




solarwinds  
msp

6 Principles to Take Your  
MSP Business from

good<sup>2</sup>  
**GREAT**

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**E**very MSP wants to be great. You can imagine the type: the MSP that has every customer configured identically, technicians working productively using a central, multi-tenant management solution, and customers happy to pay their bill each month.

Maybe this is you already. Or maybe you're "good" and have happy customers, but know you could improve your efficiency. Maybe you have a flaw or two, such as technicians running too many one-off tasks or you have inconsistent service levels. Regardless of where you're at, you can always improve to make your MSP "great".

***"There's no need to reinvent the wheel here..."***

#### **SO, HOW DO THE "GREAT" MSPS DO IT?**

How do they run smooth, streamlined operations and keep their customers happy? Luckily, the practices they use aren't out of reach for MSPs who want to grow, increase their offerings, or run more efficiently than they do today. There's no need to reinvent the wheel—just follow the lead of the MSPs who are already great.

In short, great MSPs work to create and scale a predictable business. This predictability encompasses every part of their business, including the services they offer, their staff, their revenue, and even the customers they work with, all without reducing the quality or speed of services provided. While every MSP does things a little differently, we've pulled together six core principles shared by every great MSP to help you build and grow your own predictable MSP business.



In this whitepaper, we'll cover the following 6 principles of great MSPs:

- Have frequent, non-technical customer meetings
- Track key revenue metrics
- Focus on customer-centric compensation
- Provide structured and simple service offerings
- Have documented, repeatable processes
- Deliver services using fully integrated technology

For each principle, we'll consider why it's important, provide guidance on how to implement it, and discuss specific examples to get you started.



01

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## HAVE FREQUENT NON-TECHNICAL CUSTOMER MEETINGS

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Customers won't blindly sign a contract and then expect to never have an update from you.

The onus is on you to come to them as part of your service delivery by periodically calling a meeting to discuss the state of your services.

This meeting should be non-technical with a focus on the strategic service you provide and the business needs of your customer, rather than on the specific patches you updated and the malware you removed. Your thinking here should be one of "strategic partner" and not "break/fix guy."

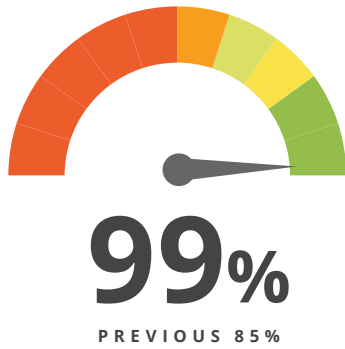


*“The onus is on you to come to customers as part of your service delivery.”*

It's important to have meetings like these because they reinforce your value to your clients by reminding them of the services you provide every day. But it's not just a bragging session where you cover what you did last quarter or last month—it's an opportunity for you to better

understand the changing needs of your customers. This will strengthen your relationships, while also providing an opportunity to increase your service footprint and adapt to your customers' current business objectives.

## EXAMPLE CUSTOMER DASHBOARD



	CURRENT SCORE	PREVIOUS SCORE
Asset Management		
Device Under Management	100.00%	100.00%
Server and Network Warranty	100.00%	0.00%
Workstation, Laptop & Mobile Warranty	100.00%	0.00%
Security Monitoring		
Antivirus	100.00%	84.00%
Windows Patching	100.00%	92.00%
Third Party Patching	88.00%	N/A
Hardware Firewall	100.00%	N/A
Data Protection	100.00%	N/A
Business Service Availability	100.00%	88.00%
Network Reliability	100.00%	75.00%
Performance	100.00%	
Servers		N/A
Ticket Summary	100.00%	86.00%

## COME PREPARED

To have these meetings achieve the goals of both updating a specific customer and hearing how you can better meet their needs, you have to come prepared.

- **Know the customer's network**  
This may seem obvious, but as you cover what was (and wasn't) accomplished since the last meeting, try to demonstrate your expertise over their network. This will come naturally if you work directly on their network. But if you don't, make sure to consult with the person who does before you enter the room. This meeting is about showing that you are (and want to continue to be) an integral part of their business, so knowing their network will reinforce this. Additionally, as the discussion turns to operational changes, your customer will expect you to lead an intelligent conversation about how those changes will impact the current state of their network.
- **Understand their technical challenges**  
Someone in your organization has been knee-deep in your customer's network. Talk to that employee to find out what current issues plague the client. It can be as simple as not having enough bandwidth or it could be something more complex,

like an old part of the network that they don't want to replace causing more problems than it solves. Also, research what feedback you already have from your customer and what you can do to help them be more productive and effective, as it will lead to a more useful meeting.

- **Keep what they value in mind**  
Every customer is different; some may value the peace of mind provided by having a backup solution in place, whereas others may be all about having the ability to print no matter what. Knowing this will help you prepare by setting the context for the meeting and deciding what information to present. For example, if the customer couldn't care less about the security of their network, leading with, "we patched all these systems, but a few machines need additional security updates," probably won't turn out well. Do your due diligence to make sure that the customer gets the message that you're laser-focused on what matters to them.

Now that you're a bit more prepared, what should you present in the meeting?

## **BE READY TO PRESENT**

This meeting should be formal enough that you have a presentation ready. You can likely use a standardized template for all your clients, then tailor portions to the specific client you're meeting with.

Your presentation should include the following:

**An environment overview**—This section can be more technical than others. Discuss the customer's environment, assets (e.g., a server coming off warranty), contracts, amendments, and general housekeeping. Mention any problems you ran into since the last meeting and how you solved them. This is a good time to bring up needed environment changes (remember that out-of-warranty server?)

