

MSPWorld: Cloud Services Partner Programs Earn Spotlight

Posted September 14th, 2011 by Joe Panettieri

A the MSPWorld conference in Austin, Texas, companies such as Enterhost, GoGrid and Vedio are pitching cloud partner programs, cloud referral programs and cloud dashboards for MSPs. If the efforts work as advertised, MSPs can potentially pursue a growing range of recurring revenue opportunities tied to cloud services.

First up, Enterhost has launched a Channel Partner Program. The company positions itself as an internet cloud services provider and Windows application specialist. According to a PDF posted on Enterhost's website, the company offers:

- Cloud servers
- Hosted Exchange, SharePoint and Lync
- Any Windows application available on-premise can be hosted in the Enterhost cloud, the company claims
- Shared Web Hosting, which is designed exclusively for channel partners, including access to the company's SSL certificate and domain name registration services
- On the legacy front, Enterhost also offers dedicated servers, disaster recovery and professional services
- The Enterhost Partner Program has four levels, according to a PDF posted on Enterhost's web site:
- **Registered Partners:** Receive access to the partner portal, use of Enterhost logo and access to channel-exclusive products. There is zero revenue requirement for partners at this level.
- **Silver Partners:** Similar to Registered, plus a 12.5 percent discount. This requires a \$1,000 to \$5000 monthly revenue commitment from partners. In conjunction with the launch at MSPWorld, anyone who registers at MSPWorld or on the company's website during the event will receive a \$0 monthly requirement. The promotion runs through Sept. 15.
- **Gold Partners:** Similar to Registered, plus a 15 percent discount and access to a solutions architect and pre- and post-technical/sales support. This level has a \$5001 to \$15,000 monthly requirement.
- **Platinum Partners:** Similar to Gold, plus a 20 percent discount and a dedicated channel program manager and premium technical/sales support. This level has a \$15,001 or more monthly requirement for partners.

Side note: I don't have a feel for each level's program requirements for partners. But we're checking in with Enterhost for more details.

Updated, 12:20 p.m. eastern on Sept.14 : Ben Tiblets, VP of Enterhost, has provided me with revenue commitment figures for each partner level. The bullet points above are now updated accordingly.

GoGrid Referral Program

Meanwhile, GoGrid has launched a referral program to help MSPs and IT consultants grow their cloud businesses. GoGrid, which positions itself as a cloud infrastructure company, says the referral program offers the following benefits:

- A consultative partnership approach
- One-on-one training sessions with GoGrid
- Co-branded marketing programs and materials
- Mentorship from solution architects to address unique needs

GoGrid's web site says the referral program allows partners to "earn fees on accounts you bring to GoGrid" with no upfront commitment. However, the online information does not disclose how much money partners can generate from each referral. We're double-checking to see if the GoGrid referral strategy involves one-time partner payments or recurring revenue payments

Vedio Cloud Dashboard

Finally, Vedio — a cloud aggregator — has demoed its new Nebula cloud dashboard. Nebula is a single, web-based view for Vedio's channel partners to manage and provision the company's cloud solutions. Vedio CEO Todd Myers went even further when I pulled him away from the conference to talk about the newly-released dashboard.

"It [Nebula] will give channel partners an additional recurring revenue stream," he said. Myers brings a unique perspective when it comes to selling solutions to MSPs. He actually owns an MSP himself — Computer Sites — which he uses as "a guinea pig" for Vedio solutions. It's all part of Myers' goal of providing "a one-stop shop for the computer guy."

Nebula is designed to help Veddio's channel partners managed a customer base. It's a white-label provisioning system that MSPs can use to deliver services and maintain a relationship with end-users, according to Myers. It offers quoting and billing tools, messaging and scheduling capabilities, real time support and instant provisioning, all through a single administrative viewing screen.

Veddio gives partners the option to charge its end-users one of two ways: per seat, or a la carte. Myers thinks the a la carte model is perfect for MSPs looking to go vertical because they can tailor Veddio's platform to the needs of end-users. Veddio's cloud platform is sold on a monthly subscription model. No long term commitment is necessary.

Veddio currently has 14 channel partners throughout Florida, Michigan and North Carolina. The company's goal is to expand that partner base nationwide, and possibly even into Canada.

Questions Worth Asking

Clearly, cloud computing partner programs are dominating the vendor chatter at MSPWorld. But some of the announcements are a bit short on details. Among the questions MSPs should be asking before signing up for a cloud services partner program:

- What are my near-term and long-term commitment levels?
- Are revenues one-time or recurring?
- Who controls end-customer pricing?
- Who controls end-customer billing?
- What types of SLAs (service level agreements) do you offer?
- Where is customer data stored?
- How are you funded? Are you profitable? Do you need to raise more cash/seek more funding?
- How do I migrate off of your system if I ever need to?

We'll be back with more MSPWorld perspectives if we hear more chatter from the show.

Additional reporting and Veddio interview by Nicholas Mukhar.