

In this month's hAPPenings, we look at the fundamentals of running an MSP and how to grow your business. We look at the common struggles with growth, and what could be harming this growth. We discuss the benefits of a paperless office and finally look at how a virtual administrator could transform your day-to-day working. We hope you enjoy the read!

## COMMON STRUGGLES WHEN GROWING AN MSP BUSINESS

Starting any business is a struggle at the start, but with the right practices and procedures in place, managed services providers can do well in a market of their choosing. It does not have to be based on the size of the overall investment or even how many clients an MSP has right from the start, but there are times when the struggle can get too real.

When growing an MSP business, it can be tough to not know where you're headed. Today's business environment carries along with it a strong sense of instability which can scare for any MSP owner. This month, we're looking into the common struggles MSPs face when growing business and how they can come out of it alive and kicking.



### Lacking a Strong Lead Generation Method

Well established MSPs use several lead generation methods to expand business and build their client base. It can seem like an attractive option to go all in right from the start but ends up usually being a bad idea when you are spread out too thin.

Focus on your strengths and weaknesses. Some MSPs have great referral programs and get most of their clients from there. Other MSPs are strong digitally and are generating leads from website traffic and through

the use of online tools. Figure out what works best for your MSP and focus more resources on what is working before going into the unknown.

### No Unique Value Proposition

Every business needs a unique value proposition (USP). Without it, a business would not be any different from the many competitors already working in the industry. What makes your MSP stand out from the rest? Is it the prices or level of service quality you provide?

Find your niche and work on promoting it. This can mean even being a specialized service provider for a specific industry and gaining an expertise entirely in that. Look for a unique strength which defines your company better from all of the others and this will really capture attention.

Is there anything missing in today's MSP industry? If so, work on bridging that gap and solving problems for clients who have been looking to have their prayers answered. Be that answer for them and get those clients coming to you.

### Show the Value

Why should a client choose your MSP over any other? Why would they trust you in the first place? MSPs do not realize that in today's business environment, trust is an undeniable reality which strongly influences decisions.

Instead of being too salesy and always pushing for the deal, let the lead know why you are the best for them and how you know to solve their problems in the best way.

Putting in that extra effort can seem like time and money which could be spent elsewhere, but when an MSP is struggling, it can really pay off.

# IS EMAIL HARMING YOUR BUSINESS?

It seems like emails have now been around forever and are an essential for any business to increase employee collaboration. The fact is that emails were once seen as a more formal way on conversating in business and considered to be of use only in the most dire situations. Instead, the phone or even physically talking to someone was seen as the way to get something done.

Now, email has become a part of our everyday lives with our smartphone buzzing constantly round the clock. New notifications fill up our personal time which should be spent with family, friends or even ourselves. This could end up harming your business instead of making it more productive, as many managers would assume it to be.



The statement of emails harming business is also true when it comes to communicating with customers. There are so many SPAM emails being sent to everyone on a daily basis that most of the real messages just get lost in the noise. Clients rather would get a call on an appointed time and date instead of seeing a random email popup. Especially if it's a lengthy one which they have to dedicate time out for.

No body has time to clear up their calendar for a 500-word email which is going to end up doing nothing for them. At many times, emails can end up becoming long threads of conversations back and forth which take place over days and weeks, when the real issue at hand could have been resolved over a five-minute phone call.

For MSPs, using the phone to reach out to potential and especially current customers is the best way to go. Paying customers are not fond of reading messages and getting important notifications of their services which they may miss out on. Rather than writing something important in an email, make the effort of personally conveying the message over a simple phone call. Your clients will thank you for it.

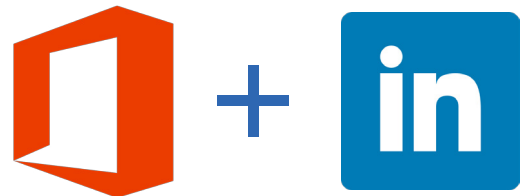


Sales isn't any different now either. There was an era of mass emailing which ended up getting customers to sign up. That was when email was new and people were enthusiastic about opening up their inbox. Now, email services usually route any marketing messages to the SPAM folder or better yet, to categorized folders which a majority of the population never opens up to see.

There is no doubt that email is a powerful way to get the message across. Only when all other methods and channels of communication have been tried and tested. There is always an appropriate time to choose to make a call, go for a face-to-face meeting or send out an email. If MSPs strategically implement policies to differentiate between the three and put down stringent rules for when to use any of the three methods, it could be a highly beneficial move.

## Pioneering Newsbytes

### LinkedIn to be Integrated with Microsoft Office Apps



Microsoft now being the managing company of popular professional social network LinkedIn, has decided to deeply integrate it into Office and other applications. This could allow users and members of each other's networks to collaborate easier, share more contact information and even get the conversation going.

Microsoft acquiring LinkedIn in a massive deal worth \$26 billion and has been working towards syncing it with the rest of its products and services line up. It will be interesting to see how 'deep' that integration can really go and how popular it will be among users.

# A PAPERLESS OFFICE IS THE FUTURE

Being a part of the managed service providers industry, you would imagine that everything is online and our offices are completely paperless.

Unfortunately for many MSPs, that is not the case and some are even flooded by the weaves of paperwork which is taking over every inch of available space. Doing paperwork, taking time out to file it properly and spending hours later to find the right document is a serious waste of time for any MSP. Making the investment to become a paperless managed service provider is just another way of freeing up resources which could be put to better use and resultantly, benefit the business overall.



