs, telecoms consultants and telecoms service providers, about 15 to 20 in total.

Prodia offers a hosted billing platform, enabling the channel partner to bill the end customer under their own brand and to set pricing, training and technical support. In addition to supplying IP connectivity and services off its VocalTec platform, Prodia also offer CPE, IP gateways, WiFi phones and softphones.

The company claims to operate a network with 100 percent redundancy and offers service level agreement with penalties if it fails to meet these.

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