

# NOT YOUR FATHER'S RESELLER

TNCI CONTINUES TO BREAK THE MOLD TO THE BENEFIT OF THE CHANNEL

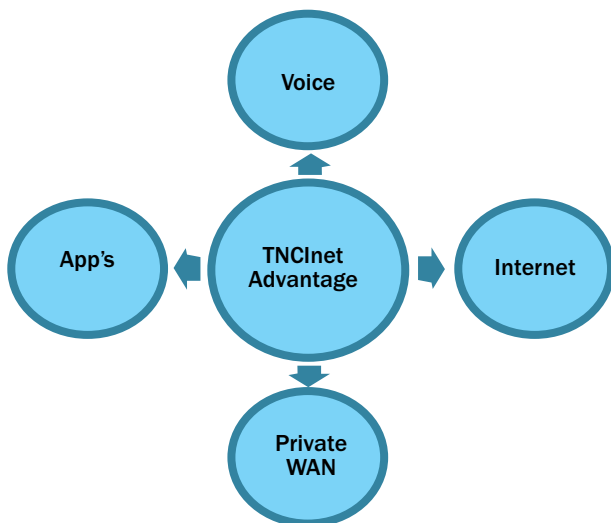
By **Martin** Vilaboy

With the steps it has taken during the past few years, TNCI has been redefining its role in the channel and, in some ways, has recast the mold of what a traditional “reseller” looks like. What started two years ago with the deployment of Cedar Point’s Safari C Multimedia Switching System – marking the introduction of TNCI’s first facilities-based offering – has evolved into the acquisition and launching of an MPLS backbone connecting TNCI to its end-user customers, followed by its continuing alignment with several access networks.

The end result is the company’s own suite of TNCI-net Advantage solutions delivered over a nationwide private IP access network. All TNCI-net Advantage solutions include a true managed services component, says the company, with 24/7 network monitoring and utilization reports.

It’s an offering that certainly sounds more “carrier” than “reseller,” or possibly “virtual carrier,” if one prefers. Either way, this shift is being made without any indications the company is losing touch with the value proposition it has always provided the marketplace, as well as the base of master agent and agent partners that helped make the investments possible.

## TNCI-net Advantage Offers Converged Communications Delivered Over its Nationwide Footprint



The bringing together of access networks, for example, largely was motivated by a desire to “get closer to our customers with our application core, which is the business dial tone that we deliver,” says Josh Ploude, TNCI’s director of network architecture.

All the while, TNCI remains “a 100 percent agent-focused company,” says Brenda MacDonald, TNCI vice president of carrier relations. This is evidenced by last summer’s launch of the groundbreaking Agent Equity Plan.

More recently, one needs to look no further than TNCI’s most recent addition to its TNCI-net Advantage portfolio to find indications of its consistency in commitment. This spring, TNCI is focusing on its new nationwide DIA services starting out as low as \$299 for loop and port delivered over its private IP network.

By leveraging its newly acquired access network capabilities, TNCI not only is able to offer agents and their customers connections at a very competitive rate, “but at the same time,” say Ploude, “there is a very smooth migration from the DIA service to overlaying voice and increasing average revenue for those users.”

In other words, “DIA is something that is being promoted, but the network supports the core voice applications,” he says. “So anyone who is DIA today will be a converged voice and data customer down the road.”

For agents and distributors, it’s hard to view a provider with the strength of a carrier and the objectives and mindset of an indirect-oriented reseller as anything but positive for the channel. Armed with its own private IP network, “we can do more to accommodate any of the applications agents may come across with their end users,” says MacDonald.

“We don’t just make an offer based on our rack rate and then walk away if it doesn’t work,” she continues. “We work with our agents and really try to accommodate them as best we can.”

What also can’t be overlooked in all of this is the impact to the aforementioned Agent Equity Plan. After all, anything that increases the overall value of TNCI, including the ownership of facilities and a network, potentially increases the value of an eventual transaction.

So, in a sense, every end user an agent places on the new TNCI network potentially contributes to the ultimate payout to the plan’s participants. □