



STORAGECRAFT®

Backup Fast, Recover Faster

CASE STUDY: HOW STORAGECRAFT MDF CAN MAKE YOU MORE PROFITABLE

SELLING MORE SERVICES WITH OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY

Of course, when we say other people's money, we mean ours. Surprisingly, a lot of IT service providers leave growth opportunities and potential profits on the table because they're not mining the rich vein of Marketing Development Funds (MDF) that vendors like StorageCraft offer. Before we get into what these funds are and how they work, let's look at some things IT companies say are barriers to marketing:

I don't have enough time.

I don't have enough money.

It's not my area – I don't have enough experience.

There are a lot of barriers, and yes, a lot of IT providers are busy. There are plenty of clients to take care of and projects to complete in a given day, and because so many providers are laser-focused on managing and implementing the technology itself, it's common for them to have little time for marketing and sales activities. In some cases, marketing and sales are handled by a single person—it's a lot to cover.

If sales and marketing activities aren't happening, a business might not be growing as much as it could, and a lot of potential profits are being left on the table. Finding the time to get all the sales and marketing functions taken care of seems daunting when there are so many other necessities to take care of. How can you build a business when your hair is constantly on fire?

With the right help, prospecting new clients or selling more services to existing clients can be easier than it looks. That's what Joel Sosebee, director of sales at North Carolina's At-Net Services, found out.

Joel knows the struggle many employees at IT services companies have. He's a busy guy and he wears a few different hats at his business,

"I manage a team of six sales people and three inside sales people. We have offices in Knoxville and Greenville, but Charlotte is headquarters, we also have a Columbia South Carolina as well as a Charleston—I manage all of that and our marketing efforts," he says.

Handling both sales and marketing at once is tough, particularly when a business has to perform so many functions for various clients. At-Net in particular knows the challenge because their service model molds to fit individual clients,

"Our attitude is that we'll take care of what you need on a monthly basis and we'll frame a contract around it—we're more of a custom MSP," says Joel.

Not only do they have various client challenges, At-Net, like so many businesses, wants to keep growing. Right now, At-Net sits at around 70 employees with multiple offices, but promoting new services and finding new clients is a particular challenge when there's so much to do.

Luckily, Joel realized they were already working with a vendor with a program to make some of their sales and marketing efforts easy—StorageCraft.

ENABLEMENT AND EDUCATION

USING STORAGECRAFT MDF

By offering free money through marketing development funds (MDF), StorageCraft will invest in your event or other marketing activity and even help out with presentations and your sales pitch. Joel explains,

“[StorageCraft] is willing to invest in us for us to invest back in them, so it really is a no-brainer. Putting together some type of event is great; we’re able to do a sales call with fifteen different companies in an hour or two, that’s a benefit in itself. Plus, it gives you a reason to call these companies—you have something to share with them.

“Everybody gets too many phone calls, most of them are something like, ‘let me take a chunk of your time and tell you about something you don’t care about,’ so having a good reason to call and offer them a good call to action is great—it’s a good way to follow up, which is essential when you’re prospecting.”

BUILDING BUSINESS THROUGH EDUCATION

Hosting an event is great, but what should the focus be? It’s all about teaching clients something they may not know, and showing how this new knowledge can save them money.

Events give you the chance to demonstrate empathy for the client’s business concerns and position yourself as a genuine expert with a range of money-saving solutions. The ultimate goal is to educate clients about the value of these solutions, which often leads to the sale and the recurring revenue associated, which makes clients more profitable for you. As Joel says, the emphasis is typically on the importance of backup, disaster recovery, and various business continuity principals,

“[Backup and recovery] is important enough for us to educate people about—there are a lot of misconceptions about backup. It’s our job to educate our customers and let them know what the risks are.”

Backup and disaster recovery is often an untapped revenue source for service providers and is typically sold and marketed as disaster recovery as a service (DRaaS). DRaaS differs from simple backup in that it’s designed to reduce downtime and save clients money should a disaster or hardware failure occur. Education is the first step toward selling DRaaS because clients don’t always see the value right off the bat. What they perceive as an increase in cost isn’t warranted when they think they’re only getting a simple backup.

EASY MARKETING

This is why presentations at your event typically outline the true risks businesses face, the costs associated with them, and how you can greatly reduce (if not eliminate) that cost for clients. This information makes the need for DRaaS a lot clearer, and really illustrates the value you provide. Joel puts it this way,

“People in general just don’t understand the risks involved and that’s one of the big things we’ve been able to do for people. There are acceptable risks people take—we all roll around with one spare tire, we don’t have four—so everybody is willing to roll the dice to a certain degree, but once you get the message out they know they’re either comfortable with the risk they’re taking or they need to do something.

We’re being good corporate citizens by making them aware and helping them understand the risks associated with backup and recovery. It helps them in their planning meetings and allows them to answer questions.”

In order to get these types of conversations going, you’ll need to start thinking about your MDF event and where StorageCraft fits in.

GETTING STARTED

Moving forward on your MDF activity is easy. For At-Net, getting started was as simple as having a conversation,

“Our channel account manager came in and talked with us about MDF. We’ve known him for about 10 years and he knew how we operated. [Events] matched really well with our goal, which is to get as many managed services contracts as we can,” Joel says.

