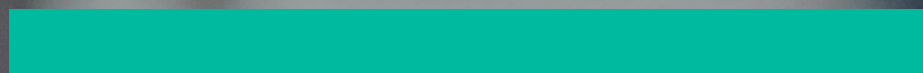




Secrets to Selling More Managed Security Services





In this ebook, you will learn all about TitanHQ's five pillars of MSP selling success.

- **Pillar one:** Activate the principle of KISS (Keep It Simple Simon)
- **Pillar two:** Do you focus on building your business or account management?
- **Pillar three:** Unify and standardize your tech stack
- **Pillar four:** How and when to sack a customer
- **Pillar five:** Becoming a system thinker and cultivating relationships



Summary

The managed service provider industry (MSP) is a global phenomenon. It is a highly competitive market with an estimated 130,000 MSPs worldwide and 40,000 in the USA¹. Over the last decade or so, cybersecurity has become a vital element in the portfolio of a successful managed service provider. As such, managed security services have become a lucrative prospect for an MSP. A report from SkyQuest highlights the value of managed security service providers, with findings showing the following²:

- **The value of the market will be USD 103.64 billion by 2031**
- **Manages security services will grow at a CAGR of 14.2% between 2024-2031**

Managed security services are a growth area for the MSP.

Analyst firm Canalys has recently published a report highlighting the value of managed security services to MSP partners and customers. The report found that **34%** of partners expect a **20%** year-on-year growth in cybersecurity revenue in 2024, with two-thirds expecting at least **10%** growth³.

Managed security services offer high market value and potential business growth. However, an MSP entering the space needs to keep certain things in mind. TitanHQ has almost **30 years of experience working with MSPs** that deliver security services. Here, we discuss what an MSP needs to become a stand-out security service provider in this competitive marketplace.

TitanHQ's five pillars to MSP selling success

A business needs a strategic vision in its pathway to success. Your company may have a strong foundation stone built on corporate goals, but the pillars upon which these goals sit are what add strength and longevity to your plan. TitanHQ has worked with countless MSPs to deliver exceptional security services. Our solutions are designed with MSPs in mind. This collaborative relationship between TitanHQ, MSPs, and customers has given us insight into how to make these relationships work and which type of approach best meets the needs of all stakeholders in the ecosystem. From best-of-breed integrated solutions to exceptional support to trusted relationships, TitanHQ has compiled the five pillars of selling success.

These are our five most important pillars of selling success for the modern MSP delivering security services:

¹ <https://www.mspressources.org/blog/how-many-msps-in-the-us-and-worldwide>

² <https://www.skyquestt.com/report/managed-security-services-market>

³ <https://www.canalys.com/insights/msp-predictions-2024-executive-summary>

Pillar one: Activate the principle of KISS (Keep It Simple Simon), but be proactive

A proactive security stance is essential to mitigate the threats from an evolving security threat landscape. Gartner, Inc. summarizes this situation by stating, "By 2026, organizations prioritizing their security investments based on a continuous exposure management program will be 3x less likely to suffer a breach."

Gartner's call to tackle cybersecurity head-on is a call for MSPs to ride this wave and establish their expertise as managed security services providers.

The MSP business model has become a go-to movement. Even though market conditions may seem challenging, and the geopolitical climate is fluid, organizations need a stable partner to manage their IT estate. However, a managed security service model must encompass proactive security delivered using a simple business model.

The cybersecurity landscape is complex. However, a simple business model can address the delivery of best-of-breed and advanced security solutions designed to handle sophisticated cybersecurity threats.

Prioritize your security investments

"By 2026, organizations prioritizing their security investments based on a continuous exposure management program will be 3x less likely to suffer a breach.⁴"



⁴ <https://www.gartner.com/en/articles/how-to-manage-cybersecurity-threats-not-episodes>



How to create a simple and proactive MSP business model

Simplifying your business model starts with understanding you and your client's needs. Businesses choose an MSP for reasons such as:

- They need to stop using the outdated break-fix IT cycle.
- Their business needs sustainable and predictable IT costs.
- They need help finding in-house expertise to manage best-of-breed solutions.

