Partnering for cloud success:

5 reasons to outsource cloud support vs building capabilities in-house

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Introduction

The explosion of Software as a Services (SaaS) adoption by businesses opens massive opportunity for cloud resellers to expand their market reach. It also means that the number of cloud services being utilized by businesses is increasing at equal cadence.

Cloud services providers know they need to be able to provide IT support for an ever-expanding line of technology services if they want to differentiate in a highly saturated market. If you're in the business of selling SaaS, you know that selling, migrating and resolving the diverse and complex issues that can arise with third party cloud services is a time-consuming and very expensive undertaking. Nevertheless, having the right sales and support structure in place is key to driving app revenue and adoption of services. It can be a strategic enabler to building stickier customer relationships and increasing upsell/cross-sell potential. So the question CSPs are asking themselves is not if they should offer support, but how. The two most common options are to build a cloud support capability in-house or to partner with a 3rd party provider, experienced in supporting SaaS for the SMB market.

In this mini whitepaper, we'll look at the two approaches and the related benefits and requirements of each.

INDUSTRY TRENDS

› SMB market has become the number one target for many CSPs worldwide

› Managed Services Market estimated to grow from $145.33 billion in 2016 to $242.45 billion (USD) by 2021, at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 10.8% during the forecast period [Source]

› Cloud adoption services are among the top managed services that customers purchase today [Source]

Do-it-Yourself: Building a cloud support capability in-house

Creating an overlay "guru" team to handle cloud app sales, onboarding and lifecycle support involves a sustained investment in a meaningful portfolio of cloud services and a highly skilled customer care team.

At a high level, this involves:

› Ramping up existing support teams

› Investing in new expertise, technical certifications and skills

› Continuous learning models and training programs

› The right technology infrastructure to enable cloud transformation (remote takeover, cloud onboarding and migration tools)

If done right, the benefits of keeping support in-house can include:

› Owning operations and relationship with customer from end-to-end

› Owning the technology and platforms (which you may to customize)

› Ability to closely monitor compliance and developing expertise

The challenge of building the program yourself comes with the high labour and infrastructure costs associated with supporting cloud services and the very lengthy timelines to ramp up and develop expert teams as the volume of cloud apps increase.

Based on some learnings we gained at AppHelp:

TO BUILD A CLOUD SUPPORT TEAM IN-HOUSE

› Could cost up to 4.6 times more than outsourcing

› Could take 2 years or more to deploy efficiently

› Take several years to build Migration and Cloud expertise and refine hiring models

› Take up to 5 times longer to implement a platform of intelligent support tools like Learning Management, Knowledge Management Systems, CRM's, SOP's., etc.

› Could involve a lot of trial and error to get the right framework

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Do-it-for-Me: Outsourcing cloud support to a 3rd party provider

Many cloud resellers and CSPs are partnering with expert cloud support providers to help run their technical support programs.

The key requirements resellers are looking for in support partners include:

› Providers with flexible integration technology to enable rapid and smooth integration with existing systems

› The unique competencies, procedures, curriculum, and coaching materials needed to train agents to deliver effective support

› A cloud services enablement platform that provides all of the key functions needed to provision, onboard and support end-users.

Choosing a white label technical support provider to support the cloud services you sell can come with many important benefits including:

› The ability to go-to-market at a fraction of the time and cost

› The capabilities to support heterogeneous SMB cloud environments effectively

› The ability to arm your existing salesforce with expert advisors who can gradually cross-sell business customers on additional, highly relevant adjacent services

TOP 5 REASONS TO OUTSOURCE CLOUD SUPPORT

1. Out of the box call center facilities and operational infrastrucutre

From call center resources, billing, telephony, to CRM and workforce management, an experienced provider will integrate these multiple channels into one turnkey solution that will come fully equipped with all the components needed to deliver service from end-to-end, while providing a seamless cloud experience on behalf of your brand.

2. A cloud services enablement platform to drive service adoption and usage

A 3rd party provider will leverage a cloud services enablement platform to provide all of the key functions needed to provision, onboard and support end-users.

At a high level, these functions include:

› Full cloud marketplace integration for a unified marketplace experience

› Email migration tools that automate key functions of data migration

› CRM ticketing system with built-in standard operating procedures

› Knowledge base with direct real time feeds from cloud app partners

› Chat & remote take-over technologies with built-in security/privacy features

3. Operational best practices to deliver white glove lifecycle services

At AppHelp, we've had a nearly 10-year head-start improving our processes and gathering learnings about delivering industry leading support. In that time, we've learned that developing operational best practices and effective training curriculums, involves years of experience and investment in technology designed to roll out new products, capabilities, and standard operating procedures. Knowledge management systems must also allow for real time updates from cloud partners to keep up-to-date with new product features and software updates over time. These capabilities make it possible to service the entire customer lifecycle in a way that builds stronger, more profitable customer relationships.

4. Certified technical staff that will keep pace with evolving knowledge and technology

If you're looking to qualify as a Microsoft CSP or even as a G-Suite reseller, your white label provider can help by having the appropriate certifications and competencies that demonstrate how they support the sale, deployment and ongoing support of SaaS products. Make sure to look for providers who distinguish themselves through various Microsoft Certified Professional certifications, such as Microsoft Certified Solutions Associate (MCSA), Gold Certified Partner or G-Suite equivalents like, Google Certified Associate - G Suite Administrator.

5. Customer service excellence that will drive customer satisfaction, renewals and reduce churn

When your customers come calling, you want to ensure they are being given an outstanding service. Domain expertise is critical, but at the end of the day, you need great people to deliver great customer experiences. Tech talent with the right balance of interpersonal skills and technical know-how is the key to providing your customers effective support that helps them get the most out of their cloud services. After all, a great customer experience translates to more customer loyalty and repeat business. This is key when selling subscription services, as savvy customers can easily find alternative products or cheaper prices. Save in recruitment, hiring and training costs while reaping all the brand loyalty benefits by partnering with an established cloud enablement and technical support provider.

AppHelp has made significant investments in building a turnkey support solution that is flexible and scalable so that our partners don't have to make these investments and can focus on growing a successful cloud business.

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ABOUT APPHELP

AppHelp delivers solutions that "help" businesses and consumers be more successful with their adoption and use of the latest in technology and cloud services. By leveraging a unique combination of technology and human capital. AppHelp ensures customers have the support they need as they traverse the customer journey. With millions of technical support incidents solved. and decades of experience assisting people with technology, AppHelp is proud to power the technical support programs for premier brands across the globe. including Comcast. Cincinnati Bell. Rogers. Bell, Telus. Windstream. Virgin Media. Panda Security and more.

Ready to take your cloud business to the next level? Email us at **apphelp.sales@appdirect. com** or visit **www.apphelp.com**.