



Spotlight on Success

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Grant Cleary



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Helping service providers navigate the cloud

Odin lets service providers navigate the complex and constantly-changing cloud market. Its Service Automation platform means service providers can bring new services to the market rapidly by leveraging Odin’s extensive applications ecosystem of more than 500 platform-ready services, and sell integrated cloud solutions across all sales channels.

Grant Cleary, senior marketing manager, APAC, Odin, discusses how service providers need to make the transition to become cloud service providers.

CompTIA: Can you provide an overview of the business?

Grant: The company began operating as Parallels in 2000 and rebranded its service provider cloud software business to Odin in March 2015. Odin was acquired by Ingram Micro in December 2015.

Now a business unit of Ingram Micro, Odin works with traditional web hosts, communication service providers, value added resellers, and distributors. More than 10,000 service providers rely on Odin to deliver applications and cloud services to more than 10 million small to medium-sized businesses in 130 countries.

Through its Application Packaging Standard (APS) and industry-leading products, Odin is committed to providing a platform that lets service providers go to market with speed, flexibility, and at a competitive cost.

CompTIA: What sets the company apart from its competitors?

Grant: Odin provides software that powers the cloud ecosystem and delivers industry expertise, a catalogue of in-demand cloud applications, and the most comprehensive selection of software including web server management, server virtualisation, provisioning, and billing automation.

CompTIA: Who are your typical customers?

Grant: Customers include small and local hosts as well as some of the world’s largest telecommunications providers. We support more than 10,000 service providers in delivering applications and cloud services to more than 10 million customers.

CompTIA: What opportunities do you see in the local IT channel?

Grant: Cloud is creating lots of different opportunities for vendors, distributors, and service providers. Most enterprises have moved to the cloud to some extent and by 2018 IDC has predicted that 60 per cent of SMBs’ total IT spend will be on cloud. That’s unprecedented



and will create massive opportunities.

Traditional service providers will benefit if they can make the move from being managed service providers (MSP) to becoming cloud solution providers (CSP).

Many MSPs have already seen their businesses transform to managed, cloud, and applications services with higher-margin annuity revenues. As more of their customers' IT infrastructure components migrate to the cloud, MSPs have had to find ways to manage hybrid cloud environments, provide their own cloud services, or resell other cloud provider capabilities. This puts them on the road to becoming CSPs.

Many service providers wait until their customers are ready before investing in a new area of technology. With the majority of customers now adopting cloud services, it is critical that partners not just adapt, but lead as a trusted advisor to stay relevant to their customer base. Businesses that aren't willing to make this leap will be left behind.

Of course this creates challenges: legacy infrastructure and systems may not be able to deliver the level of support customers need in a new cloud world. But that, in turn, creates opportunities. The role of the service provider has never been more important in helping customers navigate the journey to cloud.

CompTIA: What successes have you had over the past year?

Grant: The transition to becoming an Ingram Micro business unit was a significant success. Personally, I am proud to have created comprehensive marketing tools and resources that articulate our value proposition and offerings.

When it comes to helping channel partners, the Ingram Micro cloud ecosystem is significant. It's a major business that brings a lot of value to the partner network.

I'm also excited to join the executive committee of CompTIA because I'm proud of the role CompTIA plays in training, enabling, and helping the community to be more successful. We are in a time of massive change and transformation in our industry. People look to organisations like CompTIA for advice, support, and guidance in times of change, so it's an important time to demonstrate value.

CompTIA: What are your plans for the year ahead?

Grant: We are launching some new platform services: watch this space.

CompTIA: What advice can you give other IT channel players?

Grant: Make the leap from MSP to CSP: it will let you take advantage of the move to cloud to build your business and grow your customers' trust in you.

Also, never forget the importance of partnering. In times of change and disruption the importance of partnering becomes even more critical. This means partnering with service providers, vendors, and distributors, and increasing value by being more things to more people. You can only do that through partnering because it's not possible to be an expert in everything. Partnership has therefore never been more important.

