

# MSPs: The Marketing Whitepaper

The facts, figures and opinions on the marketing of IT Support & Cyber Security; and the strategy you need to implement today.



WINGMÄNN

# | The Foreword

This white paper has been developed by the team at Wingman; a sales, marketing & digital agency that tailors services specifically to the technology service market. With a high percentage of our clients being Managed Service Providers, Value Added Resellers and Cyber Security Practices; a considerable volume of data has been amassed over the past two years that has been used to build the facts produced in this paper.

Wingman was built on the foundation of over a decade of prior experience in technical sales & marketing roles within the managed services space. Opinions formed within this paper are taken from the considerable experience earned over this career, along with the insights gained from the performance & feedback collected from the campaigns we have delivered for our clients to date.

We are incredibly passionate about the markets we serve and knowing them as well as we do, we appreciate the broad gap that exists in regards to sales & marketing. As an agency, we have developed our niche to fill this gap, but only through partnership with our clients can we deliver true success. If we are not working to best educate & support our clients, achieve their buy-in and work to the same objectives, our campaigns will never succeed.

I wrote this white paper to demonstrate the developing trends within the market we've identified from our evidence, how MSPs can best adapt for an evolving client base and the approaches to take where all things marketing & sales are concerned.

Happy reading. Remember, never fly solo...



Dave Sutton  
Managing Director





# | The Market

## **Are the golden days over?**

### ***The facts & figures.***

As an agency, we engage in conversations with over 8900 prospective customers, on our clients' behalves, each & every month. We aim specifically at their IT Support arrangements and associated managed IT services. As a lot of this work is cold engagement, we're collecting market research data to silo these contacts for re-marketing.

From this research, 72% of small-midmarket businesses tell us they outsource and are in contract; 98.7% of those tell us that they are loyal or very happy with the service they receive from their current MSP; and a growing 28.9% tell us they cover their IT 'fully in-house' between adequately skilled resource or have no formal IT function whatsoever.

So, the figures are clear; there's still a market for these services, a big market. Tens of thousands of businesses have established retained agreements in place for this exact service, in various guises. However, with an incredibly high loyalty rate, the opportunity for businesses considering a change of provider is notably low. This results in a small market opportunity for short term quick-win sales leads at a single point in time.

## **So where is the opportunity?**

**How can you make anything of that large, but difficult to reach market?**

**The opinion overleaf...**

# | The Market

# 72%

of SME businesses outsource their IT & are in contract.

# 98.7%

claim loyalty to their current MSP or rate their existing service as good.

# 28.9%

of businesses claim to have no formal IT function or arrangements at all.

## ***The opinion.***

Selling IT Support is a little like selling insurance, (unlike car insurance), it's optional and the percentage of businesses needing to rely on that insurance these days is in decline - with IT becoming more reliable, generally speaking.

Combine that with businesses being commercially stringent, a rapidly growing reliance on vendor-directly purchased consumable IT services and an evolving younger base of more tech-savvy businesses (and their potentially whizz kid employees) evidences that the sands are shifting.

As we identified, there will of course always be a market for, "help it's broken!". But, as I'm sure most MSPs see already, the demands are swiftly changing to a "how do I do this?" style of request to the Helpdesk.

So unknowingly, MSPs have been delivering part of a new age of 'IT Support' to meet the developing demand. But, the vast majority are yet to adopt this change wholeheartedly.

So, what can be done? Despite the negative outlook on the marketplace, there is clearly still a demand for IT services built around a Helpdesk-as-a-service model; just approached in a different way. The challenge is to not only deliver a slightly different service, but help your prospects realise the IT services they need to be procuring are a little different too.

# | The Market

## ***The opinion continued...***

We need to drop the old messaging. No one cares about Free IT Healthchecks, response times, reporting and how quickly you answer the phone. Marketing these messages is a vain attempt to appear different; even if you are better. In your messaging, forget the base traditional 'USPs'.

Tell people what you can do to enhance their business - educate them from the list of proof that shows the delivery of true savings to their back pocket. Present an ownership of their whole IT picture; grasp their software, how they use it and drive considerable change through services such as automation.

At Wingman, we are generating good ROI on the campaigns we deliver; with time, the right message, persistence and, you guessed it, a little more time. It is all about playing the long-game; building and carefully nurturing a pipeline of 'qualified-in' contacts. Educating them, waiting patiently for the incumbent to drop the ball... being ready and on-hand to swoop in and save the day.

To address that changing market, we stepped back and realised that businesses don't know what they need. People go to market buying the same old thing they have always had that doesn't work for them. I imagined it a bit like shoe shopping...they decide they want to go running and buy a pair of sandals. After running a mile or two, they realise the sandals are no good and go back to the shop and buy yet another pair of sandals. We need them to realise we're the tailor-made running shoe but, without education, how will they ever realise that they have needed us all along?



# | The Opportunity in Cyber Security

We're all convinced that Cyber Security is the 'next big thing' in the arsenal that MSPs can take to market. Vendors are pushing their products, legislation (through the beloved GDPR), is steering business the right way and the press are scaremongering people into taking it more seriously... but is that enough to generate a ready-to-go market for us to sell into?  
**You bet it isn't.**

"What else do we have to do?!", I hear you groan. Amazingly, despite all of this effort by all of these powers, SME business owners think they're invincible. **Fact.** 98.2% of the small-midsize businesses we have engaged through security focused campaigns, tell us they "have it all covered" in relation to their defences. *Yeah... of course...*

Are we all a bit early with this message? Yes, a touch. Taking a standalone product to market doesn't make sense, prospective clients don't get it and won't buy a single IT product in that way from an unfamiliar MSP... they'll take it from their incumbent.

As businesses don't yet get it; there's more work to do before we can get their buy-in on the whole cyber picture, we firstly need to **educate, educate, educate.** Only through persistent educational messages, webinars and events, can we get the concept through. You are then clearly positioned as the go-to expert in the field with those prospects that have followed your messaging.

What comes next? My advice is to commoditise and bundle. "Defend your business against tomorrow's cyber threats", sounds incredibly expensive and few people are putting a price tag on it. Follow the trend with all other commoditised IT services these days; create tiered bundles with clear price points as a solution people can buy into.





# | Summary

## The fluff is great, but what do I do next?

### *a. Upsell.*

Test our theories on your existing client base! They're already convinced you're the best thing since sliced bread; meaning they're also your best advocates to push your message to new prospects. Use them as guinea pigs in your building of new products & services for the future market, (and don't forget to make a few quid at the same time!).

### *b. Rebrand IT Support for the new age.*

Help prospects realise that's not what they actually need.

Only you can deliver them a much greater ROI to their bottom-line through holistically advancing their workflows & processes with the aid of tailored technology solutions.

### *c. Preach the best cyber practices, before you can sell.*

To maximise the commercial opportunity of the cyber threat, prospective SME business owners need convincing first. Once they're educated, only then can the marketing process begin on steering them towards the solutions they need.

### *d. Go niche.*

For the best ROI of your marketing, we advise looking at industry niche messaging. We hear across the marketing spectrum in all industries, not just IT, buyers are evermore demanding a perfectly tailored service - by tweaking your message to suit individual markets, you can stand apart from the rest vying for their attention.

### *e. Be structured, be consistent and most of all, be patient.*

Most MSPs & their agencies (unlike us!) focus only on the short-term. Giving up when people don't want to buy from the first touchpoint. Long-term, structured, articulate, multi-touch activities are the only way to nurture & convert quality interest.

# Thanks for reading.

Want to know a little more?  
We'd love to hear from you.

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