1Stream

A 1STREAM GUIDE FOR MSPs

Buy, Build, or Resell: How to Actually Add *Voice.*

The three paths every MSP faces when adding communications, the real costs nobody quotes, and why the model you choose quietly decides who ends up owning your client.

THE FORK IN THE ROAD

Every MSP that adds voice hits the same three-way fork

Sooner or later a client asks, or the opportunity is too obvious to ignore, and you decide to offer communications. Immediately you face three paths: build your own phone platform, resell or white-label someone else's, or partner with a platform built for MSPs. Most providers choose based on the upfront price tag, and many come to regret it, because the sticker price is the one number that has almost nothing to do with the real cost.

The decision that matters is not what voice costs to add. It is who carries the risk, and who ends up owning the client relationship.

> *The cheapest path to add voice is often the most expensive way to lose a client.*

OPTION ONE

Build it yourself

Standing up your own platform gives you maximum control, and on paper the margins look great. Then reality arrives. You inherit carrier relationships and the contracts behind them. You take on 911 and E911 obligations, where mistakes are not billing errors but safety and legal failures. You own telecom tax and regulatory compliance, which is its own minefield (covered in a companion guide). And you own uptime, which means the 2am outage is yours, pulling your best technicians off billable work to keep dial tone alive.

Building makes sense if communications is going to be a core part of your business and you are prepared to staff it like one. For most MSPs, it is a distraction that quietly consumes the margin it promised.

OPTION TWO

Resell or white-label a provider

This is the easy button, and that is exactly why so many MSPs reach for it. Someone else runs the platform; you put your name on it and move on. But easy comes with a structural cost. Your margin is whatever spread the provider allows. Your pricing is effectively theirs. Your control is limited to what their system exposes. And you are a middleman in your own client relationship, which brings a risk most MSPs never think about until it is too late.

The fox in the henhouse

When you resell or white-label another provider's platform, you invite a potential competitor inside your client's operations. They now have a relationship, technical access, and a billing footprint sitting in your account.

Plenty of providers started as pure telecom and later bolted on managed services. The day one of them decides to expand into what you do, they are already inside, and they did not have to knock. You handed them the front door.

> *White-labeling a competitor's platform means showing the fox where the henhouse door is.*

OPTION THREE

Partner with a platform built for the channel

The third path keeps the parts you want and offloads the parts you do not. You keep the client relationship and a healthy margin, because you are selling an owned, integrated outcome rather than reselling a commodity. Someone else carries the carrier relationships, the compliance, and the tax burden. And, critically, the right partner is structurally committed to the channel: it never sells direct and never offers the managed services you provide, so it has no path to become the fox. Its entire business depends on you winning with the client, not on eventually competing for them.

THE REAL QUESTIONS

What to actually ask before you choose

Price is easy to compare and mostly beside the point. These are the questions that separate a good decision from an expensive one:

- Who owns the client relationship in this model, me or the platform behind me?
- Who carries the 911, telecom tax, and regulatory liability when it goes wrong?
- What actually happens at 2am, and whose technicians are on the hook?
- Does this integrate with the PSA, CRM, and tools my clients already run?
- Is my platform vendor also a potential competitor, today or the day they change strategy?

WHERE 1STREAM FITS

Built for the channel, never against it

1Stream is AI Integrated Communications built exclusively for MSPs and IT service providers, delivered only through the channel. It never sells direct and never offers managed services, so it is structurally incapable of being the fox in your henhouse. You keep the client and the margin;

1Stream carries the platform, the integrations, and the compliance weight, and wires communications into the tools your clients already use. It is the third path, made deliberate.

Choosing how to add voice? Choose the model, not the sticker price.

See what a channel-only, integration-first platform looks like against your stack, and talk through the resale, referral, or hybrid path that fits how you want to sell.

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This guide is educational and reflects general industry dynamics and 1Stream's point of view. Figures and scenarios are illustrative. It is not tax, legal, or regulatory advice; confirm specifics for your situation with a qualified professional.