

The Vendor Management Toolkit

MSP in a Box – Hartmann Industries (Version 1.0)

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Handling Pushy Vendors

It's no secret that software vendors targeting Managed IT Service Providers (MSPs) can be pushy. While the sales pitches of these vendors may be aggressive, it's essential to keep a logical mind when considering their products. By taking a step back and looking at the bigger picture, MSPs can make sure they are selecting the right solutions for their clients.

For example, many vendors may push specific features of their product, but MSPs should also consider the overall value of the product. Does the product have a good track record? Is the product reliable? Does it offer robust customer support? All these considerations should be considered before making a purchase.

Decision makers must be wary of vendors who offer discounts or other incentives in exchange for a purchase. While these may seem attractive, they may end up costing more in the long run. If the product turns out to be unreliable or the vendor has poor customer service, the MSP could end up spending more money in the long run trying to fix the issue.

MSPs should never feel pressured to make a purchase. If a vendor is too pushy or aggressive, it may be best to look elsewhere for a solution. There are plenty of other vendors who offer similar products that may be more suitable for the MSP's needs. Similarly, vendors that are not transparent about their pricing or terms should be avoided.

Remember - a vendor's solution may exist to improve your operations, but a vendor's salesperson exists to make a sale. When evaluating software, MSPs should take the time to research the product, consider their needs, and make sure the vendor is a good fit.

Contacting Vendors

When contacting vendors, MSPs should always be prepared. Before contacting a vendor, MSPs should have a list of questions they want to ask and be ready to provide details about their business and the services they need.

MSPs should also be sure to have a clear understanding of the vendor's capabilities, pricing, and customer service. It's also important to ask questions about any potential conflicts of interest, such as if the vendor works with any of your competitors.

MSPs should also be sure to ask about the vendor's track record and customer feedback. This can give you an idea of how reliable the vendor is and how satisfied their customers are with the product.

When negotiating with vendors, MSPs should always be aware of their own bottom line. MSPs should never feel pressured to pay more than they can afford and should always negotiate for the best deal that meets their needs.

Finally, MSPs should always be prepared to walk away if the vendor is unable to meet their needs. There are plenty of other vendors out there who may be a better fit for the MSP's needs.

Answering Cold Calls & Emails

When fielding cold calls and emails from vendors, MSPs should always approach them with caution. While some vendors may have legitimate offers that may be beneficial to the MSP, there are also some vendors who use aggressive tactics to try to sell their product.

MSPs should never feel pressured to purchase anything. Vendors should be willing to answer questions and explain the features and benefits of their product. If a vendor is not willing to answer questions or is too pushy, it may be best to move on to the next vendor.

When replying to cold calls and emails, MSPs should always be polite and professional. If a vendor does not answer your questions or is too pushy, it's best to politely decline the offer and move on.

MSPs should also be sure to keep a record of all communications with vendors. This way, if there are any issues or concerns in the future, MSPs will have a record of all the conversations they had with the vendor. If possible in the MSPs' country and state, calls should be recorded for further reference.

Finally, MSPs should never provide any personal information or sensitive data to vendors unless absolutely necessary. Providing too much information to vendors can

leave MSPs vulnerable to cyber threats. For example, telling a potential vendor how many customers or endpoints your MSP is responsible for can make it easier for a malicious actor to target your company.

Evaluating Vendors

When evaluating vendors, MSPs should always take into account the vendor's reliability, responsiveness, quality, pricing, and customer service.

Reliability is key when evaluating vendors. MSPs need to make sure that the vendor's product will work as intended and will be available when needed. This means that the vendor must have a proven track record of successful deployments, a strong product roadmap, and a good history of customer satisfaction.

Responsiveness is also an important factor when evaluating vendors. MSPs should be able to count on their vendor to provide prompt and accurate responses to any questions or concerns that arise. They should be able to quickly address any issues related to the product or the service provided.

The quality of a vendor's offerings is also a key factor. MSPs need to make sure that the product or service provided by the vendor is of a high quality and that it meets the needs of their customers. MSPs also need to ensure that any vendor they use has the necessary certifications and is compliant with industry standards.

Another important factor to consider when evaluating vendors is pricing. MSPs need to make sure that they are getting the best value for their money and that they are not overpaying for the product or service they are receiving.

Vendor Procurement Form

Use this form to evaluate and manage procurements of new vendor hardware, software, tooling, and professional services. Expand this form as needed, and store in a secure area.

Vendor's Company Name: _____

Location: _____

- Category:**
- | | | |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Backups & Storage | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Continuity | <input type="checkbox"/> Security |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hosting & Cloud | <input type="checkbox"/> Billing/Finance | <input type="checkbox"/> CRM |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Automation | <input type="checkbox"/> Ticketing/PSA | <input type="checkbox"/> RMM |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CSAT | <input type="checkbox"/> Documentation | <input type="checkbox"/> HRMS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal | <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing | <input type="checkbox"/> Training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Networking | <input type="checkbox"/> PC/Server | <input type="checkbox"/> VoIP |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outsourcing | <input type="checkbox"/> Sales Tools | <input type="checkbox"/> Website |

Year Founded: _____

Date of Assessment: ____/____/____

Number of Employees: _____

Glassdoor Rating: _____

- Compliant With:** HIPAA ISO 27001 ISO 9001 GDPR PCI
- CCPA SOC 1 SOC 2 Type I SOC 2 Type II
- SOC 3 NIST 800-53 NIST 800-171 CMMC

Pricing: Available Online Provided by Sales Unknown

Cost: _____ Recurring Charge

Billing Type: Pass-Through Billed to Client

Demo: Self-Executed Call with Sales Not Provided

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Effect on Profit Margin: (+ / -) _____ % New Margin: _____ %**Rating: _____ of 5 Final Decision: Proceed Hold Off****Hold Off Reason:**

Date of Procurement: ____/____/____ Compliance Documents Collected **Copies of Legal Documents Saved Location: _____****Sales Representative Name (if applicable): _____****Legal Representative's Name (on contract): _____**

Monthly/Quarterly Assessment Form

Use this form to evaluate the performance of vendors each month or quarter. Expand this form as needed and store in a secure area.

Vendor's Company Name: _____

Date: ___/___/___ **Category:** _____

Assessment Completed By: _____

SLA Compliance Score (1-5): _____

Suggested Improvement: _____

Incidents:

- Recorded incidents in the past month/quarter? Yes No
- List incident types and related resolution times:

Uptime/Down time:

- Approximate hours of unscheduled downtime? _____
- List the time and cause of each incident:

Feedback/Suggestions:

- Was customer service satisfactory? _____
- Any feedback or suggestions (if yes, detail):

Contract Renewal/Renegotiation:

- Is a contract renewal needed? Yes No
- Are any terms open for renegotiation? Yes No
- Are any compliance documents expiring soon? Yes No
- List the changes requested:

Overall Rating (1-5): _____

Improvement Needed (if any): _____

Date of Next Assessment: ____/____/____