

Your 4 biggest priorities

to transform your MSP

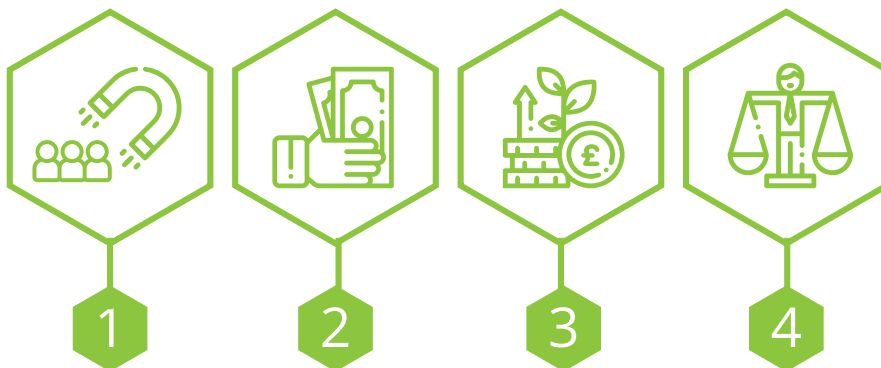


Paul Green's

MSPMarketing

Hi, I'm Paul Green, and I'm an MSP marketing expert. I'm based in the UK, and work with MSPs all over the world.

Every MSP owner I speak to wants to improve one or more of the following four things:



1. Getting new clients
2. Increasing monthly recurring revenue
3. Growing net profit and your own personal income
4. Addressing work/life balance

Throughout this guide, I explain exactly how you can achieve these goals.

After reading this guide, you will be armed with proven strategies that you'll be able to immediately implement in all areas of your business.



Your first priority:



Getting new clients

The biggest mistake that most MSPs make when they are undertaking new client acquisition activity is thinking short-term.

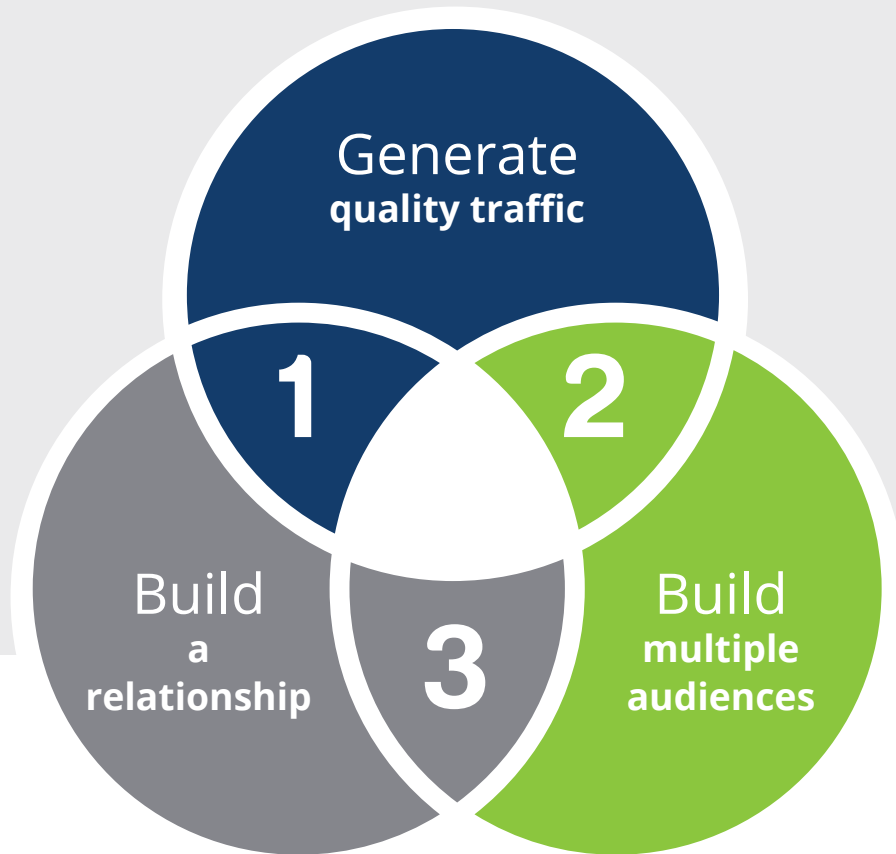
Actually, getting new clients is very much a long-term activity. Because for an ordinary business owner or manager to decide to switch from their incumbent MSP to you is a really big decision for them. You've got to remember that these people don't know what they don't know about technology, IT support and cyber security.