**A "State of the Union"**—Use this section to discuss the work done since the last meeting. Compare the state of the customer's environment at your last update to the state today. You should cover areas that demonstrate the work accomplished and establish the customer's improved state—and you should try to quantify both using tangible metrics. Examples could include patching, asset management, support hours needed, and server uptime. Many RMM solutions, like the one shown at the top of the previous page, already have the data you need and provide dashboards to help enhance the conversation.

**Customer concerns**—It's a meeting, not a lecture, so there should be a point at which you allow the customer to cover issues they see and questions they have.

**Additional needed services**—The first two presentation topics should have given you insight into where you can better assist the customer. If you have services in mind that will help the customer be more secure, productive, or resilient, now's the time to present them. This can help you gain even more traction with the client. But don't just present this as, "so here are some new services of mine that you need." Start by discussing strategies that will resolve the customer's issues, and then try to upsell with services that benefit the customer. This puts you in a "virtual CIO" light rather than having them see you as a service provider just looking for more money.

## **MEET OFTEN...BUT NOT TOO OFTEN**

How often should you meet with your clients?

Meet too frequently and you lack ample time to react to issues. Meet

too infrequently and you'll fail to demonstrate your continued value as a partner.

We recommend meeting quarterly. You should still talk to them between meetings and address any issues they might have, but we recommend one formal review per quarter.

***“Meet too frequently and you lack ample time to react to issues raised.”***





## **HAVE THE RIGHT PEOPLE IN ATTENDANCE**

A meeting is only as valuable as the actions taken because of it. So, what good would it be to present your solutions to a room without decision makers? Not much. You need to have the right people in attendance.

On the customer side, you always need a decision maker present; you're going to cover areas that need improvement and, potentially, new services to be added. Someone needs to approve all of that. For an SMB, that may be the only person required. For larger organizations, you may also need a technical liaison to help represent the customer's technical interests.

On your side, have at least a sales person presenting, since you intend to upsell services during this meeting. For larger customers, consider bringing your own technical expert that knows the environment inside and out. However, if you can, use them sparingly, as every meeting they attend equals less revenue from their billable work.



# 02

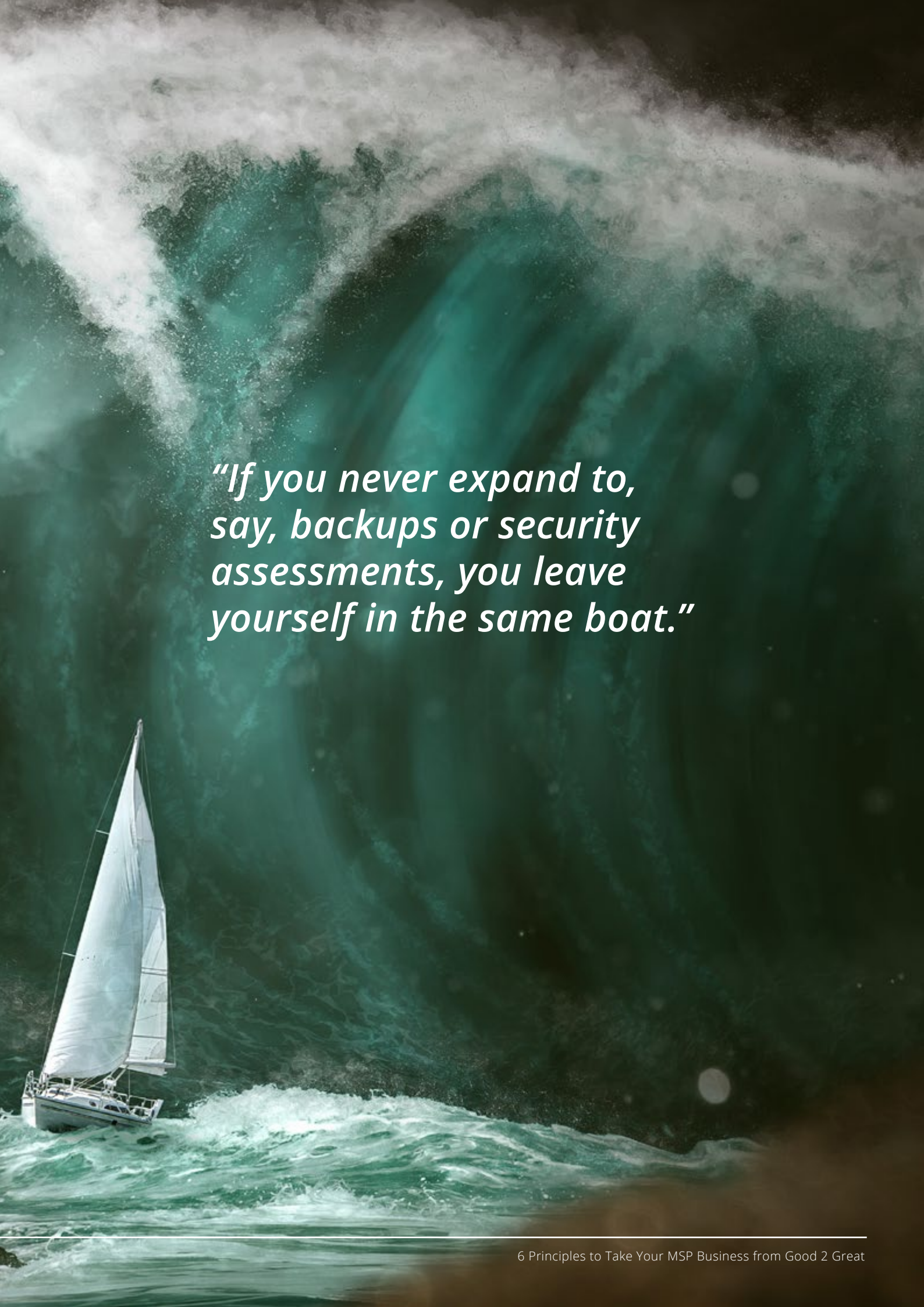
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## TRACK KEY REVENUE METRICS

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You can't run a successful business without knowing if you're making money (and if you're getting better at doing so). It's important to establish revenue metrics that define whether or not you're on track.

