



 eBook

The Right Fit:

Winning Customers by Finding
the Right Program Fit

Imagine, you own a small marketing business.

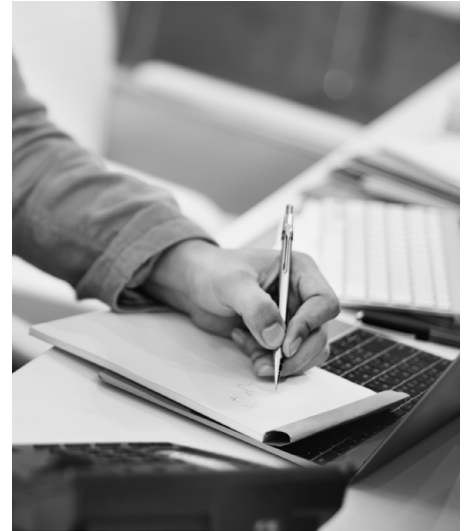
For a while, you managed your own personal computers, but now, the team's growing to the point you'll need an office and a full network. Nothing fancy, but enough to facilitate additional growth.

You receive two IT provider recommendations and decide to hear out both. The first one walks in with a plan to grow a complex network, throws a bunch of figures at you, and then gives you a price tag in the same meeting. You start developing flu-like symptoms and realize you've come down with a case of "sticker shock." The second provider walks in and sits down with you. It feels like a polite, friendly conversation among peers. They ask a few questions, then offer a basic plan—that meets your specific needs—to help keep your systems up, running, and secure—for a more reasonable price.

Odds are you'll choose the second provider. They took the time to get to know your business and help you meet your growth goals. In short, provider two took a consultative approach and earned your trust.

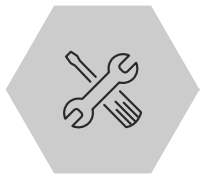
No one likes the hard sell. In business-to-business sales (B2B), you need to take a more consultative approach that leads to a win-win for you and the client. That means you need to understand their needs, and more importantly, meet those needs with your pitches. That's what this eBook is all about—understanding customer objectives and matching your programs and pitches to them. Doing this can help you gain a better sales close rate while simultaneously keeping your customers happier in the long run.

Before we get into the nitty gritty, let's talk about the **different levels of service and the corresponding mindsets from customers.**



FROM BREAK/FIX TO FULLY MANAGED

The businesses you sell to will vary in terms of their size, maturity, and needs. Many will still want simple break/fix, while others will need fully managed services. Many will fall somewhere in between. Knowing how to make the right pitch requires you ask the right questions and have a good framework in mind of what to sell. We'll cover four service levels in this book:



BREAK / FIX

These customers are *extremely cost-conscious* and only call when something breaks. They make up most of opportunities, but there are ways to move them to higher-value contracts.



À LA CARTE

These customers want to minimize repair costs, yet *can't commit to a more fully managed model*. Instead, they'll buy individual services on a contract.



PROACTIVE

These customers *rely on their network to get their jobs done* and know both the pain of downtime and the value of having a professional proactively prevent it.



MANAGED SERVICES

These customers *want to fully outsource* their IT to a third-party provider *and* want that vendor to be a true business partner.

This is just a high-level overview; in the following pages, we'll cover each level. A good portion of our time will be spent on à la carte services, since each service will require specific messaging.

**But first,
how do you decide what's right?**

Getting to the Right Service Level

When you have a prospect in front of you, always begin by asking them about their business. Here are some suggested questions to ask:

1. What are you trying to accomplish as a business in the next year? Five years? Ten?
2. How much have you budgeted for IT?
3. What are the biggest risks to your business when it comes to IT?
4. How big is your current network?
5. Do you have in-house IT people already?
6. Do you want someone to act as an outsourced IT department?
7. Are you aware of how much downtime can cost your business?
8. How concerned are you about security? Do you have anything planned in the event of a successful attack?

Remember, you want these questions to come across as part of a simple, helpful conversation. Once you have a better idea of the makeup of the business and their current needs, then you can start suggesting services to solve their issues.



