The background of the slide features a dramatic sunset scene. Two silhouetted figures are climbing a dark, jagged rock formation. One person is higher up, reaching down to assist the other. The sun is a bright, glowing orb in the upper center, casting a warm, golden light across the sky and creating a lens flare effect. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds. The overall mood is one of teamwork and overcoming challenges.

Becoming a “trusted advisor”

A Canalys report for Kaspersky

What you can expect from this report



1

Key data from partners on their channel transformation

2

The security drivers and opportunities for partners in 2021

3

The growth and profit benefits of becoming a trusted advisor

4

Four clear steps to building your status as a trusted advisor

Key findings for MSPs

1 Hybrid working increases the need for security services, boosting profits

Hybrid working models have only increased the importance of the MSP model, but they also mean challenges due to the complexity of the IT estates that are now being managed. Leading with cybersecurity managed services in customer conversations is a strong driver of profit growth.

2 Recognition of true value is key to the vendor/partner relationship

Business model transformation is one of the most significant problems for partners, not least because of the challenge it can pose for the relationships between vendors and partners. Measuring the importance of certain partners goes beyond their revenue – it is their importance to the customer.

3 Analyze your business and discover what makes you a trusted advisor

MSPs are already often trusted advisors due to their customer proximity, but often they do not find the time or reason to analyze their own strengths and weaknesses. MSPs that study their own capabilities to discover what makes them trusted advisors can grow these qualities more easily.

“Becoming a trusted advisor is not a mythical status. You are probably already one for some of your customers. The key part is understanding what makes you one.”

Robin Ody, Senior Analyst, Canalys

Hybrid work creates opportunities for MSPs

Customers face an array of new challenges today:

- The hybrid work model has caused technological challenges to increase.
- New threats and vectors mean customers need access to market and product intelligence.
- The skills shortage makes it harder for customers to manage these issues and so they rely on partners.
- Vendors must work with partners to provide access to services and ecosystems.

Security implications of an extended remote workforce



Highly decentralized and more location-independent workforce extending and thinning traditional perimeter defences.



Greater use of cloud-based resources, as well as unmanaged and consumer-owned devices, on shared home networks.



Shift in IT budget priorities and allocation, accelerating the migration to the public cloud as part of business continuity and resilience.



Greater dependence on email and team chat collaboration platforms for workflows and file sharing.

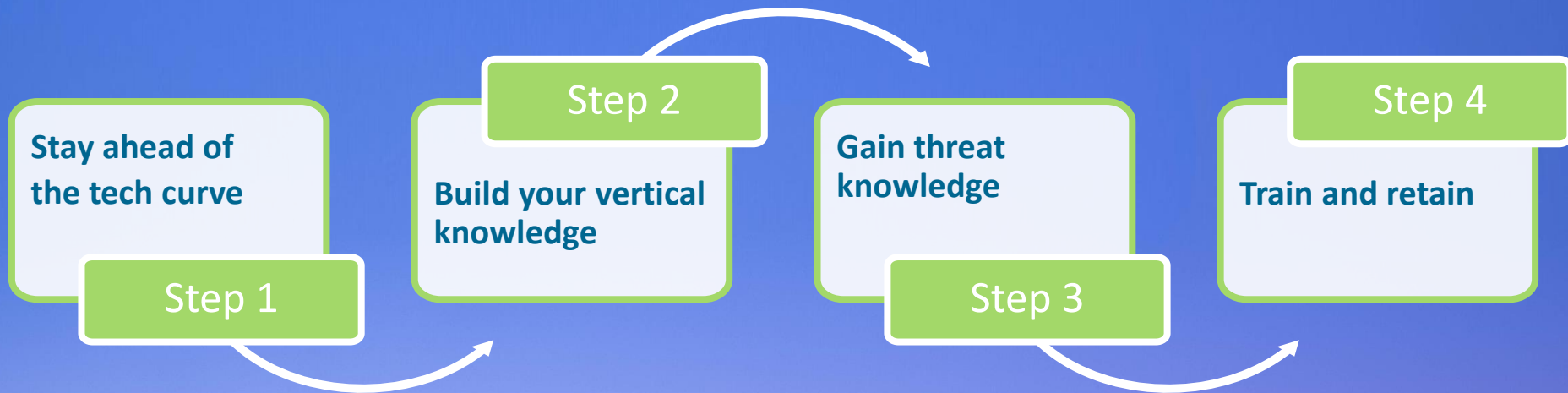


Reliance on remote training for cybersecurity awareness.

