CompTIA

Spotlight on Success

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Andrew Stuart

The Power of Partnership

Since launch in 2007 Datto has risen through the ranks to become a leading contender in the technology space. With significant growth, investment and profitability Datto is a real success story.

In this Spotlight we talk with Andrew Stuart, Manging Director of Datto EMEA to gain a better understanding about growth, partnership and the special relationships needed to make Datto and MSPs a success.

CompTIA: Datto has achieved remarkable success, what has been the catalyst for this?

Andrew: The main catalyst has been the shift in the market, especially around the importance of uptime for small businesses. The threats and risks facing all businesses are growing every day, and "Disasters" like Ransomware (which includes the dreaded Cryptolocker) are becoming increasingly common. This means that companies are preparing themselves, and want to ensure that they have adequate protection.

CompTIA: In a competitive market how do you keep the growth and momentum?

Andrew: We are extremely focused on delivering results. We do this by focusing on partner growth, achieved through both partner enablement and end-user demand generation. It is also really important to foster strong relationships, and provide partners with the right support. Our Datto team works closely with partners to establish best practice, advise on product selection and assist with white glove installations.

Another element to enable momentum is the ongoing development of our products, adding features which are often driven by our partners, which shows that we listen and act. For example, we launched a Linux agent last year, as it was frequently requested.

CompTIA: You are focused on growing your channel partners, why is a channel partnership so important to you?

Andrew: Datto has always been 100% committed to a channel model, if our partners succeed then we succeed. Our partners have invested in, and nurtured relationships with end-users and understand their pain-points. Without their efforts we could not achieve the same traction or success.

CompTIA: What are the main challenges you encountered building a partnership model?

Andrew: Two years ago, we would often hear "Who is Datto?" That's not the case today. In a crowded marketplace, growing brand reputation can be challenging, but we have many differentiators in both our technology and in our 'partner first' culture. We worked very hard in the market, attending events and reaching out to the channel to start to build relationships and ultimately partnerships.

"Datto has always been committed to being 100% channel focused. If our partners succeed, we succeed"

CompTIA: How do you go about finding the right type of partners for Datto?

Andrew: We open the floor to conversations with MSPs through our attendance at events, and face-to-face meetings like "Dine with Datto". Our products are also game changers, that attract attention from the type of partners who recognise the value and understand the shift within the market. For us it has never been about just shifting boxes, but adding value and providing quality services and products.

CompTIA: Do you have a model for a typical partner or is it more about mind set?

Andrew: Partnership is all about working together and succeeding together. As you know, we only work with MSPs that can offer End-User support in-house, have capable staff and the possess drive and desire to deliver best in class solutions and support for their customers.

CompTIA: Have you noticed any differences in building the channel in the UK versus the US?

Andrew: The channel here in the UK is very different. In the US, an MSP's nearest competitor may be an hours drive away, whereas many UK MSPs have someone right next door! The UK is a much denser, more competitive market. To overcome this, we focus on building relationships from the beginning, often before they have sold any of our products, to help create competitive advantage.

CompTIA: Your partnerships have been very successful; what advice would you give an MSP looking to develop stronger partnerships for themselves?

Andrew: I'd recommend asking as many questions as possible of your vendor. We recently interviewed Fifosys, who said the key to their success with Datto was having a "Transparent and Honest" relationship with our team. It is important that MSPs look to leverage the relationship and work with vendors to utilise available training, marketing materials and opportunities.

CompTIA: With Datto securing huge investment in 2015 how will this impact products or services to the UK Market?

Andrew: Unlike many tech start-ups Datto is already making a profit, which means the investment we received from General Catalyst and TCV (which totalled $100 million) can be invested in our partners. We have new offices with a large "Partner Briefing Centre", meaning our partners can demo to their customers in a purpose-built environment. We have also allocated MDF (Marketing Development Funds) to our partners, enabling bigger and better end user campaigns. As an example, Dublin Airport will soon feature two dual branded billboards as part of a campaign with one of our Irish partners.

CompTIA: Do you seen any challenges with growing with such pace?

Andrew: There are always challenges that come with fast growth, but we think ahead and forward plan. We were recently in an office with 50 seats and full to capacity so we moved office and continue to pay close attention to our future needs. I feel another challenge with growth is preserving your culture and ethos, but we work hard in every way to ensure we hold on to our values and passion for what we do, and represent.

Andrew's Attributes of a good Vendor Partnership

- Honesty

- Transparency

- Channel only focus

- Support and Education

- Passion