BREAK / FIX

Suggest break/fix if you find a customer is extremely cost-sensitive or is hesitant to commit to a monthly cost. You can always upsell them later once they realize the value of preventive maintenance.

Break/fix customers want to avoid spending money. They often don't have an IT line item in their budget and don't view IT as mission-critical. These customers will primarily need basic remote or on-site support. They'll call when software breaks or they may contract your business for temporary project work. These customers will contact you on an as-needed basis. You'll bill them after fixing something, or you could offer block support hours they can purchase.

While these clients don't offer predictable income, don't neglect them—break/fix customers can sometimes become higher-paying, recurring clients. Plus, they can become great sources of referrals.



À LA CARTE

Suggest à la carte if you have a break/fix customer who consistently faces the same problems. Additionally, if you find a customer is cost-sensitive, but seems to have a specific need like data protection, then à la carte offers an excellent way of bringing them on board.

With à la carte services, cost-conscious customers can use just what they need, yet you still get a reliable source of recurring revenue.

Simplicity is the name of the game here. Focus on the bread-and-butter services that nearly all businesses need, like patching, antivirus (or endpoint protection), and backup. Additionally, we've seen some MSPs start to bundle à la carte packages to further simplify the sales process. We'll briefly dig into each service and cover how to position them to customers.

Managed antivirus	Endpoint protection	Managed patch	Managed backup	Managed email protection
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Managed antivirus

Customers likely already know viruses can harm their computers and productivity. While some may not be fully aware of the extent of the damage a virus could cause, they at least generally know they need to have it. But managing it on their own can be difficult.

When talking to a customer about managed antivirus, emphasize the following benefits:

- » Protect your workstations from cyberthreats that could lead to performance issues or data loss.
- » Rest easier knowing your workstations will be kept up-to-date with the latest virus signatures and that we'll schedule and run scans on a regular basis.
- » Get wider coverage with an enterprise-grade AV solution that includes signature-based protection for known threats and heuristic and behavioral scans to detect files *acting* like viruses.

Endpoint protection

Many cyberthreats require more advanced protection. While antivirus can prevent malware, an increasing number of modern threats are designed to evade traditional antivirus. Endpoint protection takes security a step further using AI and machine learning.

When talking to a customer about endpoint protection, emphasize the following benefits:

- » Fight back against the latest threats—including those that *can't* be caught with AV—via AI and machine learning.
- » Get back up and running fast after a ransomware attack with endpoint protection that automatically rolls the endpoint back to a safe state.
- » Prevent cyberthreats from spreading across your network or from computer to computer.

Managed patch

Patching is security 101. Using a computer with an out-of-date operating system or software opens machines to attacks from cybercriminals. Plus, users miss out on new features or performance enhancements that could improve their productivity.

When talking to a customer about managed patch, emphasize the following benefits:

- » Prevent potential cyberthreats by keeping systems consistently up-to-date.
- » Enhance productivity by keeping software at peak performance.
- » Rest easy knowing you have professionals keeping watch over patch statuses.

Managed backup

Businesses live and die by their data. In some cases, a data loss incident could be catastrophic to the business resulting in costly downtime or even the loss of business-critical data. Offering backup and data protection services helps customers avoid these issues.

As you already know, backup isn't all-or-nothing. You can work with the client on the *amount* of backup coverage they need, whether that's protecting critical servers, workstations, business documents, or even data within Microsoft® Office 365®.

When talking to customers about managed backup, emphasize the following:

- » Rest easy knowing we're backing up your data regularly, so it'll be there when you need it.
- » Lower operating costs with cloud-based backups that require no special hardware.
- » Improve productivity via fast restores after a potential data loss or downtime event.

Managed email protection

Businesses run on email. Cybercriminals know this and use it to their advantage. As a result, most cyberthreats come in via the inbox. They know that people receive a deluge of email and are bound to make mistakes. Unfortunately, the native security in most email services simply isn't enough.

In some cases, business owners may not know the dangers of email threats, or they may think their primary email provider is enough. In this case, you may need to educate them before you start selling. But once you do, discuss these benefits:

- » Save time by reducing spam, and stay protected from email threats with aggressive filtering that uses collective intelligence from millions of inboxes around the world.
- » Stay productive even if your primary email service has an outage with access to a web-based email console, available 24/7.

