

# LEVEL PLATFORMS

Managed Workplace® v6.0

Reduce Service Delivery and Operations Cost



## Executive Summary

Managed Workplace® significantly reduces a solution provider's cost of service and solution delivery as well as general operational expenses for solution providers; while simultaneously providing new service revenue, increase existing project and services sales, all while delivering more differentiated services. Managed Workplace reduces the cost of solution and service delivery in as well as day to day operational expenses in several ways:

- Improved efficiency by automating certain revenue-generating activities
- Cost-savings from more effective staff utilization;
- Reductions in overhead from non-revenue generating activities;
- Reduction in revenue lost due to disputes with customers over work performed.

The overall business impacts to the solution provider from using Managed Workplace across their entire customer base are reduction in operating costs, improved margins and cash flow – even if they choose not to sell managed services or pursue incremental projects enabled using Manage Workplace.

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# 1.0 Business Rationale

## 1.1 Are Cost Savings Possible?

As evidenced in the illustration below, most solution providers are more focused on revenue growth than on reducing costs. This is because a solution provider's cost-base is typically dominated by labor costs (i.e. over 80% of total operating costs) and without Managed Workplace most solution providers have little scope for reducing these costs beyond controlling headcount and salary levels.

Solution providers already invest in their technical staff to improve their efficiency by raising their competencies and keeping certifications current. Without automation it is difficult to gain further efficiencies unless the solution provider is willing to specialize in a handful of technologies.

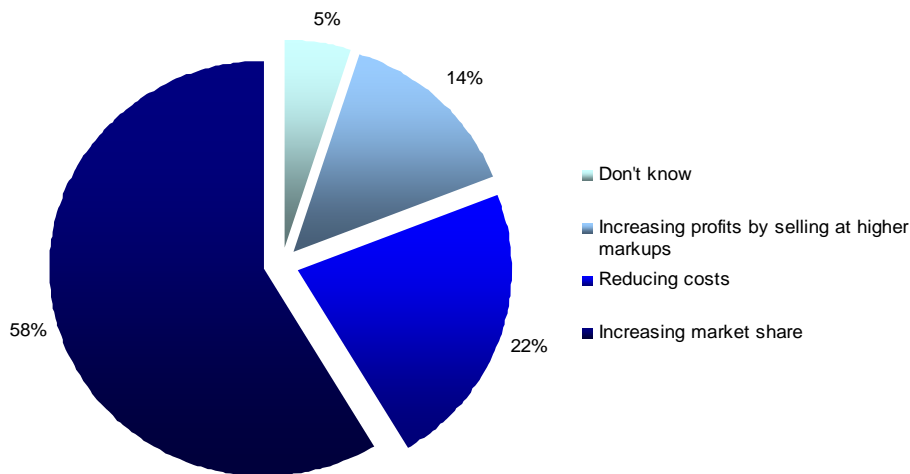
Since existing services offered by most solution providers are based almost entirely on the competencies of their technical staff, reducing technical headcount is not an option. Reducing technical headcount translates immediately to a reduction in a solution provider's capacity to serve its customers. Paying them less is not an option either since failing to keep up with market salary ranges will just increase the churn in technical staff and make the solution provider more reliant on junior staff that may not be able to do the same work as existing staff.

Most solution providers already minimize sales headcount to only those account managers staffed to the level necessary to manage existing customers, both active and previously active, so that the solution provider has the capacity to pursue new business.

Administrative headcount is also already minimized by solution providers who typically run a lean business. Smaller solution providers have next to no admin staff and outsource for accounting and financial support staff.

Although reduction in headcount and staffing is not a realistic way of obtaining cost savings for most solution providers, Managed Workplace offers several new ways of finding substantial cost reductions.

**IT solution providers' business focus**  
Source: eweek.com, Enterprise Technology News and Reviews



For example, technical personnel often constitute more than half of a solution provider's headcount and represent 40 – 60% of total costs. Using Managed Workplace just to automate routine and mundane activities (such as checking log files, backup and Anti-virus status, applying patches, cleaning temp directories and files, etc.) performed day-in and day-out by these staff can recover up to 1/4 of their time.<sup>1</sup> The time recaptured via automation can be better spent performing other revenue-generating work for the same clients, or can be used as an opportunity to reduce customer-per-headcount ratios by either serving more new customers with the same headcount, or reducing overall staff levels. Either way the savings can be measured as a cost reduction, and potentially 1/4 of that 40 - 60%, or approximately 12% of cost can be recovered via automation alone.