These three core reasons for choosing an MSP can be used to help develop your business model, keeping it straightforward but effective. The development of a simple MSP business model typically involves the following:

Create your technology foundation: An MSP that wishes to handle multiple clients' needs purpose built tools. Remote monitoring and management (RMM) and professional services automation (PSA) products are among the offerings that can serve as an MSP's technology foundation.

Automate your services: Even smaller MSPs can handle multiple clients because services are automated. For example, auto-remediation automates a security response to a threat, like phishing. MSPs use auto-remediation as a security tool to prevent cyber-attacks⁵. Look for security solutions that provide some level of automation, such as report generation or automation of regular phishing simulation exercises.

⁵ <https://www.titanhq.com/phishing-protection/auto-remediation/>

Expand your services: MSPs can use successful services to provide add-on opportunities, such as consultancy and data analysis, or additional associated offerings, such as security awareness training. Choose solutions designed to easily plug additional services into your tech stack that are interoperable and based on standards.

Market your services: In a competitive market like managed security services, an MSP must develop a compelling reason for clients to choose their offering over a competitor's. Some cybersecurity vendors offer white-labeling, campaign support, and market development. A supportive vendor can give you a competitive edge and help you build your MSP market presence.

Build resilience: The cybersecurity threat landscape is not the only moving goal. Geopolitical changes, working patterns, and even pandemics have created challenging conditions for MSPs to thrive in. A resilient MSP is a successful MSP. Build resilience into your business model and your technology stack. Choose security technology vendors offering future-proofed tools, such as AI-powered and anti-phishing solutions that predict emerging threats. By building resilience into your business model, you become proactive and ensure your clients are protected.

Pillar two: Do you focus on building your business or account management?

The managed security service provider must consider many things and wear many hats. One problem is the importance of landing business versus account management. The two are not the same and require a different skill set.



Account managers are people who know how to ensure a client relationship is a happy one. Account managers do not bring clients into the business but look after that customer during the late-stage sales cycle or after onboarding. An account manager is an essential first point of contact for clients to ensure their exceptional experience of your services. An account manager can also recognize when a client needs additional services. Where account managers work on the long-term client relationship, the people who build your sales pipeline and business focus on numbers, not longevity.

Building your business is a numbers game. Your salespeople must hunt down new clients, find opportunities, and develop these to the point they can be passed onto an account manager. Commission packages inspire business builders. Knowing their salary will be augmented with an excellent commission payment for bringing on a new paying client motivates the business builder. Account managers are "steady as she goes when it comes" to salaries.

An MSP needs both nurturing account managers and hungry business builders. By developing a business that nurtures both types of employees, you are more likely to be successful in selling more managed services.

Pillar three: Unify and standardize your tech stack

An MSP that builds a unified technology stack based on standards delivers clients a coherent and integrated security solution. This holistic approach to comprehensive security services drives success in managed security service delivery.

The unification and standardization of technology benefit an MSP and its clients. Using a standards-based approach provides the framework for interoperability. Standardization ensures that support overhead is minimized as products work seamlessly together. Unification is driven by standardization. An MSP reflects customers' needs by consolidating and unifying their tech stack.



”Cybersecurity has changed everything about the managed services space, from the services partners can offer, to the complexity of the solutions delivered to customers. But relatively few partners can deliver full-stack services.”

A report highlighted by CIO Magazine solidifies this view, finding that 95% of IT executives will consolidate their software in the next 12 months. The reason for this is to simplify system architecture and drive efficiency ⁶.

Unification and standardization are vital ingredients for full-stack customer provisioning. As analyst Canalsys points out, “Cybersecurity has changed everything about the managed services space, from the services partners can offer, to the complexity of the solutions delivered to customers. But relatively few partners can deliver full-stack services.”

Delivery of a full-stack security offering is, therefore, a competitive edge, no-brainer decision.

