



The **Power** of the Stack

Why MSPs should build a strategic, standardized technology stack.



About This Guide

This guide discusses how MSPs should strategically approach their technology stack to improve their value to clients.

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WHAT IS A TOTAL STACK?

Strategic and Standardized

67% of top MSPs have made solution and services offering development their largest area of investment.¹

What criteria do top MSPs use when selecting preferred vendors?¹

45%

“The vendor’s brand enhances my brand to drive demand”



52%

“Products enable me to differentiate my business”

47%

“Vendor has unique and/or market-leading technology”



56%

“Vendor pricing allows me to maximize my margins”

64%

“Product fit with the rest of my portfolio”



For managed service providers (MSPs), the technology solution stack you offer your clients should be more meaningful than just “a bunch of products available to buy.” Thinking of your stack holistically ensures that every product you offer makes sense together in the big picture to drive value to your clients and align with your own business strategies.

WHAT IS A TOTAL STACK?

A Strategic Stack

Comprehensive

Your stack should ideally cover all of the bases for your clients' foundational IT needs while also providing room for growth and maturation with more advanced solution offerings.

Complementary

Each solution you add to your stack should be compatible with the rest of your portfolio. This might mean that it offers complementary features to fill gaps in other solutions (e.g. third-party backup for Microsoft 365 or voice-enabled Teams through third-party UCaaS) or provides more advanced coverage (e.g. strengthening your security posture by adding SOCaaS to your security stack for 24/7 monitoring).

Consolidated

The ability to order, provision, and bill your full stack from a single distributor (especially one with a modern management platform) will streamline your operations to save time and money. Trust us, condensing your billing to a single monthly invoice is a game-changer!



Curated

Every product you offer should be carefully vetted to ensure it performs to the level of its marketed capabilities, is well reviewed by other IT pros, integrates seamlessly with your MSP tools, and adds value to your overall stack.

Competitive

Always try to balance best-in-class capabilities with your clients' budgets and needs – as well as the ability to maximize your margins. This means that the priciest solution with all the bells and whistles might not always be the best fit. Additions to your stack should preferably provide some sort of unique value to differentiate your business. And the vendor's brand reputation matters – offering top, recognized brands can help drive demand from clients.

There are hundreds of IT products out there. While it can be tempting to offer a wide catalog to appeal to a broad audience, strategically, **it's better to offer quality over quantity**. If you procure a different solution for every individual client need or add each exciting new “shiny object” that hits the market, you will end up with a sprawling stack of overlapping solutions.



An overstuffed stack is a problem because:



Clients can be overwhelmed by choice.

It's a proven fact that, when faced with too many choices, people freeze up with indecisiveness or end up disappointed or dissatisfied.³ This is true of simple choices like toothpaste, but especially of complex, high-cost decisions such as business technology. Offering a standardized shortlist of proven solutions will be much more valuable to your clients than a long inventory of options.



Training investments reduce margin.

The more solutions you offer, the more training your team requires to be able sell, implement, and support your stack. Training costs add up in hours spent by your team, as well as the price of sales trainings or technical certifications. The more heavily you have to invest in a broad array of training, the less margin you'll see from each product you add to your stack.



Your ability to sell and support confidently will suffer.

It's better to have in-depth expertise on a few solutions than shallow knowledge of a large catalog. If you offer a curated, standardized stack that you also use in-house, your sales team can speak credibly and authoritatively about the benefits of each solution, the implementation process, and your ability to support it. And your technicians will have extensive experience with each solution to provide expert-level support.

As you decide on which solutions to standardize on, **ask yourself** – does this product enhance your overall stack capabilities? Does it complement the capabilities of the other solutions in your stack? Does it offer something unique that the rest of your stack doesn't provide? Does the vendor brand have name recognition that will drive demand?



Half of MSPs don't feel like they're fully utilizing the products in their stack or that they're getting great ROI.²