While it may be easier said than done, here are some of our latest tips for this month to help you clear out all that unnecessary paper and turn your office into a completely digital one:

## Adopt Electronic Storage

Electronic storage is cheaper than it has ever been and available in vast quantities. A few gigabytes can take an entire office out of the world of paper and into the world of digital. The best part is having the ability to make several backups so there is never any fear of losing important documents.

Everything is available, can be searched within seconds and will never lose any quality because of it being stored online. Paper on the other hand, loses its structure and can end up being a major loss for any MSP if it relies entirely on it.

A great way to take everything online is by getting a quality scanner and having everything uploaded to a central storage space. This could be in the cloud or on physical storage spaces in the office which are dedicated to a specific department to manage.

## Do Some Spring Cleaning

Have an office administrator? Assign them the task of taking everything online and doing the spring cleaning. Every MSP can use a clean up every now and then and yours shouldn't be the exception.

It is all about dedicating one or a couple of resources to get the job done, but when it is finished, the entire office will be highly grateful for the mess that is now gone.

Not choosing to becoming a paperless office in today's day and age is just an excuse. There is nothing stopping your MSP from becoming an example of good business practices and a promoter of global green initiatives. Don't only consider the benefit it has on your office but also take into consideration the impact all that paper has on the globe overall.

If all MSPs were to become completely paperless, our overall global carbon footprint would be majorly impacted for the better. Now that's an initiative any business can get behind.

## Pioneering Newsbytes

### Major Data Alliance announced by SAP, Microsoft and Adobe



Customer information will be better accessible according to latest news by software giants SAP, Microsoft and Adobe. This move is being made to help clients running their software to maximize on business opportunities by seeing more of the customer.

In what is being regarded as a 'Open Data Initiative' data exchange and interoperability will now be a reality between various applications made by the three companies. The recently enacted GDPR, which is a European data privacy law, is largely being seen as a reason for companies to figure out creative solutions for when it comes to storing and sharing user information.

## VIRTUAL ADMINISTRATORS WILL TRANSFORM YOUR PRODUCTIVITY

Have you ever wondered about freeing up time in your daily schedule to do things which are more impactful for your business? It could even be freeing up time to spend with family and friends or even on yourself for a change. That is something many business owners in today's MSP industry wish they could do but never end up taking the steps required to do so.

It is stressful working constantly, day in and out for 16 hours non-stop. Business owners have it this way for most of their lives, especially during the establishing and growth stages. In the current business environment, these stages never seem to phase out now.

How about getting a virtual administrator or even a team of them? You have probably heard the term 'virtual assistant' from a friend or during a networking session around town. It may seem strange and even confusing to not have an assistant physically present in your office. Unfortunately, many business owners just do not have the extra resources or even trust to hire someone to take over some of their tasks for them.

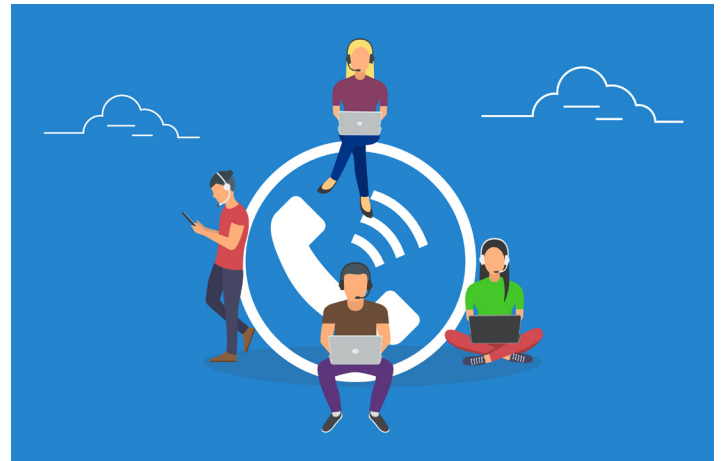


This is where the miraculous world of virtual administrators comes in. It is a whole new place which business owners are yet to fully explore, but those who do, never end up going back to normalcy.

Imagine having someone thousands of miles away from you, costing a fraction of the amount you would pay someone locally and still getting an amazing job done whenever needed. For one personal assistant here, you could hire an entire squad of virtual administrators abroad who specialize in tasks ranging from graphic design to accounting and even managing your daily schedule. The opportunities are virtually limitless!

Talking to business owners who are so overwhelmed with their work that they are unable to focus on

anything else points toward one reason for all of it. They just do not trust anyone else to get the sort of job done that they are themselves doing. It makes sense. Being a business owner makes you treat your company as if it were your own baby. That's natural. But with all the talent available in today's job market, not taking advantage is the real loss.



One of the most significant reasons for business owners to consider getting a virtual administrator is to keep things running without them always having to be there. We all go through good and bad days and even some days which force us to stay in or not leave the bed. Having a trusted virtual administrator makes life that much easier without the additional stress of not knowing what will happen.

The possibility of freeing up time with a minimal investment is now all that much more possible. Don't spend another hour which you could invest better somewhere else today without seeing how a virtual administrator can work for you.



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www.devs4msps.com  
www.pioneeringprogrammers.com



1059 S Sherman Street  
#140 Richardson, Texas, TX 75081



info@devs4msps.com



972-895-3100