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## FrontRange kicks off Abilitec channel dispute



### europe

US-BASED helpdesk specialist FrontRange Solutions has sparked a vendor row with claims it poached UK-based IT management software reseller Abilitec from arch-rival Remedy. But Remedy - which is wholly owned by US-based management software giant BMC - has hit back, claiming it terminated relations with 20-strong Abilitec.

Chris Hyde, BMC software alliances manager, told *IT Europa*: 'I can confirm that on March 31, 2004, Remedy terminated the contract with Abilitec as the partner failed to meet the financial targets set as part of the terms and condition outlined within the Remedy Alliance program.'

But Abilitec maintains it 'dropped' Remedy. 'We've been talking to FrontRange and looking to move away from Remedy for some time,' explains Mark Cowan, managing director at the company. 'We had problems with Remedy's scalability and channel management. BMC wants everyone to be a BMC house and it simply didn't fit in with the fact we're a big Micromouse partner.'

FrontRange claims the alliance is part of an on-going programme of competitive recruitment. 'We recently signed Telecentral, a CRM specialist and Cisco partner in the UK,' says Andy White, director of business development at the 400-strong company. 'We're also in conversation with Cisco resellers across Europe, several of which will go public in the coming weeks.'

The vendor is attempting to build on its 150-strong European channel in order to push five new SMB-focused product sets it is launching to accompany its flagship HEAT and Goldmine helpdesk solutions. The company has put a raft of channel goodies in place - including logistical support, access to marketing funds and discounts for partners who hit sales targets - to help attract more resellers.

But White reckons FrontRange's appeal to the channel extends beyond partner incentives. 'The big guys still have enterprise grade software,' adds White in a thinly veiled dig at BMC and Cisco. 'Changing that for an SMB is tough and changing the operational structure of these companies is

almost impossible... we're built for this market.'

The company's visibility should also increase drastically in the new year as it gears up for an IPO. 'We plan to float on the NASDAQ next year,' confirms White. 'It'll give us more financial clout for marketing, R&D and possibly acquisitions into new technology areas such as knowledge management.' [www.frontrange.com](http://www.frontrange.com)

### our analysis

When it comes to competitive recruitment conspiracy theories abound as vendors and/or resellers play a game of realpolitik: issuing contested statements that attempt to save face at being snubbed. The one certainty from this affair is that FrontRange is making progress and is set to become a greater annoyance to its larger rivals. That said one or two poached partners does not make a pan-European network, and the company has a long way to go to genuinely challenge the dominance of Cisco and Remedy. For the full transcript of our interview with Andy White catch the next issue of *IT Europa*.