Background

Level1 is a national IT infrastructure company providing LAN, WAN, voice, video, and managed infrastructure solutions to Fortune 1000 customers across the country. It is one of the largest Cisco resellers and provides managed services for its 2000+ customers.

As IT technology has developed and converged with presentation technology, Level1 has been asking new questions about how to improve its infrastruture offering. How do we handle all of the collaboration systems sitting on our client's network? How do we take the multitude of unmanaged presentation devices (ie., touch panels, network recorders, projectors, etc.) and put these assets under management to improve the customer's experience and lower operating expenses? Level1 was seeking this next generation managed services offering that could handle the traditional IT portfolio, yet also allow for management. They need solutions monitoring and remote support for collaboration systems, such as Crestron and AMX.

The Challenge

IT is a pretty broad category. An IT compay could support the local network, the MPLS network, the phone system, or the managed IT infrastructure. This same company could instead provide solely help desk, remote storage or disaster recovery. Or it could provide both groupings of service to a single customer. As technology has grown, new complexities have been introduced. Today's customers are aware of this, and they are seeking a single provider to manage it all, hence "managed services." If an IT network has virtual PBX and video endpoints sitting on the network, it may consider offering its customer "managed video" or "managed media support." But how do you do it when you are a traditional IT company and do not have the experts or the interest in monitoring a touch panel control system or audio video system?

This is the great challenge for IT companies to address properly. In traditional IT, owning the network was key. While this is still the case to some extent, it is not that simple anymore. Many disparate technologies now have become liabilities on the network. The general consensus is that technologies need to be brought under management. The new value add is much more than "owning the network;" it is about creating the most complete "managed services" offering via strategic partners.

The Solution

The key to success is strategic partners from IT presentation technology and managed video services. "We provided all of the carrier services, MPLS management, and IT helpdesk for our customers, yet we had a deficiency in the area of managed video or managed collaboration systems," explains Kent Bandleton, Technical Sales Manager at Level1. With Profound Technologies, an IT VAR can leverage the Profound expertise to take control and provide the end user with peace of mind by offering management over crucial presentation room assets. All can be managed via Profound's managed services platform.

"This has given us a tremendous story to tell our customers. With Profound, we can complement our video endpoint sales with enterprise remote monitoring and management of the presentation assets," says Bandleton. This is called the Profound Managed Services.

Profound has a proprietary monitoring system that allows for remote monitoring and support of the video and presentation resources. This provides significant value to both Level1 and the end user. For Level1, its existing managed services agreements can be enhanced to provide for tiered support for these vital presentation resources. Currently, the Level1 call center, located in Southern MD, has integrated its support systems with Profound. Together the two companies have combined to provide a most comprehensive IT infrastructure service support offering. A customer calls Level1 for anything from the DMARC forward. Now the managed services extends into the presentation rooms, some of the most heavily used areas of the enterprise. This provides the customer with a valuable and crucial support offering.

This is a tremendous benefit to the end user. Without this level of support from Profound, it is often too expensive for the end user to retain all of the necessary IT talent in house. This is why end users expect managed services. Also, this is why most companies have gone from a large, in-house IT team to an "IT caretaker" model. Profound helps expand the end user's service coverage and lessen the load for the IT caretaker. "When we consider what we are saving our customers by working with Profound, it helps build even more loyalty with our customers." claims Bandleton.

In order to replicate what Profound offers for managed services, a company would need to employ at least 5 different technically certified persons and have Profound's infrastructure. Profound's managed services offer a few components besides remote monitoring and alerts. In addition, Profound offers customer facing project management, break/fix technician support, control system programming, audio engineer configuration, system engineering and graphic design services.

Today Level1's customers enjoy a single point of contact for a broad range of savings. The customer simply calls the IT call center and submits the request. Based on the predetermined SLA, the task order is scheduled by either Level1 or Profound. The customer receives quality maintenance and support completed in a timely fashion. All of this occurs without the costly need for onsite management or additional staffing.