The benefits of offering a unified, full-tech stack of security solutions include the following:

- » **Offering full-stack service to your clients will give an MSP a competitive edge.**
- » **The full-tech stack approach differentiates your business from other MSPs, allowing you to be a specialist and expert in that security area. A survey from Pax8Nebula found that over half of MSPs believe that a full-tech stack would enable them to differentiate their business⁷.**

- » **Full integrated tech stacks reduce technology sprawl. This, in turn, reduces any associated support overhead.**
- » **Improves ability to scale and take on more clients.**
- » **No need for staff with multiple skills across disparate products. Staff can focus on the unified technology estate.**
- » **Consistency in service quality is an inherent part of a fully integrated tech stack.**
- » **Improved support and focused marketing from the security vendor(s) supplying the integrated tech stack.**
- » **Better operational efficiencies.**
- » **Solutions that work seamlessly, without conflict.**

Cloud-based security services that are platform agnostic can be easily added to an MSP tech stack. The net result is a consolidated, comprehensive, competitive MSP platform with a 360-degree view of security, essential in a highly complex and sophisticated cyber threat landscape⁸.

⁶ <https://www.cio.com/article/657327/what-it-executives-are-saying-about-vendor-consolidation.html>

⁷ <https://www.pax8nebula.com/m/6270a9837657d79f/original/The-Power-of-the-Stack-Guide.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.titanhq.com/phishing-protection/multi-layered-approach-phishing-protection/>

Pillar four: How and when to sack a customer

Pillar two discussed building your business and keeping clients happy. But sometimes, saying goodbye to a customer is necessary for maintaining a successful business and sometimes for protecting that business. An MSP is a busy company, and serving multiple customers well is the goal. However, if one customer is taking your focus away from the rest, this could have severe and detrimental effects on your broader business and ability to grow that business.

It may seem counterintuitive to "sack a customer", but certain conditions force the situation. Some examples of warning signs that you should watch out for include the following:

- **The client violates SLAs, ToS, regulations, or laws. Any issue regarding statutes, regulations, or even ethics could seriously backfire on your company. You may have to justify your client's technology decisions in court. This may rebound on your business reputation.**
- **The customer's attitude towards your staff and company is abusive. Your staff should be respected, and poor behavior that is insulting or abusive should be challenged. If this does not work, you may need to rethink your relationship with this customer or lose skilled staff.**



- **The customer does not listen. Customers come to an MSP for expertise and cost-effective exceptional solutions. However, if they do not heed advice or warnings, this may interfere with the effectiveness of those solutions. An MSP's relationship with its customers should be collaborative, but sometimes, with the best will in the world, a relationship breaks down.**

There are other reasons to sack your customer that are not the customer's fault. This includes a change in your business model that is at odds with the customer's needs. Whatever the reason for saying goodbye to a customer, you must be considered in your approach.

Considering sacking a customer, you must look at all the options carefully. Being prepared and ready with the facts may save you face in the broader market. To prepare, explore the following:



Is your tech stack too disparate?

Offering too many security tools may be difficult to maintain. Customers can be confused by disparate technology offerings, expecting one thing and receiving another. Be clear in what you offer and move to a standardized, unified tech stack to simplify things for your business and customers.

Does your customer service stand up to scrutiny?

Exceptional security service delivery requires outstanding standards of support. Does your company offer excellent customer support using expert advice from the vendor if needed? Poor support can lead to frustrated and angry customers and a breakdown in the MSP-customer relationship.

Customer due diligence has failed.

Knowing your customers ensures they can meet the costs of delivering your services. If you have not performed customer due diligence, you may end up with a non-paying customer.

Do you have an SLA?

Your Service Level Agreements (SLAs) are as important as the security solutions you supply. An SLA is a legal document that outlines MSPs' obligations, commitments, and responsibilities towards the customer. The SLA is your protection and sets the bounds of service delivery. A customer who ignores this can quickly become a problematic client.

Once you have the evidence in place and have decided to discuss the ending of the contract, you should sit down with the customer to discuss the issues. Be professional and constructive and attempt to work out a compromise. Go through the problem areas with the customer and discuss a way forward, even if this ends in a parting of ways.

