

ChannelPro Network's Complete Guide to
Marketing to Managed Service Providers
and IT Integrators

How to Effectively Market to the SMB Channel

WHAT DO CHANNEL PARTNERS really want from vendors and distributors? The ChannelPro Network surveyed its audience of managed service providers and IT integrators to find the answer to that question and much, much more. The results of our proprietary research provide a roadmap for effectively marketing to the SMB channel.

You'll find out which marketing messages and campaign types are the most impactful for reaching your customers. Their choices for top brands of products and solutions. Which products generate the most profit for them. The solutions they want to learn more about. Their perspective on the economy and its impact on their business.

In addition to the marketing data, we've included the results from *ChannelPro's* 2020 State of the Channel survey, and our recent Readers' Choice selection of the best vendors, distributors, and solutions.

The ChannelPro Network is pleased to offer this unique, all-inclusive guide to honing your message to the channel.



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THE
ChannelProNetwork
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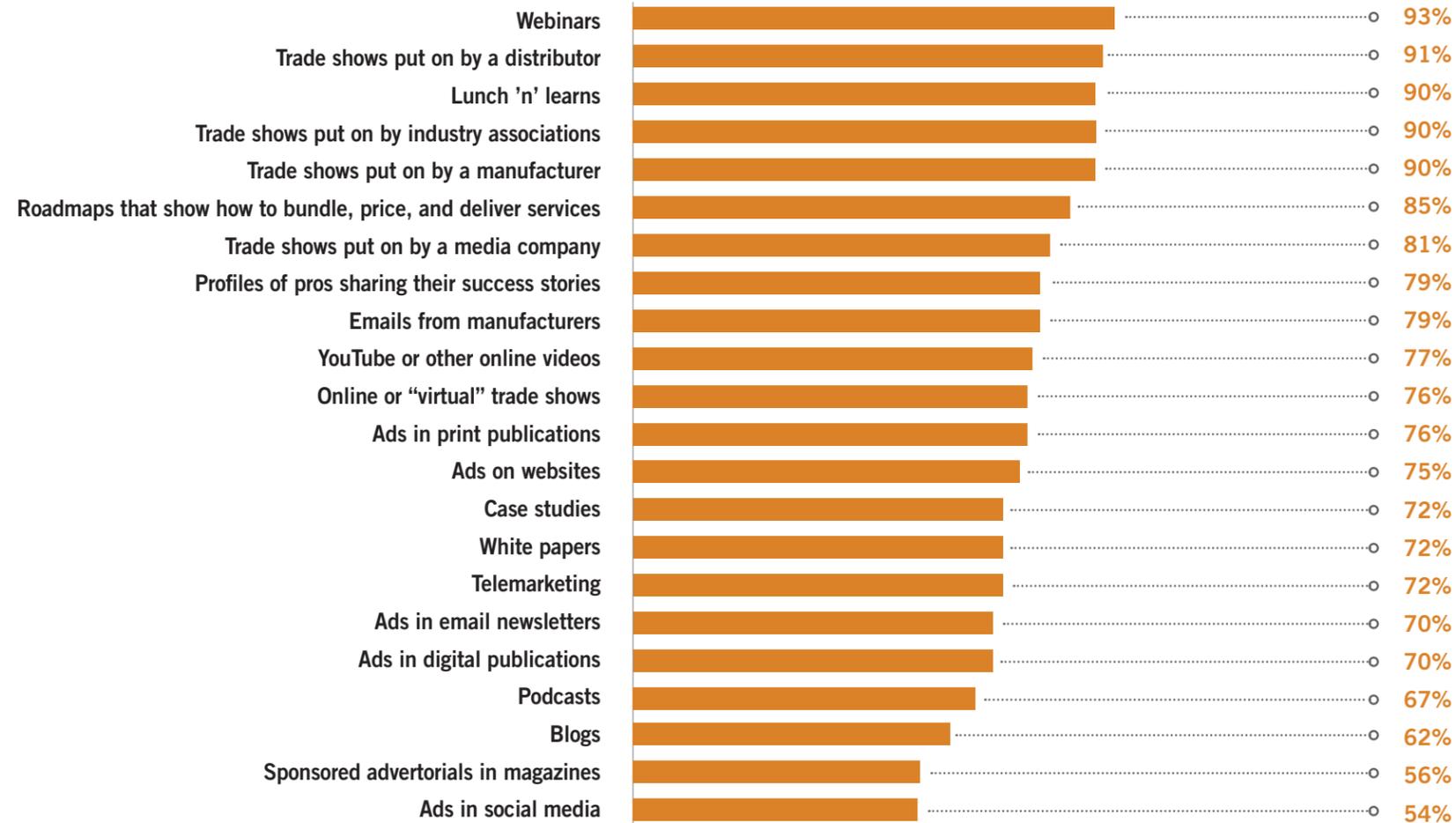
The data used for this guide was collected from more than 1,200 respondents.

