

International Call Center Solutions for Cloud Communications



David Wise - CEO

About AVOXI

AVOXI is a cloud communications provider focused on meeting the international calling needs of call centers, hotels, tour operators, and global enterprises looking to project a local presence. We provide telecommunications and enhanced VoIP solutions including toll free services, call recording, call termination, Cloud PBXs, call center solutions, toll free numbers worldwide, local numbers worldwide, SIP trunks, DID/DDI numbers, VPN solutions, business telephone systems, VoIP phone systems, and conference calling.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine

CEOCFO: *Mr. Wise, what is the concept for AVOXI?*

Mr. Wise: We put our client's phone calls in the cloud.

CEOCFO: *Why would we want them there?*

Mr. Wise: There are several reasons. The most important of which is to save money. The cloud also gives you the ability to scale your business faster, so that you are not dependent on a number of phone lines in your phone system at your office. Alternatively, in the cloud, you are connected to massive amounts if you make phone lines. Reliability is the other major reason. If your office is in a hurricane's path, and the hurricane blows out the building, you can maintain your communications system since your users would have the ability to work remotely from anywhere in the world. Lastly, it gives you the peace of mind that there is another layer of business contingency planning.

CEOCFO: *Are people today accepting of the fact that the cloud is better or are there still a large portion that feels safer with the more traditional land lines?*

Mr. Wise: I think it is largely a generational question. If you went to someone who just got out to college and told them to set up a business and get a phone system, they would never think of buying a phone system and putting it on the wall and ordering phone lines. If you went to someone that was, say, a gen X person or a baby boomer, they might buy a phone system and put it on the wall. I think it is primarily a generational influence, and I think most of the decisions are still being made by X gens and baby boomers. There are not many millennials that are making that decision today. I think that over time, you are going to see more adoption of the cloud technology. There is definitely a security concern, but even with a phone line, there are security concerns. There may not be as many, but there are some. In either case they are all easily addressable with the right technology partner.

CEOCFO: *Who is using your services today? What types of companies?*

Mr. Wise: We target call centers. My view is that every business has a call center component in it. It may just be the receptionist that is answering the phone, but every business has a call center. We target companies that have a call center of 100 or less. Geographically, 80% of our business is international, including India, the Philippines, South Africa and Australia to name a few.

CEOCFO: *Are you reaching out directly? Do you work through partners?*

Mr. Wise: We sell through two ways. We have a telesales department that takes incoming calls and makes outgoing calls to prospective clients. We also have channel partners. These are folks that are resellers or IP integrators or system administrators and we sell through those channel partners.

CEOCFO: *What is the competitive landscape like and why should it be AVOXI?*

Mr. Wise: In the US, there are many people that do cloud communications and do it well. Internationally, there are an equal number of people that do it very well and ones that do not do it well. The key difference is in how you predict problems. I think you mentioned a minute ago about Voice over IP, dropped calls, one way audio or choppy calls. That happens just like it happens on a cell phone. The goal is to predict those problems and to make adjustments before the

client ever knows it. Cell phones companies are constantly looking at their radio frequencies between their towers and congestion to ensure quality service and we are doing the same thing in Voice over IP. However, instead of looking at towers, AVOXI is looking at the internet pipe, traffic flows, packet loss and latency between our clients and us. For example, the client can be in India and they get great call quality because we are connecting them to the nearest point and we are routing traffic to the best available location.

CEOCFO: *What do you understand about preventatives that perhaps other VoIP companies do not realize and do not pay attention to as well?*

Mr. Wise: We put in place our “secret sauce,” of how we do that from an operational standpoint. It is expensive and anyone can set up a website and say they are in the VOIP business. They have a Voice over IP gateway and some type of soft switch sitting on the back of a quickie bar. It will work for a while, but for a call center, it will never work consistently and reliably over a long period of time. We have been in business for thirteen years. I have been doing Voice over IP since 1997 or 1998 and there is a great deal of money that you need to invest in back end systems to make sure that it does work.