By putting metrics in place, you can more easily set goals for the business—after all, if you don't set goals, you'll never know when you get there (and you won't know when to push yourself farther).



*"If you never expand to, say, backups or security assessments, you leave yourself in the same boat."*

## **SO WHAT REVENUE METRICS SHOULD YOU BE TRACKING?**

There are a few basic areas of revenue you can measure. Some are rather easy to track while others may require a bit of work to pull the data together, but all will help you track whether the business is doing well and discover where you can grow.

### **AVERAGE DEAL SIZE**

This high-level metric assesses how well your sales efforts produce. It allows you to both see where the revenue “sweet spot” is for your organization and identify where there might be new opportunities for lucrative contracts.

Keep in mind, some element of average deal size is simply cause and effect. For example, if you stick with businesses that have 5–10 workstations and one server, you’re likely never going to break out of your current revenue level. Likewise, if you always stick to providing a certain set of services and never expand to, say, backup or security assessments, you leave yourself in the same boat.

By measuring average deal size, you get more visibility into where your business is succeeding. And you can also measure whether adding new services or changing your target market improves this metric.

## **REVENUE/CUSTOMER**

There are several ways to measure your lifetime revenue per customer. For most of these metrics, you measure them over time as an absolute value, a percentage growth, or a growth in revenue.

Here are a few suggestions:

**Net new deals**—How many new customers do you close monthly? What is the average deal size for net new business?

**Upsell revenue**—How much has your current customer base grown from a monthly revenue perspective?

**The growth of managed services**—How many more servers/workstations are under management? What percentage of each customer’s environment has been put under management?

**Cross-selling other services**—Focus in on a new service (e.g. backup). How much revenue is that service bringing in monthly? What percentage of the customer environment is covered by that service?

# *“These metrics aren’t valuable if you don’t take action.”*

## **PUTTING THE METRICS TO WORK**

If your MSP has a number of sales reps, break the metrics down by individual rep and identify the best and worst performers. There is a reason your top performers do better—have them do knowledge transfers with the lower-performing set of reps to elevate their game. You can also craft biweekly training on how to close deals, generate higher revenues per customer, etc.

## **METRICS FOR SMALLER MSPS**

Some of you reading this might only have a few members on staff. In fact, you might be the salesperson, technician, and business owner all rolled into one. So, in lieu of tracking the metrics that a larger MSP would, use the metrics below to gauge how effective your business is. While not directly revenue-centric, each is closely related to the revenue you generate.

- **Ticket volume**—On average, how many tickets are generated on a daily/weekly/monthly basis? Which customers generate the most tickets?

- **Hours billed**—If you’re closer to the “break/fix” side of services, how many hours are you billing per customer within a given timeframe?
- **Revenue/technician**—How much income is each employee generating?
- **Tech utilization**—As a percentage, how well utilized are each of your techs?

## **MAKING THE METRICS MATTER**

These metrics aren’t valuable if you don’t take action. Take the tech utilization metric: if you find that one tech is overworked while others are underused, then reassigning customers or responsibilities can balance the workload. For each revenue metric you track, find something actionable you can do with the information to improve your productivity, efficiency, employee satisfaction, and revenue potential.



# 03

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## FOCUS ON CUSTOMER-CENTRIC COMPENSATION

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The transition from good to great is filled with challenges. Just like the switch to selling services for a hardware-focused, value-added reseller is a big jump, it's equally difficult for a small MSP to offer additional services. Regardless of where you are on the spectrum, you need to become less tactical and more strategic.

As you move closer to greatness, every part of the business begins to change—how you communicate with the customer, how you assign people, what sets of services you offer, whether you offer a customer portal, etc. This requires you to measure success differently, well beyond just

tracking revenue. Revenue may drive the business, but if you're too focused on income, your customers will notice. That'll mean lower customer (and employee) satisfaction rates and, ultimately, lost business.

Successful MSPs know they need to direct company culture and drill customer-centric behavior into their employees. They do this with a mix of compensation to drive behavior and metrics to measure it.

A photograph of a boxer in a ring, wearing white shorts with red trim and red boxing gloves. The boxer is in a defensive stance, looking down. The background is dark with red ropes and some blurred lights. A quote is overlaid in white text.

*"To achieve greatness you need to be far more strategic in your execution."*

## **WHAT SHOULD YOU FOCUS ON?**

In many ways, it's about determining what's important to you and the legacy you want to leave your customers with. For example, if customer service is important, don't focus on the number of calls. Instead, measure the average length of call per customer. While the overall number of calls provides an indicator of how well run your customers businesses are, the call length indicates how quickly you solve problems.

So, in short, you need to build your metrics to fit the company culture you want to create. For the moment, we'll focus on two primary, customer-facing roles: sales and technicians.

### **Sales**

While this may sound odd, sales shouldn't just be sales driven. When people are paid only to sell or deliver existing offerings, they will actively avoid putting effort toward selling new services. To convince your team to try new things, they need more than just direction—they need a reward. For example, if your sales team gets more commission from selling one service than another, which will they try to sell?

