

Managed Services Success Stories

MANAGED SERVICES FURTHERS PARTNER/CUSTOMER ALIGNMENT

NASHVILLE COMPUTER AVOIDS “CHAOS” VIA ZENITH INFOTECH’S SOLUTION

Since opening its doors in 1988 as a software company, Nashville Computer eventually grew and evolved through a hardware-focused sales model to its current focus on service. With a staff of 12, the Tennessee-based MSP supports networks and computers for various SMBs in middle Tennessee. However, over the years, as the industry (and the business) grew, so too did the pain that comes from responding to customers’ never-ending emergencies.

“We tell clients that our goal used to be for your servers to break, because we make money when you hurt,” says Charles Henson, vice president, Nashville Computer. “Now our business goals are aligned with yours: to ensure your servers and workstations have maximum uptime.”

Nashville Computer was already doing its own style of managed services, collecting a monthly retainer from some of its clients in exchange for periodic visits where techs addressed updates, patches and fixes. But Henson and his colleagues knew there must be a better way.

“It was chaos,” says Henson. “We’d come in Monday morning, and there would be several messages from clients (from over the weekend) that their servers were down. It was hard getting our guys to do projects and stay focused, because we never knew what they would be doing day to day. It was costing us in productivity, because we’d have to stop what

SCORECARD

Solution Provider:
Nashville Computer

Vendor:
Zenith Infotech
(www.zenithinfotech.com)

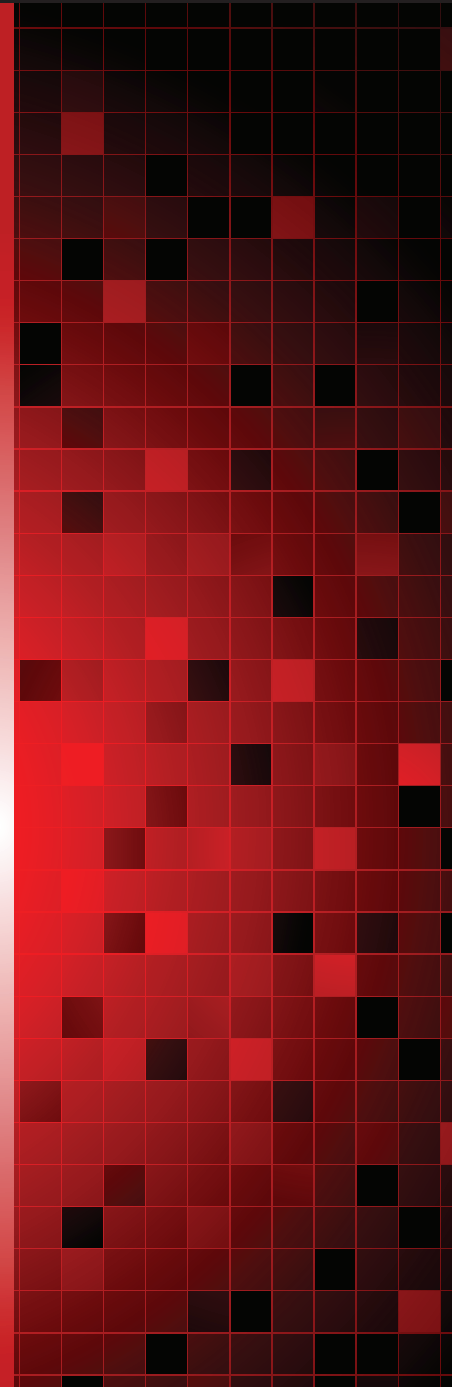
Solution:
A 24-7 time-saving managed services solution that works to maintain the end client’s bottom line.

we were doing for one client to go help another.”

When a new hire explained Zenith Infotech’s value proposition, Nashville was quick to get onboard. “We looked at other services, but we would have had to provide the hardware, provide the system itself, load the software, put it at the client sites, build reports,” Henson says. “And we still would have needed someone to sit and monitor it.”

Start Local

Nashville first began its relationship with Zenith in-house, setting up remote monitoring services for its own servers and workstations. Shortly thereafter, they added their own Web servers to host client sites. That particular move helped Nashville learn the software and establish the processes and procedures it would use for client sites. Monthly maintenance clients were



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the first to deploy; today about 30 percent of their customer base is on a managed services platform. Nashville also offers Zenith’s client help desk services, as well as Backup and Disaster Recovery, all in a bundled solution with remote monitoring.

The decision to align with Zenith had a profound effect on Nashville Computer.

“We’re able to maintain more clients with fewer engineers and do a better job for those clients,” Henson says. “What I used to stay up to do at 2 am, I now assign to the (Zenith) NOC (Network Operations Center), and they perform that service,” he adds.

One client had been experiencing random issues with a server for three years, and Nashville techs had never been able to pinpoint the problem. After the MSP installed a Zenith agent, the system determined that a memory module was defective; Nashville techs replaced it, and the problems went away.

These days, Monday morning is no longer chaos at Nashville Computer. Assignments can be planned in advance, and techs no longer have to wait for the client’s permission to address an issue. “We know ahead of the game about problems, so we can be more proactive and not depend on clients to tell us what’s wrong,” Henson says. “It gives us peace of mind and our clients’ peace of mind.”

Systematizing installations is one of the MSP’s key strategies to reap the most benefit from managed services implementations. All client networks are set up in a consistent way: Nashville cleans every machine, installs anti-spyware and anti-virus software and adds a label that includes the machine ID and help desk phone numbers. All

servers are on a specific IP scheme, all workstations, printers and other devices are in a certain IP range, and the router gets the same IP address. That step stabilizes the network and simplifies support.

Selling Fixed Costs and Uptime

Nashville Computer clients have greeted the managed services platform with much enthusiasm.

“It’s an easy sell,” says Henson. “We call it Budget-Friendly IT. We show clients what they spent with us over the last three years, and how much less it would cost with managed services.” One doctor’s office had racked up thousands of dollars in repair costs, a variable amount that came out of profits. After hearing about the steady monthly fee that managed services enables, “The doctor said, ‘now I know what my bonus will be,’” since IT costs would no longer fluctuate, Henson recalls.

Another client, a construction company that performs estimates and repairs for an insurance company’s clients, had a controller fail, without warning. Nashville virtualized the server to BDR while awaiting parts. The company ended up running the virtualized server for six full days without any disruption – a process that saved the client thousands by preventing lost business, since the insurer assigns jobs on a round robin basis to a list of providers.

Perhaps the biggest impact of aligning with Zenith has been to Nashville’s bottom line.

“We save two to three hours per client per month, and offer much higher quality of service because we’re monitoring them 24/7,” Henson says. “Our profitability has increased, and we have a recurring revenue stream we never had before. The steady cash flow helps maintain our bottom line.” ■