## 1.2 How Big Could The Savings Be?

Most solution providers fall into two camps: those that are too busy treading water with existing customers to pursue new business opportunities (i.e. "swamped") and those that have deliberately over-invested in staffing levels to ensure having the headroom to grow (i.e. "low margin") but are struggling to grow due to the higher cost-base.

The swamped solution providers are shorthanded in human and technical resources, spending too much time simply keeping their clients' IT systems up and running instead of looking for better ways to expand their business by undertaking new projects for those customers or by acquiring new customers. Although they would prefer using their limited resources to perform more strategic tasks that could lead to more lucrative contracts rather than simply reacting to problems, these solution providers are rarely able to do so because they fear that excess staff costs will force them to increase rates and lose competitiveness. For these solution providers, reducing cost is a necessity if they are to grow at all.

Since successful solution providers often find themselves short-handed when responding to growth opportunities, some amount of excess staffing is unavoidable when ramping to meet new business needs. A 2006 survey of solution provider profitability performed by IDC for Microsoft's Partner Program found that solution providers were typically running at only 60% to 70% capacity utilization.<sup>2</sup> For a typical low-margin solution provider that has over 80% of their cost of business based on labor-related factors, the hidden cost of under-utilization is an 80% x (100 - 65%) or 28% tax on margins!

These two savings are cumulative. Harvesting staff efficiency and utilization-based cost savings can yield a combined reduction of up to 12% + 28%, or 40% in reduced cost of running your business as a solution provider.

## 1.3 What about My Business?

Since these numbers are based on averages and are hypothetical, it is better if you substitute your own assessment of your business costs to identify a potentially significant cost-savings opportunity:

- What proportion of your total cost of business is driven by technical labor cost?
- What proportion of your technicians' time is spent on routine, mundane, and recurring tasks such as checking event and log files, verifying backup status, verifying Anti-virus and Anti-spam status, applying

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<sup>1</sup> For example, spending 15 minutes per system to login, check filespace usage, delete temporary files, check event and other log files, check patch status, check A/V status, etc. times 8 systems will occupy ¼ of a technician's day.

<sup>2</sup> Partner Profitability Assessment Report, IDC 2006, published by Microsoft Corp, survey of Microsoft partners between June 2005 and May 2006 in the USA, UK, and Germany. Utilization levels were measured by partner type.

software patches, gathering asset-related data, etc.? And if you are not doing these tasks, should you not be performing them if you could do so efficiently?

- What proportion of your technicians' time is spent on non-revenue generating activities such as driving to and from customer sites, time spent gathering data to justify work performed, etc.?
- What proportion of your business (sales and technical) is partially under-utilized?
- What proportion of what should be revenue-generating work for a customer is spent on non-billable activities due to invoice payment disputes over work performed?

## 2.0 Automating Routine Tasks

### 2.1 90-Day ROI from Automation

Many activities performed by your technical staff are mundane, repetitive tasks that can fully or partially automated using Managed Workplace. These include repetitive logins and reboots, checking on backup status, checking system logs and event files, verifying Anti-virus and Anti-spam status, gathering asset data, applying patches, checking disk capacities, etc. In fact, many solution providers are so overwhelmed by these routine tasks they have little time left over for performing higher-value work for their customers such as performance analysis of critical systems, recurring incident analysis on problem devices, and capacity and upgrade planning.

Using Managed Workplace to automate routine tasks more than cost-justifies its deployment to a customer site – even if you are not selling managed services to that customer. Why should a technician spend 15 minutes times 20 systems, or 5 hours, to log into every system just to delete temporary files, or to check on Windows event logs, when this task can be fully automated using Managed Workplace? Assuming a loaded cost-base of approximately \$50 per technician-hour, the \$250 saved in this single example repeated only 3 times per year completely offsets a non-discounted \$60 monthly license cost for Managed Workplace at that site for the entire year.

Since these activities are typically performed monthly (if not weekly) your real savings are higher since you will recoup the cost of deploying Managed Workplace within the first 90 days. You may choose to pass some of the cost-savings along to your customers in whole or in part to increase your competitive posture. Or, as identified in the companion white paper *Driving Net New Recurring Revenue*, you can choose to package these services differently to translate these cost savings into recurring revenue opportunities. Having deployed Managed Workplace to a site, the choice is entirely yours to make on a customer-by-customer basis.