You may need to change your compensation plans to drive the correct balance of "more old business," "some new business," and the services you know will help you provide better support (like managing all devices

instead of just workstations and servers). Pay attention to balance—you can't afford to take too much emphasis from current business, but you do need to focus on new offerings in order to grow.

Your compensation plan should align with your overarching goals around better service, faster response time, higher customer satisfaction, etc. You can start by tracking things like the percentage of customer devices under management or the average percentage of customer environments being backed up. But you may want to profile your most satisfied customers to discover what you've sold them, as this may shed light on additional metrics you can track.

### **Technician**

With the technician on the front lines, many MSPs focus on service quality for performance. While it's definitely key to the success of your business, you must be careful about how you measure and reward your techs. You can't be one-dimensional, even if that one dimension revolves around how well they serve your clients.



Some technicians double as an ad-hoc salesperson, as they can often see what new services will address customer needs. For them, new sales should factor into their compensation. Others simply provide good service, making it more appropriate to augment their base compensation around their service quality.

It's important to acknowledge that compensation can take on both tangible and intangible forms (e.g., money versus a pat on back), and that the compensation structure you create is going to set the culture and tone for the company, resulting in specific behaviors.

***"It's critical that techs don't work in silos."***

There are several ways to both measure technicians and formulate their compensation:

**Teamwork**—It's critical that techs don't work in silos. They need to share information, cover for another tech who can't address a customer issue, etc. Putting a peer review in place where techs can be rated on a

quarterly or annual basis will allow you to determine who is a team player driving your business forward—and compensate them appropriately.

**Revenue upsell**—Techs will see sales opportunities before anyone else and, if not made to care, will likely let them fly right over their heads. This metric can revolve around both selling more of an existing service, as well as adding new services.

**Customer satisfaction**—Back to the issue of service quality, use customer surveys to measure that professionalism, accuracy, and timeliness of service meets your customers' standards.

**Personal development**—Technology is changing at a rapid pace, and techs with a full schedule have little time to educate themselves on the latest tips, tricks, and trends that may improve their services and your business. While you should invest in helping them learn about the latest version of Windows Server or another technology, you can also expect them to take the initiative to grow themselves.

As you work to build a proper customer-centric compensation model, keep in mind that the plan needs to align the entire company around the right goals. This can be difficult for larger MSPs.

For example, if your current sales incentives revolve around, say, offering penetration testing, but you offer your technicians a bonus around backup services, sales will have a hard time getting technicians to help with penetration testing. Plus, your customers will eventually call you asking which services they should spend their money on. Nobody wins when compensation isn't unified and focused on the customer.



*“The plan needs to be built to support participation from the right resources internally.”*

# 04

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## PROVIDE STRUCTURED & SIMPLE SERVICE OFFERINGS


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Pricing is difficult for every MSP and, frankly, for any service business. It's hard to show value when customers get sticker shock simply because you charge over \$100 an hour. Don't go hiring a kid fresh out of college to lower your rates; sticker shock is just a perception problem on the part of your customers.

They may look at IT as a cost to their businesses. They focus on the break/fix work you do, seeing

you as a reactive tool to address the unpredictable nature of their network. Other customers might see you as a proactive, strategic partner, fully managing every aspect of their network to keep the business running as predictably as possible.

Both types of customers need to justify the cost, and that's difficult if your pricing is either unstructured or doesn't communicate the value of your services.



*"It's hard to show value when customers get sticker shock simply because you charge over \$100 an hour."*

### **GREAT MSP INSIGHT - SKY DATA VAULT**

While Sky Data Vault, a provider of fully managed backup services to the MSP market, doesn't consider themselves an MSP, their focus as an organization provides some insight for growing MSPs on how to do business.

They find their greatest success comes from creating predictability. "We typically don't win business because we are necessarily the cheapest or because we are so much better than the competition," said co-founder Michael Thompson. "The reason we win business is because MSPs understand they are buying a service and not a product, and they know how much profit they are making on day one." It's this predictability that wins them business and helps their customers. "Our philosophy 'Success Together' is the basis for everything we do," said Thompson. "The faster we can get our customers to 'wash, rinse, repeat,' the better."

***"The faster we can get our customers to 'wash, rinse, repeat' the better."***

### **WHAT NOT TO DO**

Let's say you're eager to make money when talking to a prospective customer, and you agree to do just about everything, promising 100% coverage at a fixed price. Maybe you made this mistake when you first visited the customer's site and got a sense of the environment (e.g., number of devices, servers, applications, etc.), so you gave them a fixed price contract, then found out later about some older software you didn't discover the first time (and maybe have little experience with). Just bringing everything up to a baseline will take a material amount of time—time you hadn't accounted for.

This mistake will come back to bite you nearly every time, as it creates a lot of gray area. Should the customer call three weeks in about a problem with their main application, written by an employee who no longer works

there, you're responsible and stuck having to support it.

If you have this kind of contract with multiple customers, it'll make it impossible for your business to scale. You won't be able to establish SLAs, level-set the services offered to each customer, or prioritize your techs between customers.

You need to offer a fixed set of services that you are good at, and allow anything outside of those to be offered as a "time and materials" or hourly project. For example, that 100%-coverage customer should have been addressed with an onboarding project to give you the lay of the land and let you bring everything up to snuff. After that, you should have put them on a defined support package.

## DEFINE THE PRICING MODEL

You need to provide every customer with a defined set of services that you've calculated will leave you with a profit. And, truth be told, customers want a simple pricing structure that they can easily understand. There are many good pricing models, but one that has proven perennially effective is a three-tiered "Good, Better, Best" model.