At this point, At-Net has done a number of events that have varied from a lunch-and-learn (a lunch and educational presentation at a nice restaurant) to events at a driving range (beer included, of course). Different event types can serve different purposes and can vary from more to less complex. There is almost certainly an event type that will serve your needs and budget (check out our events guide to learn more about different types of event you can host).

Really, the process is as simple as thinking about the type of event you’d like to host, where it will be (e.g. a nice restaurant, your office), and doing some pre-promotion and invitations. The nice thing is that StorageCraft is here to help with a lot of the tasks that would take the most time. Typically, one of our sales professionals can help with some of the pre-marketing and will usually present at the event itself, taking a lot of the weight off your shoulders. Joel explains it like this,

“One of the things that make [events] successful is the fact that our channel account managers do a lot of the heavy lifting. We’re not a ginormous company. We don’t have a dedicated marketing person yet—it’s just me. So when they help us promote the event and do things like postcard mailers, it just makes it super easy for us and it’s really just up to us to provide the list of attendees for the event. Plus, they do a great job presenting—not too wordy, they have good details, and great interactions with the attendees. Events have gone really well.”

MDF FOR THE WIN

DEFINING EVENT SUCCESS

Events are great, but they're not worth the time and effort if you don't see results. So the real questions now are: Will these events be successful? Do providers get more service sales after an event?

The charts to the right show BDR revenue for an MSP and a VAR following an event. As you can see, revenue spikes are common following a StorageCraft MDF event. Most MSPs and VARs see a revenue bump in sales of backup and disaster recovery-related services not long after.

In most cases, these events will help you sell DR services just as they helped At-Net,

“We've seen an increase in DR and other sales. In all the events we've done we've closed business with StorageCraft after,” says Joel, “One event we did resulting in four or five opportunities. We've got lots of conversations going.”

Lastly, remember that events are elastic and even if you've never hosted one, there's a huge amount of freedom in the way you can make MDF work for you. Your StorageCraft channel account manager will work with you on an event that makes sense for your business, whether it's a lunch and learn, a golf tournament, a sporting event, or what have you—we've even had clients use MDF for a billboard to generate awareness. If it's within reason and helps you promote your company and profit from disaster recovery as a service, there's a good chance we can help.

So what's the delay? Call your channel account manager or email sales@storagecraft.com to get started with MDF so you can start picking up all the cash that's been sitting on the table.

BDR sales following MDF event: MSP



BDR sales following MDF event: VAR



ABOUT AT-NET SERVICES

At-NET services got started in 1999, when they were two engineers servicing a handful of customers. By 2001 AT-NET Services, Inc. was formed. In late 2002 they began to grow and add exceptional staff. Today they service customers from Charlotte, NC to Shanghai, China and have some of the best engineers in the industry.

Engineers with AT-NET are network systems specialists with core disciplines including VOIP, data management, security, as well as cloud and online services.

According to AT-NET, here are a few reasons clients choose them:

- They are the best in their field
- They employ smart people who are passionate about their professions
- They staff only dedicated career employees
- They have built a reputation as a responsive, capable, and accessible company
- They strive to have a valuable partnership with their customers



ABOUT STORAGECRAFT

At StorageCraft®, the goal of complete disaster recovery drives everything we do. Our StorageCraft® Recover-Ability™ solution is an end-to-end, best-in-class backup and disaster recovery solution that is both fast and reliable.

STORAGECRAFT RECOVER-ABILITY

It starts with a good backup. Our award-winning *StorageCraft® ShadowProtect®* takes complete, pristine images of your machines, including all your operating systems, applications, services, and settings.

It then records changes at the sector level, so you always have an up-to-date copy of every machine in your IT environment, whether it's a critical server or an employee laptop, physical or virtual. We even work with specialized database servers, like SQL, SharePoint, or Exchange. You can get granular recovery in Exchange with *ShadowProtect Granular Recovery for Exchange*.

You have complete control over the frequency of your backups and you can set rules for consolidation and retention to manage your precious storage space using *StorageCraft® ImageManager™*.

Plus, with *StorageCraft® ShadowControl®* you can monitor the machines in your backup environment from a single interface and get alerts when a machine is running out of

space, when a backup doesn't happen, or when any of a variety of conditions you specify is met.

We also give you tools to test your backups using *StorageCraft® VirtualBoot™* and *StorageCraft® Image-Ready™* technologies, which gives you confidence that your data is safe and that a disaster won't shut you down or hold you up.

Then we make it easy to replicate your backup images with *StorageCraft® Cloud Services™* or to our cloud or to your own offsite location so you can always have your data close when you need it and at a good safe distance when a disaster comes.

When it does, you can launch your backups as virtual machines with VirtualBoot or mount them as drives for complete, granular access to your data.

Or you can pre-stage the recovery of a backup image in a virtual machine with our patented *StorageCraft®*



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HeadStart Restore® technology, so if your main server blows up, you can be up and running in minutes. You can even virtualize your data in our cloud so even Mother Nature can't keep you down.

Then, you can rebuild your infrastructure and recover to all kinds of machines, physical or virtual, using our *StorageCraft Hardware® Independent Restore™* technology or *ShadowProtect IT Edition*.

You can't be sure what kind of disaster will strike you next, but with the StorageCraft Recover-Ability solution, you can be sure it doesn't matter. You'll be just fine.