2020 IT Marketing Effectiveness Study

Based on 325 respondents from the ChannelPro and IoT Playbook audience

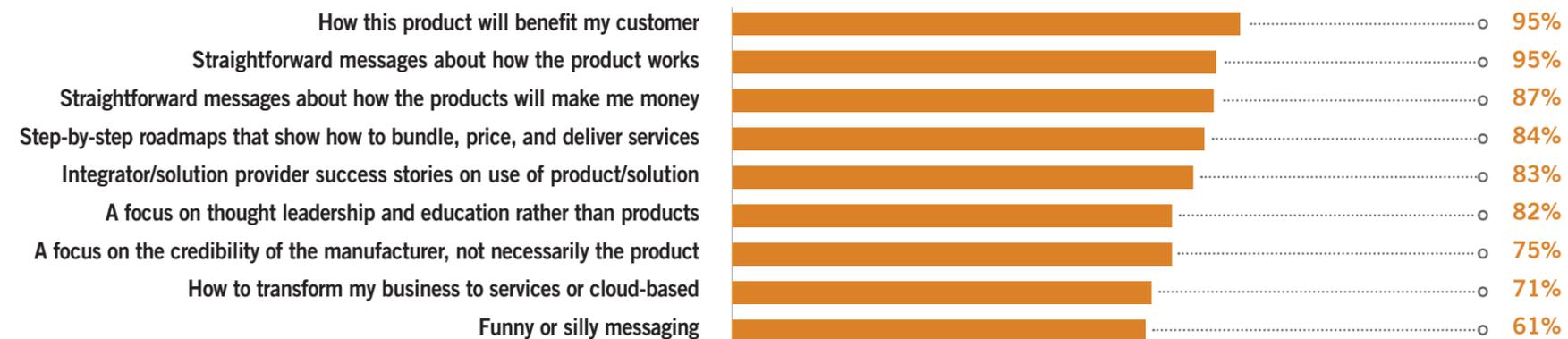
Most effective methods for learning about products or services

Percentage of respondents selecting effective or very effective



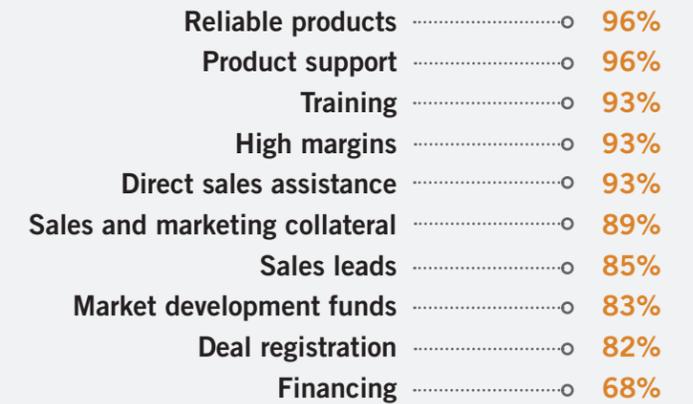
Most effective marketing messaging types

Percentage of respondents selecting effective or very effective



Most important things they want from a manufacturer or distributor

Percentage of respondents



Topics they want to learn more about

(Percentage of respondents)



2020 STATE OF THE CHANNEL SURVEY

CLOUD AND MANAGED SERVICES ARE ALL GROWN UP

Results from our latest channel opinion survey suggest that the two defining markets of the decade just ended are fully mature ones as well. BY RICH FREEMAN

THE CHANNEL as we know it isn't very old.

After all, the first providers of managed services via RMM and PSA systems began showing up a scant 20 years or so ago, and the MSP business model was still a puzzling one in the eyes of most IT providers when *ChannelPro* debuted in 2007. Practically no one, moreover, imagined someday being a cloud service provider the next year when Microsoft's Business Productivity Online Suite, which later became Office 365, arrived.

Today, private equity firms are pouring billions into managed services vendors, MSPs with regional and national footprints are multiplying, and Office 365 has north of 200 million monthly active users.

The markets that defined the decade just ended for channel pros, it seems, have grown up fast. According to our fifth annual State of the Channel report, channel pros have too. No longer a strange if promising concept, managed services has officially become the new normal among our readers, according to this year's data. And cloud partners are steadily diversifying beyond low-margin offerings like Office 365 licensing into more demanding—and profitable—online opportunities requiring deeper expertise.

