

## Cloud-based Hosted Voice over IP Service for Small Businesses, Realtors, Virtual Teams, Professional Services and Call Centers



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- Scott Seltzer

**CEOCFO: *Mr. Seltzer, what is the basic idea behind ConnectMe and ConnectMe Voice?***

**Mr. Seltzer:** We are a hosted Voice over IP service company. Our flagship product replaces a traditional phone system with one that uses the Internet and uses a cloud based infrastructure to provide features. Instead of going out to buy an actual phone system and pay for the hardware, and then phone lines to connect with the telephone networks, you just purchase business class phones that connect right up to your internet and you get every kind of feature imaginable, delivered to you through the cloud. It is a much more efficient way of delivering phone service.

**CEOCFO: *Are companies still looking at traditional systems? Where are we in the overall migration?***

**Mr. Seltzer:** We still have lots and lots of customers that are coming to us because their old phones are getting broken down and replacing them and maintaining them is very expensive, so that is still going on, therefore there is lots of growth in our industry. There are also many customers that already have hosted Voice over IP, or premise based Voice over IP systems and we will sometimes get business by competitive takeover on some of those.

**CEOCFO: *How is VoIP looked at today and why is ConnectMe Voice the right Voice over IP to choose?***

**Mr. Seltzer:** I think the reputation for Voip as an industry is evolving and getting much better. The availability of reliable and inexpensive bandwidth is improving. The availability of routers that are not causing problems for VoIP are getting less expensive, and the providers themselves are finding ways to better accommodate all the various scenarios out there. The reliability in many cases is better than traditional phone service now. Quality, as long as you have solid internet connection, is typically better to much better than what they had before. We are really seeing the industry come of age now. What makes ConnectMe different is we have developed our own platform, so it enables us to have quite a bit of flexibility in the way we can design features for customers, adapt to what they really need, and our pricing is a much better model for many of our customers because we price on a per simultaneous call pad basis instead of pricing based on every single user that is out there. It ends up coming out to be much better for them.

**CEOCFO: *What is the difference?***

**Mr. Seltzer:** Let us say we have a company with 100 people. That company may have 25 phone lines right now. We go in and put hosted Voice over IP in. Many of our competitors will say you have to pay 100 times whatever that number is. We say you do not need 100 phone lines, you only need 25 because that is all you had before, so we are going set it up with 25 and simply limit the service to 25 simultaneous calls just like you did with your old phone system. Therefore, it ends up being considerably less money because you are paying for 25 instead of 100. If you are multi unit business or have units

scattered across the country, we can aggregate all of that into one account so that your call pass can be centralized. It just keeps the rates down. The other thing that we are focused on are features that customers really need such as call parking, monitoring, and recording, as an example. Everything that they are used to doing on their traditional phones systems, but a lot more. Another thing that really separates us from a lot of competitors is very strong support for call centers. We do a lot of work with call centers and we are integrated with various call center CRM tools. For very reasonable rates, we can provide world-class call center features for customers as well.

**CEOCFO: Are companies turning to you because they understand the difference and the depth of what you are offering or are people surprised that you seem to be on the side of your client as opposed to an adversary?**

**Mr. Seltzer:** All of the above. A lot of our business today comes to us as a result of the relationships we have developed with our partners. A high percentage of our sales today are sold through partners, who are often IT service providers. We also have CRM providers out there who resell our services. We also have some telecom providers who resell our services when their customers decide upon hosted solutions. We make it very easy to do business with us, and we create an advantageous pricing scenario, allowing their customers better rates than their competitors are offering. A great deal of our focus is through those partners. The partners have relationships with the customers, so you have a trusted IT services provider and they recommend voice over IP phones services. When the service is recommended by their IP provider, customers tend to go with their recommendation.

**CEOCFO: Do customers care that it is ConnectME and know that when they are dealing through a reseller or partner?**

**Mr. Seltzer:** In most cases, they do know, but we are flexible with our partners who do prefer a private label service. These are partners who sell, support it and bill for the service.

**CEOCFO: What is an example of what a customer might look for that is a little more specialized and how you are able to put it together for them?**

**Mr. Seltzer:** We work with various CRM providers, so let us say for example, of our major partners is a crm and progressive dialing solution. We provide the call center features, and enable the outbound phone calls through a softphone running on their computer. We can then provide features such as the ability to have a pre-selected voicemail to be left while they are on to the next call (message drop). This along with the ability to have call recordings tagged to the customer records, screen pops to identify the customer when a call comes in, and smart CallerID. Smart CallerID allows the customers to display a CallerID which matches the area code they are calling.

