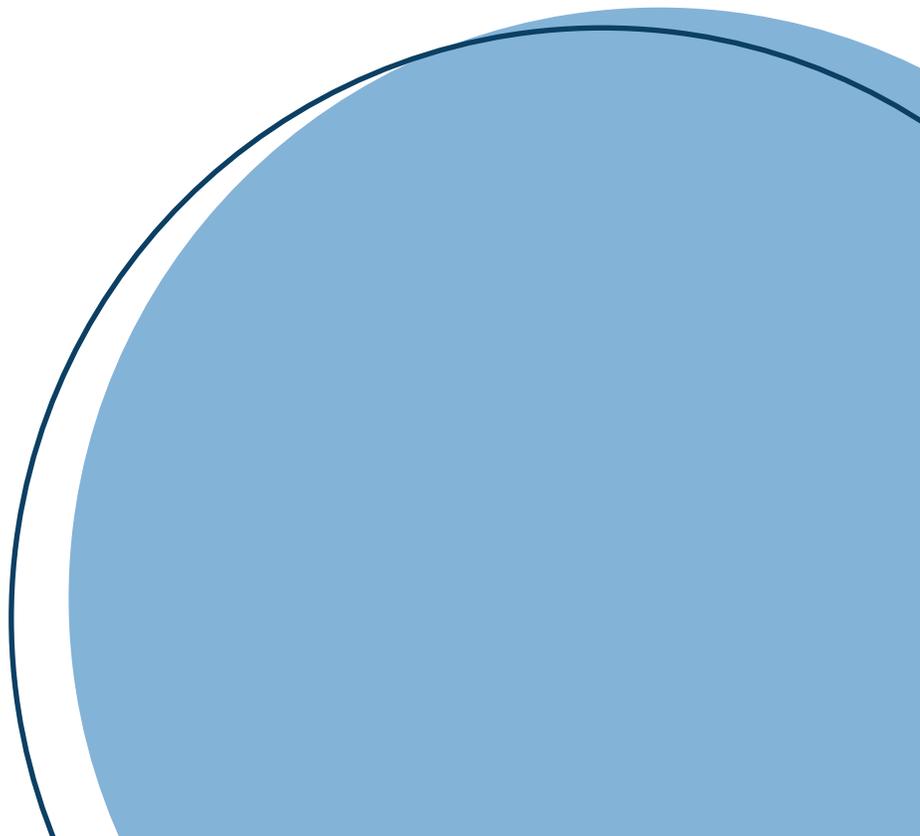
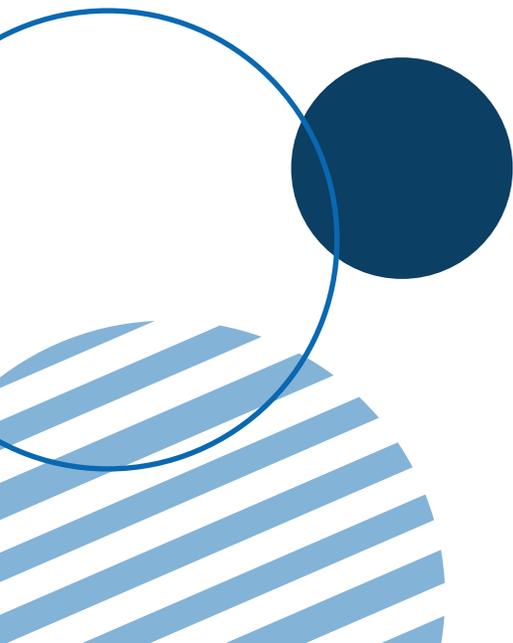


Remote Monitoring and Management:

*The Key to Proactive,
Efficient IT Service Delivery*

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Introduction

As businesses emerge from the difficult economic recession, they need to continue the low-cost and high productivity practices that allowed them to successfully weather the storm.

Specifically for providers (TSPs), it's paramount that they develop new ways to find additional revenue streams. In order to keep clients happy and, TSPs need to be able to do it all for their clients—from managing infrastructures to responding quickly to end-user needs. With a growing number of issues to resolve and limited technicians at hand, how can TSPs operate efficiently while providing top-notch service?

One tool that can increase the efficiency of existing support staff and better leverage resources is remote monitoring and management (RMM). RMM delivers an arsenal of IT management tools, such as remote desktop monitoring, trouble ticket tracking, user information, support, and more through one comprehensive interface. By definition, RMM refers to a set of IT tools that collect information about the hardware and applications running in the client's environment and provide activity reports to the IT service provider for review and issue resolution.¹



Chapter 1: What is Remote Monitoring and Management (RMM)?

RMM is remote, proactive monitoring of computer and network health. Some RMM tools use agent technology, which allows for the direct management of applications running on a computer. Remote agents can connect without VPNs, firewall issues, or router configurations, and can perform tasks for their clients even while offline. This enables technicians to fix problems without logging into the affected machine. Problems can be resolved remotely from the agent and console, even while a client is using a computer or server.

