Stranger Than Fiction: Saving Enterprise Communication from the 'Upside Down'

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Eighties horror is enjoying a comeback with the new version of Stephen King's "It" and the widely acclaimed Netflix series "Stranger Things." The show centers around the disappearance of 12-year-old Will Byers, who ends up in a parallel dimension called the "Upside Down." While he is able to communicate with friends and family, the methods aren't exactly reliable or clear — a strangely familiar feeling for organizations trying to implement agile enterprise communication only to encounter their own version of a horror story: dropped calls, connection problems, and frustratingly limited functionality. Here's a look at how you can flip your communications paradigm if you're stuck in the enterprise Upside Down:

Hello? Hello?

As noted by TechCrunch, the future for enterprise communications is "suddenly exciting." Why? The market is breaking wide open as forward-thinking providers offer Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) solutions that match copper-wire reliability while also incorporating value-added features.
However, for many organizations, the future feels more like the phone call Will's mom receives from her missing son in the first episode: distorted, disjointed, and ultimately dropped. Many companies still think VoIP means they have to communicate with satellite offices or remote workers as if from another dimension, one where strong connections are impossible and there is a frustrating inability to relay even simple information. Now, imagine if Will had enterprise-grade, guaranteed-uptime VoIP in the Upside Down. The first episode would also be the finale, since the call would be crystal-clear and tracking his location would be no problem.

The Lights Are On, But No One's Home

In the show's third episode, Will uses a string of Christmas lights to communicate with his mother. They work out a code that lets him talk to her, and he indicates he is alive but unsafe. It's better than the dropped phone calls, but still cumbersome, since he can't do much more than answer yes-or-no questions.

Enterprises are familiar with this feeling. It's the one you get when network connections and quality of service are miserable and everything takes longer than it should. When latency and lag spike and the video conference you had planned goes down the drain, you can't complete the call on the docket since no one can log on. And since you don't want to cram what should be a give-and-take conversation into TL;DR emails, you're left with SMS or other messaging services — effectively flashing the lights across corporate environments so you can at least say you tried.

Toss the Upside Down of old, overburdened enterprise communication for the right-side up of cloud communications.

So, what's the solution? Enterprise cloud communication for borderless collaboration and high efficiency. Instead of struggling to find the bandwidth, resources, and platform to match corporate needs, cloud-based communication providers put everything required within reach, which both limits the need to string Christmas lights around the office and train employees in some kind of holiday-related work code.

There's one caveat here: You're not getting out of the enterprise Upside Down if last-mile networking hardware isn't up to the challenge. Even the best cloud providers can't overcome the limitations of decades-old routers or narrow-pipeline ISPs. Sort out your infrastructure before you bring in the cloud.

Enterprise Communication: More Than Just Talk

Will's friends discover he's alive by communicating with him via walkie-talkie that's performance-boosted by a telekinetic girl named Eleven. It's good enough, and they start looking for ways to save him.

For many enterprises, "good enough" is as good as it gets for communication. Users can talk to one another, but anything else is beyond the capability of existing systems. However, here's the thing: While you're stuck figuring out how to save staff from the Upside Down, other organizations have already closed the portal, killed the monster, and are working on strategies for next season.
According to No Jitter, that's the benefit of embracing disruptive forces such as unified communications-as-a-service. These solutions let enterprises tap high-performance video conferencing, VoIP calls, and multimedia support, all without the need to buy expensive hardware or provide on-site support. Think of it like tossing walkie-talkies for smartphones — if Will had "Find My iPhone" enabled, the "Upside Done" might be a more appropriate moniker.

Thankfully, there's no demogorgon lurking around your office and carting staff back to its lair in the Upside Down. However, there is a similar frustration: an inability to reach people when, where, and how you want that makes it feel like you're trying to contact another dimension. Get back up — toss the Upside Down of old, overburdened enterprise communication for the right-side up of cloud communications.

*Stranger things have happened. Contact a Vonage Business expert to learn more about cloud communications and the network efficiencies that enhance quality of service.*