The Benefits of Standardization to Your Business



Improved ability to scale



More consistent service quality



Faster resolutions on tickets



Well-practiced sales motions



Standardized client onboarding/offboarding



Peace of mind that clients have the tools and security protection they need



Operational and monetary efficiencies

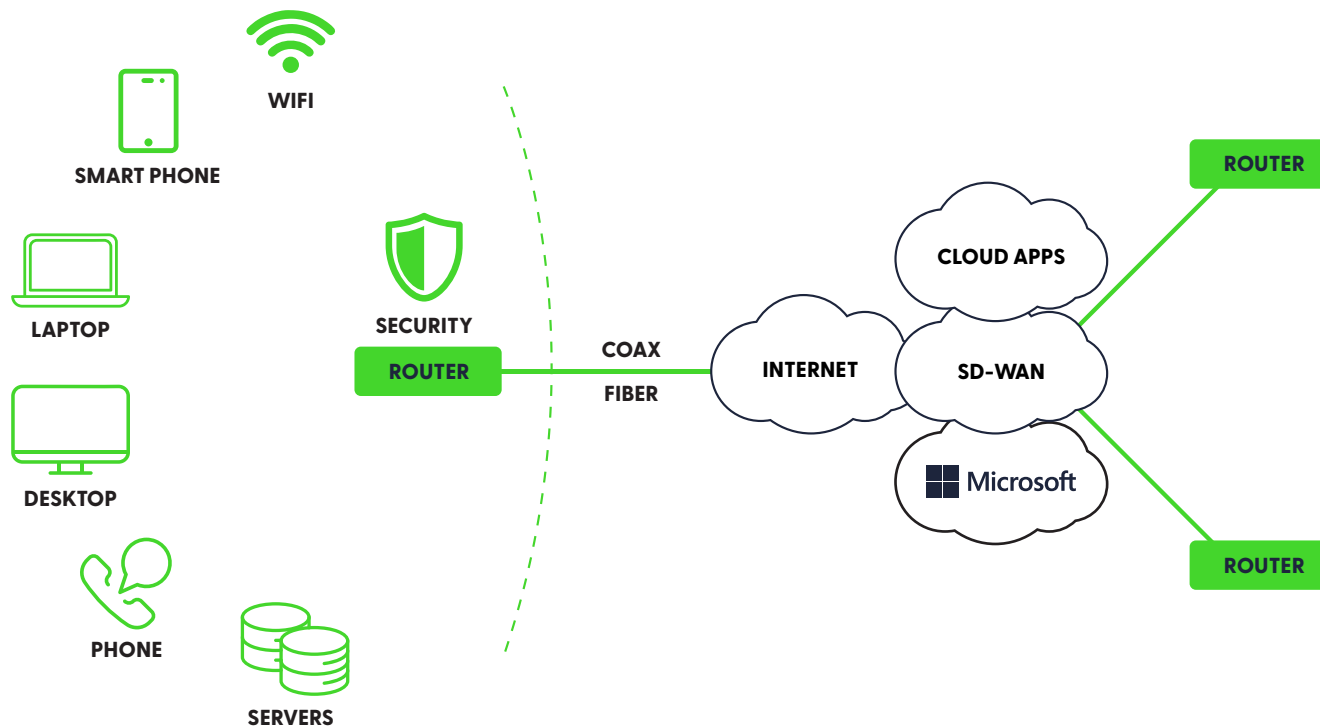
WHAT IS A TOTAL TECH STACK?

Covering the Full IT Ecosystem

As businesses operations converge on the cloud, organizations are looking to reduce complexity and time spent managing vendors by procuring their tech solutions from a single source. The channel is now competing to become the sole trusted tech advisor for the lion's share of clients' tech spend.