À LA CARTE BUNDLES

We mentioned earlier that simplicity is the name of the game for many customers. Bundles let you sell multiple services at a time in a way that makes sense to customers and lets you gain higher-value contracts. Below are a few suggested packages—and how you might offer them to potential customers. You can also consider providing a bit of a discount on a bundle to sweeten the deal.

Note: These bundles are suggestions from what we’ve seen our own MSP partners use. You can always mix and match to experiment.

Core security

With the proliferation of cyberthreats over the past few years, as well as increased press attention to data breaches, businesses are increasingly aware of the importance of cybersecurity. This offering is fundamental, but can help businesses reduce their risk against most attacks.

Under a core security package, you would offer:

✓	Managed antivirus (or endpoint protection, preferably)
✓	Managed patch
✓	Managed Mail

When talking to customers, emphasize the following:

1. Reduce your cyberattack risk by having us patch software vulnerabilities, manage antivirus for you (or offer greater security via AI-driven endpoint protection), and defend against email-borne threats.
2. Boost productivity by reducing the risk of security-related downtime.
3. Gain greater peace of mind by knowing your foundational security will be managed by IT experts.

Note: You may want to consider adding backup into the mix here as well. This would make the offering similar to core desktop; however, the way you talk to customers about this will differ. You’ll want to focus on the importance of protecting their data, particularly against ransomware.

Core desktop

Businesses need their employees to remain productive throughout the day. This requires keeping their devices well-maintained and keeping a watchful eye out for potential issues. This package lets you monitor for issues, keep them safe from many cyberthreats, and maintain uptime.

The core desktop package should include:

✓	Antivirus (or endpoint protection)
✓	Patching
✓	Backup
✓	Lite monitoring

When talking to customers about the core desktop package, emphasize the following:

- » Steer clear of a good portion of cyberthreats by keeping your systems current with the latest patches—as well as antivirus scans and signatures.
- » Keep your workforce productive by ensuring software is up-to-date and both data and systems are available.
- » Enjoy peace of mind knowing your workstations are managed and monitored by experts.

Service desk management

Many customers will want to budget for their IT services, and they'll want access to your team on a regular basis. For these customers, you could charge a flat fee for full service desk management.

✓	Essential IT support , including lite monitoring, asset/hardware/software reporting, and a branded system tray icon to request support
✓	Managed service desk access , including unlimited remote service desk support

When talking to customers, emphasize the following:

- » Predict costs each month with a preset service desk package.
- » Keep the workforce productive with quick and easy access to IT support.
- » Reduce potential performance issues with lite monitoring.

**PROACTIVE**

Suggest proactive services if you get a prospect who understands their network is critical to their business's productivity and bottom line.

Some prospects already have critical services supported by technology. They're extremely sensitive to downtime, and they know the cost of fixing issues often exceeds the cost of proactive monitoring and maintenance. When you find this type of customer, pitch them on proactive services and use à la carte as a fallback.

Proactive services should include:

✓	Network monitoring and maintenance
✓	Device availability monitoring
✓	Preventive maintenance on devices
✓	Managed patching
✓	Managed antivirus (or endpoint protection)
✓	Reporting
✓	Quarterly business review

When pitching customers on proactive services, emphasize the following points:

- » Greatly reduce network downtime with proactive monitoring and maintenance from IT experts.
- » Reduce the risk of security events threatening your network with patching and antivirus (or endpoint protection).
- » Stay informed on network issues with frequent reporting.
- » Get even more visibility into network issues and discuss strategic changes via a quarterly business review.



FULLY MANAGED SERVICES

Suggest fully managed services for prospects who have complex IT needs or want someone to completely handle all their IT.

Many businesses need more complete services. They want to outsource their IT to a third-party provider and trust that provider will keep everything up and running. They may have no one in-house to take care of things, or they may have an IT person or two in house and want to augment their capabilities via a third-party managed services provider. Regardless, these customers have more extensive IT needs than some of your other customers. They'll also likely be the most lucrative in the long run.