Meanwhile, younger markets with even brighter near-term prospects are gaining velocity even as frequently dismissed older ones like hardware march stubbornly forward. The complete picture, as always in IT, is complex, rapidly evolving, and reliably interesting.

Nothing but Blue Skies for IT in Aggregate

That picture begins with an appropriately bullish assessment by our readers of the overall IT landscape. Indeed, the share of participants in our survey anticipating much better conditions for their business in the next 12 months jumped from 23% last year to 33% in 2020, while respondents predicting merely stable conditions dropped from 31% to 24%. Similarly, 57% of channel pros expect their clients to spend more on technology this year and 11% believe the increase will be significant. That last figure is up from just 6% in our previous study.

The channel's rosy take on the economy as a whole is undoubtedly contributing to that upbeat outlook: Though the 22% of survey respondents expecting significant improvement in 2020 is about the same as last year's 20%, the segment predicting some improvement jumped from 33% to 43%, while the portion forecasting flat conditions plunged from 36% to 19%.

Numbers from last year's balance sheets have our readers thinking optimistically too. Fully 53% of participants in our latest study collected more revenue in 2019 than the year before, and 50% earned more profit. Those figures are up from our previous survey's already impressive 42% and 39%, respectively, and help explain why 64% of channel pros

expect a fatter top line this year and 62% anticipate a bigger bottom line.

Decreasing concerns about wage growth could help explain that increasing confidence about profit. In an encouraging, if preliminary, sign that hiring qualified administrators may finally be getting a little less expensive, the share of readers forecasting pricier salaries for technicians dropped from 43% last year to 34% this year, even though the percentage of survey respondents planning to add headcount is roughly the same. The trend extends to salespeople as well: 66% of channel pros predict little change in what they pay their sales team this time out, versus 55% a year ago.

Security Hot, IoT Holding Steady

Things are moving faster in the swelling market for security software, hardware, and services, which analysts at IDC say will climb at a 9.4% CAGR through 2023 to \$151.2 billion. Good thing, too, according to our readers. In 2019, 50% of them rated their anxiety level about cybersecurity dangers at 9 or 10 on a 1-10 scale, with 10 indicating the most concern. This year, that figure is all the way up to 67%.

Channel pros are clearly eager to grab a slice of the growing security pie. In just one year, the portion of them offering email, anti-virus, spam filtering, and other security services has jumped from 66% to 79%, while

the share reporting no plans to deliver security services has plummeted from 22% to 10%.

Closely related fields also saw big upticks in interest. Fully 83% of surveyed readers, for instance, now offer BDR, widely considered

Fig 3: Managed Services Move Beyond the Tipping Point

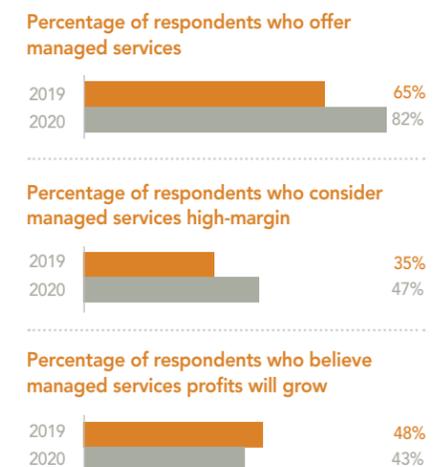


Fig 4: Cloud-based Business Applications on the Rise



Fig 5: Hardware Still a Moneymaker (high to average margins)

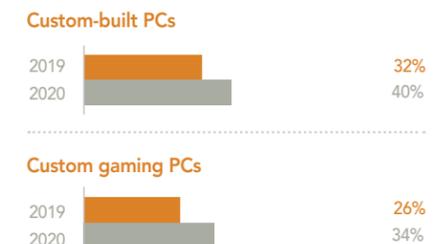


Fig 1: Economic Optimism

What are your expectations for market conditions in 2020 versus 2019?

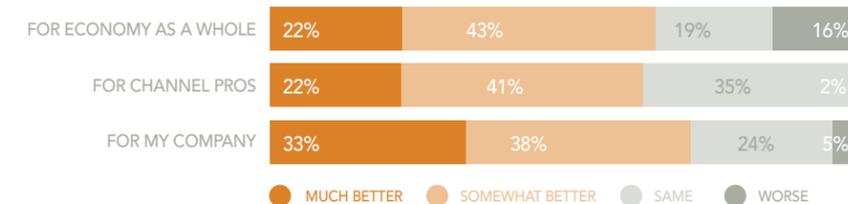
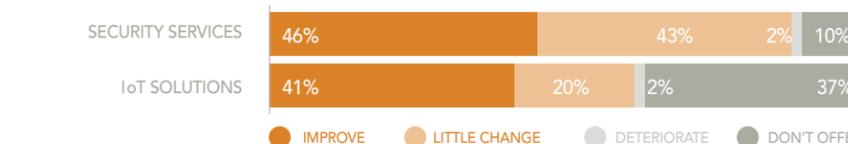


Fig 2: Security and IoT Profit Expectations



2020 STATE OF THE CHANNEL SURVEY

the last line of defense in a well-designed security architecture, versus 68% last year. What's more, training services (including but not limited to security training) are now available from 68% of poll participants versus 47% in last year's study.