Seeing as they can't tell whether an MSP is good or bad at technology and support, they're making the decision not at a cognitive level but at an emotional level. That's why you need to take a long-term approach to your marketing.

You're also held back by something called inertia loyalty. Where even if they're unhappy with their incumbent MSP, they feel it's better to stay with the devil they know than switch to someone new.

For all these reasons, you need to take a long-term view of your marketing. Marketing for new clients isn't just about putting some adverts out there and hoping that you get a response. **It's about playing a long game, following a simple three-step process.**

Let me take you through
the **three steps**.



Step 1: Generate quality traffic

Starting at the top with quality traffic - the days of free traffic have long gone. These days you need to pay for traffic in cash, or put in some work to do it (that's paying in sweat). Generating traffic isn't something that the business owner or manager should be doing, it's a job that can be outsourced.

Your primary sources of traffic are the main networks.

Google / other search engines

Google can be a good source of traffic, depending on how competitive your area is. Would I spend money on SEO, search engine optimisation?

Probably not. Google is too focused on its map product to make SEO hugely worthwhile for the average MSP.

Would I spend money on pay-per-click on Google Ads? Maybe, depending on the specific market place and depending on your ability to differentiate yourself from your competitors.

Google is a maybe, but a definite for quality traffic is LinkedIn.



LinkedIn is the number one marketing platform for MSPs right now, and no wonder.

Since Microsoft bought it a few years back, it's become an excellent platform, a B2B version of Facebook. It acts in a very similar way and it has become more driven by content than by anything else. I would be spending a great deal of time on LinkedIn focusing on three activities to build your network.

These activities are the three Cs:



You should be connecting with as many people as you can; well, people that you want to do business with. Every day you can increase your network by manually connecting with your target audience. You can make about 20 connection requests on LinkedIn with just the free version, so you should be doing that every single day.

You should be finding people that you would love to be clients and connecting with them.

Don't overthink this. You can think as simple as "accountants, YourTown" and look for those people on LinkedIn. Or Google them first and put their company names into LinkedIn and connect with them that way. If you wanted to, you could automate this process using something like Dux-Soup or Alfred.

www.dux-soup.com

www.meetalfred.com

These tools sit as extensions in your Chrome, automating the task of visiting people and sending a connection request.



The other great platform for traffic is Facebook. Facebook is a great way of reaching decision makers in their downtime. They may not be using it during the day, but it's a great tool in the evenings and on weekends. Just because you personally don't like Facebook, you mustn't assume that other people think exactly the same way that you do. Facebook is a great platform for traffic, simply because it's so prevalent.



You may also use Instagram. Instagram is not a B2B marketing platform, but if your ideal clients are retailers or in hospitality such as hotels and restaurants, then they are likely to be using Instagram to do their own marketing. Therefore, in the spirit of being on the platform that they are using, you could be using Instagram to reach those people.

On Google, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram, there are organic and paid ways of using these platforms.

The organic ways are the ones that tend to take time. That's you (or someone you pay) spending a fair amount of time building your networks, adding on new content and helping people to engage. Because the more they engage with your content - the more they like it, share it or comment on it - the more likely they are to see more of your Content. So engagement is a good thing.

And then there are the paid ways, such as Google ads, LinkedIn ads and ads via the Facebook business manager (Facebook and Instagram).

Paid ads can be very hit and miss.

In all the work I've done with MSPs over the last few years, for example, I found that organic LinkedIn tends to dramatically outperform paid LinkedIn.

Whereas on Facebook, we found that paid Facebook adverts, using special custom audiences where you upload the data of people you want to reach, can outperform absolutely anything else on Facebook.

It all comes down to who you want to reach and which platform you're going to use to reach them.

Once you've generated some quality traffic, instead of simply driving this traffic to your website, the smart thing to do is to drive it to one of a number of multiple audiences.

Step 2: Build multiple audiences

By multiple audiences, I mean building groups of people who, in some small way, are willing to listen to what it is that you have to say.

As an MSP, there are at least two audiences that you should be building – LinkedIn and Facebook.

Audience 1: LinkedIn

As I've already said, LinkedIn is an amazing platform for MSPs and you can drive traffic from other platforms to LinkedIn in order to grow your LinkedIn audience.

Particularly when you start adding in the clever automation available, it's quite possible to grow your LinkedIn audience by a couple of hundred people every month. You should be aiming to be connected to thousands of relevant prospects on LinkedIn.

Audience 2: Facebook

You can do exactly the same on Facebook. And that will either be via your Facebook personal profile, your Facebook page, or through a Facebook group.

