

All-Inclusive Managed Services Is A Big Hit With Business Owners

An MSP's ability to automate IT processes and provide a comprehensive managed services offering, which includes the Barracuda ECHOplatform, is helping drive sales to new heights.

If there's one lesson Cohn Consulting has learned during its 23 years in business, it's that working smarter is more profitable than merely trying to work harder. "Because we are a smaller company, we recognized early on that we can't just throw bodies at problems like many of our larger competitors do," says Jon Czerwinski, vice president, Cohn Consulting. "This has forced us to automate business processes wherever possible."

Becoming an MSP 10 years ago was a move in the right direction for the company, but it wasn't until more recent years — after finding a good IT channel mentor and partnering with Barracuda MSP — that its sales and profit margins really began to soar.

From Basic RMM to Fully Automated Managed Services

After investing in an RMM tool, the company only used it for basic monitoring for four years. It wasn't until 2010, when the MSP started working with Gary Pica from TruMethods and partnering with Barracuda MSP, that things began to change. "During this time we learned how to bundle managed services and articulate our value," recalls Czerwinski. "We started offering a business service that included BDR protection, security, and support for a reasonable flat rate per month. And, instead of charging a 'per device' fee, we offered an 'all-in, per-person' service. This was a big hit with business owners because they think about their employees' productivity and getting work done."

Although Cohn uses a cost-per-employee model, it doesn't charge the same price for each customer. "We take into account the complexity of each customer's environment and the level of risk we will incur managing them," says Czerwinski. "A small business that has just one file server and QuickBooks is much less complicated to manage than a customer running Microsoft Dynamics on-premise who also needs application integration services. After assessing clients' work environments, we come up with a range that's typically between \$115 and \$180 per employee per month."

Cohn also began using its RMM tool, SolarWinds N-able N-central, to remotely push out mission-critical business solutions, such as Barracuda Intronis Backup agents. Then, utilizing its Autotask PSA tool, which is

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PROFILE

Company Name: Cohn Consulting Corporation

Headquarters: Atlanta, GA

Year Founded: 1993

Website: www.cohnconsultingcorp.com

Number of Employees: 4

Key Markets Served: construction, financial, professional services, transportation

Revenue: \$1.1 million

Specializations: remote support, cloud services, business continuity, virtualization

▶ Jon Czerwinski on partnering with Barracuda MSP:

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integrated with N-central, the MSP was able to confirm whether each agent was installed successfully. This allowed Cohn to monitor each backup using the Barracuda ECHOplatform.

“Barracuda MSP was a good fit for our business strategy because their solution has always allowed us to add agents to computers and other devices in a way that requires little to no touch,” says Czerwinski. “And, from the customers’ perspective, they appreciate that we can implement this technology without interrupting their work. Unlike some backup and disaster recovery applications that require IT administrators to take over workstations via a remote session, Intronis Backup can be implemented in the background without any user disruptions.”

Initially, Cohn Consulting included the web-based file backup software in only a small portion of its packages. However, as the MSP’s and Barracuda MSP’s business models have evolved, Cohn moved to include Intronis Backup in a majority of its managed services bundles.

“It was nearly impossible to predict how a customer’s backup needs would change,” says Czerwinski. “One of our clients had offices in multiple states. We tried to get them to roll out the Intronis Backup for years, but it was too difficult to give them a set cost upfront. When Barracuda MSP replaced its cost-per-gigabyte business model with a fixed, flat rate monthly price structure, we were able to go back to this customer and close an immediate sale.”

Backup Takes Business Automation to the Next Level

Only 5 percent of Cohn’s legacy customers are in the “break-fix only” category. The other 95 percent are on a managed services plan. “A few years ago, we adopted an à la carte model that includes various levels of labor-saving service choices,” says Czerwinski. “Our plans start with patch management and go all the way up to the full suite of services that includes business continuity, managed security, cloud services, virtualization, and remote support.”

Despite offering customers choices and flexibility, some of them weren’t on board with converting to any kind of a managed services plan. “Over the last few years we terminated our business relationships with nearly 20 percent of our customers,” he says. “The pattern with these customers was that we wouldn’t hear from them and then they would call us with an emergency that required all of our resources to resolve. Since then, we’ve enjoyed steady revenue growth, double-digit profit margins, and a much calmer work environment.”

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-Jon Czerwinski, Vice President, Cohn Consulting

▶ About Barracuda MSP

As the MSP-dedicated business unit of Barracuda Networks, Barracuda MSP enables IT managed service providers to offer multi-layered security and data protection services to their customers through our award-winning products and purpose-built MSP platform. Barracuda MSP’s partners-first approach focuses on providing enablement resources, channel expertise, and robust, scalable MSP solutions designed around the way managed service providers create solutions and do business. Visit barracudamsp.com for additional information.

➔ **Sign up for a no-cost, no-obligation trial of Barracuda Intronis Backup and read the Barracuda MSP Blog.**