### 2.2 Continuous Data Gathering

Managed Workplace automatically gathers asset, performance, log, and event data on a continuous basis for you. This information may be gathered from Windows registry, performance counters, and event logs, as well as from SNMP MIBs, Syslogs and custom logs. This information can be viewed at any time via a Device Dashboard and alerts can be set so that your staff can be notified of problematic situations. Backup, Anti-virus, and Anti-spam status monitoring can also be easily automated using templates for popular backup and other security assurance tools.

For example, there is no need to repetitively log onto each system at a customer site to check for alerts in Windows logs or to check disk usage. Using Managed Workplace, Windows events and performance counters can be monitored and viewed online or via various reports. For example, using predefined monitoring policies in the Windows Server 2003 template, you can automatically monitor windows update services on a Windows Server 2003 server and be notified if that service fails to install an update. Similarly, you can be notified of account expiry, login failures and denials, logical disk manager errors, NTFS quota threshold alarms and over 40 other events and performance indicators.

Similarly the Windows XP template enables you to automatically gather and monitor over 28 indicators, the Active Directory template has over 109 indicators, and the SBS template has over 60 indicators. Not only are these gathered with no labour cost, for many solution providers the depth and quality of monitoring and data gathering

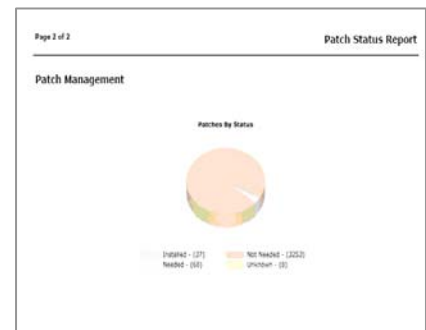
provided “out-of-the-box” by Managed Workplace is significantly better than what they are currently able to perform manually.

## 2.3 Patching

Managed Workplace provides extensive and automated patching capabilities for Microsoft systems and application software based on Windows Software Update Services (WSUS). By leveraging these capabilities solution providers can control which patches are deployed automatically and which require their prior approval based on different patch classifications. This automation can significantly reduce the labor cost for solution providers who have existing patching services that encompass:

- Security patches for all Microsoft system and application software
- System software patches and service packs for Windows 2000, 2003 and SBS servers, Virtual Server, Vista and XP desktops
- Software patches and service packs for critical infrastructure applications such as Microsoft Exchange 2000 / 2003 / 2007, Active Directory, ISA Server, SQL Server, Content Management Server, Windows Software Update Server, and Office Communications Server
- Software patches and service packs for productivity software including MS-Office Suite, SharePoint, Windows Live, and MS-Project
- Software patches for utility applications including Internet Explorer, Windows Defender, Silverlight, Health Vault, Forefront, Network Monitor, and Data Protection Manager
- Software patches for design software such as Visual Studio, Visio, and Expressions

Not only can you apply patches automatically, using Managed Workplace’s **Site Patch Status Report** you can track the status of patches needed, rapidly identify failed patches or find recent patches that are applicable to your customers’ systems. This lowers your cost for proactive maintenance of your customers’ systems, while simultaneously reducing the time required to apply critical fixes that promote the stability of your customers’ IT infrastructure.



Since Managed Workplace works with, and does not replace, existing Microsoft update management technology, a solution provider who already provides patch management services using native Windows capabilities will immediately realize a cost-savings from using Managed Workplace. Instead of representatively logging into each customer’s WSUS server, you can control them all from a single dashboard in Managed Workplace.

## 2.4 Scripting

Managed Workplace provides an automated means of running scripts to perform recurring tasks on your customers’ computers. Scripts can also be run on a schedule, creating a significant opportunity to drive down the cost of recurring, repetitive tasks.

Managed Workplace's script library provides example scripts for common tasks such as cleaning up temporary directories and files, running scandisk, defragment a drive, etc. You can also develop your own scripts as required to meet the unique needs of your customers. Since Managed Workplace scripting uses standard tools, your technical staff do not need to learn proprietary skills to take advantage of this cost-savings opportunity.

## 3.0 Improving Efficiency and Effectiveness

### 3.1 More Effective Troubleshooting

Imagine how more effective your existing break / fix service would be if your technicians already knew what the cause of an issue was at the same time that they were notified of the problem? How happy would your customers be if your staff knew of problems and were already working on resolving them before the issue became apparent on your customer's site? What savings are possible if you could ensure that your service technicians arrive at your customer's site with the correct parts each time? Many solution providers will attest that this is all possible if you have Managed Workplace installed in all your customer sites just to improve the effectiveness of your break/fix service.

