



NHC'S POSITION IN THE EVOLVING WORK LANDSCAPE

A conversation with co-founder, Steve Gibbs



By Brady Hicks

As *THE Communications STACK* Provider, New Horizon Communications (NHC) connects its partners with the technology and resources that their business customers need to become profitable and grow. NHC prides itself on offering the right solutions, backed by its superior infrastructure, unprecedented services and support.

In a remote-work world, however, those needs only continue to change.

Whether you're talking about cloud connectivity, network management or something else, NHC believes that it can roll with the changes in demand. Recently, *Remote Work Solutions* magazine sat down with NHC co-founder, president and COO, Steve Gibbs to discuss NHC's role in the evolving remote workplace.

Remote Work Solutions: Could you please tell us a little about NHC?

Steve Gibbs: New Horizon Communications (NHC) has been

delivering cloud-based and legacy telco communications services to businesses nationwide since 2002. We market our services exclusively through a network of highly trusted partners. We are 100 percent partner driven. As *THE Communications STACK* Provider, NHC packages a wide range of technologies for business communications and collaboration. NHC stacks these packages into three layers:

Network Services for all types of network access.

Overlay Services such as UCaaS, VoIP, contact center, collaboration, SD-WAN, edge and cloud cybersecurity

Managed Services such as managed Wi-Fi, security monitoring and disaster recovery.



NHC co-founder, president and COO, Steve Gibbs

All of these are delivered on a single invoice, managed from a single pain of glass command portal with 24x7 NHC stateside support teams. In every transaction, we serve two customers: the partner and the end customer. NHC is obsessed about creating a positive customer and partner experience, from design through quoting, provisioning, project management, billing, repair and account management.

RWS: For the company with at-home workers, what needs to be considered?

SG: Beginning in March of 2020, businesses that could go virtual did so with all or most of their employees. This was accomplished ad-hoc and very quickly. What soon became obvious was folks working from home using the family's broadband connection also had to compete with everyone else's bandwidth needs in the family. Also, would a traditional corporate VPN provide enough network security, especially with

so many WFH employees accessing company servers from their residential Wi-Fi and public broadband connections? What happens when mission critical WFH employees lose their network connections? What tools are available to track WFH productivity?

Two years later, working from home for part of the week is now the permanent norm. This means the edge of the corporate network is now an employee's home. But before we get into our solutions technology, consider the burdens of managing "part of the week" work-from-home networks or full-time virtual employees. If a business has three locations and 50 employees – and it's the type of business that can operate virtually – it does not have three locations; it has 50 locations to manage. Enterprise customers with 10 locations and 1,000 employees must manage 1,000 locations. Most business IT organizations are not set up to manage this much remote network. We have installed or migrated many thousands of locations in the U.S. and Canada, all under 24x7 support.

Because of COVID, the working world has fundamentally changed. On the plus side, people no longer face long commutes every workday. Those hours of commute time can be used for more productive work

For example, it's proving to be very effective and popular for call center type functions by eliminating the "boiler room" atmosphere of customer service centers. It attracts quality workers that could otherwise not commute into offices. Downsides include employee isolation, lack of team cohesion and decline of company culture. All of these result in higher-than-normal employee turnover. The jury is still out on the long-term effects of full-time or part-time WFH. The key to making it work better is using communications technology that helps everyone in an organization to utilize cloud applications that enable teams to work together, talk, text and see each other like they're all in the same building.

RWS: How is THE Communications STACK Provider uniquely positioned to support telework?

SG: We have all of the tools and resources that a business will need to effectively support full-time in-office, partial WFH or full-time WFH environments. The key for a business in any configuration is to be able to communicate with customers, vendors/suppliers and co-workers transparently regardless of a worker's location. Your phone and office follow you – not the other way around. We achieve this with our newVoice UCaaS solution. We own our VoIP switches and have more than a dozen years of experience supporting thousands of customer installations of every size from single residential work from home to large campus environments. UCaaS technology enables users to send and receive calls from anywhere there is an internet connection, all via a stand-alone phone, mobile device, PC, laptop or tablet, and all with the same advanced features of a PBX. Add to that the ability to see who is available in an organization for calls, as well as to send and receive text messages or video conference anytime. Our VoIP switches are made by Metaswitch – now owned by Microsoft – so this gives us a real pathway to integrating Teams into our solutions mix. We also offer very sophisticated cloud-based contact center enhancements to our newVoice VoIP platform, with both operator and manager level features, tracking and reporting. Once, call centers had to be in large rooms with dedicated operators and supervisors all using expensive equipment and software. Now we can give users professional call center features and reporting, from the cloud to any location with Internet connectivity.

RWS: Are there any specific technologies to which you want to draw attention?

SG: Yes. One of the challenges with WFH is the workers' local

broadband connection, residential Wi-Fi and router. Family members are also using the connection at the same time for gaming, etc., meaning there could be some serious performance issues. Also, if the worker is in a more population-dense area, there could be multiple Wi-Fi networks laced over that location. We offer several solutions for businesses that want to have more-secure and better-performing internet for their employees. We can provide 4G LTE backup to an existing WFH Broadband connection to ensure the employee stays productive in the event of a cable failure. We can connect all the WFH employees into our CloudSecure virtual firewall, for secure communications between residences and businesses' corporate applications. And for more-robust installations requiring higher levels of protection and performance, we have a package of solutions that includes an SD-WAN box with our integrated EdgeSecure gateway, utilizing existing broadband combined with one of our 4G LTE or 5G wireless broadband connections. This can really pump up the performance of the residential broadband connection at a much lower cost than trying to add another land-based, dedicated internet connection. We also add our secure Wi-Fi solution so the user at home is completely isolated from their residential local network.

RWS: What sort of things can we expect from NHC in the future?

SG: More Teams-related UCaaS features. Increased proliferation of 5G and how it will improve customers access options and speed, getting the service activated. There remains a shortage of workers out there and customers want us to provide more managed turnkey solutions. ♦

For more information on NHC: THE Communications STACK Provider, be sure to visit www.nhcgrp.com or call (855) 600-4NHC.