IT Solutions Provider Moves Beyond "Break-Fix" Approach

Besttel enhances network visibility, deepens customer engagement, and drives new business with Cisco Smart Care Service.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Customer Name: Besttel
Industry: IT Solutions Provider
Location: Cumbria, U.K.

Challenge:
• Increase sales by providing more customized services to customers
• Move beyond "break-fix" IT approach to more active role in anticipating network issues
• Keep track of individual contracts, service-level agreements, and hardware termination dates

Solution:
• Cisco Smart Care Service increases network visibility, helps enable Besttel to offer wider range of services, and provides ability to manage any device reachable by IP under single contract

Results:
• Expanded Besttel's IT services to move from "break-fix" model to proactive network management
• Reduced number of system alerts on local university network from 350 to 19 within months
• Cut customers' support costs by 17 percent while providing higher-value service

Challenge

Founded in 2009, Besttel is a Cisco Premier Partner, offering voice and data center solutions for small and medium businesses throughout the United Kingdom (U.K.). Specifically, the company specializes in supporting Cisco® Unified Communications and Cisco Unified Data Center solutions.

Besttel takes pride in its high-touch sales approach with prospective customers, establishing itself as a trusted advisor at the beginning of every engagement. "We call it the 'softly-softly' approach," says Paul Cobley, managing director of Besttel. "We don't pressure our customers. We don't go straight for the sale. Instead, we take the time to understand them and identify a solution that's truly best for their needs."

When the company was founded, Besttel relied on Cisco SMARTnet® Service as its primary service offering. SMARTnet enabled Besttel to extend expert technical support to customers by giving his IT staff direct access to Cisco engineers, the Technical Assistance Center (TAC), and an extensive range of online resources to resolve critical network issues.

Cobley began noticing that coordinating SMARTnet on each device individually was becoming more complex as some customer networks grew. For those with larger networks, this individual handling can lead to some devices with out-of-date software, numerous contracts to manage, and a partial or fragmented view of the installed base.

Cobley also notes that with SMARTnet, Besttel was often taking a "break-fix" approach to customers' support issues, intervening only after issues arose. He recognized that in order to remain competitive, Besttel needed to gain greater insight into customers' IT environments, play a more proactive role in anticipating issues, and simplify network management, all while keeping customers' support costs low.

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Paul Cobley
Managing Director
Besttel

Solution

Besttel learned about Cisco Smart Care Service from its Cisco liaison. Smart Care is a service designed to help Cisco partners simplify network maintenance through proactive network assessments, remote software repairs, and on-demand technical support. With Smart Care, Besttel provides customers with an appliance that monitors Cisco hardware against key performance metrics, and the appliance generates an alert whenever those metrics do not meet Cisco standards. Meanwhile, system configurations are backed up remotely, and software is automatically checked for updates and patches.

"When I first learned about the Cisco Smart Care Service, I saw a way to differentiate ourselves from competitors," says Cobley. "We already offered the best hardware in the business with the FlexPod solution, combining Cisco Unified Computing System (UCS), NetApp storage, and virtualization from VMware. With Smart Care, we're able to make those solutions even more compelling by tailoring a service package that proactively meets each customer's needs."

Cisco tools and resources enable Besttel to track operating system and application software updates for any device reachable by IP under a single contract. As a result, Besttel can take a comprehensive approach to the care and continuous improvement of its clients' networks at a single price, with a single point of contact.

Results

Since adopting Cisco Smart Care in September 2011, Besttel has expanded its suite of service offerings while significantly reducing network incidents. Cobley recalls a specific instance where Smart Care enabled Besttel to clearly demonstrate value for a new customer, thus securing the partner's status as a trusted advisor. "A local college came to us for help in streamlining its IT management," says Cobley. "With Smart Care, we were able to assemble a custom maintenance package. We identified all end-of-life software and put together a program of rolling upgrades for them. After just six weeks, their network was up to date, and the number of alerts went down from 350 to 19."

This preventative approach to network management continues to prove its value for customers across the United Kingdom, driving down the total cost of services by identifying issues before they cause disruption on the network. As a result, Besttel's clients typically save 17 percent on support costs when they switch to Smart Care. "Not only do our customers see a marked decrease in the number of network issues, but they also see a significant reduction in operational expenses," says Cobley. "That's a win-win as far as everyone's concerned."

With Smart Care in its arsenal, Besttel can achieve deeper engagement with its clients and distinguish itself from rivals without increasing staff. The result is an increase in new business that Cobley attributes directly to the addition of Smart Care in Besttel's portfolio. "Smart Care gives us a service offering that's a true differentiator," says Cobley. "Customers have always appreciated that we're a local organization with a personal approach to sales. Now we can reinforce that with the technical expertise and industry-leading tools available from Cisco. That combination continues to set us apart from the competition."

Next Steps

Looking ahead, Besttel plans to expand its Smart Care service offering to new clients, and continues to find new ways to add value for current customers as well. "You don't need to be a large partner with a dozen field resources to resell this service," says Cobley. "You can scale it to your most appropriate resources, and that's exactly how we prefer to work. We're here to build relationships, solve problems, and provide support. Smart Care is key to making that goal a reality."

For More Information

· To find out more about Cisco Smart Care Service, visit: www.cisco.com/go/smartcare.

Services List

· Cisco Smart Care Service

· Cisco SMARTnet Service