Using Managed Workplace's automated monitoring and alerting, you can be notified in advance of or as problems occur in your customer's IT environment. Managed Workplace also has self-healing actions that detect the failure of a critical Windows service and automatically restart that service prior to notifying you that the problem has occurred. In many cases this enables you to resolve the underlying cause of the failure before your customers are even aware of them!

Even if the cause of the problem cannot be self-healed, the continuous monitoring and alerting capabilities of Managed Workplace provides an invaluable heads-up when something goes wrong with your customer's systems. The cost of 20 to 30 minutes of time spent with your customer on the phone, calming them down and diagnosing the issue, (which is normally not billed) goes completely to your bottom line through improved efficiency of your technical staff. Same problem solved, but far more effectively when using Managed Workplace.

In addition to reducing non-billable lead times in reacting to customer problems, Managed Workplace's detailed alert information provides significant insight into your customer's environment that makes your staff more efficient in diagnosing the cause of problems. Alerts can be categorized and then referenced by service group so your technical staff can simply drill down on the alert indication in the Central Dashboard in Managed Workplace to quickly understand the cause of the alert.

For example, your technical staff can be notified of a network error and within a couple of clicks find the switch that generated the alert, and see which port is in error on that switch. They can then click on the device information to see other SNMP details for that switch so that they can determine the model number and other information to determine what replacement parts might be needed.

In another example, your technical staff can be notified whenever a server disk is running dangerously low on free space in advance of a disk failure. The alert detail information indicates exactly which server and logical drive are of concern so that your technicians know exactly what type of problem to fix (i.e. low-disk as opposed to hard drive failure) and where it is occurring.

Many solution providers using Managed Workplace frequently report that their technicians are happier and more motivated because they are able to spend more of their time solving problems rather than diagnosing them. This

translates into further cost-savings by reducing churn in your technical staff as well as higher efficiency from being more motivated.

### **3.2 Rapid Remediation via Remote Access**

Managed Workplace enables remote access to your customers' sites without opening holes in their firewalls or by having to tediously configure virtual private networks to provide secure remote access to their systems. This built-in capability spans a variety of protocols (RDP, Telnet, SSH, VNC) and enables your technical staff to gain access to systems remotely when they otherwise would not be able to for security-related, configuration-related or cost reasons.

For example, with Managed Workplace you do not need to license remote access software to provide your technicians with this capability. In fact, deploying Managed Workplace to a site simply to facilitate remote access is frequently less expensive than licensing a 3<sup>rd</sup> party remote access product for that site. For example, remote access products (e.g. LogMeIn, GoToMyPC, PCAnywhere, etc.) can cost over \$60 per computer per year, and are more expensive when remote access to more than 10 – 12 systems per site are required.

For solution providers who choose to continue licensing higher-cost remote access products, some of these products, such as Real VNC Enterprise Edition, can be configured to work with and be launched by Managed Workplace. Using Managed Workplace's Service Center as a common console from which your staff initiates all remote activity can increase their efficiency. Your staff can be notified of a problem by Managed Workplace, login to the Service Center to see details on the device in question and, within a couple of clicks of a mouse, launch a remote session using the tool of their choice.


Note that since Managed Workplace uses an agentless architecture, remote access capability does not depend on special applications in the system being accessed. This means that your technicians will be more successful when accessing severely degraded systems remotely to diagnose them. For example, as long as the Onsite Manager within Managed Workplace is running, your technicians can remotely RDP to any Windows desktop or server, or Telnet to any Linux or Mac desktop or server to resolve problems. Even if a problem is severe and prevents new applications on the system from being launched, frequently a remote login is still possible because it is supported within the operating system itself. Also, since Managed Workplace supports AMT technology on Intel® vPro™ equipped desktops and laptops, your technical staff can even remotely access information on a failed device that will not boot correctly.

Accessing systems remotely instead of going onsite to work on them can also dramatically improve the efficiency of your technicians. Not only can they collaborate better with one another to solve problems, they can avoid multiple trips and can remain more focused on the task at hand when working remotely than when distracted at a customer site by other issues. That means that, on average, they will tend to close problems faster than they do without using Managed Workplace.

