

Microsoft Resource Center Live on ISPworld!



If you're a Service Provider, you need to check out the Microsoft Resource Center in ISPworld. This new resource provides you with the software, support, and resources necessary to run your business more efficiently. Take advantage of technical and business resources, white papers, How-to Articles, the Microsoft Knowledge Base, licensing and certification programs, bulletin boards and much more! Just click on the Microsoft Resource Center link on the ISPworld home page!
<http://www.ispworld.com/msrc.htm>

November 15, 2001 Volume 1 Number 29

Operations Strategy Marketing People

Section - Marketing

Ideas for Selling Security

By Dana Blankenhorn
ISPworld News

Selling security as a service is a continuing theme here, and ISP Executive recently got a chance to discuss the subject with an expert.

Ashok Kalle is president of Pathway Communications, a Toronto company that has offered management services to local and wide area networks since 1995, and has since become one of the largest privately-owned Canadian ISPs, both in terms of revenues and customer base.

Kalle said that security is a basic premise of any broadband opportunity. "When people get broadband they need some intervening security device or infrastructure to protect their internal network from the public Internet. That's a specialized area. We do an assessment to learn what people want and need to do, then we do a security assessment, testing for vulnerabilities, and we finally provide a fix. We maintain, monitor and manage their security needs."

Demand for these services has exploded in the last few months. "We get a revenue stream with reasonably high margins, but this also increases switching costs. Once you're doing network management it's more difficult for customers to move away than if they were buying one commodity services."

A key to success is getting your people, offerings, and processes certified. There are standard checklists for security certifications, but Kalle said ISP 9000 certification has also been important to his company.

Once you are certified, some of your most valuable contacts will come from insurance companies, but these must be handled delicately. "They do not directly provide leads. They're not in that business. But they will say, look to a good provider and here are a couple of people."

Thus, "It's incumbent on the ISP to let insurance companies know what you've done, without making it a pitch. It's beneficial to the insurance company to have companies at hand, and you have to lobby, influence and pitch to get on those lists."

Insurance companies will be happy to know of your offerings because they're getting inquiries at the time, he said. "Many companies are beginning to realize if they want their assets insured, they're going to be asked about security. It's just as when you have a security system in your house your rates go down. There are benefits directly and indirectly."

While it's easy for a large company to get on such lists, it's vital for a small company to invest in getting onto them, he added. The pitch is this will help the insurance company by providing a solid contact for their smaller customers.

If your ISP is not up to this challenge, however, don't despair. There is still an opportunity for you, Kalle said, by affiliating with an expert. "We do have agreements and arrangements with local area network service providers to provide their security services on an outsourced basis for them. If you're in an organization providing network services, installing and managing local area networks, you will need to provide this security, so we have fee-sharing arrangements to do this."

Making a few good business contacts, either with managed security operators or insurance companies, can do you and your customers a world of good.

To submit articles or ideas to the Strategy section of this newsletter, write to: dana@blankenhorn@mindspring.com



What's New
Microsoft Resource Center Live on ISPworld!

If you're an ISP, you need to check out the Microsoft Resource Center on ISPworld. This new resource provides you with the software, support, and resources necessary to run your business more efficiently. Take advantage of technical and business resources, white papers, How-to Articles, the Microsoft Knowledge Base, licensing and certification programs, bulletin boards and much more! Just click on the Microsoft Resource Center link on the ISPworld home page!

<http://www.ispworld.com/msrc.htm>