

Interview with Sara at Next Degree Communications

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Sara Sink, owner of [Next Degree Communications](#) is a long-time Vertical dealer. We sat down with Sara to talk about her background, her perspective on the industry, and why she loves working with Vertical.



What's your background?

My Mom was a telephone operator and I was interested in telephones at an early age. One of my first jobs was as a receptionist at a local business and I was in charge of researching and choosing a new phone system for the office. After meeting with that rep, I sent a letter back that I was interested in the telephone industry—and was hired immediately. After 2 years I decided that I wanted to do things differently and decided to start my own company with my husband.

How did you grow and build your company? How did you become a Vertical dealer?

In 2000 we started selling Panasonic. Then, in 2001, we became a Comdial dealer. When Vertical bought Comdial, we moved into the SBX and MBX and have continued to sell most of the Vertical product line. Currently, we're selling Summit and iPECS Cloud from Vertical. We support somewhere between 300 and 400 customers in Southeastern Iowa and West Central Illinois. Ours is a relatively small operation. We used to sell about 2 contracts per month, but recently, especially with all the people interested in moving to the Cloud, it's 3 or 4 or even 5 per month.

What do you like most about the current products and services from Vertical?

The best thing about my relationship with Vertical is the support I receive from the entire Vertical team. From my sales manager, to the warehouse, to customer service, to (especially) tech support, namely Toni and Rich, they rock!

We love Summit's ease of use for the end user and the ability to make it do pretty much anything. As for iPECS, with the new iPECS One pricing, we're the most competitive in the market. The new iPECS One interfaces are on par with the rest of the market and at a reasonable price. Because the programming for iPECS is so similar Summit, it was easy to transition into. Because of the web-based programming I can even do it from my cell phone! Perhaps more importantly, with both products the reliability of the equipment is stellar.

How does Vertical help you solve your customers' communications problems?

I find that proper installation is key to everything, and comprehensive collaboration with the end user prior to installation keeps post-installation issues at a minimum. With iPECS Cloud, they don't need to invest in hardware, and upgrades are included in the monthly costs. During COVID, being able to reroute calls to mobile phones was very easy to do in both Summit and iPECS Cloud.

Almost every time we compare with existing telco service, we can save customers money with Vertical VoIP trunks, which helps offset any hardware investment. And with the 3 months' free promo on iPECS Cloud, those who are CAPEX adverse can easily move to the Cloud at minimal costs. Moreover, the ability to reuse Summit systems and phones to connect to iPECS Cloud makes us more competitive. Vertical offers digital endpoints that will work on both the Summit system and iPECS Cloud, which is great for those who don't have the infrastructure to support IP endpoints at all locations. We have a solution for any opportunity we come across.

What do you see for the future of telecom?

While everything is moving to Cloud, I feel there will still be a need for traditional systems, especially in the Midwest with all the old and historic buildings, where it is cost prohibitive to run new cable. There are even those who are restricted from full cloud use because of State or Federal regulations. I foresee more things becoming WiFi and Bluetooth enabled and more integrations with other cloud products.