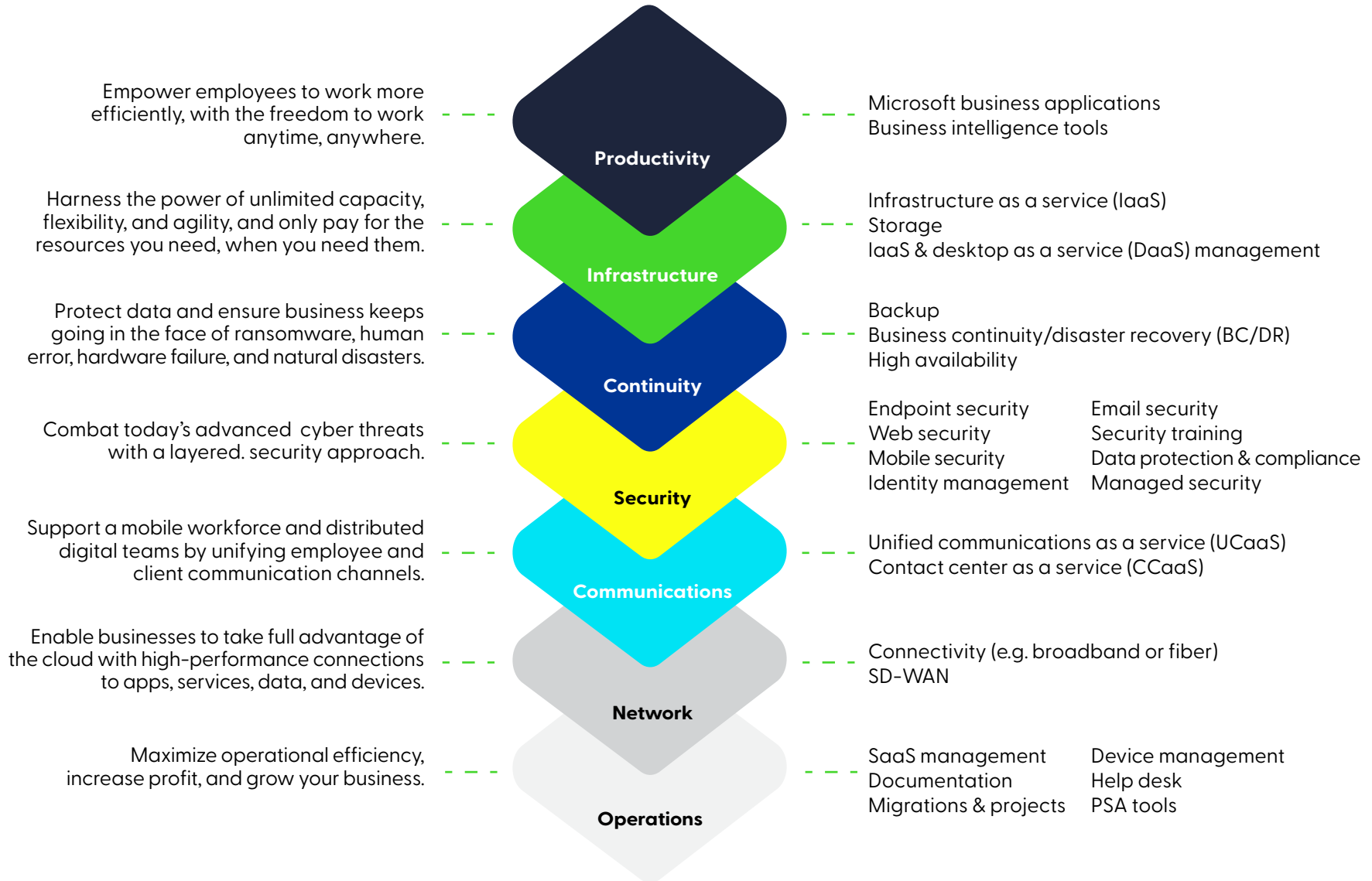
The traditional MSP tech stack focuses on cloud apps, endpoint management, security solutions, and infrastructure – but there is opportunity to be had in offering communications and the underlying connectivity to the cloud as well.

By building a complete tech stack that includes network, connectivity, and communications solutions in addition to productivity, security, continuity, and infrastructure solutions, MSPs can solidify their role as the trusted advisor for all of their clients' technology needs – while capturing more of their total tech spend. Additionally, the “one-stop shop” approach allows MSPs to offer improved value through the operational and monetary efficiencies of service consolidation.



WHAT IS A TOTAL TECH STACK?

Building It Out & Breaking It Down



What MSPs Are Offering⁴

75%

offer cloud productivity services



29%

plan to offer cloud-based infrastructure design and management

73%

offer networking (Wi-Fi, switching, routing)



25%

plan to add security management software/tools

70%

offer business continuity and disaster recovery (BC/DR)

MSP Barriers to Stack Development

As important as researching and developing your stack is, many MSPs are just too busy to prioritize those tasks over the urgency of day-to-day operations. According to a recent study, the top hurdles for MSPs to add new tools to their stack are:²

Lack of time to research and evaluate solutions

Ensuring compatibility with existing tools

Knowing where to start/which options to consider

Lack of time to train technicians on implementation and support

Lack of knowledge to sell the new product to clients



4 Reasons to Become a **One-Stop Shop**

Modern businesses can streamline their vendor management by procuring their tech solutions from a single source. If you can meet a broad range of needs while establishing yourself as a trusted tech advisor, you can embed yourself as your clients' go-to resource for all things IT. The end game is to become the first partner that comes to mind when they face IT requirements or issues.



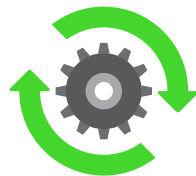
1. Improve Your Value.

