

Investing in people and tech top priority for MSPs

In a tightening economy, many MSPs pause to rethink and reallocate investments. However, making investments in not just new technologies, but hiring technical expertise to meet customer demand is still the number one priority for MSPs.

Those were the top takeaways at an eSentire and IT Europa Leaders in a Discussion roundtable event in London, hosted by IT Europa's Editorial Director Will Garside.

MSPs attending the roundtable agreed that buying new security technologies rather than building their own solution can speed up growth but investing in the right people is what's on top of their minds.

The MSP industry faces a dire shortage of skilled labour, with delegates stating they are having a hard time hiring skilled people who have expertise in security and other pressing areas. They emphasized that MSPs with people dedicated to the business side who can sell, market, and deliver cyber security services will have a distinct advantage.

"The industry needs people; they are always the first and last thing on the list when it comes to MSPs making investments," eSentire's Senior Solutions Architect Andy Lalaguna told delegates. "There isn't a shortage in the cybersecurity sector; there is a shortage of the right cybersecurity people with the right experience."

SECURITY AUTOMATION AND THIRD-PARTY OUTSOURCING

As the labour shortage trend continues to slide from bad to worse, MSPs are trying to find alternative ways to meet their customers' needs. In a lagging skills market, one potential area of investment that security-centric MSPs can exploit is the power of automation and artificial intelligence (AI).

"Automation and AI can help alleviate some of the burdens," the one of attendees said. "It can show clients that you've got your finger on the pulse."

Lalaguna agreed by saying that he sees this strategy as one of the technologies that can potentially help combat the cybersecurity talent shortage.

"The industry for all of us isn't going to get anywhere without automation, so the ability to effectively do assessments and target those assessments with different features and facets of what good practices look like while aligning with whatever those regulations or requirements are, both locally and throughout the rest of the world, is essential."

Another common solution is for MSPs to leverage the knowledge and resources that a third-party outsourcing partner brings to the table, but for one of the delegates, bringing in qualified professionals with expertise in security is still the preferred option.

"Unfortunately, in the UK supply chain, we haven't got to that stage where I feel I can give assurance to a third-party outsourcing provider. I rather invest in someone I know and trust, pay their salary, and contribute to their livelihood. The supply chain isn't quite there yet but I can't wait to see what kind of benefits they can produce in the next 10 years."

SMB CYBERSECURITY LANGUAGE BARRIER

The cybersecurity skills shortage is not getting any better and neither is the cybersecurity language barrier that exists between MSPs and SMBs, which delegates agreed has become one of the largest obstacles impacting MSPs today.

The reason there is such a large disconnect is due to the complicated security jargon and terminology that MSPs use, which according to guests, is very technical and not business-led.



eSentire's Senior Solutions Architect
Andy Lalaguna

One of the attendees explained that SMBs currently do not understand the complexities of buying security-related products or cybersecurity-managed services.

“At the moment, they don’t understand how it works,” the delegate said. “They are fully aware of their threats and their individual risks, but they continuously say to us that they don’t know what they are doing when it comes to security.”

Lalaguna agreed by highlighting that SMBs want to invest in cybersecurity but don’t understand it, citing that businesses have reached a cybersecurity tipping point that demands action.

“There are two primary concerns: one is that SMBs are looking for a ‘Coca-Cola’ decision because so and so said that this brand is well known and that they can fix all of our problems,” he explained.

“The other is the language we use to describe our services becomes a challenge because unless both parties speak the same language, customers aren’t going to understand.”



COMMUNICATION KEY TO BRIDGING SMB LANGUAGE GAP

According to Lalaguna, information needs to be conveyed via effective communication to bridge the language gap and ensure any intel doesn’t get lost in translation.

“Simplifying the language so that customers can understand is vital. People that are employed to provide the services, and the people that are paying, need to speak the same language.”

Lalaguna said eSentire has adopted this approach in its attempt to overcome and eliminate the language barrier between them and their clients.

“We differentiate ourselves in the market because we speak plainly to customers. We have an opinion about what the right thing is to do, and we demonstrate the passion, delivery, and execution of that.”

“Customers buy with providers they align with, and our customers stay with us because of that reason. They like the way we deal with them and they like doing business with us because of the way we communicate.”

To help improve the communication barrier, Edward Lewis, UK Sales Field Manager at eSentire, said MSPs should commit significant time and resources to developing their employees’ ability to communicate and to recruiting people who can convey any technical terms to their customers in a way that makes it easier for them to understand.

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