### **3.3 Improved Effectiveness for Help Desks**

Some solution providers offer an existing help desk service that provides on-demand support for desktop users. These services typically include desktop operating system support as well as support for major desktop applications.

Managed Workplace also improves the efficiency of help desk personnel who troubleshoot problems called in by those desktop clients. Managed Workplace's VNC capabilities enable the use of remote shadow sessions, so



that your help desk personnel can see what the client is doing on their end. As a result, your technicians can work step-by-step with your clients, explaining what the issue is, rectifying the issue remotely; as well as training clients on how they can resolve similar issues in future. This significantly decreases the amount of time spent assessing the nature of the problem.

An Average help desk call lasts between 15 to 20 minutes, which may cost approximately \$10 to \$30. The remote management capabilities of Managed Workplace offer a significantly faster way of resolving problems, and, more importantly, at the first attempt. A recent study by Harris Interactive found that 70% of respondents indicated that first contact resolution was the primary driver for IT customer satisfaction and that on average every 1% increase in first call resolution will improve overall customer satisfaction ratings by 0.6%. Not only can Manage Workplace reduce your cost per call, it can help you improve customer satisfaction.

## 4.0 Improving Staff Utilization

### 4.1 Improved Margins for Fixed-Price Service

Increasingly, service providers are offering fixed-price service agreements to their customers, or are bundling included maintenance services with some of their projects (for example, x months of free support for new installs) to improve their competitiveness.

By using Managed Workplace to deliver proactive maintenance on the systems under fixed-price service agreements, the cost of delivering on these agreements can be greatly reduced. This benefit goes straight to the bottom line as improved margin while enhancing your competitive posture.

Managed Workplace provides many ways of improving proactive maintenance on systems and network elements:

- Continuous monitoring can alert you to problem situations before they get out of hand. Scheduling a service call is usually cheaper than paying a technician overtime to respond to a crisis.
- Extensive performance monitoring and trending, coupled with comprehensive asset data gathering, enables you to better plan capacity upgrades to avoid problems.
- Automatic detection of patches needed coupled with automated patch deployment once you approve them enables you to avoid known Windows and application software problems.

### 4.2 Changing the Staff-to-Customer Ratio

The efficiencies gained from using Managed Workplace are also rapidly translated into cost-savings by enabling you to manage more customers with the same number of technicians. This increase in staff utilization is a direct result of working in an automated-assisted process instead of a labor intensive process (just like you can travel faster in a car than if you walked to your destination).

In addition to the automation of routine tasks identified earlier in this paper, other types of more complex tasks also benefit from automation-assistance using Managed Workplace. For example, analyzing assets to pro-actively identify performance or capacity issues using Managed Workplace can save literally hours of time required to comb through records just to compile the information needed to start the task. This enables your staff to better utilize their time working with the results instead of just gathering them. Some specific examples of this include:

- Verifying available disk capacity levels on all systems (desktops and servers) at a customer site is as simple as running the Site Disk Inventory Report in Managed Workplace.
- Finding all systems having a hard drive capacity, or physical memory of a specified size via the Site Asset Baseline Report.
- Finding all systems that have a specialized application installed, or a count of all installed instances of an application via the Site Software Inventory Report.

For solution providers that already use advanced Professional Services Automation (PSA) software such as ConnectWise, Microsoft CRM, TigerPaw, and AutoTask, Managed Workplace provides deep integration with PSA ticketing systems to optimize information and work flow. Alert conditions detected by Managed Workplace can

automatically cause tickets to be opened in these PSA systems. Bi-directional updates and closing of tickets is also supported with most of these PSA tools. This workflow optimization across leading PSA tools is unique to Managed Workplace and enables you to further improve staff utilization by taking full advantage of the advanced workload and workflow management capabilities of these third-party products. These process improvement opportunities include:

- Service workflow and automation
- Time and material tracking
- Customer Resource Management

### 4.3 Using the Right Staff for the Right Priorities

Using Managed Workplace reduces the hidden cost of dispatching the wrong technician when a problem arises at a customer site. Managed Workplace's templates and service group features enable you to segregate alert notifications so that your CCNP specialists are automatically notified when network issues arise and your MCSEs are notified when Windows issues occur.<sup>3</sup> Assigning the right work to the right specialist improves your staff utilization and minimizes downtime caused from switching and restarting task assignments.