There's more than proliferating threats drawing channel pros into security. Some 29% of our readers now call security services a high-margin business, versus 21% in 2019. The number of channel pros calling BDR high margin, furthermore, is up from 25% a year ago to 32% now, while the number saying the same of training services has spiked from 17% to 26%.

The future looks even brighter to many in our survey base. Nearly 46% of the people we polled foresee higher profits for security services in the next 12 months, versus 36% in our last study. Another 36% see steeper profits on the way in BDR, and 24% say the same of training services.

Security, however, isn't the biggest growth opportunity in the channel. Worldwide spending on Internet of Things solutions will reach a towering \$1.1 trillion in 2023, according to IDC, up from \$726 billion in 2019. The number of survey respondents offering IoT solutions has dipped ever so slightly in the last year from 30% to 29%, but readers in that cohort are doing a better job of making money: The segment of our survey base calling Internet of Things solutions a high-margin field has more than doubled since 2019 from 8% to 19%. Moreover, 41% forecast even higher profits ahead in the next 12 months, versus just 24% a year ago.

Managed Services and Cloud Computing Are Officially Mainstream

As for managed services, the momentum we highlighted in our last State of the Channel report has evolved into dominance in a startlingly short time. While 65% of the readers we surveyed in 2019 offered at least some managed services, the number now stands at a whopping 82%. For comparison's sake, only 77% of surveyed readers offer basics like networking gear and PCs.

MSPs enjoy the money they're making at managed services too. Among this year's poll sample, 47% call managed services a high-

margin market, versus 35% in our last study, and 43% believe profits will grow even richer in the next 12 months. That's down from 2019's 49%, but a big number just the same.

Plus, there's plenty of room for channel pros to collect more money from managed services going forward. At present, 62% of them make less than a quarter of their revenue that way, and 76% make less than half. Though 45% expect managed services to account for a greater share of their top line in 2020, 50% predict little change.

Like managed services, cloud computing generally and software-as-a-service specifically have become thoroughly mainstream. The portion of respondents to our poll offering Office 365 licenses, for example, stands at 71% this year, and 34% of readers are selling Google G Suite as well, up from 21% in our previous report.

Cloud solutions are also producing a growing share of billings for channel pros. The portion of our readership making at least half its revenue from the cloud has more than doubled since 2019, from 8% to a still modest 18%. The number of channel pros making less than a quarter of their revenue online, by contrast, has dropped from 79% to 68%.

Still, no one is making much profit in SaaS productivity apps at present. Just 4% of the channel partners we surveyed, in fact, call Office 365 a high-margin business, and 53% believe margins will remain about the same this year. A slightly better 6% of poll respondents like the profits they're clearing on G Suite, but 37% foresee flat margins ahead there too.

Look for figures like that last one to persist, moreover: Though 44% of polled readers expect cloud solutions to generate a greater share of revenue this year (down from 57% a year ago), 51% see cloud revenues holding stable.

Fig 6: Top- and Bottom-Line Growth Projected for 2020

What do you expect 2020 revenue and net profit will look like when compared to 2019?



Solution Lineups Are Getting Broader and More Profit-Heavy

A closer inspection of this year's results, however, reveals signs that cloud strategies among channel pros are maturing. For one thing, readers we polled are shifting away from selling table stakes productivity suites like Office 365 alone toward providing a wider range of services. Fully 48% of survey participants now offer website hosting, for example, versus 31% a year ago, and 54% now offer unified communications or VoIP to customers, versus 47% in 2019.

Channel pros are increasingly progressing beyond SaaS as well. The portion of our audience selling infrastructure-as-a-service solutions based on Microsoft Azure, Amazon Web Services, and other public cloud platforms has notched up from 32% in last year's survey to 36% in our latest one. Just over 31% of respondents, furthermore, now deliver platform-as-a-service offerings, as opposed to just 25% a year ago.

Better yet, channel pros are pairing commodity-priced cloud licensing with more lucrative cloud services in bigger numbers. Among respondents, 69% provide some combination of cloud consulting, deployment, and migration assistance to their clients, up from 55% the year before, and just 19% of readers call margins on those services low.