Having people connecting to you on Facebook personally is not really the done thing for B2B sales. What's more normal is getting people to like your page so that they get updates from you. However, over the last few years, Facebook seems to have fallen out of love with its own product, and

doesn't seem to show Facebook page content as much in people's news feed. Remember, not many people go to visit your page, but if you can get your page content to appear in their news feed, then that's a very powerful thing to do.

The really powerful way to build an audience on Facebook is through a Facebook group.

But this will only work if you operate in a specific vertical or niche. This is where you can build a Facebook group of like-minded people who are willing to discuss issues that matter to them. That might be technology for a specific vertical, for example. To see an example of a successful Facebook group, come and join mine. You can apply to join for free at www.facebook.com/groups/mspmarketing.

There are hundreds and hundreds of other MSPs, like you, discussing marketing every day.

Audience 3: Instagram

The third place you might build an audience is Instagram.

Again, this is only going to work if you are looking to work with retail or hospitality clients – people who use Instagram for their own marketing.

Audience 4: Email marketing list

The fourth and most important platform is your own email marketing list.

This is the only platform that isn't controlled by someone else. Microsoft could take your LinkedIn contacts away from you tomorrow. Mark Zuckerberg could certainly take your Facebook or your Instagram audiences away from you.

But if you build an email list, no one can ever take that away from you. That's yours.

You can switch between CRMs (customer relationship management software) but that email data always belongs to you.

Email marketing is getting harder and harder - it's getting increasingly difficult to get people's email addresses, get emails delivered and get them acted upon. Nevertheless, I still believe that your email audience should be your most important and most focused upon audience.

To build this audience, you need to do three things:

1. Ethical Bribe

An ethical bribe is where you give someone something in return for their contact details. Because the phrase, 'sign up for our newsletter' doesn't work any more and hasn't worked for 20 years.

Instead, we need to bribe people to come and join the email list. Me, I like books or guides for this. That's how I persuaded you to join my email list. You gave me your contact details and joined my marketing list in return for this personalised guide.

You could do a very similar approach on your website. Or you could just offer people a book, perhaps about email security or something like that. Your prospect must get something that they perceive has a value and that seems to be relevant to them, in return for them joining your email list.

Once you've got your ethical bribe in place, the next thing you need is a CRM to run it all for you.

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2. A great CRM

You can run some of these out of your PSA, but in my experience, Autotask, ConnectWise, Syncro MSP and the others just aren't that great at the marketing job.

It's a bit of a bolt-on for them. Because really they're built to manage services, to keep tickets in order and to do delivery.

Instead look at something like Mailchimp, MailerLite, ActiveCampaign or Infusionsoft. They were built from the ground up to do marketing; to allow you to collect email contacts; to keep notes on prospects and to do automated clever marketing campaigns with all sorts of bells and whistles. And that's why I always recommend you use one of those.

If you don't have a CRM Mailchimp is the right place to get started.

If you do have one and you're looking for something advanced, personally I use Infusionsoft, which I've always traditionally found a great bit of software (although I think it's lost its way in the last few years).

A lot of my MSP clients are using ActiveCampaign these days.

The third part of what we need is a data capture page.

3. Data capture pages

In most cases, the data capture page is powered by the CRM.

A good data capture page doesn't have any distractions on it.

It's focused solely on one thing, which is telling them about the ethical bribe that they can get in return for their contact details.

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"If you want to grow your MSP read this book."

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Your data is 100% secure and protected

Your data capture page should go on your website with a lot of your traffic sent there. In fact, the first time you send someone to your website, you should send them to your data capture page.

"But I want them to look at my website," I hear you say.

The thing is, when they're coming to your website, they're looking at one, maybe two pages, then leaving. Typically, people look at the homepage, maybe the About Us page, then they leave the site.

You've paid in either cash or sweat to get traffic to your website and then they left. You don't know who they are and you'll never have a chance to engage with them again.

The better way of doing it is spending that sweat and cash sending them to a data capture page. And getting your data capture page good enough that at least a third of people will opt in.

Then, you've got them in your email list and you have multiple chances to talk to them over the next five to 10 years. It really is a complete game changer if you focus your traffic on building audiences, rather than just sending people to your general website.

Step 3: Build a relationship

The final part of this three-step processes is to build a relationship with them. And this is done through content marketing.

Remember when I said earlier that your average business owner or manager doesn't know what they don't know about tech? Let's teach them. Let's educate them.

But let's not do this in a way which is boring for them. We don't want it to be technical, or full of acronyms, or dull, or using scary terms. We want this to be done in an every day manner, talking about things at their level.

We're not going to talk down to them. We're going to drop down to their level and educate them at their level of understanding. But we need to make sure we educate them in a strategic way and not a tactical way.

