

BLU Networks: from local to pan-European VoIP player with flexible services

Customer name

BLU Networks

Business

Provider of VoIP and traditional telephony solutions, fixed-mobile integration and data solutions, including Internet connectivity and IP-VPNs

Sector

Communications

Challenge

To cope with rapid growth of customer demand and to expand through the whole of Europe

Products and services

VoIP Access (SIP trunking)
Voice Line and Voice Connect
Number Hosting
IN services
IP Access

By flexibly responding to changes in the telecom market, BLU Networks has expanded its customer base from a few hundred to thousands of customers, ranging from SMBs to large corporate, government and healthcare organisations.

In 2010, the dominant operator in the Dutch telecommunications market decided to change its contract terms for the next year. This caused a great stir in the market — and gave Jouk Lier, the founder of service provider BLU Networks, a challenge. He and his (at that time) five employees anticipated that towards the end of the year they would be serving around 600 customers.

They didn't expect to grow to a few thousand customers. Between Christmas and New Year there were days when BLU telecom took on some 500 new customers. The company's systems were not designed to cope with this.

"Time was of the essence," says Lier. "Not only did we risk losing out on huge growth potential, but we needed to quickly address service issues for existing customers. For example, sending out invoices was taking far

too long because we had so many more customers."

Fortunately, Lier was no stranger to coping with a changing market. He founded BLU Networks in 1989 as Lier ICT, a provider of traditional voice services. Over the years he had transformed the business into a provider of integrated communication services. Now he was ready to tackle this new challenge.

Within minutes, a new connection

He did so by quickly developing a new platform for VoIP and hosted PBX, based on VoIP infrastructure and SIP Trunking services from Colt. BLU Networks had changed its preferred provider to Colt in 2009 specifically because Lier wanted a partner that could offer more flexibility in the face of market changes. His choice now paid off, thanks to Colt's speed and flexibility in provisioning new connections. With other carriers this is normally

a time-consuming and complex process. Service providers such as BLU Networks must complete a technical form, and if there are any errors or omissions most carriers will send it back to fill in all over again.

"Colt eliminates this issue," says Lier. "We can always just call, and Colt helps us to put in the order for a new connection, so that it is provisioned correctly, without any back-and-forth."

With this support, BLU Networks has quickly grown to become a full service provider across Europe. Together with its subsidiary company, NG Networks, it employs just 35 employees to provide service to more than 125,000 end-users.

BLU Networks sells to its customers only indirectly, through resellers and partners. A self-service portal enables these resellers and partners to deliver BLU Networks services to customers in real time: they can, for example,





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Director, BLU Networks

provision a new connection within minutes. Through BLU Networks, they can deliver completely integrated voice and data services, including mobile, and usually save customers more than 25% on telephony costs compared with traditional voice services.

Blurring traditional telecom boundaries

Uniquely, BLU Networks overcomes some of the traditional limitations of telecommunication services by offering an integrated cross-border service. Colt's network, available throughout Europe, makes it possible to port local numbers internationally. Through this flexibility a customer that is, for example, active in Spain and the Netherlands can be reached in the Netherlands on a Spanish number, without any forwarding (from the Spanish to a Dutch number). The customer can also dial out from their Spanish number in the Dutch office, or from their Dutch number in Spain. So customers can expand as they need to, through a single service provider.

This service is also available in-country. For example, one BLU Networks customer has two locations in the Netherlands with different area dialling codes, and can make an outgoing call from either location's number, regardless of which location they're in.

“We can make that happen,” says Lier, “while still showing the actual location in the ‘back end’, which is important if, for example, someone calls the emergency services.”

Personal support

Besides offering uniquely flexible services and competitive pricing over

a highly reliable network, Colt maintains warm and personal contact with BLU. Lier really appreciates the accessibility and helpfulness of Colt's employees.

“With other companies it is often difficult to get the right support,” he emphasises. “The account manager, for example, only helps with the commercial side, but for support you must raise a ticket and you can then never find out what is happening. With Colt we can always quickly speak to the right person who can resolve our issue immediately. Which means we can always keep our partners well informed and continue to expand across Europe with confidence.”

Lier also appreciates the way Colt joins BLU Networks in discussions with other market players whenever there are market challenges to address.

“Colt really cares about our business and always helps us to explore solutions to new challenges,” he notes.

In the near future BLU Networks will expand its portfolio further with comprehensive solutions for unified communications, including a WebRTC solution offering voice, chat and video from a web browser. The company expects further strong growth as a result, for which it will need more network capacity. It is already in talks with a healthcare organisation with more than 2,500 users.

“With Colt, we know we'll always have the capacity to support growth,” Lier concludes.

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