

# MSPs: Don't Get Stuck In A Break/Fix Rut

Discover how — and why — you should be selling a monthly, ongoing IT monitoring and management service.

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Over the past few years, I've had countless conversations with PacketTrap MSP customers and prospects. In most cases, the topic of conversation shifts to business development, revenue cycle, and ways to use PacketTrap MSP to better service customers. Even at industry events, managed service providers spend far more time at sessions or talking to industry experts about revenue generation, rather than checking out the latest wares from vendors. Perhaps the simplest recommendation I can offer is that MSPs should begin to shift away from the traditional break/fix model to a professional IT services model of billing and service delivery.

Let's look at the process by which a customer contacts an MSP. Most of our MSP customers are providing IT consulting to small to midsize businesses that have limited on-staff IT resources. Beyond initial projects to set up networks and facilitate network management, add new users, or manage implementations of new hardware or software, you only get a call as the default service desk when something breaks. Assuming you receive the call in a timely manner and actually have a technician available to service the customer, at best you're looking at only a few billable hours for the technician, and depending on the issue, perhaps an opportunity to upsell new technology or services to fix a larger issue. As worst, you can't accommodate the service call, which will send your customer elsewhere and damage your service reputation. More importantly, what the SMB might not realize is that getting into the habit of calling an MSP when they have an issue or failure costs them as well, specifically in terms of IT system down time.

While this scenario illustrates the inefficiency and business risk associated with a break/fix approach, selling a professional IT services contract to SMBs is much easier said than done.

## Practical Tips For Transitioning To A Full-Service IT Business

So, how can you make the case for selling a monthly, ongoing IT monitoring and management program? It begins with being able to outline the value of ongoing network monitoring and network management. The single best way to do that is to be prepared to discuss your value proposition. Practice these lines for use when talking to clients and prospects:

*We have technology in place to provide ongoing monitoring of your critical IT systems. For you, that means we can identify — and in many cases address — an IT issue before you or your employees are even aware. That means less downtime and less worry. Let us focus on your IT while you focus on everything else.*

When discussing the value of delivering real-time monitoring and management, it will help to define IT system downtime and lag time, and the resulting costs. While it's easy to understand the cost and productivity that could be lost from a catastrophic IT incident (for instance, an email server going down and leaving employees without one of their core IT systems), consider this: even if employees experience a 10 second delay when accessing an IT system they use every day, throughout the day, it adds up to poor productivity and

wasted costs. You can become an SMB's CTO, evaluating all IT systems to optimize network resources and ensure that employees have immediate access to the systems they need to do their jobs.

A good sales team can help transition current clients to a recurring revenue model and sell monthly professional IT services contracts to new prospects. But, it's important to hire a sales associate that is familiar with selling services. In my next post, I'll go over best practices for building out a sales team. Stay tuned.

In the meantime, have you had success moving clients away from break/fix? ●



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