This model has consumer psychology on its side, as many will automatically default to the mid-price package.

You can also use this model to gently nudge customers to the highest option. You see this with popcorn in movie theaters all the time. The smallest option is the least expensive (let's say \$4), but is also significantly smaller when compared to the medium. However, the medium (at \$5) is only slightly less costly than the large (at \$5.50). This is all done so you end up thinking, "well, I don't want the small, so I'll get the medium... wait a second! For just 50¢ more I can get a large? Large it is!!!"

And, just like that, you have your customer buying the largest offering. You get the idea by now, but what service offerings should be in each level?

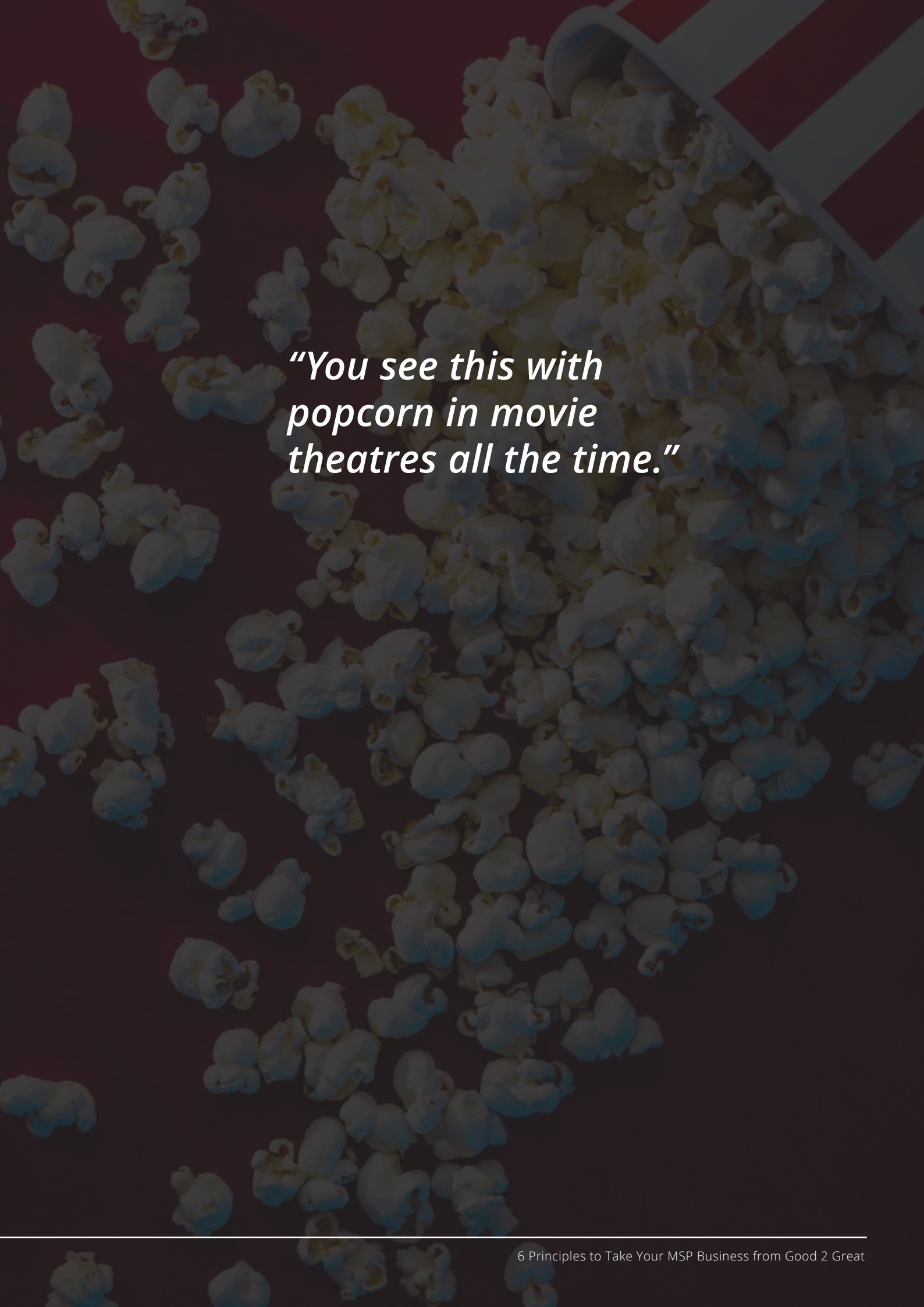
Take device management as an example. You might choose to offer this service a la carte, but use the three tiers to define what you're responsible for:

- **Good**—Provide the most basic of services to "keep the lights on" for that device
- **Better**—Includes Good, plus data protection (AV, patching)
- **Best**—Includes Better, plus backup (business continuity)

There's no single answer here in terms of what you should charge and include. You'll need to do the math to make certain you can turn a profit based on the amount of work you agree to and the corresponding revenue you would bring in. Use research-driven pricing to find the right amount to charge, as opposed to just working off an hourly rate.

For example, consider the power of a single dollar as part of your top line revenue (say, \$100 a month adjusted up to \$101). That small 1% increase on the top line may be far more material to the bottom profit line. Let's say that a \$100 customer only brings you \$10 in profit... that additional dollar raises your profit by 10%!