Pillar five: Becoming a system thinker and cultivating relationships

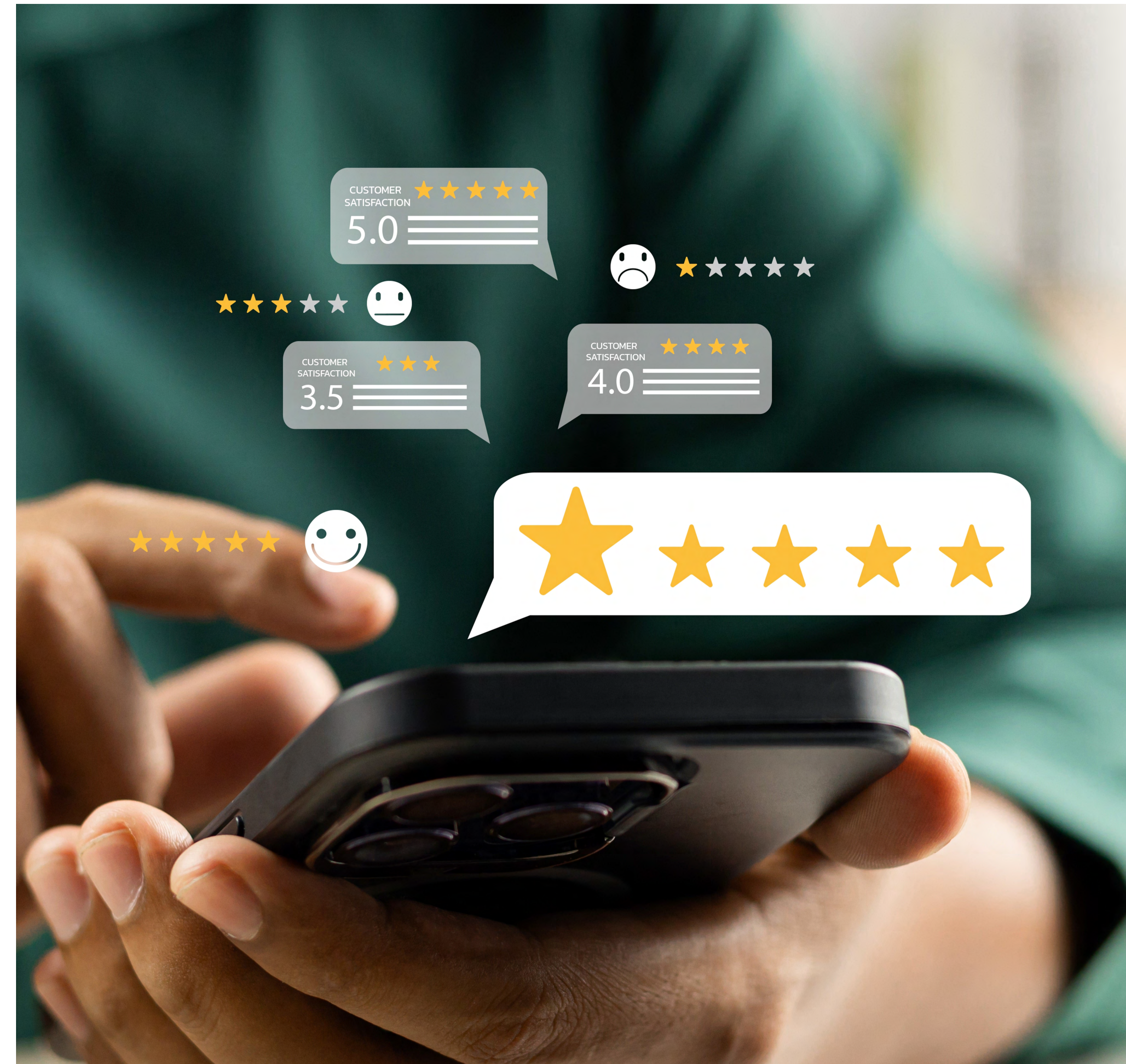
Human relationships are at the core of our society, and building positive and strong relationships will benefit an MSP. Having a system-thinking approach to your business will reap benefits. After all, a collaborative ecosystem is at the heart of an MSP's business model. According to Canalys, half of MSPs will work within a managed services hybrid delivery model in 2024⁹. This collaborative working environment will be based on an ecosystem of partners, vendors, and customers' IT teams.

