



# Place Your Bets

Comms Business Magazine met up with Claire Macland, Head of Avaya EMEA Marketing and Go-To-Market, to take a look in to the future. Macland says that if she was a betting person her money would be on video for 2013.

“There is no doubt that the next 12-18 months will be an exciting year for the video market. The activity we’ve seen in this space since our acquisition of Radvision has been tremendous. Even back in 2011, video hadn’t quite made it onto the roster of ‘must-have’ communications tools in the eyes of some of our customers. Looking back, we were still pushing quite hard to get them to see the true benefits this technology can offer; cost and interoperability were two big customer concerns.

This year, we’ve seen a noticeable shift in customer perception. Video is no longer a place to which you go, involving a high-end set up and guy from IT on stand-by in case things go wrong. Rather, video today is just a thing that you do. Consumers are comfortable using it and they’re bringing this attitude to work. Our partners are telling us that delivering video at a cost effective price point and in a truly democratised manner – accessible to all staff and within any size organisation – is a real door opener for them. When you combine this with the fact that we can deliver one touch video on an iPad or a smartphone we really are talking about a game changing year. When you consider that the natural extension to a video sale is a data or networking sale you can see why our partners as well as our end-users customers are excited about it.

## Networking

There’s no doubt 2012 was the year of ‘BYOD’ and actually ‘BYOA’ (Bring Your Own App) – employees using third party applications and cloud services in the workplace. Not only are customers using personal devices, they are now accessing consumer apps on these handhelds. This will further intensify in 2013 with effective and secure management of BYOA being a key focus for CIOs and IT managers. The increased uptake in real-time collaboration tools, such as video, will also have a knock-on effect on a company’s network giving it a second reason to be put into the CIO spotlight. IT departments will be forced to accommodate these two growing trends and ensure they have the right network and controls in place to maintain IT stability, flexibility and security.

## Contact Centre

The contact centre, which has traditionally adopted new technologies at a slower pace than other industries, is going through an evolution that will certainly continue into 2013 and beyond. Customer experience management, or the ability to deliver the experience the customer wants

when they interact with a brand, on the device of their choice, at the time they want, regardless of location is a huge channel opportunity; particularly as it puts the contact centre at the very heart of company’s CRM strategy. As a leader in the 2012 Gartner Magic Quadrant for contact centre Infrastructure, Worldwide Avaya has been at the forefront of this evolution. Take social media for example, you’d be pushed to find an organisation today that isn’t either sold on, or warming up to, the concept of social

media as an ideal way to boost brand awareness and improve customer service. Our customers are increasingly coming to us and our partners asking for help in developing strategies that will help them to capitalise on the power that new technologies have to transform the customer experience and foster stronger relationships with their customer base, while simultaneously managing the risks associated with open communications in a digital world.

## SME and Mid-market

Small is just a number if you’re an SME. What some see as small, others see as agile and we’re getting a very clear message that what this segment of the market wants is access to the sophisticated real-time collaboration tools that bigger businesses are getting but at a price point they can afford. They want telephony, video, networking and security and they want it in a manageable, out of the box package that they can roll out across the business.

At Avaya we’ve already made a commitment to focus on this market in 2013 and it’s a huge opportunity for our partners. Our flagship SME

product, IP Office 8.1 now scales to 1,000 users and offers the real-time collaboration capabilities traditionally available to much bigger organisations at a fraction of the cost and is only available through our channel partners.

Overall, we’ve seen that IT is increasingly becoming more centred around people – whether that’s the people who use it in the workplace or the customers who experience it through the contact centre. Against this backdrop, we’re working more closely than ever with our channel partners to ensure that they are selling the benefits of technology for the user, for example how it impacts staff in SMEs, how it can transform the customer service environment, how it can enable employees, customers and clients to use the devices and applications of their choice. In 2012 our partners have been critical in communicating this shift from a technology-centric approach to a user-driven IT environment and this will only become more apparent next year.



Claire Macland, Head of Avaya EMEA Marketing and Go-To-Market