For example, if a server's performance begins to act unstable, a technician can log in to determine what the problem is. If a virus is detected, the technician can kill the virus process before it can cause major damage. It can be done quickly and remotely—without affecting the client's productivity—so that the virus does not have time to corrupt other files or systems. Since technicians do not need to log directly into an affected workstation, agent-based solutions also provide protection and flexibility for companies have a mobile workforce.

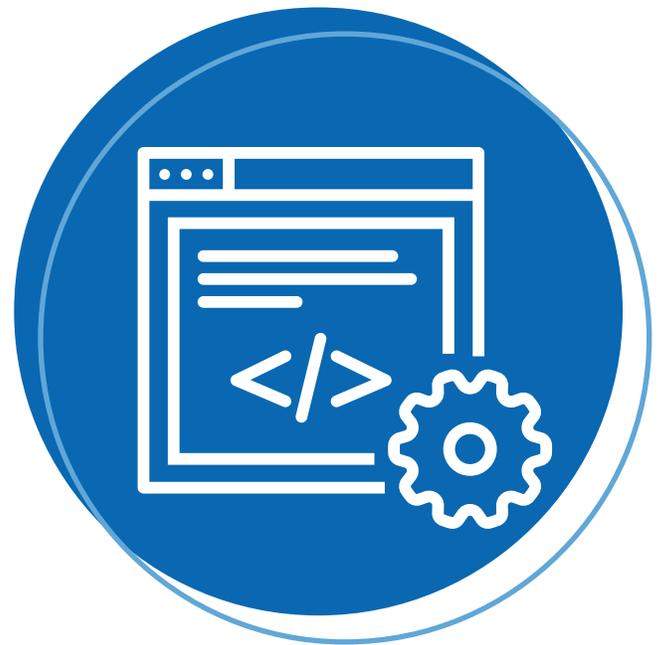
An RMM solution detects issues, reports them and allows technicians to resolve those issues from a remote location. When a common problem arises, like when an end user gets locked out of the system by typing in an incorrect password, an RMM solution allows the technician to pull up this information from another location and assist the end user without leaving their station. The end user password can also be reset using the control center.

Chapter 2: Proactive Maintenance and Management

RMM also provides powerful maintenance and management capabilities. Proactive maintenance includes the management and deployment of Windows updates, defragmentation of hard drives, antivirus definition updates, and many other tasks.

The ability to set up routine, scheduled maintenance tasks with RMM not only prevents problems, but also significantly reduces troubleshooting time. Since basic scans have already been performed, technicians can jump right into more complex troubleshooting steps and come to a quicker problem resolution. RMM is also a powerful management tool for system administrators. TSPs use RMM tools to manage software deployment, troubleshooting, and other important functions. RMM tools also create automated processes through scripting, which simplifies tasks such as copying files and performing advanced searches.

One popular management tool available with RMM is automatic remediation. If a technician always takes the same steps to resolve an alert, problem, or customer request, RMM allows the technician to automate, save, and share the remediation of these issues. More advanced automation with remediation can also be set up to kick off a scripted set of actions upon detection of a problem. Those actions can be recorded to a ticket or time entry that automatically documents the work completed on the client's monthly invoice. Some IT service providers are even billing time and material to clients for automated activities that are performed throughout the month.



Chapter 3: Why Do Technology Solution Providers Need to Offer RMM?

Offering RMM can provide numerous benefits both to TSPs and their clients. RMM is a unique solution that allows you to increase the level of service to your clients while differentiating yourself from the competition.

RMM solutions also offer a consistent revenue stream with relatively high margins. RMM allows you to set up automation so you can let it work on its own and that gives you additional man power with your existing staff. With an RMM solution, you can take on more clients without having to increase head count.

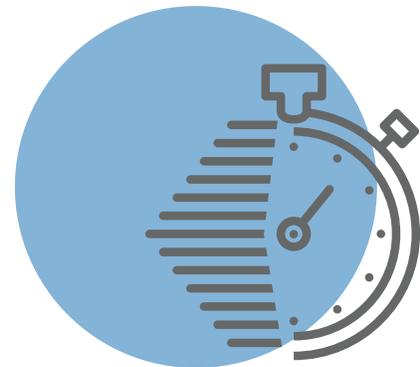
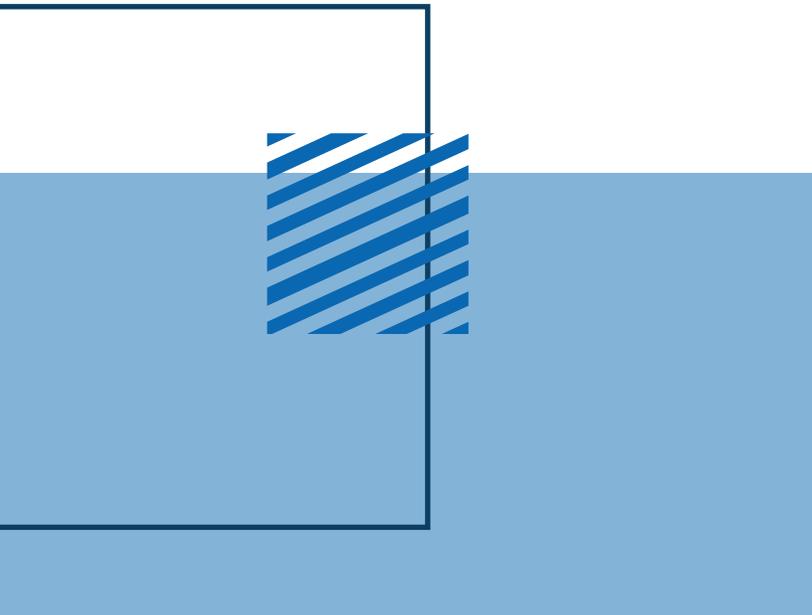
Some TSPs have already been using RMM to their advantage. These businesses have enjoyed the ability to get things done faster, work remotely, respond proactively and ultimately provide more value to their clients. Ian Richardson, CEO of Doberman Technologies, reported not just happier clients, but a 40% year-over-year top line growth thanks to automation.



