

MSPs and MDM: A Golden Opportunity

Mobile is big -- just how big is reflected in current shipments of mobile devices. Samsung shipped more than 60 million Android-powered smartphones in the last quarter. Apple shipped more than 149 million iPhones so far in 2012. And tablet vendors, led by Apple and Samsung, shipped more than 100 million tablets this year to date.

In total, more than 1 billion mobile devices are in circulation today, and most of them are consumer devices owned by individuals. Mobile devices have obliterated the line between work and personal lives, as end users want to consolidate their digital activities onto fewer devices. This trend is widely known as bring-your-own-device (BYOD).

For businesses, BYOD is a blessing and a curse. For the first time, end users are willing to buy and provision their own devices, sparing businesses the expense of refreshing PCs and paying for expensive data and voice plans. However, end users aren't completely decoupling from their employers' IT department; they expect the IT department to provide configuration, maintenance and application support.

Businesses on all levels are struggling to gain control over this mobile paradox. At risk are their productivity, data security, operational integrity, internal policies and external regulatory compliance. While there are more than three dozen suppliers of mobile device management (MDM) technologies, the fragmentation of mobile device platforms and added expense are hindering adoption.

While business consumers understand the need for exercising control over mobile devices they and their employees own, it's difficult for them to justify the expense. Adopting MDM requires investments in technology, training, staffing and policy creation -- and mobile devices often don't eliminate the need for conventional PC endpoints. In fact, many businesses are adopting thin clients to augment the BYOD trend. To the IT consumer, all this adds up to more expense with rapidly eroded benefit.

MDM as a managed service is the formula that provides the right value to end customers. MDM-as-a-service eliminates the need for expensive software evaluations and acquisitions, the training of staff, and ongoing maintenance and support. Through an MSP, the end customer gains all the MDM benefits as part of a comprehensive managed services contract or through a nominal add-on fee for the additional activity. As with other IT management functions, the managed services model reduces the expense and complexity of the mobile management technology to put it in reach of even the smallest business.

For MSPs, MDM enhances value. All managed services are engaged in a never-ending struggle to maintain value and stave off commoditization. By offering mobility management, MSPs are extending their value to customers, opening the opportunity for horizontal sales and eliminating a need for accounts to see other providers for services. Because MDM is a new technology, its high profit potential will replace the lost profit value in declining services.

While more than 1 billion mobile devices are in circulation today, the mobile trend is just getting started. Microsoft's release of Windows 8 will usher in a new generation of tablets. The arrival of Windows Phone 8 and the new Blackberry 10, along with the growing number of iPhone and Android phone users, will continue to smartphone explosion. And there's a whole new generation of mobile devices set for 2013 and beyond. In addition, MDM opens up the opportunity for MSPs to move to per-user pricing model that offers potentially higher margins.



Steve Ricketts, VP of Marketing

Continuum recently struck a partnership with FiberLink, a leading provider of MDM services, to create the new “Continuum MDM powered by FiberLink’s MaaS360,” an extension to Continuum’s SaaS-based managed services. Through this relationship, Continuum managed service providers can support mobile devices in the same way they remotely monitor and manage PC endpoints and network-connected servers.

Mobile will soon be the rule, not the exception. Continuum and its MSPs will be well prepared to meet the expanding challenges and rapid changes in this dynamic market.

Steve Ricketts, VP of Marketing, Continuum, which provides an end-to-end intelligent remote monitoring and management solution, 24 x 7 Service Desk, and business continuity platform offering – all integrated with a 24/7 Network Operations Center (NOC) that enables MSPs to profitably backup, monitor, troubleshoot and maintain IT environments.