Fully managed services should have a fixed-fee contract. In this, you should include:

✓	Monitoring and maintenance of the complete network
✓	Monitoring and maintenance of devices
✓	Managed patch
✓	Managed antivirus
✓	Managed backup
✓	Reporting
✓	Monthly business review
✓	Remediation time

Ultimately, at this level, you're becoming a true business partner for them. IT is mission-critical for their business, so you need to think of yourself as an extension of it. For these customers, hit the following points:

- » We'll be a true business partner for your organization, treating your success as our own.
- » Rest easy knowing we'll keep your systems up-to-date with the building blocks of security.
- » Stay productive with the highest level of maintenance and monitoring we can offer, keeping your systems in top shape.
- » Stay informed via reports sent directly to you.
- » Offer feedback with monthly reviews and check-ins.

A Quick Word on Marketing Communications

By tailoring your pitch to your potential client, you can hopefully increase your close rates on sales and earn more revenue over time. But getting face time with prospects requires upfront work. Discussing the marketing process would take its own eBook (or series), but we wanted to offer a few high-level tips:

- » **Figure out who you plan to target.** This helps you focus your messaging and gives you a better idea of where you can reach them. For example, if you want to target a specific vertical, consider going to trade shows or events to network and meet potential business prospects.
- » When prospecting for customers, **try multiple channels to see which work best for you.** You may need to buy a list of prospects to contact, or you may want to create your own. Once you do, try reaching out via different channels, including email, cold calling, or even paid ads. And make sure to measure your results to see which work best and which are a waste of time.
- » Remember, **marketing is a nonstop event.** You need to continuously market your business if you want to avoid a typical feast-or-famine cycle. This means periodically contacting cold leads to see if they're ready to take the leap, and it also means continuing to communicate with customers after you've sold them.

There's a lot to learn on the marketing and sales front. SolarWinds MSP offers free, extensive resources on these topics, and they're all geared specifically for IT service providers. You can learn more by visiting the SolarWinds MSP Institute at solarwindsmsp.com/msp-institute.

THE PERFECT FIT FOR THE PERFECT CUSTOMER

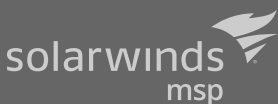
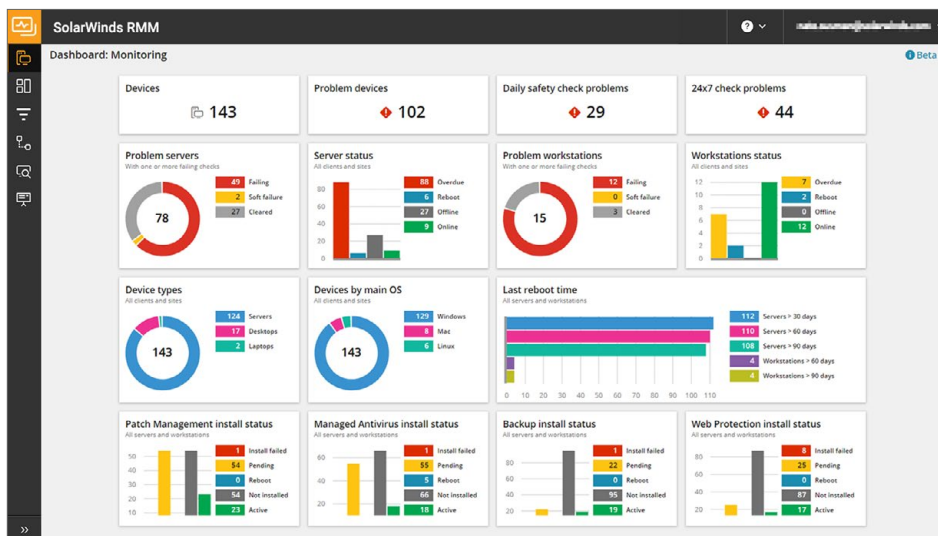
Knowing how to match your offering and pitch to customers makes a huge difference on your sales close rate. When you get a lead, try to ask the right questions to see where they fit, then personalize your pitch to their business needs. From there, you can always sell them more services as their needs grow.

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