Chapter 4: Run Your Business More Effectively and Profitably

One of the most important benefits RMM tools offer is the ability to better utilize labor and resources. Using RMM tools, technicians are able to multitask by kicking off a backup restoration job, moving to another computer to start a disk scan for hard drive issues, and move back to the original computer to find the particular file from the backup that an end user requested—all from the same interface. In this scenario, one technician completed three tasks in half the time it would take. Consider the impact of multitasking tool for a TSP handling thousands of tickets a month. This productivity savings can significantly improve efficiency and profitability.

RMM tools can get things done faster, which is one of the primary indicators of profitability. RMM tools enable the efficient delivery of a variety of services, including remote help desk, end-user information, support, and more. TSPs can even set up a customized home page for customers so they can track tickets, see status updates, access reports, review invoices, and see the value of the services they are receiving at any time. Also, with proactive resolution to technical problems, TSPs can strategically schedule site visits and work on revenue-generating projects rather than running to put out fires.



Chapter 5: Increase Customer Service Levels

Perhaps the most obvious benefit for your clients is less downtime. You can proactively monitor and fix issues before they interrupt your customer's business—sometimes before they even know they have a problem. Can consistently monitor virus updates, and ensure antivirus programs are enabled and that regular backups are taking place. Keep the entire network operating efficiently by performing preventive, including regular disk and registry cleanups and system defragmentation. Even common problems like running out of drive space can be handled proactively because you can see what is going to happen and take action before a customer incident takes place.

When remote monitoring is not utilized, TSPs have to react to emergencies. With remote monitoring tools, you can take advantage of agent and internal monitors to collect information automatically and set alerts when computers or applications need attention.⁴

End users will experience immediate response to requests or problems. Instead, technicians can instantly connect from a remote location and fix technical problems on the spot. Technicians can work behind the scenes to resolve issues, enabling clients to continue working without interruption.

By consistently monitoring systems and fixing problems as they arise, a TSP becomes a true partner in the client's business. Inventory and bandwidth utilization reports can help clients budget for hardware and software expenditures. By providing exceptional and proactive customer service, clients are happier, which means an improved bottom line for you.

*"Customers are no longer running us down to report problems; we are running them down to report preemptive resolutions!
They love it!"*

- Barry Langley, CEO, Simple Solutions Business Technology Consulting

Chapter 6: Save Time and Money

With an RMM solution, you no longer have to travel to a client's site to resolve IT issues. RMM allows your technicians to resolve issues remotely, so they won't have to lose a whole day if a problem only needs one hour to fix. By increasing technician efficiency, IT service providers have room to grow—both to take on more clients and to manage more endpoints without having to increase headcount. Additionally, IT service providers realize actual cost savings by eliminating the need for transportation, lodging and other associated costs. Some IT service providers have reported a 50% reduction in travel costs after implementing RMM.

As companies become more energy conscious, RMM tools can also help clients realize their goals to become more environmentally friendly. For example, "the simple act of shutting off a PC after hours and on weekends can quickly add up. In some case studies currently under way, companies are experiencing an average cost savings of \$17 per PC, per month. Multiply that by an office full of PCs and a company can really start to save. Advancements in remote management technologies are allowing managed service providers to help small and mid-size businesses realize these savings," reported Charles Weaver of ChannelPro SMB.³

Conclusion

As technology solution providers search for ways to more effectively manage technical resources, they can benefit from. RMM solutions that help increase customer service levels, save time and money, and help businesses run more effectively and profitably.

With the ability to handle a variety of network and end-user problems remotely, TSPs can offer superior customer service while increasing their productivity. And as responses to client issues become more efficient and customer loyalties strengthen, they will be in a strong position to watch their business grow.

¹Walsh, Lawrence, "Professional Services Automation Imperative," Channel Insider White Paper, February 2009.

²Pereira, Pedro, "Managed Services Success Still a Big Challenge," Channel Insider, January 2009, <http://www.channelinsider.com/c/a/Managed-Services/Managed-Services-Success-Still-a-Big-Challenge/>

³Weaver, Charles, "Managed Services Goes Green," ChannelPro SMB, May 27, 2009, <http://www.channelprosbmb.com/article/2552/Managed-Services-Goes-Green/?highlight=remote+monitoring+and+management>