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# Four Reasons Office Equipment Dealerships are Perfectly Suited to Sell Managed IT Services

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Table of Contents



## CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>1. Dealerships Are Already in the Customer Service &amp; Relationship Business</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>2. OEDs Are Already Viewed as Trusted Advisors</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>3. Technology is Converging</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>4. OEDs Know How to Sell</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>8</b>





# Introduction

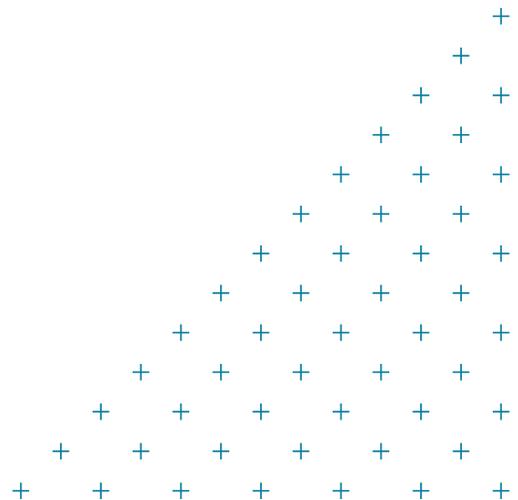
**The technology needs of small and medium sized businesses (SMBs) are evolving.** The introduction of cloud computing, unprecedented access to web-based solutions and software, and an increasing reliance on outsourcing of core services are all changing the way SMBs conduct business today. Emerging technologies have developed so quickly, however, that the market is already becoming saturated and solutions are commoditizing. The SMB challenge now lies in identifying which specific services and partnerships are best-suited to help them achieve business goals and objectives.

This creates lucrative opportunities for providers in the IT services market, who can leverage their expertise and understanding of these modern solutions to transcend traditional vendor and reseller relationships and act as strategic advisors to the SMB. Providers today are thriving by not only helping to identify and deploy the best available solutions for particular business needs, but by also providing proactive support, maintenance and troubleshooting for these offerings – eliminating the need for small businesses to invest in internal IT staff or infrastructure and eliminating barriers to entry which may otherwise prevent small businesses from tapping into these resources.

**Throughout this sea of change, at least some constants remain: the power of relationships, the need for effective sales strategies, and the value of one-stop shopping in the SMB market.** Business owners value mutually-beneficial relationships, partnerships built on trust, solution expertise, high-end customer service and providers who can help them solve more than one business challenge. It's in these areas that one particular vertical is accelerating their entry into the managed IT services market: office equipment dealerships.

**Dealers are uniquely-positioned to step into this booming IT services space – they're sales experts, they have well-established customer relationships, and they've already got a foot in the door (and in some cases, the network).** The key to successfully integrating these new services into an existing portfolio lies in forming the right partnerships, getting buy-in from the top down and shifting certain aspects of the business to support a managed services model.

**First, it's important to understand exactly why managed IT services make so much sense for businesses in the office equipment industry.** This guide looks at four reasons that dealerships are in a prime position to integrate managed IT services into their portfolio.



## Four Reasons Office Equipment Dealerships are Perfectly Suited to Sell Managed IT Services

### 1. Dealerships Are Already in the Customer Service & Relationship Business

# 1. Dealerships Are Already in the Customer Service & Relationship Business

**It bears repeating that business owners value relationships, and prefer to do business with vendors they know and trust.** Managed IT services are all about providing customers with peace of mind and insurance for critical systems and data – and as system failure and unplanned downtime becomes increasingly intolerable, the importance of trust in these deals can't be understated.

**Across all industries, businesses today rely heavily on technology throughout their day-to-day operations – and the costs and potential damage associated with any outages or data loss can be catastrophic.** With so much at stake, it's no surprise that trust is at the foundation of any strong SMB/IT provider relationship.

Office equipment dealers understand this notion and are already great relationship builders, and those that already have happy customers purchasing hardware, print, toner and other office equipment solutions are a step ahead of an

outside competitor who has no established reputation or rapport with those businesses.

OE customers also already understand the value of outsourcing and leveraging an outside expert for technical support, maintenance, sales and other services. **It's not cost-effective for many businesses to hire in-house copier technicians, and the same is true for IT.**

It's a matter of convenience as well – why pay multiple vendors and write a handful of checks at the end every month when one provider can handle it all? **Business owners – particularly SMBs – value one-stop-shopping and simplicity, and the ability to purchase office equipment alongside technology hardware and services is an appealing prospect.**



## 2. OEDs Are Already Viewed as Trusted Advisors

The ability to demonstrate solution expertise and act as a business advisor is critical in managed IT services sales – and dealerships have already been doing this for quite some time in the office equipment industry.

SMBs are more than capable of making direct purchases from vendors, both with regard to office equipment and information technology. They look to service providers or dealers for the added expertise and understanding being brought to the table, and for their ability to effectively troubleshoot and support those solutions post-implementation. The same message that OEDs have successfully leveraged in the office equipment space can easily carry over into managed services – the technology and sales processes may be a bit different, but the underlying concepts and messaging are the same.