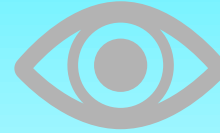


Compliance and regulation requirements strengthen as vulnerabilities and targeted attacks increase.

Trusted advisors are not born, they are made



Being closer to your vendors can help you stand out



Step 1: staying ahead of the tech curve

The first role of an MSP is to help customers solve technology issues with business outcomes.

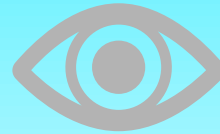
Certifications, from vendors and industry bodies, are still strong independent indicators of capability. Balancing independence with the need to build vendor relationships is one of the attributes of a trusted advisor.

“Smaller partners can struggle with the admin of vendor programs, particularly for the larger vendors. This also slows the adoption of newer vendors.”

Myth-busting!

You are already a trusted advisor for some of your customers! But identifying why is the key to becoming one for all customers.

Vertical knowledge is a key recruitment target



Step 2: vertical-specific knowledge

Working in education, healthcare, manufacturing or financial services, for example, will bring specific challenges and answers.

These are hard for others to replicate and make it easier to create repeatable services; automation of business processes drives profitability.

“Partners that invest in building industry knowledge have several advantages – they also become known among customers, making sales easier.”

Myth-busting!

Your competitors do not have a silver bullet for becoming a trusted advisor and are often looking for the same answers.

Customers need MSPs to be their ears on the street



Step 3: developing threat knowledge

In cybersecurity services, being on top of the latest threats is a key strength.

“Insight into the threat landscape can be hard to maintain but is an important element for trusted advisors. Partner forums and cyber-groups are invaluable.”

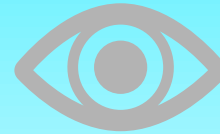
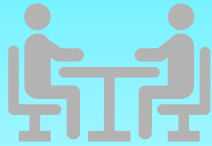
Myth-busting!

Cybersecurity managed services do not have to be expensive to develop. There is value in what you already know.



Work with vendors that give access to information from their threat intel feeds.

Retention is the key to closing the skills gap



Step 4: train and retain

Trusted advisor status is about people. Train them to provide a customer-centric service and deliver technical competence to boost employee engagement. This leads to better customer retention and builds your status.

Understanding your workplace is one the best ways to strengthen your business inside and out, boosting revenue and profit growth.

“Partners focus on sales and technical training. The current industry turnover levels show MSPs must also focus on improving employee retention.”

Myth-busting!

Technology alone will not differentiate you as an MSP. Growing your MSSP skills is about investing in your people.



The financial cost of replacing an employee is between 50% and 200% of their salary. Employee engagement = improved retention = trusted advisor.

The benefits of being a trusted advisor multiply

*"The cost of losing a customer is **six times higher** than the cost of retaining one."*

*"Existing customers are where we can expand, because they **trust us to deliver.**"*

Decreased churn means decreased cost

Customer retention helps solution expansion

Improved retention means less strain on sales

**Retention + NCA =
growth + profitability**

Sales can focus on new customer acquisition

Your team can grow to take on new skills

Product development can grow IP

Key takeaways

Lead with security

The fragmentation of environments has increased the need for security skills, but this is a massive boost to profitability for MSPs.

Build your certifications and program admin

A minority of partners really have insight into their vendor relationships, but this is an important step in your access to resources, such as marketing and sales motions.

Gain knowledge of the latest threats

Most vendors can provide some insight into the threats that are most common but developing specific knowledge in your vertical sets you apart.

Train and retain

The biggest part of becoming a trusted advisor is knowing what you do well and investing in your people, improving retention and closing the skills gap.



Insight. Innovation. Impact.

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