Encouragingly, readers are also venturing into the burgeoning and profitable market for cloud-based business applications. Doing so entails adding new people and skills, but channel pros are increasingly willing to make those investments: Some 28% of those we polled this year support online CRM solutions from Salesforce, Microsoft, and others, for instance, versus 17% in 2019. Similarly, 23% support cloud-based ERP products from vendors like SAP and Oracle's NetSuite

unit, way up from the 11% operating in that field 12 months back.

Evidence that readers are diversifying their offerings isn't limited to our cloud-focused data, however. Figures from elsewhere in our study also show channel pros entering markets that require more know-how and therefore pay better. For example, 46% of those we polled now provide videoconferencing solutions, versus 36% in 2019, while 32% offer digital signage solutions against last year's 25%.

Up significantly as well since our previous report are IT integration services (offered now by 71% of readers rather than 64%), server virtualization (68% now instead of 59% before), and desktop virtualization (58% now versus 46% before). The portion of channel pros doing no custom application development whatsoever, meanwhile, has nosedived from 59% to 23%.

Hardware: Not Dead Yet

Hardware may not be the trendiest way to make a living in technology these days, but it's far from a dead end either. Fueled by the recent end of extended support for Windows 7 and increasing demand for premium laptops, in fact, global sales of PCs grew 2.7% last year, according to IDC, marking the first full year of growth in that category since 2011.

Channel pros have noticed the change. Those calling PCs and peripherals a high- or average-margin business edged up this year from 42% to 46%, for example, while the percentage of those predicting better profit

on PC sales in the year to come has grown from 12% to 19%. What's more, 40% of poll respondents now call custom-built business PCs a high- or average-margin opportunity, versus 32% in 2019, and 34% say custom gaming PCs are high- or average-margin items, versus last year's 26%.

Pessimism about server hardware is abating too. Though 12% of readers forecast lower profits on servers in 2019, only 8% do this year. And though 60% of participants in our previous study predicted unchanged or higher margins on servers, a sharply improved 78% say the same in our new one.

That should give heart to the channel

pros in this year's survey sample, 67% of whom are 50 years old or more. You apparently don't have to be young to do well.

Fig 7: Employees per Company

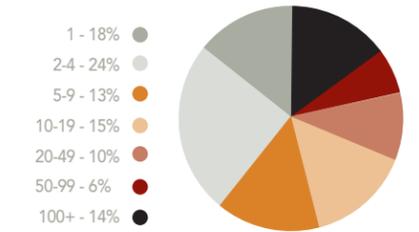


Fig 8: Top Solutions Offered

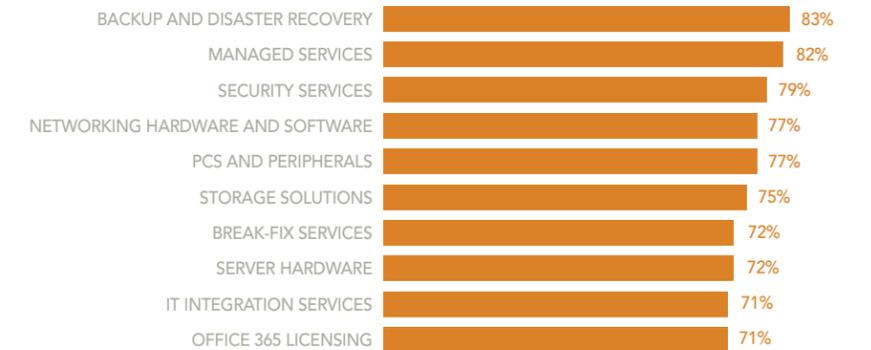
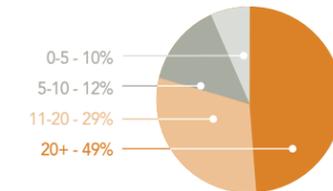
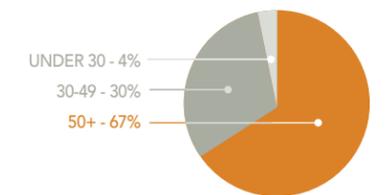


Fig 9: Age and Experience Rule Channel Businesses

How many years has your company been in business?



What is your age?



READER ROI

- **CHANNELPRO READERS** are even more bullish about overall IT market conditions now than a year ago.
- **INCREASED DEMAND** has more partners offering security solutions.
- **MANAGED SERVICES** and cloud computing now officially define the SMB channel mainstream.
- **THE HARDWARE MARKET** is showing fresh signs of life.

