

5 WAYS

GREAT MSPs

AUTOMATE

BUSINESS

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INTRODUCTION

When we talk to Managed Service Providers both big and small, new or mature, the question of automation often comes up. All MSPs want to run their companies efficiently, and automation frees up time spent on repetitive tasks so they can focus on growing their businesses.

For some there is the focus on improving profits. Increasing per customer profits frees up capital that can be invested in other areas of the business. Streamlining manual tasks frees up technicians to work on higher revenue activities while still being paid for the maintenance work you've automated. On the other end of the spectrum there are MSPs who are growing quickly and need a way to streamline how they onboard customers. Eliminating manual activities during the onboarding process allows these MSPs to onboard more customers and give those customers a better experience.

The exact needs of each provider are going to vary, but we've discovered 5 things that the most successful MSPs are doing to automate business. Read on to see how your business can automate its way to growth and profitability.



1. IF A TASK IS REPETITIVE, THEY AUTOMATE IT

“The drag-and-drop interface of Automation Manager simplifies creating scripts to the point a person needs to know little besides what they want the outcome to be.” - Mike Doerfler, Network Technology Supervisor Nex-Tech, Inc.

Great MSPs automate as many routine maintenance tasks as possible.

Maintenance can consume a significant amount of time from technicians. Every MSP should be focusing on how to automate as many of the day to day maintenance tasks as they can. As a general rule, if you are doing something repetitive, something with a similar set of steps on a recurring basis, then it is something you should be automating.

Automate the basics; One of the first and easiest things that you should be automating is preventative maintenance such as desktop cleanup (temporary files, flush DNS, etc). These are simple tasks that many MSPs today are still doing manually and their technicians are focusing their time here instead of on important service calls or higher value projects.

Automate the specifics. Some of your customers are going to have specific needs. If your customer has numerous SQL databases then you can automate database table maintenance and cleanup

for them to keep their servers running at peak performance. There are hundreds of items you can be automating and it is important to provide your customer with the most value possible. By providing these high value services you are rooting yourself deeply with these customers and it will be hard for another MSP to walk in off the street and undercut you.



2.

THEY AUTOMATE REMEDICATION FOR COMMON PROBLEMS

“45% of tickets handled by automation” - Lan Dynamix.

Great MSPs spend their time on high priority tasks and use automation to resolve minor issues.

Service Level Agreements are a big part of the relationship between customers and MSPs. Your customers need their infrastructure available at all times and your goal is to minimize downtime. The fact is that many issues simply require a software or hardware reboot, simple tasks that pull technicians away from more urgent issues that require their expertise.

Use your RMM’s Self-healing: Your RMM software should provide self-healing capabilities. If a device or service changes to a warning or error state, the system should automatically launch an automation policy to remedy the situation. Common automation policies will involve restarting key services, flushing DNS, and in some cases rebooting the workstation or server.

Exceed your SLAs: When you automate remediation you provide an almost instantaneous response to a customer problem. These quick

resolutions are going to build up good will with your customer. No customer likes any downtime and if your managed services are fixing their problems before they even realize they have problems, you are going to be able to show your customers how many issues you resolved and the hours or days of downtime that your services helped them avoid.



3. THEY STREAMLINE CUSTOMER ONBOARDING

“Simply put, N-able’s technology allows us to automate at new levels and we are passing along the benefits to our customers. It’s changing the way we do business” - Wim Lamot, Technical Manager, Accel.

Great MSPs ensure that new customer onboarding is as quick and painless as possible.

Automation is as much about best practices as it is about technology. Once you have discovered the maintenance and remediation that you want to automate, you are defining the best practices for your business. You are packaging your services so that when you make your pitch to customers, you are confident in your maintenance schedules and response times and the margins you will receive for those services.

Deploy probes automatically: In order to streamline the onboarding of new customers you need to have a system that can discover devices and deploy probes automatically. This will greatly reduce the time it takes you to add devices to your management software.

Schedule maintenance automation: Once you have set up your monitoring you need to schedule all of your automation policies to take care of routine

maintenance. This way in the early days of a customer’s onboarding you are spending less time doing maintenance and are available for any support issues that may come up.

Schedule remediation: By automating remediation you can impress your customers with how quickly you meet your SLAs for many common issues, winning you points with the customer in those crucial early days.



4. *THEY WOW THEIR CUSTOMERS*

“Our ability to proactively provide reports on business-critical aspects of a customer environment is a powerful support and sales tool.”

- Pat Moore, Network Operations Manager, CalTech

Great MSPs know that it's not enough to just do great work, they make sure their customers see the work they are doing.

Customers are spending their valuable dollars with you and providing them with meaningful updates about the work you are doing goes a long way towards winning their loyalty. As the saying goes, “out of sight, out of mind”. Status reports are a great way of giving weekly updates about the maintenance and other issues you are resolving and doing a quarterly review with your customers to take a deeper dive reminds them of the value of your services. Your RMM system should provide graphical reports for customers and allow you to schedule when they are delivered. Graphical reports have a much bigger impact with customers than any written summary.

Executive reports provide an overall status of the network including a comparison to last week's performance.

Security reports show customers how protected they are and how many issues you are preventing.

Backup reports reassure customers that their data is secure in the event of any failures. Patch reports demonstrate that you are keeping customer systems fully up to date.

Help Desk reports help customers justify the costs they are spending with their service.



5. *THEY GET PAID FOR AUTOMATION WORK*

*“Automation scripts save time while allowing to bill at standard rate”
- Accel Computer Service*

Great MSPs are also great business people who ensure that they track their automation work as billable hours.

Just because the system is doing the work for you doesn't mean you shouldn't be paid. Every MSP has the choice of performing tasks manually or investing in the tools to automate their business. By automating maintenance and remediation tasks you are improving your response time and providing your customers better service.

Automate ticketing: Your automation policies should be capable of updating your ticketing system so that when they complete you are logging time. You can assign 15 minutes for small tasks and more time for larger tasks. Before you know it the system will be executing policies left right and centre and racking up a nice invoice of billable hours for you.

Leverage “discounts” to boost customer satisfaction:
A common strategy to build good will with customers

is to discount some of the “automation hours” the system has logged. Your costs associated with these hours is next to nothing, and giving your customers a small percentage discount is an easy and effective way of strengthening your customer relationships.



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