Centering on relationships is part of a movement that many businesses and salespeople follow. The wisdom goes that building relationships, not actively selling products, is the way to sales success. A Salesforce report shared this view, which found that 87% of business buyers expect sales reps to act as trusted advisors¹⁰.

An MSP must work to build and foster professional relationships with their clients. But how can they go about this?

Provide exceptional products

An MSP that delivers poor-quality security solutions will degrade customer trust. The customer must see the fruits of the relationship in the quality of products and the delivery of solutions. Maintain your competitive edge and customer satisfaction by supplying advanced, state-of-the-art security solutions that work to mitigate cyber risks. Evaluate security solutions that are designed to be delivered by an MSP. Ensure those solutions, like AI, use advanced functionality to detect and protect against the changing threat landscape.





An MSP business can also check out vendors for product reviews by independent review sites such as G2, Gartner, and Peer Reviews¹¹.

A happy customer is one who has exceptional products that work. By giving your customers the best security solutions on the market, you will help build trust with them.

Deliver exceptional support

Support is as important as the product itself. An MSP can create a competitive edge by offering and delivering great support. Word gets around, and a great support package will be a factor in building your business and finding and retaining customers. However, to provide this exceptional support, you need to have great vendor relationships with suppliers who, in turn, provide their outstanding support to an MSP. By collaborating on support options, an MSP and security solutions vendor can work together to build customer trust.

People love consistency

Keep your interactions with the customer consistent. Relationships are built over time, and a familiar face or voice helps develop a connection with a customer. Maintain consistency and continuity by assigning the customer the same contact person or team. Over time, consistency, augmented with exceptional products and excellent service, will create a trusted relationship and customer loyalty.

Offer an open-door policy.

Don't close the door on clients. Keep communication going and leave your door open for them to contact you or a dedicated person on your team. This will reap benefits as you can develop conversations around what they need going forward. Consider having regular meetups and even customer conferences. Even smaller MSPs can have breakfast meetings to discuss new security issues and changes in the threat landscape. By using a process of continuous communication with benefits like learning opportunities, your relationship with your customer will strengthen.

Build trust; don't do the hard sell.

Train your staff in relationship-building techniques. From sales to support, each staff member must understand how to foster trust and respect with the customer. Ensure staff understand the importance of always acting professionally. A Dale Carnegie paper on building customer loyalty states, “71% of customers said they would rather buy from a sales professional they completely trusted than one who gave them a lower price”.

The road to better security services sales

The road to revenue from security services is paved with gold. However, getting there is not a case of just adding a few disparate security solutions to your client offering. The savvy MSP knows that selling any services, including security, requires a clear vision and strategy built upon a solid foundation of an exceptional, unified tech stack, reliable support, and excellent customer relations. The MSP landscape may be crowded, but the best companies will shine through diligent attention to the details of security service delivery.

For more essential strategies, watch the latest TitanHQ MSP roundtable panel. Find out how specific decisions by our MSP partners are fueling their continued business growth.

Watch the TitanHQ MSP roundtable panel discussion here: [“MSP Strategies for Success”](#).

At TitanHQ, we are dedicated to partnering with MSPs to help them build a high-margin security practice, supporting both existing clients and attracting new ones with our unique value proposition. Our advanced network security solutions currently protect thousands of businesses in over 200 countries worldwide.

⁹ <https://www.canalys.com/insights/msp-predictions-2024-executive-summary>

¹⁰ <https://www.salesforce.com/form/conf/sales/state-of-sales/>

¹¹ <https://www.titanhq.com/about/awards/top-solution-provider-expert-insights/>