METHODOLOGY & DEMOGRAPHICS

The 2020 *ChannelPro* State of the Channel survey was conducted online from August to October 2019 and was open to everyone in our email database. About 41% of the 1,035 respondents call themselves MSPs, 36% say they're primarily VARs, and 18% are custom system builders. Just over 49% hold executive management titles such as CEO, owner, and president; about 21% work in unspecified technical management roles; and about 17% are sales or marketing managers. Approximately 42% work at companies with one to four employees, while roughly 13%, 24%, and 20%, respectively, are affiliated with firms that have five to nine, 10 to 49, and 50-plus people on staff.

*Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

2019 CHANNELPRO READERS' CHOICE AWARDS



THE CHANNEL'S GOT TALENT! MEET CHANNELPRO'S 2019 READERS' CHOICE AWARD WINNERS

SIMON COWELL'S got nothing on you, channel pros. When it comes to the vendors you rely on for products to sell and solutions to run your business with, you're reliably tough judges. As a result, the companies you pick in our annual Readers' Choice Awards can take justifiable pride in winning your vote. Here are your selections in all the categories that matter for 2019.

Managed Services Awards

Best Remote Monitoring and Management Vendor

Gold: ConnectWise
Silver: SolarWinds MSP
Bronze: Datto

Best Professional Services Automation Vendor

Gold: ConnectWise
Silver: Datto
Bronze: SolarWinds MSP

Best Integrated RMM/PSA Suite Vendor

Gold: ConnectWise
Silver: Datto
Bronze: SolarWinds MSP

Notice a pattern here? When it comes to RMM and PSA software, ConnectWise is your favorite, with SolarWinds MSP and Datto following close behind. That leaves a long list of names in these hugely strategic categories frustratingly shut out.

Best Quoting Solution Vendor

Gold: ConnectWise
Silver: QuoteWerks
Bronze: ChannelOnline

The good news for ConnectWise rolls on! For the first time ever, it displaces six-time consecutive gold medalist QuoteWerks atop the voting for best quoting solution.

Best Managed Print Vendor

Gold: HP
Silver: Xerox
Bronze: Lexmark

Sure, our hats are off to HP for its seventh straight gold in managed print and to Xerox for its fifth straight silver. But if you love an underdog, you've got to appreciate Lexmark finally winning the bronze medal after three straight years of falling just a few votes shy of the mark.

Cloud Computing Awards

Best Cloud Computing Marketplace

Gold: Ingram Micro
Silver: Pax8
Bronze: Tech Data

Ingram Micro is our gold honoree for the third year in a row in this category, and while we'd never want to tarnish that impressive accomplishment in any way, it's worth noting that 2018 bronze medalist Pax8 trails Ingram this year by one lone vote.

Best Managed Hosting/Cloud Infrastructure Provider

Gold: Microsoft
Silver: Amazon Web Services
Bronze: SherWeb

Microsoft and Amazon have been placing first and second in this category since we introduced it in 2013. Guess what? They do so again. Kudos to bronze winner SherWeb, though, for beating out hosting giant RackSpace for the second year straight.

Cloud Computing Awards

Best Cloud Email/Collaboration Solution

Gold: Microsoft
Silver: Google
Bronze: Amazon Web Services

The only thing new in this category is the margin by which Microsoft crushed top competitor Google. Voters cast some 3.5 times as many ballots for the maker of Office 365 as they did for the maker of G Suite.

Best Private Cloud Computing Vendor

Gold: Microsoft
Silver: Dell
Bronze: Hewlett Packard Enterprise

The whopping 51.5% of the vote that first-time private cloud medalist Microsoft collected last year left us scratching our collective heads. The 55.6% it got this year confirms that 2018 was no fluke. Microsoft and its Azure Stack private cloud platform are the far-and-away favorite among *ChannelPro* readers.

Virtualization Awards

Best Server Virtualization Vendor

Gold: VMware
Silver: Microsoft
Bronze: Citrix

Best Desktop Virtualization Vendor

Gold: VMware
Silver: Microsoft
Bronze: Citrix

Best Storage Virtualization Vendor

Gold: VMware
Silver: Microsoft
Bronze: Hewlett Packard Enterprise

When it comes to server and desktop virtualization, channel pros know what they like and are in no rush to change. Once again, they selected VMware, Microsoft, and Citrix as their win, place, and show. In storage virtualization, VMware maintains its top-of-the-heap position for a second year, following many earlier years without any medal at all in that category.

Hardware Awards

Best Server Hardware

Gold: Dell EMC
Silver: Hewlett Packard Enterprise
Bronze: Lenovo

Watch out, Dell. You take home gold again in this category, just as you have every year since 2016, but second place finisher HPE comes much closer this time around, and Lenovo (our bronze medalist in 2018) takes a bite out of your votes as well.

