

Comtec Enterprises
MicroScope Aces Awards 2008
SME Focused Reseller of the Year

Summary

Managing IT resources is a daunting enough exercise for large enterprises to undertake, but for small and medium size enterprises (SMEs), IT management can lead to further headaches and frustration. As resellers increasingly focus upon the enterprise market, SME needs can be overlooked or else met with inappropriately scaled or engineered solutions.

SMEs may have different requirements for IT management, but the fundamental IT needs remain consistent across SMEs and enterprises alike. Businesses of all sizes require increasingly complex systems to enhance their competitive edge, and all IT infrastructures require significant skills and finance in order to operate and maintain. For SMEs this can detract critical time and resource away from developing and growing the business, therefore reducing productivity and efficiency, which is contradictory to what IT investment should achieve.

With 99% of UK businesses comprising of SMEs (according to the DTI), it is imperative that resellers in this space are able to address their specific needs and serve them appropriately - an ability upon which Comtec Enterprises has built its significant success.

Introduction

Comtec Enterprises is an ICT solutions company that specialises in enabling secure, converged IP communications for UK organisations. Comtec Enterprises provide comprehensive consultancy, implementation and support services that complement products from the world's best-of-breed technology vendors.

Since 1994 Comtec Enterprises has worked in the SME environment, applying its investments in technical and consultancy skills to find solutions that meet individual business challenges. Its experienced and highly qualified people can advise on any aspect of voice, data, network video or security requirements in a totally independent fashion. Comtec Enterprises believe passionately in delivering a valuable, customer-orientated service, and this is the foundation of its success.

This submission will demonstrate Comtec Enterprises' commitment to continuous investment in the development of resources, skills and expertise that translate as genuine value-add for SMEs. Whereas most resellers' primary focus is on targeting enterprises, Comtec has remained grounded and focussed on the SME and on developing its range of specialist services.

Managed Services for the SME

Comtec has a company culture that has aided its understanding of the SME market, allowing it to grow alongside its customers and develop solutions accordingly.

Managed services have grown increasingly popular for SMEs due to lack of in-house finance and resources. However, when SMEs look for a solution, they are often faced with resellers who have jumped on the managed service bandwagon without investing in the managed service themselves, or that outsource parts of the service to third parties. Having been informed of the shortcomings of managed services by SMEs themselves, Comtec understand how poorly SMEs have been served, and offer a proposition that SMEs value.

After developing its service for some time, Comtec embarked upon significant investments to underline its managed services in order to dismiss the 'smoke and mirrors' and distrust that SMEs often face. In order to take 100% responsibility for its managed services, Comtec invested in its own state-of-the-art, fully manned, 24x7 Network Operations Centre (NOC), to provide a secure environment for continuous monitoring of its customers networks, and in addition, invested in an award winning datacentre facility, leveraging the most advanced power facilities and intelligent datacentre design.

"Our managed services are different because they are ours. We are committed to providing every aspect of the service ourselves so our customers always know where they stand. We do not delegate so there is no distrust or confusion," Nick Claxson, Managing Director of Comtec Enterprises explains. "Having such advanced in-house facilities is highly valued by our customers. Our investment in the NOC and datacentre means we can show customers where their assets are hosted and protected, which gives them added security and is something most resellers are unable to offer SMEs."

Comtec launched its first managed service, in collaboration with Cisco, called 'Solid Ground', in September 2007. Designed specifically to allow SMEs to exploit and maximise their network architecture, Comtec provides the facilities for its customers to achieve enterprise-class value from their IT assets. This partnership also demonstrates Cisco's recognition of Comtec's understanding of the SME sector, utilising Comtec's expertise to extend Cisco's own service offering.

"Comtec Enterprises has consistently demonstrated its expertise in delivering networking technologies for the benefit of its customers. We hope to continue working together to develop and enhance our solutions in order to meet the business challenges of SME organisations." - Cisco Systems Inc.