What do I mean by this?

Well, we want to make sure that the content appeals to decision makers and not to users.

If you do a piece of content, 'Why is your computer slow?', that's something which talks to users. Whereas, if you take the same piece of content and reposition it as 'Why your staff whinge about slow computers', that becomes a strategic piece of content.

Your educational content must always talk to the people that you most want to influence - the decision makers. It's also got to be entertaining as well as educational.

That educational content should then be shared with your audiences through all your platforms.

Better still, add this fresh original content onto your website as a blog article and then email the blog article out to people. It should go on your Facebook.

It should go on your LinkedIn and on your Instagram, if you're doing that.

You could even turn it into a print version and send out print newsletters. What you're looking to do, is to increase the number of touch points that you have with someone. If a prospect stays on your database for two or three years, you could potentially touch them 10, 20, 30, 40, maybe even 50 times in those years.

People buy only when they're ready to buy. At the point that they're really ready to start thinking seriously about leaving their incumbent MSP and looking for someone new, if you've touched them around 50 times over a period of a couple of years, then they feel like they know who you are.

It's a very light and loose relationship. But it's a start, **and it's more than your competitors will have.**

That's what makes this a particularly powerful long-term marketing strategy. You're not just looking for short-term wins of "doing a bit of an advert, hoping somebody goes to your website and hoping they inquire". Hope is a terrible strategy.

This is a long-term strategy. And you get to build your own database, keeping you in control.

You should be proactive with your marketing. You can build up relationships with potentially thousands of people in one go, just by creating some content every week and just by sending it out.

Then, of course, you have to turn prospects into meetings.

The one thing that really makes this system come alive is where you have someone, at some point, doing a telephone intervention.

This is not a job that can really be outsourced (especially not a telesales agency). Although it is a good part-time job for someone in the business.

Someone sits there and they phone your networks, they phone your databases, they phone the people you're connected to on LinkedIn.

They phone the people that are getting your emails, they phone the people that are following you on Facebook, and they just try to move the relationship forward on the phone.

This telephone intervention can be the secret sauce between having a database of thousands of people which doesn't really generate any meetings. And having exactly the same database that does generate prospect meetings.

I had a marketing business that I sold in 2016 which had 12,000 prospects. We weren't doing anything clever on social media - it was all based on email marketing. We were emailing our prospects twice a week, so sending out 24,000 emails a week.

I then had a full-time team of three telesales people ringing those people, so every week they were making a couple of thousand dials speaking to people, moving the relationships forward.

We had no boom and bust in our business. Because we were constantly marketing. Constantly adding in new prospects, building relationships with them and getting hold of a couple of thousand of them on the phone every year to move that relationship forward.

That's a machine. It's a marketing machine. And if I owned an MSP today, it's exactly what I would set up again, that exact same machine.

I believe it's what you should do in your business. This is the long-term play for getting new clients into your business. It's a very powerful thing to do.

Summary

If you can get this three-step system set up for your business, you've got an opportunity here to have a real long-term focus on building and working prospect database.

Hell, you only need to get 200 or 300 people a year into your email list and onto your other audience platforms and many of those will stick around for years to come.

Your second priority



Increasing monthly recurring revenue

One of the things that makes the MSP model so powerful is that it is absolutely awash with monthly recurring revenue. This is the lifeblood of any business. I can't think of how difficult it must be running a business where you don't know how your bills are going to be paid every month.

In fact, if that's the position you're in right now, your main focus should be to increase your monthly recurring revenue. So that all of your overheads are covered on the first day of the month as soon as that direct debit or regular payment lands.

Increasing monthly recurring revenue is all about getting more sales out of your existing clients. And the simplest and the most powerful way to do this is by using something called the profit matrix.

The profit matrix leverages information that you already have in the business.

This info is probably already hidden away in your PSA. But the profit matrix brings it to life, makes it real and turns it into a powerful selling tool.

The profit matrix is very simple. Here's a couple of examples that some of my clients have done.

PORT	BACK-UP	EMAIL	SECURITY	WEBSITE	X=3rd PARTY CURRENTLY
MTP					
MSP					
ONPREM					
CLOUD					
EMAIL					
AV					
BACKUP					
R					
PERF					
EXCHANGE					
GET					
BATH					
MARKED					
B					
T					
AV					
SECURITY					
AV					
EXCHANGE					
DOWN					
SSL					
HOSTING					
TELEPHONE					
RMM					

MSP	Support	Backup	Security	Website	X=3rd PARTY CURRENTLY
MTP					
MSP					
ONPREM					
CLOUD					
EMAIL					
AV					
BACKUP					
R					
PERF					
EXCHANGE					
GET					
BATH					
MARKED					
B					
T					
AV					
SECURITY					
AV					
EXCHANGE					
DOWN					
SSL					
HOSTING					
TELEPHONE					
RMM					

The profit matrix is simply a grid, where you have clients down one side and services down another side. You put some kind of mark, maybe a little dot, or a magnet, or something where the client is buying a service. And you leave it blank where they're not buying a service.