Best Converged/Hyperconverged Infrastructure Solution

Gold: Cisco
Silver: Hewlett Packard Enterprise
Bronze: Lenovo

Cisco pulls further ahead of HPE and its Simpli-Vity portfolio with readers in this still-young category, but the big news this year is Lenovo doubling its share of the ballot to edge past Nutanix, arguably the HCI market's most recognized name.

Best Desktop Hardware

Gold: Dell
Silver: Lenovo
Bronze: HP

Best Laptop/Ultrabook

Gold: Lenovo
Silver: Dell
Bronze: HP

Best Hybrid/Convertible PC

Gold: Lenovo
Silver: Microsoft
Bronze: Dell

The results in these three categories look a lot like last year's, though Lenovo's margin of victory in the laptop/Ultrabook polling is up significantly. The most striking change from 2018 is largely hidden from view, however, in the desktop voting, where Apple makes a huge jump from distant also-ran to respectable fourth-place finalist.

Best Monitor

Gold: ViewSonic
Silver: Samsung
Bronze: Dell

Dell was the surprise story in the monitor stakes last year, jumping straight into the gold spot after two years without a medal at all. This year it's the bronze winner, while industry mainstay ViewSonic, which was denied a place in the top three last year, grabs the gold for the very first time.

Best System on Chip

Gold: Intel
Silver: NVIDIA
Bronze: AMD

Best Embedded Solution

Gold: Intel
Silver: Raspberry Pi
Bronze: AMD

Intel once again owns both of these categories. AMD, meanwhile, which was denied a prize in embedded solutions for two years running, reclaims the bronze spot it last occupied in 2016. Raspberry Pi is the silver medalist for embedded solutions, just like last year, but its trend line among our readers is interesting: After collecting about 16% of the votes for several years it rose to about 20% in our 2018 vote and just north of 24% this year.

Best UPS and Power Conditioning Vendor

Gold: APC by Schneider Electric
Silver: Eaton
Bronze: CyberPower

All hail APC by Schneider Electric. It is the runaway winner in this category yet again. Eaton and CyberPower, which have been trading places for second and third place for years, do so once again, with Eaton reclaiming the silver spot it ceded to CyberPower in 2018.

Mobility Awards

Best Smartphone Vendor

Gold: Apple
Silver: Samsung
Bronze: Google

Best Tablet Vendor

Gold: Apple
Silver: Microsoft
Bronze: Samsung

It's Groundhog Day for our smartphone and tablet awards. Voters have now picked the same vendors in the same order for the third year straight. Judging by the number of votes separating gold winners from silver and silver winners from bronze, moreover, it could be a while before that pattern changes.

2019 CHANNELPRO READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

Best Mobile Device Management Vendor

Gold: Microsoft
Silver: Cisco (Meraki)
Bronze: IBM MaaS360

How times have changed. Once upon a time, Citrix, MobileIron, and VMware's AirWatch unit dominated these awards. For the second year in a row, though, Microsoft and Cisco are the top winners, albeit in reverse order this time. IBM's MaaS360, meanwhile, helped keep all three one-time MDM chieftains off the medal stand altogether.

Security Awards

Best Endpoint Security Vendor

Gold: Webroot
Silver: VIPRE
Bronze: Bitdefender

Best Security Software Suite Vendor

Gold: Webroot
Silver: Sophos
Bronze: Trend Micro

Need more evidence that the security market is more competitive than ever? Check out the results here. Webroot is the gold medalist in both categories again, just like 2018, but by narrower margins in both cases. VIPRE and Sophos, meanwhile, won nothing last year in categories they each medal in this time around. And can this really be the first time Trend Micro has won anything in either of these categories? Hard to believe, but true.

Best Email Security Vendor

Gold: Barracuda
Silver: Proofpoint
Bronze: Sophos

Barracuda wins handily here for the third consecutive year. The (much) more surprising result is first-time medalist Proofpoint's leap from deep in the pack in 2018 to silver honors in 2019. We're going to go out on a limb and guess that popular cloud distributor Pax8's decision late last year to add Proofpoint to its line card has something to do with that dramatic ascent.

Best Security Hardware Vendor

Gold: SonicWall
Silver: Cisco (Meraki)
Bronze: Fortinet

SonicWall triumphs here once more, and by its widest margin yet in the three years it's been our

gold medalist. Congratulations to Fortinet, which after edging its way up the voting for a while and finishing just outside the money in 2018, finally captures its first Readers' Choice Award.