CEOCFO: *Why were you sure back then that this was the right method and that it would be sustainable over time?*

Mr. Wise: I do not know that I was sure, because there were days that I thought it would never be adopted. Initially when I started doing Voice over IP, I was with the big carriers. If they were comfortable doing it, then I knew that there could be a product that could be built for business. Big companies like Cisco systems have invested tremendous amounts of money in developing this technology, at least the switching and routing technology, because that is really what the core Voice over IP is. The gateways are equally as important, but today it is more SIP (Session Initiation Protocol) based than anything else. You still need gateways to do the conversion from TDM to SIP. It is probably more that I believed in it because Cisco was putting so much money into doing it.

“We have many years of experience in international call center solutions, and will work hand in hand with you to help you achieve your business VoIP goals.” - David Wise

CEOCFO: *What has surprised you as the business has grown and developed?*

Mr. Wise: I’m an entrepreneur and we have grown the business organically on our own resources. We have not brought in any outside money. Throughout the thirteen years of business, we have grown to be a \$10 million a year company, all based on inward growing at 13% a year now. I think that is the surprise because I had already envisioned that this is what I was going to do for the rest of my life. I am on this endless pursuit to give end users more control and flexibility over their communications. That is what I live and breathe. Not that we are a huge company, but I did not know when I started that it would be a \$10 million a year business, growing at 13% thirteen years later. I do not know that I envisioned it being smaller than that; I just envisioned that this is my passion and this is what I am going to continue to work on. How many times have you picked up the phone and told the phone company that you want to do something, or you go to your phone system programmer in your back office and say that you want to do something and the answer is “no”? I want to give our clients more control and flexibility over their communications. That is why we built software that gives them the ability to do that.

CEOCFO: *Your website shows a number of well-known customers. How do you get them to at least take a look? Is it difficult to get in and how important is the longevity of your company when you are speaking with a prospective customer?*

Mr. Wise: At AVOXI, we have a methodology of identifying the big clients, which we call ‘whales.’ We have created criteria to find these customers which includes a certain amount of revenue, how long the customer has been in business, what industry the customer is in, and what their requirements are. Once we look at them and determine whether they fit the criteria, then we put together our ‘A team’, if you will, and we learn everything we can about the company. We hunt them differently than we would hunt any other customer in that we seek to take fear off the table. You mentioned in your question how big companies like buying from big companies because nobody gets in trouble for buying from Cisco, for example. However, they also like buying from smaller companies, as well, because they can be more accommodating of their clients’ specific needs. Also, smaller companies can generally bring disruptive technology to the table that can make big financial impacts on their company. They are buying from a smaller company to take fear off the table, and for us, the way to do it is by giving the prospective whale the full package. We give them things like our articles of incorporation; we give them copies of our license, bios of all of our management, contacts of our bank relationships, and copies of our audited financials. We do this to take fear off the table. We do that because we know that is what we need to do. Before they even ask for it, we provide them this information to get them comfortable with us and then we connect the CEOs, COOs, and the chief technology officers from each company with one another. We connect with the equivalent at that other company. Sometimes we are dealing with the general manager vs. the CEO or the IT director vs. the CPO. We try

to marry up with the person on the other side so the customer does not feel like there are being sold. We want to educate them as much as we can so they feel like they are making a good buying decision.

CEOCFO: *What have you learned in The Citadel that has helped in your in the business career?*

Mr. Wise: I think that execution is much more important than planning. I do not mean that planning is not important; we do a lot of planning, but it really gets difficult when you begin executing it. Even if you are not succeeding right away, be persistent and stay at it, looking at the details and understand what is going on. The other thing is, do not be afraid.

CEOCFO: *What is next for AVOXI?*

Mr. Wise: AVOXI has some cool new products, we are making, as well as updating our user interface for better functionality. When creating new products, we look at our clients needs to decide what we need to create. I spend a great deal of time on the plane flying to see customers and team members. We get in front of our customers and hear what they want. We also want to expand our channel program. Today the channel program sits in South Africa and there are many opportunities available in several other markets that we are interested in expanding the channel program too.

CEOCFO: *Why AVOXI?*

Mr. Wise: If you want to go global and you have a call center, AVOXI is the right fit for you. We have many years of experience in international call center solutions, and will work hand in hand with you to help you achieve your business VoIP goals.



AVOXI

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