The more solutions and services your clients consolidate with you, the more operational and monetary efficiencies they gain, such as:



Reducing time spent managing vendors.

Every vendor that a business must interface with costs time, from documentation, to contracts, to communications, to billing. Consolidating the vendors they directly interact with frees up your client from administrative tasks related to managing those relationships.



Streamlining their support.

When there's an urgent issue, nobody wants to have to hunt around for the right number to call. As a one-stop-shop MSP, you can become your clients' main point of contact anytime they need help with their IT.



Receiving better deals by bundling products and services.

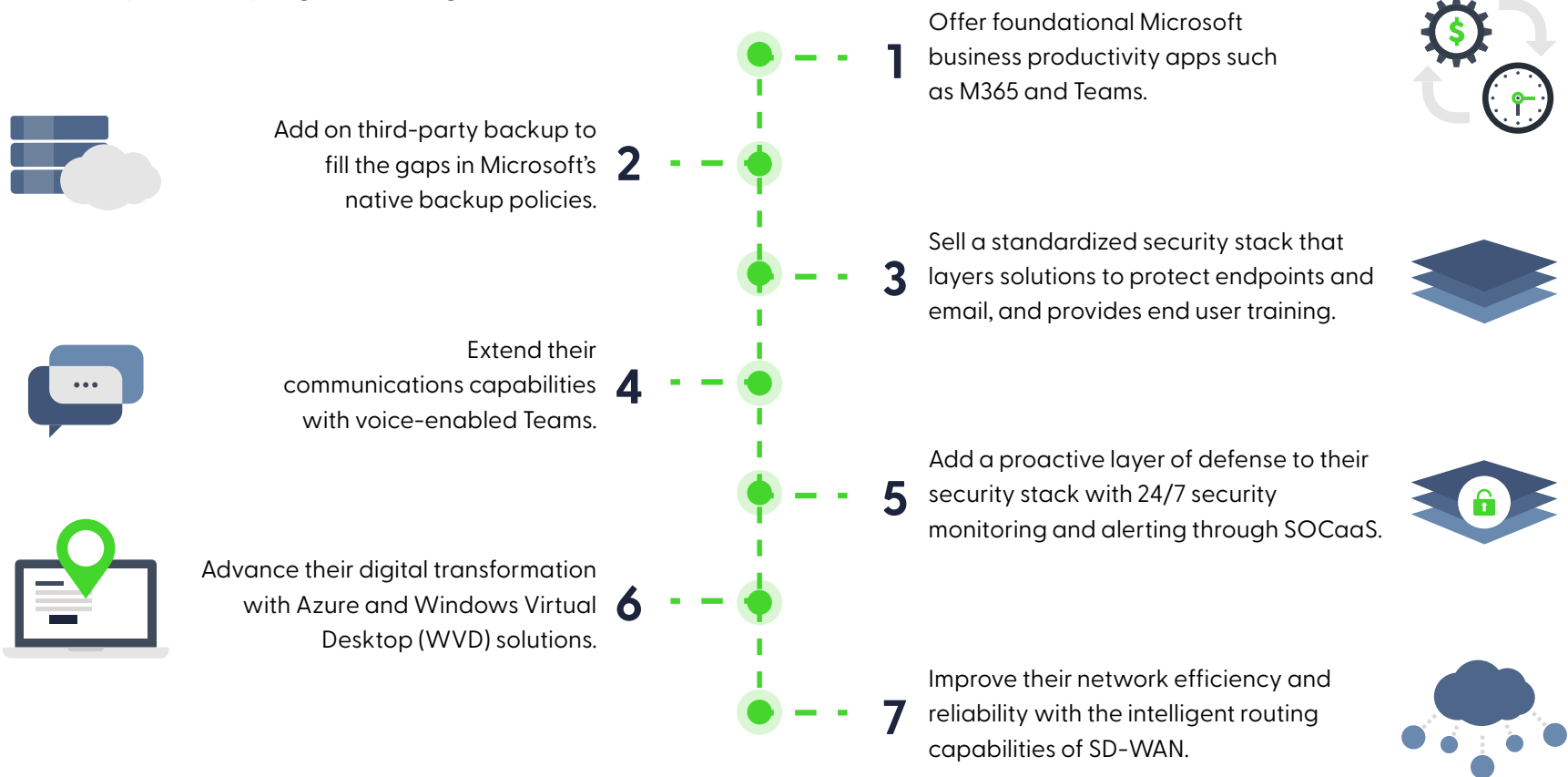
When you stack and bundle related products and services, you can pass through savings and discounts to your client.