*“You see this with popcorn in movie theatres all the time.”*

## DEFINE THE TARGET CUSTOMER

The last piece of the puzzle is about defining who you'll be targeting. There are low-end customers who are all about the discount and paying as little as possible. Other customers require a larger price tag, such as those who need high-maintenance custom work. The goal is to structure and price your services so that you find the "sweet spot" customer—the customer that takes items from your service menu, is happy with them, and gladly pays the bill every month. Eventually, with enough experience, you can spot the high- and low-end customers during the interview process. For example, if your agreements come back red-lined, pass on those customers.

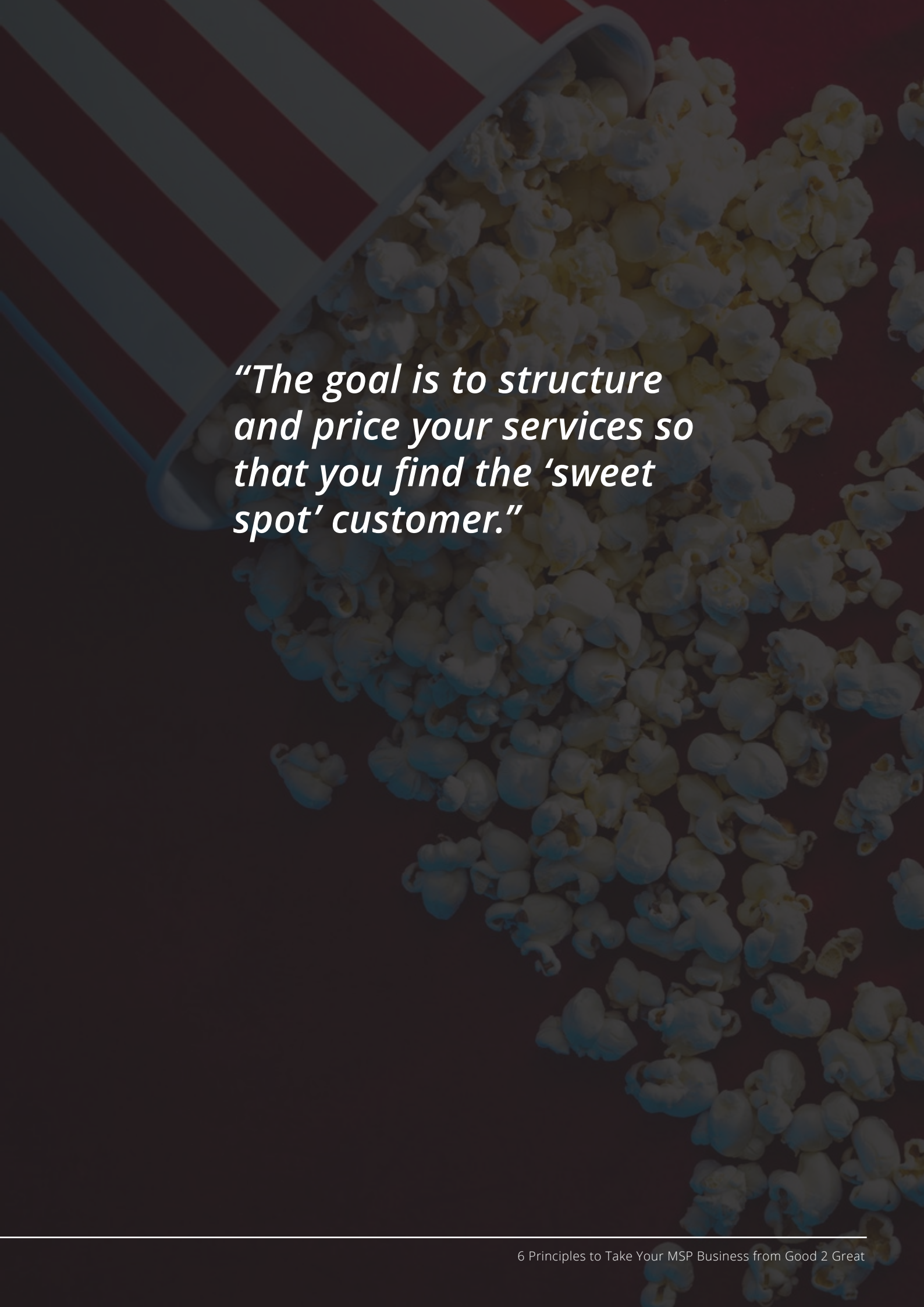
Your contract should be well defined, listing the scope of services and devices included, the agreed upon service levels, response times, and how issues outside the contract will be addressed and billed.

## SCALING YOUR SERVICES

One of the challenges you'll face is trying to get the customer to expand from, say, a couple of servers to every server and workstation in the organization. There are several strategies successful MSPs use:

- **Start small**—Begin with an entry-level model where you deploy a smaller service at a lower cost. It's a pretty big pill for the customer to swallow when you walk in and ask for \$200 per device for every service you offer. The strategy is to start with something and eventually overtake the remainder of the services and devices.
- **Go a la carte**—Break up services into smaller options. Using the "Good, Better, Best" example, allow the customer to add backup to their Good service as an option instead of making them purchase your Best level. The goal is to introduce the customer to a new service and build onto it.
- **Slow and steady**—Focus on what's most important to your customers and, over time, work on building trust (e.g., via your quarterly review meetings). As trust builds, you'll be able to upsell more easily and get the customer to your highest service level.

You know your services, and your prospective customers don't. And they don't want to have to figure it out either. Your pricing should be straightforward, easy to digest, and make sense from a cost-to-value perspective. If it does, you'll find yourself getting a lot more yesses than before.