Managed Workplace will also automatically inform your technicians when an alert condition has self-healed. For example, if a performance monitor failed on a device and the device was restarted for some other reason, the performance monitor failure condition may no longer be present. By being kept up-to-date on self-heal situations your technical staff can better utilize their time responding to unresolved priorities. This immediately reduces your cost in responding to low-priority events, in some cases driving across town, only to discover that there is nothing that needs to be done. The benefit from eliminating self-healed activities can immediately be seen using the Site Trouble Ticket Resolution Time Trend Report.

Managed Workplace will also track the self-healed alert so that your staff can look into root-cause later if time permits, or alternatively help your senior staff track chronic problems with a device using the Site Top Devices By-Alerts Report and the Site Alerts Summary by Device Report.

Managed Workplace also enables you to organize access permissions by user role so that you can better control access to information based on staff competencies. Coupled with Managed Workplace's remote access and scripting features, solution providers can "right-size" work between managing automated and semi-automated tasks performed by junior staff, and analytical and corrective tasks performed by more senior personnel. This not only lowers the cost of work performed by enabling more work to be done by lower-cost resources, it also improves your ability to optimize staff utilization by competency or skill level. The Site Trouble Ticket Summary By-User Report gives you deeper insight into turnaround times by technician so that you can better tune your role assignments.

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<sup>3</sup> Partner Profitability Assessment Report, IDC 2006, published by Microsoft Corp, survey of Microsoft partners between June 2005 and May 2006 in the USA, UK, and Germany. Utilization levels were measured by partner type.

## 5.0 Reducing Overhead Activities

### 5.1 Commuting To/From Customer Sites

Most solution providers incur significant amounts of non-billable time on the daily basis. For example, how many times have you driven, or have sent one of your technicians to drive to the customer site simply to reboot a server? Even in cases where the customer is billed for the time to drive to their location and the time spent on site recovering the problem, the drive-time back to the shop is not normally billed.

With Managed Workplace, you can either automate or perform remotely many of the activities and tasks that would normally require you to go onsite, such as gathering diagnostics, restarting a server, checking logs, etc. Aside from improved efficiency in performing those tasks, eliminating non-billable time spent travelling to and from customer sites goes straight to your bottom line along with cost-savings from lower fuel consumption.

A recent survey of over 200 Level Platforms partners found that the average saving in hours, due to eliminated non-billable drive time, was 5 hours per end-customer per month. Hence solution provider with 30 customers can save  $5 \times 12 \times 30$  or 1800 hours of urban driving per year.

According to the US Environmental Protection Agency, the average city driving speed is 28 km per hour, so this translates to avoiding approximately  $1800 \times 28$  or 50,400 km of automotive travel per year. According to Environment Canada, the average mid-size North American car has a gasoline fuel efficiency of 10 L per 100 km. Hence, Managed Workplace avoids the consumption of  $50,400 \times 10/100$ , or 5040 L of petrol per year. At an average cost of \$1 per L, Managed Workplace saves even a small solution provider over \$5000 in automotive fuel costs per year in addition to saving \$9000 in lost billable time due to travel (e.g. 5 hrs / month  $\times$  \$150 /hr  $\times$  12 months/yr).

The total saving of \$14,000 per year in reduced driving time alone fully offsets the cost to deploy Managed Workplace to every one of the solution provider's 30 sites. Due to volume-sensitive license discounts, the savings become greater as the number of sites where Managed Workplace is deployed increases. A case study of a UK solution provider managing 60 sites with Managed Workplace (shown in the Appendix) confirms that even using a modern, fuel efficient diesel-powered service van, they were able to save a minimum of 100 hours per month in reduced labor time and an additional \$1500 per year in fuel savings.

### 5.2 Reducing Research and Tool Set-up Time

Since most other remote monitoring and management tools do not provide an out-of-the-box library of best practices in monitoring the diversity of products typically encountered in SMB networks, many solution providers who have used RMM solutions other than Managed Workplace have been forced to spend significant time and cost to develop and maintain their own monitoring policies.

Managed Workplace already has a library of over 165 monitoring policies and Level Platforms adds to this library every month by synthesizing the best practices of over 1000 partners with recommendations from over 60 vendors. This eliminates the need for a solution provider to spend precious technical staff time on the overhead activity of researching and designing their own monitoring policies.

Even those partners who choose to use their own policies can reduce their overhead in RandD time by building on the monitoring policies provided with Managed Workplace.