You don't do this in a computer, because anything that's on a screen is too easily forgotten about. You make this real. You wrench it out of the computer and you make it physical.

You put it on a flip chart or a whiteboard, and you put it on your wall.

Ideally, it goes in the place where the most people in the business can see it, especially your technicians. And then you keep it up to date.

Yes, yes, yes - I know that's replicating information. And yes, I know it's not particularly a very 21st century thing to do to keep a piece of paper up to date. But trust me, the profit matrix only really works when you wrench it out the computer and you make it physical.

There are three opportunities to grow your monthly recurring revenue with the profit matrix.

Growth opportunity 1

Promote additional services to existing clients

The first is your techs picking up on opportunities to promote services to your existing clients.

As your techs are on the phone or as they are dealing with tickets, they can glance up at the profit matrix, to see if a specific client is buying a specific service.

I know that information is in the PSA. But they're dramatically more likely to look at it if they can just literally flick their eyes up to the wall and have a quick visual check. No matter what kind of communication method you prefer, visual communication is always easier for us if we can just get an immediate confirmation of whether or not someone's already buying something.

None of us expect technicians to actually sell when they're on the phone. But it's only a training matter to get them to pass on upselling leads to you or whoever is doing the account management within the business.

"Hey boss, I was just chatting to XYZ client. They've been having this problem this week. It occurred to me that if they bought ABC solution that would just fix that problem straight away. Over to you. Love your tech."

Wouldn't that be a great email to get?

If you have got technicians you think might do some selling for you, then they need to be motivated to do so. The simplest way to do this is to give them 10% of anything they sell.

If they sell a project, they get 10% of that value. If they sell a contract service, they get 10% of the first year's value. That seems like an awful lot of money to give away but it's not. Because technicians could and should be the very best salespeople in the business (but for the fact they don't like selling).

Of course, you only give these bonuses when you receive the cash from the clients. Your technicians will be very motivated once they clock that they can make a fairly substantial amount of money, just by recommending things that the clients really should be buying anyway.

Growth opportunity 2

Strategic reviews

The second opportunity to grow your monthly recurring revenue using the profit matrix is to do strategic reviews.

Strategic reviews are where you go out and you formally sit down with your clients and review where their business is going. And what their opportunities and threats are likely to be in the next 12 months or so. These reviews are not backward-looking technology reviews or ticket reviews.

In fact, the worst case scenario is that this turns into a whinging session or even a tech fixing session. Where someone says, "Oh, I'm glad you're here because we've been having problem with this." You, or whoever is going out to do these strategic reviews needs to operate as the strategist only.

The strategist cannot be seen climbing under a desk and plugging a cable in. The second they see your bum crack, they won't trust you as a strategist, you've just become another technician.

For that reason, I always recommend that strategic reviews happen offsite. They could happen on your premises, but your premises aren't as exciting as clients think they will be. Better to get them off their premises and get you off your premises.

Why not go for lunch? Book a local, independently-owned restaurant to show that you support local businesses and take your client for lunch. Not only do you have the benefit of getting them out of their normal

environment, but you also, by having lunch with them, guarantee that you'll get 60 minutes of their time. And ideally without any kind of interruptions as well.

You should set up that lunch in a very specific way. They should know that the purpose of the lunch is to review their business going forward. They should know that they shouldn't bring any tech problems to it.

In fact, if they've got any outstanding tech issues they should email those over before so you can raise those with the team. You don't want to talk about those at the lunch. They should be aware that it's just a chance to talk about what they're doing over the next couple of years.

Then, at that lunch, you should be speaking 20% of the time and they should be speaking 80% of the time. That's you asking lots of open questions, lots of How and What questions about their business. "What are your plans for the next couple of years? How would you think you're going to achieve that? What are the critical success factors? How will technology help you? What do you worry about when you can't sleep at four in the morning?"

The more the client talks, the more opportunities you will spot to do one of three things.



If you review the profit matrix before you go out to lunch, you can see what they're not buying and what they really should be buying, just with a quick visual check.

You wouldn't be as blunt as approaching them at the meeting to say, "Hey, you're not buying XYZ and I think you should," because that's crass. Instead, you would steer the conversation towards the thing that you think they should be enhancing.