*“The goal is to structure and price your services so that you find the ‘sweet spot’ customer.”*

# 05

## HAVE DOCUMENTED, REPEATABLE PROCESSES


To be profitable, an MSP must work to achieve complete predictability in a number of areas of the business:

- **Hours needed**
- **Revenue generated**
- **Number of issues**
- **Number of customers**

Having this kind of predictability is the mark of a mature and professional MSP and shows the customer that you have your stuff together.

To achieve this, you need a proactive plan for everything you do, including standardized processes for how issues are addressed and documented. This can be everything from step-by-step how-to guides on a variety of common issues to requirements around updating documentation.

One tech taking the needed 10 seconds to properly document will save the next tech 10 minutes.

A close-up photograph of a man's face, which is partially enclosed within a large, clear, spherical bubble. The man has dark, wet hair and a light beard. A small, blue and green fish is swimming near his eye. The background is dark.

*“Many people overcomplicate documentation in the name of having enough detail.”*

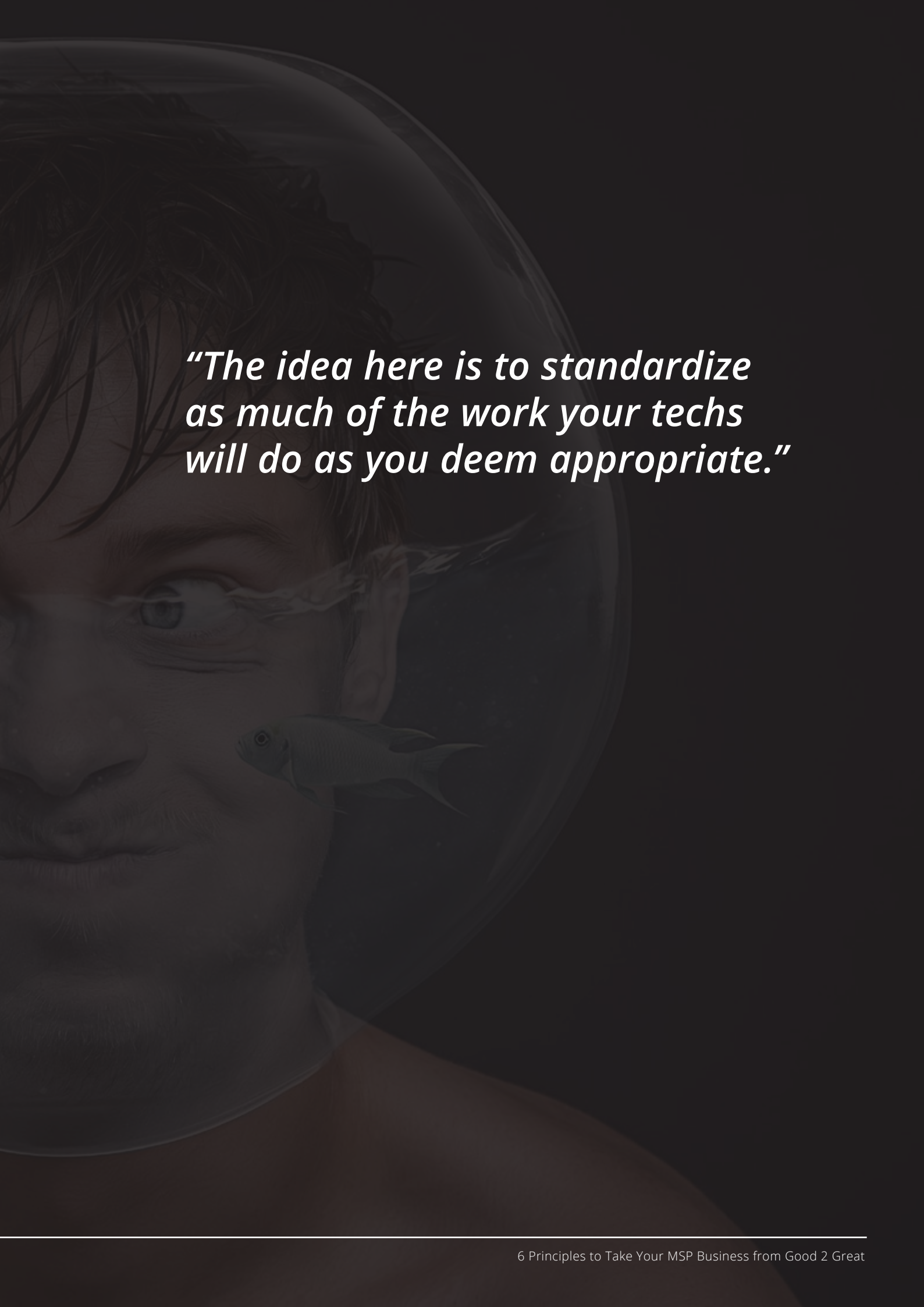
Don't forget your goal with documentation—you want to speed people up, not slow them down. Many people overcomplicate documentation in the name of having enough detail. While this is well intentioned, make sure you don't just end up adding friction to the process. Of course, the amount of documentation will depend on the complexity of the task. Just try to make it as simple and straightforward as possible.

### **SO, WHAT PROCESSES SHOULD YOU DOCUMENT?**

Documenting everything can be daunting. So start high-level: How do you want technicians solving problems?

Do they need to refer to a standards document prior to working on issues? How about updating a helpdesk ticket or system documentation? You might want to require this so that each customer's environment stays documented, making it easier for the next tech to get up to speed.

Once you have a foundational "how we do things around here" process, you can start focusing on more detailed processes for specific tasks, such as the setup and configuration of workstations, security settings, application deployment, etc. There is no specific level of detail you have to reach; the idea here is to standardize as much as you deem appropriate. Just remember to keep the documentation simple!