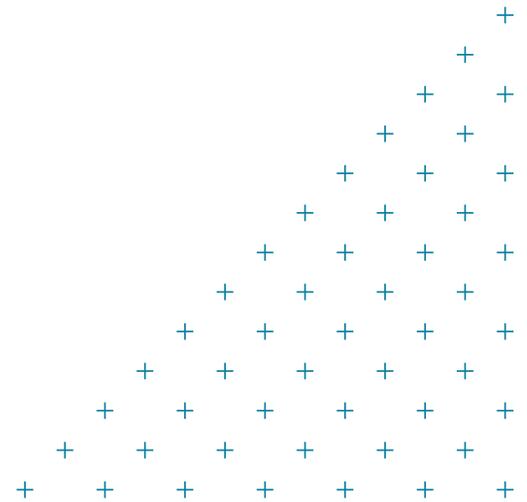
What's more, managed services present constant opportunities to upsell, cross sell and upgrade existing deals by bringing new devices under management, taking on ad-hoc project work and upgrading between service tiers or bundled packages. Good [remote monitoring software](#) allows service providers to generate reports and data to share directly with customers, which helps demonstrate the value of their offerings and measure ROI. And IT providers are also well-positioned to regularly meet with existing customers to discuss business goals and objectives in order to identify future sales opportunities and continually align technology solutions with the direction a business is headed in. By integrating IT into the mix, dealerships can become even more of that one-stop shop that so many SMBs are looking for.



## 3. Technology is Converging

The office equipment industry has already been transitioning toward managed IT services with solutions like managed print, which boasts many of the same benefits offered by outsourced technology management: **remote monitoring, predictable costs and simplified billing, improved systems efficiency, and more.**

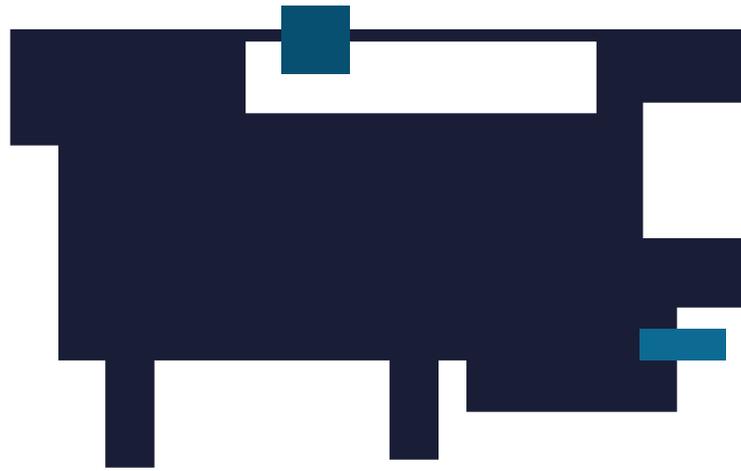
As this technology convergence continues, new phenomena like the Internet of Things are syncing each and every device and endpoint being used both at home and in the office. And in business, whoever owns the network or the infrastructure today owns the customer – leaving dealerships with only one choice: expand the scope of their services to include IT and technology management before IT providers expand into the office equipment space and squeeze them out of the equation.



## 4. OEDs Know How to Sell

**The best technology services offering isn't worth much if you can't sell it.** Outsourced IT doesn't exactly sell itself, and laundry lists of features and tech specs are unlikely to convince the average business owner that they're worth the price of admission.

The good news for dealerships is that they've got some of the best salespeople in business today—and they've got the workforce and existing customer base needed to find success in managed IT services. Not all reps need to be trained in IT sales, and there are a few key hires that need to be made; most notably the Virtual Chief Information Officer or vCIO. **But with the right training and the ability to identify the top ten to twenty percent of current customers who are a good fit for outsourced IT, OEDs can jumpstart their transition into this growing market and bring in impressive new revenue streams without having to capture any net new prospects or invest heavily in upfront marketing programs.**



# Conclusion

Dealerships are looking for opportunities to bring in new revenue streams and set themselves up for continued growth for the foreseeable future. Managed IT services present dealers with an unprecedented opportunity to expand the scope of their services and take greater ownership over their customers' network and infrastructure – and, in doing so, exponentially increase the value they're bringing to the table and further cement existing account relationships.

The key to successfully integrating these new technology offerings into the business lies in finding a partner who understands the dealer channel and can provide the tools, expertise and technical personnel needed to bridge the gap between office equipment and IT – empowering OEDs to quickly step into this booming market without requiring significant capital investment. ConnectWise's IT management platform can help dealerships accelerate this transition by providing a robust, scalable outsourced IT model that combines powerful software with human resources which allow dealers to realize up to 60% margins.