2. Up Your “Stickiness” Factor.

As your clients purchase more products and services through you, you increase your relevance to their daily operations and become more integral to their business success. This makes it harder for them to leave the relationship for “a better deal” from a competitor. The deeper your relationship with your client, the more frequently they interact with you, and the more solutions they have enmeshed with you, the more upheaval it would cause to switch to another provider. Because humans are psychologically hardwired to take the path of least resistance, this gives you a measure of protection from the competition – no matter how enticing their offers.

3. Provide Room For Growth.

Standardize on a scalable stack that covers all your clients’ basic IT needs, but still has room to upsell/cross-sell more advanced solutions as their organization matures. An example stack progression might look like this:

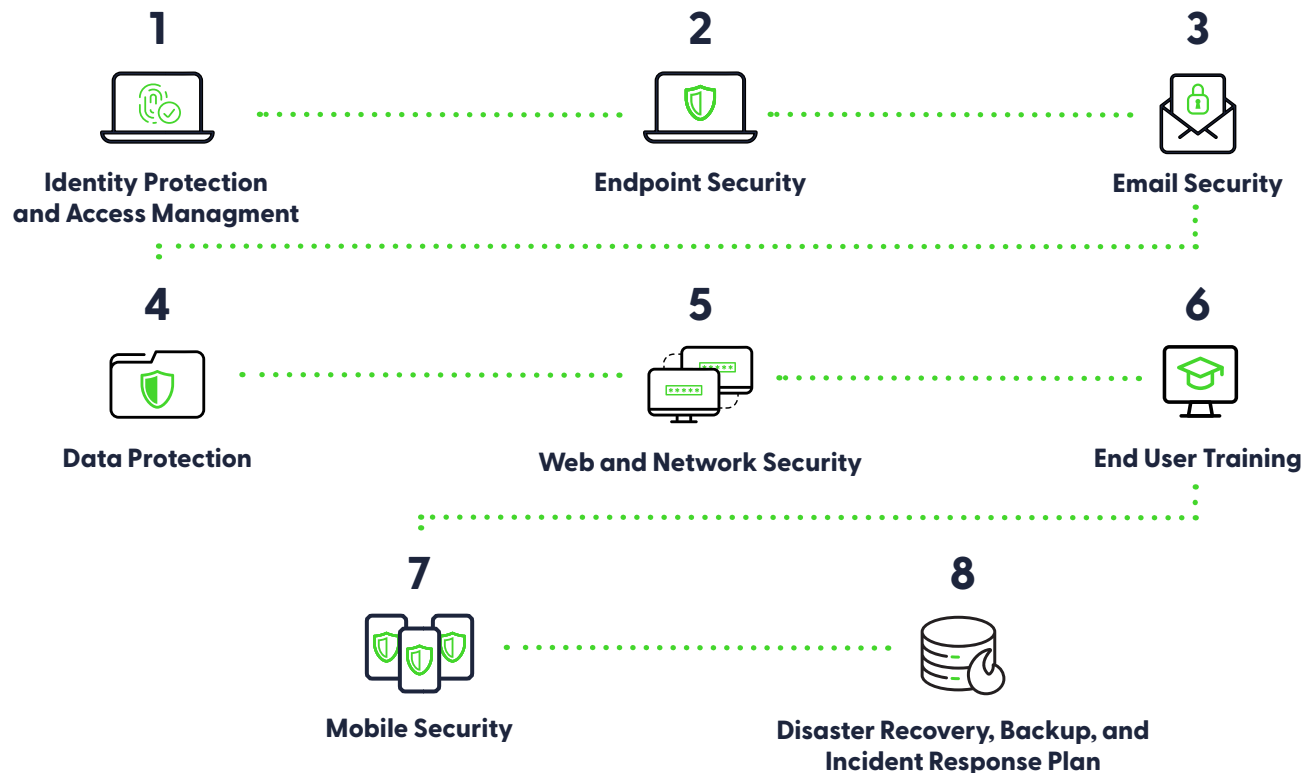


4. Protect With Layers.

As the volume, variety, and sophistication of cyber threats continues to skyrocket, a layered security approach is the best defense. This is especially true in the remote work age as unsecured, distributed employees work outside the protection of the corporate firewall.