*“The idea here is to standardize as much of the work your techs will do as you deem appropriate.”*



06

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## DELIVER SERVICES USING FULLY INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY

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Nearly all MSPs start by using freeware or disparate tools that don't connect easily. You can't really fault them for it, as the caliber of free tools that exist today is pretty impressive. Everything from systems management, to remote control, to antivirus, and beyond, all provide legitimate value. But since most freeware tools don't easily integrate, you'll miss out on important automation. For example, an application monitoring system has no inherent ability to update your completely separate ticketing system.

That could make it hard to track how quickly you resolve issues, which in turn gives you less to show at your quarterly meetings.

MSP-focused products today are making functions like support, billing, and reporting more efficient and productive—in many cases, all within a single, easily accessible platform. While disparate tools can be “best of breed,” it's the rise in efficiency and productivity from integrated tech that separates the great MSPs from the good.



A person is shown from the chest up, wearing a white VR headset. They are looking out over a vast, blue ocean under a clear sky. The person's right hand is raised, holding the top of the headset. The background is a soft-focus view of the ocean and horizon. The overall tone is serene and futuristic.

*“While disparate tools can be ‘best of breed,’ it’s the rise in efficiency and productivity from integrated tech that separates the great MSPs from the good.”*

## SO, WHAT SHOULD BE PART OF A FULLY INTEGRATED MSP PLATFORM?

The real benefit of a fully integrated solution is productivity. When searching for a solution, you should look for how much easier it makes your technicians' day-to-day duties and how much it speeds up their ability to identify and solve problems.

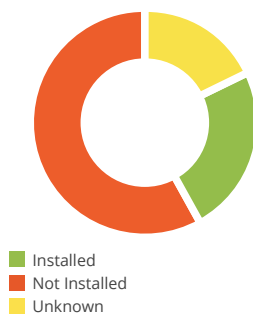
So, make sure you have at least three key pieces in place.

### 1. RMM as a platform

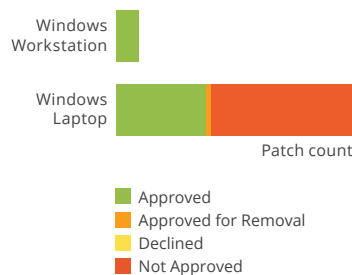
Your remote monitoring and management (RMM) solution should be more than just remote control with a few bells and whistles added. Your RMM product should allow you to comprehensively cover the entire device lifecycle, including onboarding, bringing devices up to baseline, and maintaining an inventory that can be used for licensing, maintenance, support, and monitoring. The solution should also be able to easily hook into your ticketing and billing systems.

## EXAMPLE PATCH REPORT

PATCH STATUS

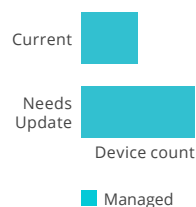


PATCH APPROVAL STATUS



DEVICES THAT ARE UP TO DATE **67%**

DEVICE UPDATE STATUS



## **2. Automation**

Part of achieving repeatable processes is dependent on how much automation you use. Automation allows you to deliver services with consistency and eliminate human error. At a minimum, your RMM product should allow for custom-scripted actions. However, it's also helpful to look for a solution that allows you to automate processes without having to learn a scripting language. Some solutions provide drag-and-drop scripting, which allows you to define actions to be taken within a GUI without needing to crack open the code. This helps save time using pre defined scripts as management objects, rather than complex scripting code.

## **3. Robust reporting**

Integrated reporting is critical across all facets of implementation, support, security, migrations, and upgrades. For example, to identify which machines need security updates, you first need an inventory report showing the current state of your devices and what updates are already on them, as shown on page 34.

Or when you prepare for your quarterly review with the customer, it's helpful to provide executive reports (like the one shown on page six) on the state of the environment and your services. Without integration, reporting becomes a cumbersome, manual task where you have to pull information from disparate systems (for example, inventory from one system and patching status from another) to turn the raw information into usable intelligence.

# GETTING TO GREAT

Just running an MSP is a challenge. You face customer demands, changes in technology, and much more, all while trying to maintain a profitable operation. The challenge of moving your business from good to great requires much more than simply addressing your customers' problems more quickly. To become a great MSP, you need to create a scalable, predictable business that focuses on your customers.

Each of the six principles—outlined in this white paper—help to produce better customer relationships, increased revenue, and a thriving business. Customer meetings, customer-focused compensation, and structured, simple service offerings all work to build a solid relationship with your customers.

Tracking revenue metrics, creating repeatable processes, and using integrated technology all help ensure your business runs smoothly.

By following these principles, you'll increase the predictability needed to succeed as you grow in every part of your business—from services offered to how they're delivered, from obtaining new customers to increasing revenue from the ones you have, and from working to make your customers happy to knowing they will be.

And, remember, "great" isn't a destination; it's about the journey—through these six principles—to create a better run organization that meets the needs of its customers. Put these six principles into action, and continue down your path to greatness.

## ABOUT SOLARWINDS® MSP

SolarWinds MSP empowers MSPs of every size and scale worldwide to create highly efficient and profitable businesses that drive a measurable competitive advantage. Integrated solutions including automation, security, and network and service management—both on-premises and in the cloud, backed by actionable data insights, help MSPs get the job done easier and faster. SolarWinds MSP helps MSPs focus on what matters most—meeting their SLAs and creating a profitable business.

To find out how SolarWinds MSP can help you take your MSP business from good to great, visit: [www.solarwindsmsp.com](http://www.solarwindsmsp.com)

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