

Cisco Partner Delivers More Value to SMB Customers

Network Resource Technologies Corp uses Cisco Smart Care Service to provide a rich managed-services offering to small business customers.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
<p>NETWORK RESOURCE TECHNOLOGIES CORP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology Sales and Integration • Lanham, Maryland, United States
<p>CHALLENGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition from time-and-materials-based offerings to managed services • Clearly demonstrate the firm's value • Provide network information to help customers make better IT decisions
<p>SOLUTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deployed Cisco Smart Care Service to serve as the foundation of complete managed-services offering
<p>RESULTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generated steady, recurring revenues and new project income • Improved efficiency and reduced costs of supporting SMB customer networks • Established closer, more profitable relationships with customers

Business Challenge

Network Resource Technologies Corp (NRTC) is a small firm that tackles big technology problems for its customers. With extensive expertise in advanced unified communications solutions, the Cisco Premier Partner provides technology guidance and support for small and medium-size businesses (SMBs) in the greater Washington, D.C. region.

“Our key differentiator is our expertise in advanced technologies,” says Paola Agustin, Chief Financial Officer, NRTC. “We focus on training our engineers and keeping them up to date with the technologies in which they specialize. That allows us to work on complex issues and provide real value for our customers.”

Over time, NRTC leaders found that under their conventional engagement model, it was becoming

more challenging to demonstrate the company's value.

“The traditional time and materials contract structure just is not working for many of our customers,” says Agustin. “They are becoming more concerned about matching up billable hours with the work that we are performing. They want deliverables from us, rather than just hours. But it can be hard to show the value of what we are doing when the customer does not really understand what is happening on the network.”

NRTC customers also were becoming increasingly cost-conscious about technical support services.

“As the economy changes, our customers are looking to make sure their technology providers have processes in place to provide better service at a lower cost,” says Agustin. “We were looking for tools and processes that could help us operate leaner and give more to our customers for less.”

NRTC also wanted to be able to provide clients with more comprehensive information to help them improve their network operations.

“We strive to provide customers with the information that they need about their network to make better decisions,” says Agustin. “Just solving an issue reactively does not help them get their IT requirements under control or make smart business decisions about IT investments.”

Solution

NRTC leaders recognized the need to transition from conventional professional service contracts to a full managed-services offering, one that could provide SMB customers with a richer set of services for a fixed cost. What they needed was the right framework to facilitate this change. The Cisco® Smart Care Service provided the ideal foundation for the firm's new Intellicare managed-services offering.

"When Cisco announced Cisco Smart Care Service, we knew right away that it would be a great fit for us," says John Wilson, president and chief executive officer, NRTC.

Cisco Smart Care Service provides a comprehensive platform for Cisco partners to offer managed services and support their customers, in collaboration with Cisco. At the core of the service, an appliance deployed at each customer site collects data about the health of the network. The appliance securely communicates with the Cisco Smart Care Service infrastructure at Cisco, which analyzes the data and notifies NRTC about any identified issues or risks. Using web-based Cisco Smart Care dashboards, NRTC engineers can then provide a variety of high-value services for their customers, including:

- Continuous network monitoring and management
- Direct technical support using proprietary Cisco tools and knowledge bases
- Proactive network health and security checkups
- Isolation of potential issues (such as device configurations that do not comply with best practices for security) and the ability to repair such issues remotely
- Backup of network configurations to a remote location for disaster recovery
- Pre-sales assessments of a network's readiness to support IP voice solutions

"Cisco Smart Care Service provides all of the tools, resources, and processes that we need to provide a complete managed service to our customers," says Agustin. "We can combine proactive monitoring and reporting, asset management, security alerts, and thorough technical support for the entire voice and data network, as well as the personal touch of professional consulting, under a single service."

As part of its Intellicare service, NRTC provides customers with monthly network and device health reports, which reinforce the firm's value.

"Cisco Smart Care allows us to show our clients where their money is going," says Agustin. "We can provide important insight into how their network is performing and show them what we are doing. Instead of just seeing a bill for hours, they receive valuable information about their networks."

Cisco Smart Care Service also provides a customer-facing portal that allows NRTC to share ongoing network health information with their clients.

"Some of our customers are very self-sufficient, and their IT teams want to be able to check in and monitor the network themselves," says Agustin. "The ability to extend that view to those customers is extremely valuable."

NRTC leaders believe that the move to Cisco Smart Care is an easy transition for many customers, who view it as a logical extension to device-based Cisco SMARTnet® support contracts.

"Because many of our clients already depend on Cisco SMARTnet, Cisco Smart Care Service is very easy to sell," says Agustin. "Our customers get many of the same things that they were getting

with Cisco SMARTnet for about the same price, but they gain the added value of the proactive services that we can offer.”

“Cisco Smart Care Service brings NRTC into a new level of support and gives us a competitive edge ”

—Paola Agustin, Business Manager, NRTC

Results

Today, the Cisco Smart Care Service platform provides extraordinary value to NRTC and its customers. The response from customers has been overwhelmingly positive. In just the first few months after adopting Cisco Smart Care Service, NRTC transitioned one-third of its network support contracts to the new Intellicare service.

“Under the old contract structure, customers would only call when they had issues; for many of them, the network was a complete mystery,” says Agustin. “Now, with proactive monitoring and reporting, we can give them the information that they need to address a problem before it affects their business. We can place the control in their hands, and they really appreciate it.”

The Cisco Smart Care platform is also helping improve NRTC’s profitability by enhancing margins and generating a steady, recurring revenue stream. In addition to the benefits of the service’s features, using Cisco Smart Care Service strengthens NRTC as a trusted technology advisor, which leads to new business opportunities.

“The proactive monitoring aspect of the service often generates new project income for us and helps us build more business,” says Agustin. “It provides an opportunity to go in and show a customer what is happening with a device and make recommendations. The customer can then use that knowledge to guide their budgeting and make smarter IT decisions. That helps us build stronger long-term relationships.”

Internally, the Cisco Smart Care tools are helping NRTC engineers provide higher-value services at a lower cost.

“The Cisco Smart Care Service packaged tools are simple to train on, deploy, and administer,” says Agustin. “That directly increases our efficiency and reduces our internal costs. Having all of a customer’s devices under one contract also makes the support contracts much simpler to manage.”

Ultimately, these capabilities are allowing NRTC to offer an extremely compelling managed service offering to its customers and stay ahead of the competition.

“There are not many technology partners in our market who can offer such a robust service, who can provide this level of protection for customers’ technology investments, and who work closely with the technology vendors to stand behind the networks that they support,” says Agustin. “Cisco Smart Care Service brings NRTC into a new level of support and gives us a competitive edge.”

For More Information

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



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