Some solution providers use customized, point-specific monitoring tools to automate the collection of various indicators. These tools typically require site-specific setup and configuration. However, with Managed Workplace, the overhead time and potential errors in site-specific setup are significantly reduced since the same monitoring policies can be applied in a couple of mouse clicks to all devices in a service group that spans all sites managed by a solution provider. And cross checking what monitoring templates are applied to a device is easy to do using the Site Configuration Report.

### 5.3 Reducing Disputes for Work Performed

Most solution providers have experienced love/hate phone call relationships with their customers; the customer loves to call you for support, but hates being billed for your time! Customers are more likely to dispute charges for work performed when:

- They are unsatisfied due to significant downtime experienced during the period that the work was performed.
- They feel the work was unnecessary and in their view non-authorized.
- They do not believe the amount of time spent on the problem and believe that it could have, or should have, been resolved faster.
- The total charges are unexpected and not budgeted for.

Using Managed Workplace, solution providers can reduce the likelihood of these disputes arising because:

- Fixing customer problems is considerably faster using Managed Workplace. Managed Workplace generates alerts immediately when problems are detected, automatically self-heals certain problems, integrates with workflow-optimized PSA tools to ensure that the right technicians are mobilized, provides drill down capabilities to rapidly isolate the type of problem encountered, provides detailed asset inventory information so that the exact configuration of the system experiencing the problem is known to the technician, provides a range of remote access tools for accessing the customer's systems to fix them as quickly as possible, and provides scripting and patching capabilities to speed the deployment of fixes. All these features contribute to minimizing downtime for your customers, as well as reducing the cost to fix problems, which makes them less likely to dispute your invoice for the work performed.
- Since Managed Workplace enables you to perform more work faster for your customer, there is less chance that a customer will complain about the amount of time spent resolving an issue. The Site Alert Resolution Time Report can also be used to show the profile of remediation times and highlight the fact that most of your support activity is well within your SLA.
- Managed Workplace's reporting provides an easy way of reporting the health of systems before and after work is performed. For example, the Server Health Report provides an overview of the vital signs of a server. In many cases, you can show the positive effect of your improvements by running this report before and after servicing a server. The Site Server Health Report also identifies the top problem

systems in your customer's environment. This facilitates communication with your customer so that they will concur that the work performed was necessary.

- Since Manage Workplace makes it easy for you to schedule reports, you can schedule a monthly or quarterly review with each customer to proactively present the case for future projects, or to identify problem systems before they have to be fixed on an emergency basis. This helps your customer plan and budget their IT expenditures with you.

By using Managed Workplace to reduce disputes for work performed, you can turn overhead costs attributable to those disputes directly into incremental revenue! This significantly improves your margins.

## 5.4 Improved Tracking of Work Performed

Managed Workplace also improves your ability to record the work performed without requiring significant additional effort to do so. The following benefits help drive down, or contain, your administrative costs:

- Time spent by your technicians can be tracked to improve cost control and reduces overhead in calculating end-of-month billing.
- Recorded tasks can be used as proof statements for invoices.
- The Site Work Completed Summary Report provides an organized and summary representation of all activities executed by your technicians (remote or onsite).
- All reports in Managed Workplace can be scheduled to run automatically every month or every quarter. This reduces the overhead in preparing for periodic reviews with your customer.

## 6.0 Maximizing Your Savings

Using Managed Workplace, solution providers are able to eliminate or reduce many non-revenue generating activities and increase the automation level for service delivery activities to become more cost-efficient and profitable.

In addition to decreasing the amount of time spent on avoidable activities solution providers can use the time savings generated by Managed Workplace to focus their resources on maximizing revenue and growing their business. Many solution providers experience triple-digit percentage improvements in both margin and revenue as a result of using Managed Workplace.

The cost savings and margin improvements generated by Managed Workplace are maximized when Managed Workplace is employed as a standard component in your service delivery to all your customers. This white paper has shown a wide variety of ways that the ROI from using Managed Workplace at every customer site will recoup its entire cost of deployment within 90 days – even if your customers never purchase a managed service from you. You may find that the basis for that ROI varies from customer to customer, but as most Level Platform's partners have found, there are so many ways to realize cost savings that the ROI from using Managed Workplace can always be found.