**CEOCFO: How do you reach out?**

**Mr. Seltzer:** We exhibit at trade shows, online advertising, SEO and lots of blogging. A lot of what we do internally will be to outreach to find partners. We do that through tradeshow, email, social media and things of that nature. We then have a high level of focus on supporting our partner's and their sales and marketing activities.

**CEOCFO: What has changed over time and what have you learned along the way?**

**Mr. Seltzer:** I have learned how rapidly we have to change. We have been around in one form or another since the early 90s. We started out as a voice messaging company with custom voice messaging and IVR applications. Since then, we have seen every aspect of our industry change. For example, our primary service was delivered on toll-free numbers, which we charged \$.15 per minute for the time. Now, the vast majority of customers use local numbers, and time is included on a flat rate as part of the service. Of course, Voice over IP did not even exist when we first started. So, we have had to re-invent ourselves many times over the course of years.

**CEOCFO: How do you know when a new technology is right?**

**Mr. Seltzer:** That is a real challenge and we are constantly looking for new trends and features, evaluating how viable they are and seeing how much interest there is from our customers. We are going to tend to bring online features that have interest to our customers more often than not, as opposed to us just figuring something out that is going to be important to people. So, we are market driven.

**CEOCFO: What do people want now that that might be in the works?**

**Mr. Seltzer:** Perfection. They want everything to work all the time without any interruptions or issues. Every time they call anything regardless of whether it is a cell phone or not, it should work every time. That is exactly what we strive for at least in the parts of the world that we can control. That is the number one thing that people want, everything to work perfectly all the time with not hassles. As far as features are concerned, the one thing we are bringing out there that is the ability to send SMS text messages to your company phone number. This means you can have interactive text chats with

customers using our portal, instead of a phone. I think that is a big deal. If someone were to text most company phone numbers right now, it would not go anywhere, so now the messages are no longer missed, and it provides a new and desirable way to communicate with customers.

**CEO CFO: *What features do you offer that people are not realizing the value?***

**Mr. Seltzer:** Since it is so new, I would have to say that it is the SMS texting feature. This is really the way that many people prefer to communicate, and every business could take advantage of this new means of communications.

**CEO CFO: *Would you tell us about the choices of equipment your customers have? Do they care as long as it works well?***

**Mr. Seltzer:** Some customers do. When it comes to the actual phones themselves, we are definitely in favor of Aastra, which is now owned by Mitel. We will support all the IP phone models out there, such as Polycom, Cisco, Yealink, pretty much all of them, but we like the Aastra Phones because of the way we can make it work very well when it comes to monitoring, which is known in our industry as BLF. This makes it possible to easily park a call, and be able to press a single button to do a transfer, or intercept a call, and we really like the way that we are able to implement that with Aastra. These are the phone features that customers really need.

**CEO CFO: *What is your geographic range?***

**Mr. Seltzer:** The good thing about Voice over IP is we can work anywhere. We have customers all over the US and Canada, and a few down in Central America and a couple in the UK. However, most of them are in the United States, with a special concentration in the New York metropolitan area, and Dallas/Fort Worth Texas.

**CEO CFO: *How is business?***

**Mr. Seltzer:** It has been a great year. There is absolutely nothing to complain about.

**CEO CFO: *How do you ease the fears of implementation?***

**Mr. Seltzer:** When we start up new service, we have a project call and talk with them about the implementation and explain how everything is going to get up and running, working and tested before you ever send any real traffic to your phones. We place your new phone on your desk along with your old phone, we make sure the calls are routed correctly and tested, and then the day that we switch live traffic over, we will generally be there so that if there is any questions on how to use it or things of that nature, we will be there. For most customers, we do on site training as well to make sure they are comfortable with using the features. The implementation therefore has no downtime, and we can make customers feel comfortable long before their inbound calls cut over.

**CEO CFO: *Why choose ConnectMe Voice?***

**Mr. Seltzer:** If you choose ConnectMe Voice, you are going to work with people who will actually get involved in your communications need, understand what you will need and provide the right solution and be there for you when it comes to training and support and service. At the same time, it is potentially saving you money on your phone bills.