“With Solid Ground we allow SMEs to optimise their resources whilst providing the peace of mind afforded through managed services endorsed by Cisco. We offer our customers an open, honest approach to managed services, whereby they can actually see where their services are hosted, understand the infrastructure, and be safe in the knowledge that their IT assets are protected by us – the people they buy from” Claxson comments.

Offering complete verification of the security, reliability and operational efficiency of a network, Comtec’s managed service takes the onus away from the user, ensuring that security or performance issues are pre-empted and acted upon before they can affect business performance or employee productivity.

Intype Libra, a digital printing company based in Wimbledon, is an SME that needed an easier, more economical solution to its IT management problems. It now entrusts the management of its critical ICT systems to Comtec Enterprises. Tony Chapman, Managing Director of Intype Libra explains:

“Previously, we put all our eggs in one basket by having a one man IT department. This proved costly and had the potential to backfire if our IT manager was unavailable. With Comtec, we get 24/7 specialist support and outsourcing has made sound economic sense - equating to 20% of the cost of managing our IT in-house.”

SME Focused Solution Set

Comtec holds strong relationships with its vendor partners and has attained the highest accreditations with many of them. These include, Gold Partner status with Avaya, Gold Business Partner accreditation with APC, and both Silver Business Partner and SMB Select Partner with Cisco. In November 2007, Comtec also won Avaya’s SMB Growth Award, recognising Comtec as Avaya’s fastest growing SMB reseller in EMEA. Comtec leverages these relationships to ensure the best service and value for its SME customers.

Comtec has developed ancillary services to ensure that it offers ‘the total package’ to its SME customers. One such service is the highly specialised ability to decommission, securely transport, and re-enable an organisation’s entire IT estate. For fast growing SMEs this answers a critical requirement for continuous uptime and guaranteed operation of IT infrastructure.

For fast growing SMEs that may wish to build their own datacentres Comtec’s experienced technical consultants in its Power division can provide the necessary help and support through design, implementation and maintenance. In December 2007, Comtec was announced as the winner of the inaugural DatacenterDynamics Awards for ‘Innovation in the

micro-datacentre', acknowledging its understanding of the distinct datacentre needs of organisations.

Growth

Comtec has experienced rapid organic growth, expanding by over 3000% in the past five years. Indeed, Comtec's growth has been recognised by Deloitte and Touche, in its rankings of the fastest growing technology companies across both the UK and Ireland, and EMEA. In the UK and Ireland, Comtec was crowned 4th in 2006 and 11th in 2007 (one of only three resellers to feature in the top 20). In EMEA, Comtec ranked 18th in 2006 and 44th in 2007. Comtec has also remained the fastest growing technology company in the South East for two consecutive years. No other reseller in the UK has been recognised for this level of growth.

Comtec's customer-focused approach has proved instrumental in achieving this sustainable growth and will ensure continuing business development.

Azlan is a leading value-added distributor of networking, servers, storage and enterprise software and services in EMEA, and has been working with Comtec Enterprises for **X years**. Bob Cole, **XX at Azlan** comments,

"Working with a variety of resellers you soon learn where each of their strengths lie and in what markets. The SME market is huge and holds so much potential for the channel, so it is essential we have a partner that is committed to addressing the needs of the SME. We have a long and trusted relationship with Comtec, and value their expertise within the SME sector."

SME Focused Philosophy

Comtec Enterprises recognises the mutual benefit afforded by helping its customers stay ahead of their competitors. As a way of achieving this Comtec adopts 'bleeding edge' technologies to provide the most innovative solutions to business needs. Refreshingly, Comtec doesn't use its customers as 'guinea pigs' and tests technologies in-house first, helping clients to make educated investments based on proven functionality. Claxson explains:

"We are constantly working to improve our services and understanding to better provide our customers with the solutions they need. It is absolutely fundamental that the confidence our customers have in us does not falter, so we never offer anything to our customers that we would not use ourselves."

Comtec's forward-looking strategy will ensure that it stays ahead of the competition, galvanising customer relationships and ensuring continuous business growth.