

Managed Security Services – Decreasing Costs and Vulnerabilities

Current economic conditions demands re-evaluation of IT budgets. When looking at security spend the issue isn't how much can you do without - but how can you spend wiser. Managed Security Services provides the means to decrease costs as well as reduce the risk of vulnerabilities.

**Speakers: Michele Ogle, Infrastructure Solutions Marketing Manager;
David Puzas, Global Marketing Executive, IBM Security & Privacy Service.**

Michele:

Hello and welcome to the IBM infrastructure solution podcast series for SMBs. This segment is Managed Security Services – Decreasing Costs and Vulnerabilities. With economic conditions being what they are every company has adopted a survival strategy and reducing cost is core to that strategy. With small and medium businesses were resources and budgets are already at a bare minimum there is no fat to cut especially in the IT department. Reducing investments in areas like business continuity and security may sound like a good idea but increased risks may be more than you bargained for. A better approach may be to look at how to reduce security costs and get more bang for your bawk in Managed Security Services.

Joining us is David's Puzas, Global Marketing Executive for IBM Security and Privacy Services to share some fundamental reasons to keep security as a top IT investment area.

Hello David, how are you doing today? Thank you for joining our podcast.

David:

Very well thank you and thanks for having me Michele.

Michele:

David you have been in the security field for quite some time now. I imagine you seen it evolve a bit over time.

David:

Yes, that's actually a pretty valid point and I think over the last several years I think we've seen this acceleration of the evolution of the security landscape. It wasn't too long ago that it used to be all about full glory scenario as I like to say where people look to just simply cause problems for companies and not very malicious but now it's all about profit. I think when you look at the SMB environment and companies within that market segment there lies a significant challenge for them because there is many preconceived notions about their lack of security or their ability to address security issues which makes them prime targets for what we will call the bad guys if you will.

Michele:

David this is a very interesting area because now that we talk about these economic times, that the bad guys have a little bit more visibility into things and they are smarter than they used to be, security investments tend to be one area however that people are still looking at cutting. Why is maintaining security investments important right now for SMEs in particular?

David:

That's a pretty good question and one that actually I've heard a lot recently. In tough economic times as you mentioned it's all about what can I do and how can I continue to operate but I desperately need to reduce the cost that I have in my business. One of the areas that I can consider and as you mentioned earlier on, maybe people are considering security and maybe business continuity in other areas that they feel just quite are needed or as important as some of the other things to keeping the doors opened and helping the business run effectively. What I would challenge somebody considering those types of cuts is you probably going to want to look elsewhere.

Let me give you a couple of reasons why I say that. One is as having been in the field a long time and now when we look at IBM and what we provide as a security solution provider, one of the things we have seen through our Global Security Operations Center which are located in major continents around the world in providing third manage protection services and being and services for customers in over 133 companies, we've seen a significant increase of upwards of 30% increase in network and web-based security events over the last 120 to 180 days.

When you consider companies having to take resource action and may be downsizing and layoffs occurring and you have disgruntled employees. Usually and down times what we do find is that desperation sets in and for many organizations that means they are now faced with the challenge of a heightened level of attacks that they are now having to deal with. When you consider that credit card information is stored and most everybody is accepting credit cards as just one example, that now creates a significant I guess opportunity if you will for the bad guy. Customers nowadays need to be as vigilant if not more than they have ever been before.

To add to that you look at things like compliance. So your ability to continue to operate may actually be impacted through various compliance mandates that you have to deal with. This time it's not just something you can tell your auditor that I'll get to it later or I am not going to be able to invest in it this quarter. It's not something you can bear on your business. Those two things are the reasons that I would challenge somebody just off the top of my head when considering cuts and looking in other areas that would be a better way to go about it.

Michele:

David I would love to hear somebody tell an auditor I can't do that right now or come back and see me in six months. So instead of cutting security spend we should be looking at decreasing

the cost of investing in security measures that you would say would provide you a better ROI. What are some of the options for SMB customers to do that?

David:

That is actually a good question and one that I think if SMBs really look hard enough that I think there is lots of things and how they manage their business today that they could probably save some dollars. Security is no different primarily because one of the luxuries we have an IBM and being a global security provider is the fact that we have what we will call a market leading managed security services. It's the ability for that SMB company who is struggling with how can I save some dollars but still maintain a heightened level of protection; outsourcing is a very good option for that SMB customer.

It's going to do a couple of things for them. It's going to provide them and allow them turnover of all the heavy lifting day-to-day operations of managing security technologies and infrastructure to someone that can provide them a heightened level of protection than the customer trying to do it themselves. It will give them a proactive approach to managing security in their environment thereby limiting future impacting costs that potentially they would have to deal with. It's great reduce complexity around and it's going to help improve employee productivity.

So you have a couple of things there that are huge value points to an SMB customer and by simply partnering with the managed security service provider is going to make their lives a lot easier and going to save them a lot of money in the process and get them better protection of essentially at a lower cost.

Michele:

David I know you mentioned that IBM has these services of course I know we do. What is the difference between our managed security services and the benefits to our services versus another vendor?

David:

Again another very good point. I think when you look at differentiation, yes everybody now is going to be talking the story of we can help you save money and reduce complexity and they should be. It's what resonates even with us personally and our own investments as you look at our family as an example. When you consider that you have security and the critical role that it plays in you maintaining business continuity and uptime and being able to operate a business, you just can't flip your security over just to anybody.

I think there are a couple things to consider. IBM is the market leader in this particular category and a recognized market leader being able to whether you are the largest of customers or the smallest of customers; we are able to provide you flexible service options that provide you better protection at a lower cost. We are doing business in over 130 plus countries globally. We have customers that we have been doing this for years and of all sizes and in many different industries

or vertical markets. I think from that perspective we have great presents and expertise to be able to bring for the SMB buyer. Above and beyond that I think once you get past your ability to get those types of things and again I go back to you just can't flip it over to just anybody.

There are a couple things to consider. One is you don't always have to buy new technology to get better protection. I think in many instances customers by partnering with the managed service like IBM, one of the things we can provide additional value around is leveraging your existing investments. Getting them and tuning them and optimizing them for your particular environment to provide a heightened level of protection. The other point to that is when I look at a key point of differentiation is our ability to provide what we call preemptive protection, the ability to stop or prevent a problem or an attack before it occurs. That is primarily our key point of differentiation in what we deliver what we called Managed Protection Services or the ability to deliver a guaranteed level of protection for customers who have chosen to outsource their security to IBM.

That is very unique and IBM is the only vendor in the entire world and in this industry that can offer this type of managed security service. Another piece of that is we can help you reduce the complexity in your operating environment and really find the needle in the haystack or look down and make a very simple and consumable for you as the buyer to be able to find out and maintain complete control of your security environment while focusing all of your valuable resources and the cost savings by turning over the heavy lifting in day-to-day management of your security infrastructure. We'll take all those cost savings and then reinvest them in areas that you really need to be spending money on in your business.

Michele:

David thank you so much for sharing that. I know that we've got some challenges ahead of us in the economy but I think if we approach especially in the area of security and approach it in a way of optimizing what we have and spending a little and getting more for your money I think SMB's can make it through and still remain secure in the process.

Thank you for joining us for this segment of IBM Infrastructure Solutions Podcast Series for SMBs. Remember reduce budgets doesn't mean that you have to increase your security risk. Managed Security Services can help you.

For more information about IT security and IBM solutions to help you identify and address your risk areas go to www.ibm.com/expressadvantage/security.