Many of my MSP-owning clients do this. And what they find is, for every three strategic launches they do, at least two of them they come away with; if not an order form, with an opportunity to submit a proposal. Which very often leads to increased monthly recurring revenue.

In fact, one of my clients, Andrew, has increased his monthly recurring revenue from £2,000 a month to £44,000 a month. And that was all done through strategic lunches with existing clients. He found some needs that they had; some wants that he could satiate and removed a hell of a lot of fear for them.

The strategic lunch done well, using the profit matrix as a backup, is a win-win for everyone.

You sell some more services, they have fewer problems and they sleep better at night. Boom!

Growth opportunity 3

Extend the grid

The third opportunity to grow monthly recurring revenue with a profit matrix is to extend the grid.

You can extend it in two ways. You can add new clients, which extends it in one way, and you can add more monthly recurring revenue services, which extends it another way.

There are two ways to extend the monthly recurring revenue services. First of all, you can add different flavours of what you're already selling.

Take email security, for example. You might currently sell a standard email security. How about offering a different flavour, an enhanced version, an advanced version? Talk to your vendors. There are always other things that you can do. The other opportunity is to add more bolt-on services.

I have one client who has more than 100 monthly recurring revenue services. Some of them are more marketing based (such as web design), but many of these are based around support, VoIP, so support telecoms, cybersecurity, etc.

In fact, one of his secrets is to take anything that anyone might want and, rather than sell it to them as a one off hit, turn it into a service. He won't sell you a router, but he will sell you a router as a service.

If he puts in a VoIP service for you, he won't sell you an on-hold message for £50. He will turn it into a monthly recurring revenue stream and rent it to you for, let's say, £5 a month.

If that's the only thing that's on offer, then most people will happily buy that because they don't know any difference. And that monthly recurring revenue stream can soon add up.

If you charge someone £5 a month for a router as a service and you break even after four or five months, they will keep that router for another five years. What kind of extra net profit is that going to bring into the business?

Your third priority:

There are four robust
ways to improve your
net profit.



1. Increase your prices

The first thing you need to do is to increase your prices. There are a couple of different ways you can do this.

First of all, for new clients you should be constantly nudging the price up. Remember the psychology of pricing. £22 per user is the same price as £24, and you could argue it's the same price as £26 or £27 per user. People are more flexible on pricing than you think. And of course that extra £4, £5, £6 is dropping straight to the bottom line.

2. Charge more for add-ons

The second thing that you can do now for your existing clients is to charge more for the stuff you do that's add-on stuff.

For example, if you do a project for them and the project would cost, let's say £3,000, make it £3,327. Make it an odd number. Make it an unusual-looking number so it doesn't look like you have just added a margin to it.

I'm not saying you should do this for your recurring support plans, or Office 365 or anything like that, that's because they will notice. It's the one-offs, the add-ons, the extras that are primed for this.

By just nudging these prices up, the additional revenue just drops straight to the bottom line.

3: Sell more to existing clients

The third thing to do is to sell loads to your existing clients. This is a drum I beat very often because it's so bloody important. Because the greatest way to increase net profit is to sell loads to people who already trust you. Remember, this isn't selling them stuff that they need. It isn't selling them stuff that they would quite like to have, there's no hard sell. This is selling them stuff that they **WANT**.

The best way to sell more to existing clients is via the profit matrix which I talk about within this guide.

4. Lower your overheads

The fourth way to increase net profit is to lower your fixed overheads.

If you haven't had a rates review for a period of time, Google it. There are a couple of companies that could help you.

They'll also find someone that's cheaper to supply your electricity and maybe even gas at your business premises. And they'll switch you for free because they get paid a fee from the company they're switching you to.

There's also a book I recommend called "Profit First", written by a guy called Mike Michalowicz.

One of the key points in his book is to put off expenditure and to say to yourself, "Do I really need it? Let's wait one more day, one more day, one more day." When it's stuff which doesn't get you a sale or it's not increasing your business, it's just an overhead. It's a fixed overhead and it can make a real difference if you put it off, and put it off, and put it off, and put it off.

Those four things improve your profits. If you could implement them this week, what kind of an impact would that have on your profitability? Would it be exciting if you could generate another couple of thousand this week just from four simple actions like that?

Your fourth priority:



Addressing work/life balance

If there was one book that I could make every business owner read, it would be *Top Five Regrets of the Dying* by Bronnie Ware.

The author was a palliative care nurse in Australia, who cared for a lot of elderly people over a 20-year career. And noticed that lots of different people had very similar regrets which she grouped together.

The most common regrets are...