## Appendix I – NextStep Networking case study



nextstep  
networking

### Discover How Managed Workplace Increases Revenue



*“Managed Workplace is so much more than a monitoring tool. It has completely transformed the efficiencies of the services we provide allowing us to significantly reduce our staff utilization and service costs.”*

- Erin Arnold, Vice President  
NextStep Networking

#### Partner Profile

Company: NextStep Networking

Location: Cincinnati, Ohio

Years in Business: 5

Partner Since: 2005

#### Business Value

- Increase Staff Efficiency
- Reduce Operating Costs
- Attract and Retain Customers



#### Business Challenge

NextStep Networking prides themselves on delivering superior service and found that the program they were working with was limiting their abilities to deliver the level of service they guaranteed their clients. They needed a solution that was easy to use, install and that would quickly and accurately outline any issues out in the field. NextStep also wanted to expand the depth of their services offering to include a remote support program and patch management helping to further lower operating costs.

#### Partner Solution

The tools provided by Managed Workplace, allowed NextStep to completely automate the way in which they perform software rollouts and upgrades. Working with Level Platforms, they developed a script which allowed them to complete F-Secure antivirus rollouts overnight, remotely, and without disruption to their clients' productivity. Upon receiving an alert from Managed Workplace that definitions were out of date or that a new version of the software was available, the scripts specific to the upgrade would automatically take action on the alert. Furthermore, they were also able to remotely uninstall any and all previous antivirus agents again using the automated scripting capabilities. All of this at a fraction of the time but with increased profitability for their business.

#### Benefits

Managed Workplace has increased the functionality and ease of service for the NextStep support team. NextStep's technical staff has successfully increased their utilization rates by using Managed Workplace's consolidated tool set to affect changes and repairs effectively better handling service calls. The toolset coupled with the high caliber support received from Level Platforms has dramatically increased staff efficiency in delivering both new managed services and new project services. NextStep clients have significantly less downtime have been able see a dramatic improvement to the level of service they receive.

#### Next Steps

NextStep Networking is so pleased with the success they have achieved with Managed Workplace, that they are expanding their revenue generating abilities by automating the removal of the other AntiVirus packages as well as the installation of F-Secure.

#### Corporate Profile

NextStep Networking is a local Network Service Provider supplying a framework for end-to-end Information Technology (IT) solutions; from strategy to implementation and support in the Cincinnati area since 2002. The company is comprised of highly skilled and certified technology advisors and engineers, dedicated to leveraging the most appropriate technologies to build solutions that meet business needs today and into the future.

## Appendix II – CF Systems case study

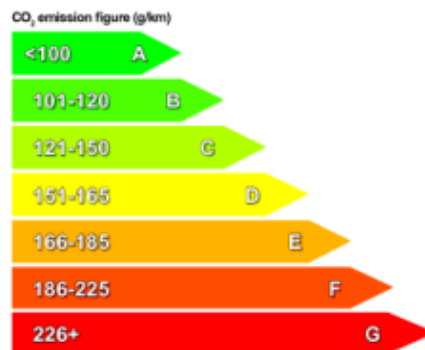
CF Systems is a Managed Workplace partner in Cornwall England serving approximately 50 – 60 active customers. Using Managed Workplace, although they only have a half dozen staff, they are saving a minimum of 25 hours per week in reduced labor costs (the actual amount is unquantifiable due to the benefits of preventative maintenance that they are now able to achieve as a result of using Managed Workplace).

In addition to labor savings, Managed Workplace has enabled them to reduce their travel by at least 150 miles (240 km) per week. Their service vans are fuel-efficient, diesel-powered Renault Kango vans, which (according to [www.fuel-economy.co.uk](http://www.fuel-economy.co.uk)) emit 0.120 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> per km traveled and attain a fuel economy of 53 miles per gallon.



In Cornwall, diesel costs £1.09 / Liter (approx, \$2.23 USD / Liter) so in addition to the labor cost savings, Managed Workplace also saves CF Systems approximately 150 miles/week / 53 miles/gallon x 4.545 Liters / UK Gallon 1.09 GBP / Liter x 52 Weeks/Year or £729 per annum in fuel cost reduction (\$1500 USD). The fuel savings alone recover the cost of an Onsite Manager at one of their customer locations.

From a green perspective, even though their service van is already considered a green vehicle with a UK Green Label Class B rating (shown below), Managed Workplace enables CF Systems to reduce their GHG emissions by 240 km / week x 0.12 kg GHG x 52 weeks/yr / 1000 tonne/kg = 1.5 metric tonnes.



By using Managed Workplace, CF Systems has enhanced their “Green Appeal” to their customers by reducing GHG emissions by 1.5 metric tonnes per year, or 200 kg per employee.

## TRADEMARKS

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