The Cybersecurity Framework developed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) – the gold standard for cybersecurity guidelines – recommends that businesses deploy a range of solutions that identify risks, protect systems and data, detect intrusions, respond to threat events, and recover capabilities to mitigate impact.

Offering a standardized security stack that provides comprehensive coverage for the full lifecycle of cybersecurity makes it easy for your clients to comply with best practices, defend against a broad range of attack vectors, and protect their business.



The Vital Importance of Your **Internal Stack**

Whatever your metaphor of choice – “drink your own champagne” or “eat your own dog food” – the advice for MSPs is clear: Use the same solution stack in-house that you offer your clients. By doing so, you’ll gain:



Credibility During the Sales Process

By using the same stack internally that you sell externally, your sales team will have greater familiarity with the products and can assure clients of your confidence in the solutions.



Implementation Experience

By first adopting a solution in-house before offering it to clients, your team will gain valuable real-world experience implementing the solution to make client deployments go smoothly.



Support Expertise

Through internal use, your technicians will gain deeper day-to-day knowledge of your stack solutions to give them greater expertise when providing support.



Strengthened Security Posture

Remote monitoring and management (RMM) tools provide MSPs with direct reach into their clients’ endpoints – making them extremely efficient targets for ransomware attackers and one of the biggest threats to their downstream clients’ security. Utilize the same layered security stack that you offer clients to protect yourself to the same level that you recommend to clients.

Building Your MSP Tools Stack

You also need to develop a segment of your internal stack unique to your role as an MSP to help you be more efficient in your day-to-day operations. Although you likely won't offer any of these solutions externally to clients, you should still apply the strategic stack mindset to your internal MSP stack – choose wisely, ensure they integrate and complement each other where needed, and think of it as a holistic solution stack instead of individual pieces.

Internal MSP tools often include:

Automated documentation and reporting

Multitenant SaaS management

Finance and accounting software

Customer relationship management (CRM)

Remote monitoring and management (RMM)

Professional services automation (PSA)

Help desk ticketing

E-signature



Accelerate Your Cloud Management

Pax8 Pro adds premium features to the Pax8 Platform that save time and reduce human error with automated and standardized processes. Pax8 Pro helps you grow your business and optimize client security with the power of multitenant visibility.

- PSA service ticket integration
- PSA user contact creation
- Microsoft prospecting tool
- Microsoft security reporting with GAP analysis
- Onboarding/offboarding checklists

[Explore Pax8 Pro](#)

How Pax8 Powers Your Stack



Pax8 is here to help make building out your stack easier. Partners who standardize and consolidate their tech stack with Pax8 benefit from:



Vetted Vendors

To ensure a seamless partner experience, every vendor on our line card undergoes a 150+ step vetting process before launch.



Favorable Pricing Modules

Our stack is built for MSPs – including ensuring that our pricing modules offer enough margin to increase your MRR.



Streamlined Platform Processes

Our modern marketplace and SaaS management platform consolidates your billing, automates provisioning, and improves workflow efficiencies.



Dashboard-Driven Business Insights

Our platform offers analytics on vendor utilization and category penetration to help you optimize your stack.



Specialized Expertise

Receive strategy and sales guidance from category-focused Solution Consultants, and rest assured that our technical support team includes experts in every solution.



Resources to Help You Adopt and Sell

With events, courses, and content designed specifically for MSPs, we help you earn more through learning more.

The more solutions you add to your stack through Pax8, the more the **efficiencies and cost-savings stack up!**

Resources to Help You Sell

MISSION BRIEFING

Strategically Expand Your Tech Stack: Our Mission Briefings help you build on your Microsoft foundations with solution-focused sales advice for adding in-demand productivity, infrastructure, communications, continuity, security, and network solutions to your stack.

[Register to Attend](#)

Security Strategy Assessment

[Take the Assessment](#)

The MSP's Guide to Selling Communication Solutions

[Get the Guide](#)

The MSP's Guide to Selling Backup Solutions

[Get the Guide](#)

The MSP's Guide to Selling M365

[Get the Guide](#)

The MSP's Guide to Selling Network Solutions

[Get the Guide](#)

The MSP's Guide to a Multi-Layered Security Approach

[Get the Guide](#)

The NIST Cybersecurity Framework as a Navigational Tool for MSPs

[Get the Infographic](#)



Want to find ways to **strategically develop** **and standardize** your tech stack?

Our stack experts are standing by to discuss specific solutions,
recommend proven stacks, and assist with pricing.

[Schedule a Call](#)

Sources

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