1. I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me.
2. I wish I hadn't worked so hard.
3. I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings.
4. I wish I had stayed in touch with my friends.
5. I wish that I had let myself be happier.

Did you see that nowhere in that list is a regret of, "I wish I'd spent more Saturday mornings trying to get Windows 7 to upgrade to Windows 10". The reality is, at the end of your life, you'll look back and you'll miss lots of things, but you won't miss your business. You won't miss your business partner. You won't miss your clients.

You'll miss all the fun stuff. You'll wish you'd spent more time with the kids, gone to the park more, flown more kites and had a dog.

See, for me, many MSP owners get the whole point of owning a business completely wrong.

They start off in the right way. They have the entrepreneurial seizure, as Michael Gerber describes it in his classic book, *The E-Myth Revisited*. The entrepreneurial seizure being where you suddenly realise you have to work for yourself. And quite rightly they act on that and start a business. Maybe this is what happened to you?

But, within a few years that business stops being a business and becomes a prison. In fact, far too many business owners create a prison of their own design. And then lock themselves inside and throw away the key. Then, far too many of them spend the next two or three decades locked inside either that business or a different business. And it's absolutely crazy. Because the whole point of having a business is for the business to fund your lifestyle. You're not supposed to give up your life to feed the business... the business is supposed to feed your life.

I work with lots of different MSP owners at lots of different stages. Some one-man bands; some owners of large businesses with 50, 60 staff and

almost everything in between.

It's very hard to have this conversation with a one-man band, even if it's a one-man band who's outsourced much of the first line work to Continuum or equivalent. Because, ultimately, that is not a business, that's just a well-paid job. The goal for all of us should be to get the business to the stage where we have a **CHOICE** of what we do in that business every day.

The marketing business that I built up and sold back in 2016 was a great business. At the point I sold it, it had 15 staff and they were doing most of the work.

I would work a couple of hours a day on the business. I would go to the cinema, I would hang out with my wife and daughter - I had a pretty cool life. Then I would go in and see the staff on Thursdays, or "Angry Thursdays" as I used to call them (even the best organised, most systematic businesses annoy the perfectionist business owner in some way).

Because that business didn't **NEED** me involved to thrive, I had a great deal of choice over what I did. And I chose to do the stuff that I enjoyed the most, which was being the face of the business and going out and running events. I still do love doing that.

The goal for you should be to get your business to the stage where all the routine functions of the business, 99% of the work can be done without you needing to be there.

Then you can choose what to do. I've worked with many MSPs who've reached this stage, and it's amazing to be on that journey with them. Some of them choose to do third line support because they love the technical challenge and it takes them back to why they got into this in the first place. Some of them prefer to throw themselves into account management, going out and doing strategic review lunches with clients.

Some of them choose to go and do other things instead. I have clients who are busy building their property portfolios, rather than sitting in an office with techs every day.

Others go out to learn how to fly, or learn how to play golf, or do interesting things. I have one client who is getting close to a point where the business will pay him to not be there every day. So he can go and live a lifestyle in a different country, enjoying good food and good wine every day. Why not? Wouldn't that be great? To spend the last 30 years of your life in a country you love, eating food and drinking wine you love, while you're being paid not to have to run the business every day?

Don't get me wrong, someone's got to run the business, but it doesn't necessarily have to be you.

What we're talking about here is the difference between being the owner and the operator.

I built and sold a marketing business and hey, here I am doing it again with MSPs (and I love every minute of it). But I'm also looking at acquiring some businesses. Let me tell you the kind of business I'm least likely to acquire - it's a marketing business.

Because if I acquired a marketing business, I know about marketing, therefore I'm going to get sucked into it as an operator. I don't want to be an operator of a business. I just want to be an owner.

I'm going to go and buy some businesses that I don't know how to operate. But they'll be big enough and chucking out enough net profit for me to hire a really good management team to run them on my behalf.

I then have the choice of how to work in that business. I know that I will enjoy that business more and that business will grow faster, if I spend a couple of hours every week with the management team helping them to do their job properly, and then leaving them to get on with it.

£10,000 a month personal income for a business you don't have to go into? Yes please! That sounds like a great business to own.

That's really the goal for you. Where to take your MSP and turn it into a proper business that gives you choice, and the key word there is choice. You can continue to work 60 hours a week in the business if you **WANT** to,

but it's not fun when you **HAVE** to.

Here is a scary thought: You will always struggle to create a business that gives you the lifestyle and income you want, whilst your main activity each day is dealing with clients.

If you're serious about growing your business in the years to come, then you need to regularly find some of your time to work **ON** the business rather than **IN** it.

OK, you may be the best technician the business has. The clients may love you. But the rate of progress of the business will be restricted by the amount of time and energy that you are able to put in.