Best Managed Security Service Vendor

Gold: Symantec
Silver: Continuum
Bronze: McAfee

Last year's voting concluded before silver medalist CARVIR was bought by bronze medalist Continuum. Together, their combined results would have been enough to land them in first place. Bad sign for Symantec, right? Maybe not so much. Its streak as the only gold medalist in this category since we created it in 2016 remains intact.

Storage Awards

Best Backup and Disaster Recovery Vendor

Gold: Datto
Silver: Veeam
Bronze: Barracuda

Best Cloud Backup and Disaster Recovery Vendor

Gold: Datto
Silver: Veeam
Bronze: Barracuda

Datto and Veeam would probably be upset with anything less than gold and silver in this category. The folks at Barracuda, on the other hand, have to be feeling pretty good about displacing big names like Carbonite and StorageCraft to win dual bronze medals this year.

Best Storage Hardware

Gold: Datto
Silver: Dell EMC
Bronze: Hewlett Packard Enterprise

After multiple close-but-not-quite finishes behind Dell EMC, Datto finally edges into first place in storage hardware. HPE, meanwhile, returns to the bronze spot it handed over to Synology last year.

Best File Share and Sync Vendor

Gold: Microsoft
Silver: Dropbox
Bronze: Datto

Microsoft, which garnered more votes than Dropbox in this category for the first time in 2018, widens its lead significantly this year. Datto places a solid third behind the two more established contenders for the third time in a row.

Distributor Awards

Best Hardware/Software Catalog

Gold: Ingram Micro
Silver: Tech Data
Bronze: D&H

Best RMA Offerings

Gold: Ingram Micro
Silver: Tech Data
Bronze: SYNEX

Best Financing Options

Gold: Ingram Micro
Silver: Tech Data
Bronze: SYNEX

Best Training Programs

Gold: Ingram Micro
Silver: Tech Data
Bronze: SYNEX

Best Sales Support

Gold: Tech Data
Silver: Ingram Micro
Bronze: SYNEX

Best Cloud/MSP Service Offerings

Gold: Ingram Micro
Silver: Pax8
Bronze: Tech Data

Best Internet of Things Offerings

Gold: Ingram Micro
Silver: Tech Data
Bronze: SYNEX

Where *do* they put all those gold medals? Ingram Micro wins another six of them this year, with only Tech Data's first-place finish in sales support denying the distributor a clean sweep.

Best Value-Added/Specialized Distributor

Gold: Ingram Micro Cloud
Silver: Pax8
Bronze: Tech Data Cloud

Pax8 steps up from bronze to silver this year. Much as in the polling for best cloud marketplace, however, it doesn't quite surpass Ingram Micro. Tech Data rounds out a trio of companies that account for 61% of the vote collectively in a crowded segment.

Additional Awards

Best Vendor Partner Program

Gold: Microsoft
Silver: Dell Technologies
Bronze: Lenovo

Microsoft, which had won every gold medal ever awarded in this category until 2018, reclaims the crown it handed over to Dell in last year's shocking vote. And let's not forget to congratulate Lenovo for winning silver or bronze every year since 2014.

Best IT Community

Gold: CompTIA
Silver: The ASCII Group
Bronze: The 20

True, CompTIA has won every gold medal ever doled out in our IT community polling, but regular medalist The ASCII Group has come extremely close in many of those years, including this one. The 20, which isn't really an IT community so much as a managed services cop with community-like qualities, takes home its second straight bronze.

Best Unified Communications/VoIP Vendor

Gold: Cisco
Silver: Microsoft
Bronze: Cytracom

Cytracom pockets a medal in this hotly contested segment for a third year running, while Microsoft returns to the silver medal spot it occupied for many years until unexpectedly dropping out of the top three altogether in 2018.

Best Networking Vendor

Gold: Cisco
Silver: NETGEAR
Bronze: Datto

Cisco's gold medal here isn't exactly an upset, and Datto, while still a relative newcomer in networking, is the bronze winner three years running now. NETGEAR, however, after winning nothing last year, has to be pleased about returning to the silver spot, which it pretty much owned until 2018.

Best Digital Signage Vendor

Gold: Samsung
Silver: ViewSonic
Bronze: LG

LG came achingly close to earning silver honors versus bronze in 2018 and 2017. This time around, perennial first-place finisher Samsung and second-place winner ViewSonic pull further out ahead.

How the Voting Worked

Winners of the *ChannelPro* Readers' Choice Awards were selected by readers of our magazine and visitors to our website. A total of 945 votes were collected between April 4 and May 17, 2019. Readers were free to cast votes in as many or as few of the 49 categories as they wished. In each category, they could either select a name from a list we provided or write in a name of their own. Voters were permitted to submit multiple ballots, though few did.



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