Spend more time on business development and your business will develop faster. It really is that simple.

Of course walking away from doing so much support work is not such a simple thing to do. It often takes several months to ease you out without having a negative impact on the business.

But, my goodness, it will make a significant difference. Not only will the business perform better, but you will enjoy it more. You will no longer be going home grumpy at night because you've got to spend the evening dealing with the finances, the marketing, and the staff problems.

This is a sector that generates new, highly trained and qualified staff every year. Make use of that. Hire and fire until you get the right people to fulfil the amount of support work you need them to complete.

It's vital to stay in touch with clients but make sure you get the balance right. Working on business development strategies is a powerful use of your time. After all, no one else is going to do it. And, as the boss; the driver of the business, it's a hugely valuable contribution you can make to the future prosperity of your business.

Never be afraid to take a bit of quality time away from your business. A relaxed, refreshed mind will give you greater clarity of thinking.

The most common question with this subject then is how to get started.

Well, I believe that's the easy bit. The first thing you need is a very clear direction for the business. You need to find some quality time to sit down with your other half (and I mean your life partner not your business partner) and figure out a vision for the life that you want to lead in the future. Really go into some detail painting pictures about that vision.

Once you've got that vision, then you can put together a business goal. Because remember, if the business is there to feed our life, then we've got to have a vision for our life ready before we put together a goal for the business. Once you've got a goal for the business, you can put together the right strategy and the right tactics to implement those goals. Most goals involve growing the turnover, growing the net profits, getting more new clients and growing monthly recurring revenue. You put in place strategies to do that and then tactics to implement the strategies. **The real power of doing all of this is the final part of this diagram.**



The real power of this is what you do on a daily basis.

You see, the way to get started on removing yourself from the business is to find an hour, or 90 minutes, or two hours a day to work on the business rather than in the business. And then to do it every single day.


Everything I achieved in my last business, building it from me sitting in my bedroom on day one with no clients, to a million pounds worth of revenue was all done in daily 90-minute sessions. I'm not particularly smart, I don't have a university degree, I get bored very easily by detail. But I do have an incredible work ethic.

For more than a decade, I've got up at 5am every single weekday to work on my business for 90 minutes. You can achieve a great deal in that time. In fact, you can change the whole world in just 90 minutes a day. So long as you do it every day.

Even now I still repeat this, although I do give myself a lie-in until 6:30am on Fridays these days. I'm up at 5am and I'm working on the business. It's amazing implementation time. I've never found another normal person yet who's willing to get up at 5am!

But even if you don't get up at 5am, there is a period of time every day where you can work on the business. Where is that period of time for you? Is it first thing in the morning? Is it lunch time? Is it in the evening? Is it locked away in a home office at 2am? Who cares when it is (although earlier in the day you'll get more done) so long as you find some time every day.


Many MSP owners come up with the idea of doing an admin day. The problem with an admin day is it's too easily eaten up by other activities. That client that's unhappy, that invoicing that really needs to be done... oh and the API for this fell over. Can you just fix it? No, no, no! All of that stuff is working in the business. That's why even just one hour a day on the business can change everything drastically. The reason I recommended you to do a vision, goals, strategy and tactics is so you know what you're actually doing with your hour a day.



If you've got a vision for your life which involves a big house, a gravel driveway, and a Porsche on that drive. And your business goal requires tripling your net profit to do that. And your strategy requires you adding one new client and 50 new users every month. And your tactics for doing that are building up your LinkedIn and making 50 phone calls every day... then it's very easy for you to see what it is that you need to do on a daily basis.

What we're trying to do here is link the things that you do on a daily basis with the vision for your life. You can have a great life and you can have that within the next year or two. But that's not going to come just from wishing or hoping.

Hope is a terrible strategy for everything. It's going to come from taking action. The most successful people I know are action takers. Even if they're, like me, not particularly smart and don't have all the answers, by taking action every day, they overcome all of their problems. And they get there eventually. I did it, you can do it. It all starts with finding a little bit of time every day to actually get on with stuff.



Final thoughts from Paul

I hope this guide has been useful to you and can assist you as you look to grow your monthly recurring revenue and your net profits in the years ahead. I have a real passion for helping MSP owners to free themselves from their businesses and live great lives while making the business even better. That's a win-win for everyone.

In fact, a business that's chucking out enormous amounts of monthly recurring revenue and huge amounts of net profit is a great business. It's a win for clients. It's a win for staff. And it's definitely a win for the owner.

It's a more robust business that's likely to be better run and is more likely to be here in 10 years time. There are lots and lots of different ways I can help you.
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