Marketing Makeover – Strategies that Make You Look Good in a Crowded Cloud Marketplace

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About eBridge

- Marketing agency specializing in B2B IT Service providers – SaaS, IaaS, PaaS, Hosting, Cloud, MSPs, Data Centers & IT Security
- Established in 2001 = LOTS of change!!
- Managed tens of millions of dollars of online campaigns
- Worked with hundreds of service providers on hundreds of projects
- Web Hosting and MSP M&A division at thehostbroker.com

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Some of Our Clients

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AGENDA

- Trends
- Pros and Cons of the Technology Evolution
- Go-to-Market Plan
- Channel Development
- Considerations for a Channel Program
- Best Practices
- Take-Aways

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Survey Time

Let’s see those hands!

- How many are MSPs?
- How many are VARs?
- How many are Telcos / ISPs?
- How many are Hosters?
- How many are here for the first time?
- How many sell through the channel or are thinking of launching a channel?

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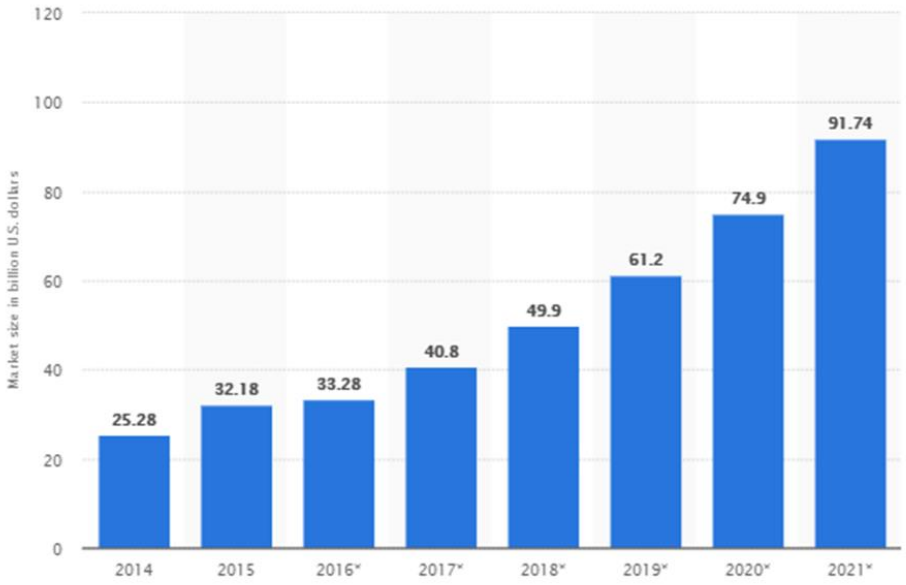
Cloud Adoption – Hybrid

Size of the hybrid (public/private) cloud market worldwide, from 2014 to 2021 (in billion U.S. dollars)



DESCRIPTION SOURCE MORE INFORMATION

The statistic shows the size of the hybrid cloud market worldwide, from 2014 to 2021. In 2016, the global hybrid cloud market is expected to reach 33.3 billion U.S. dollars worldwide.

Source:. Statista 2018

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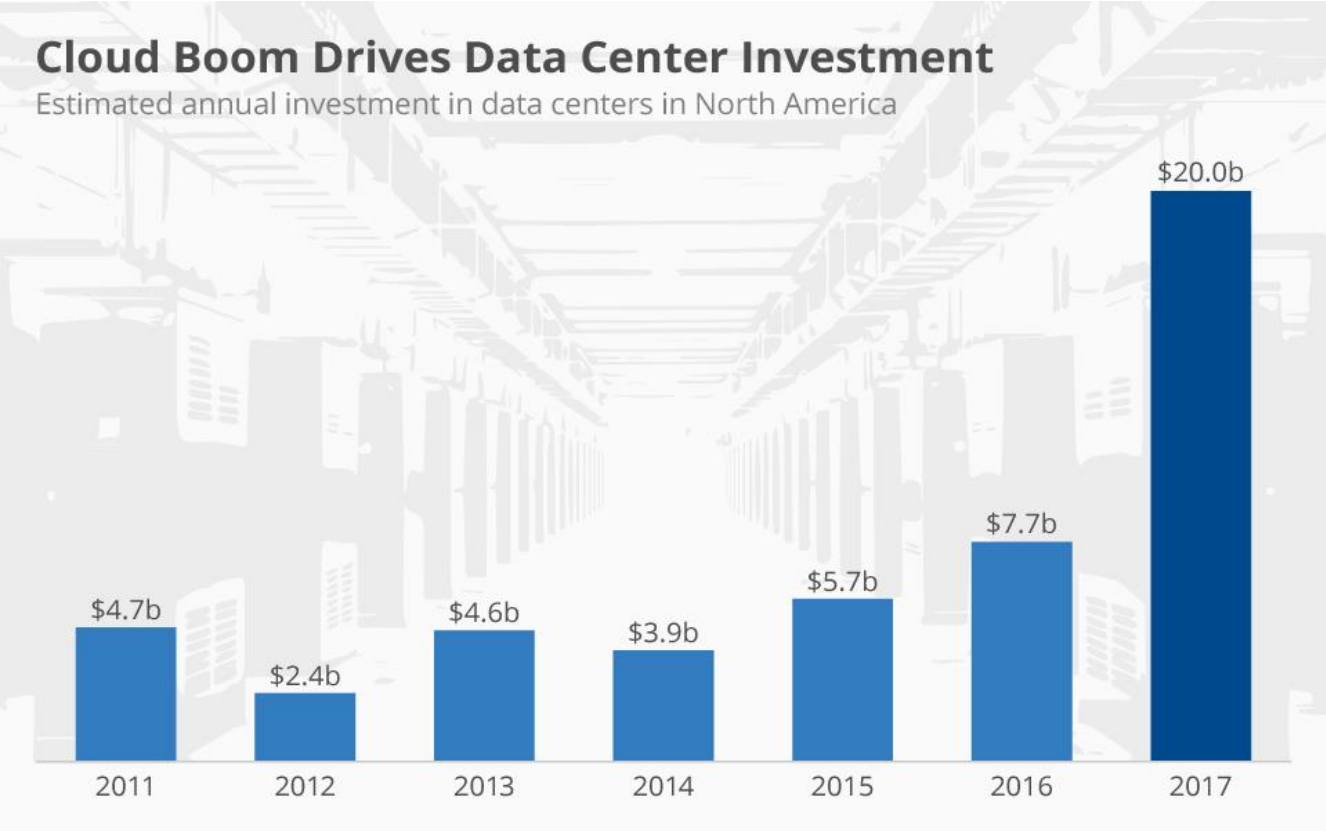
Migration to 3rd Party Data Centers



Source: Statista.com 2018

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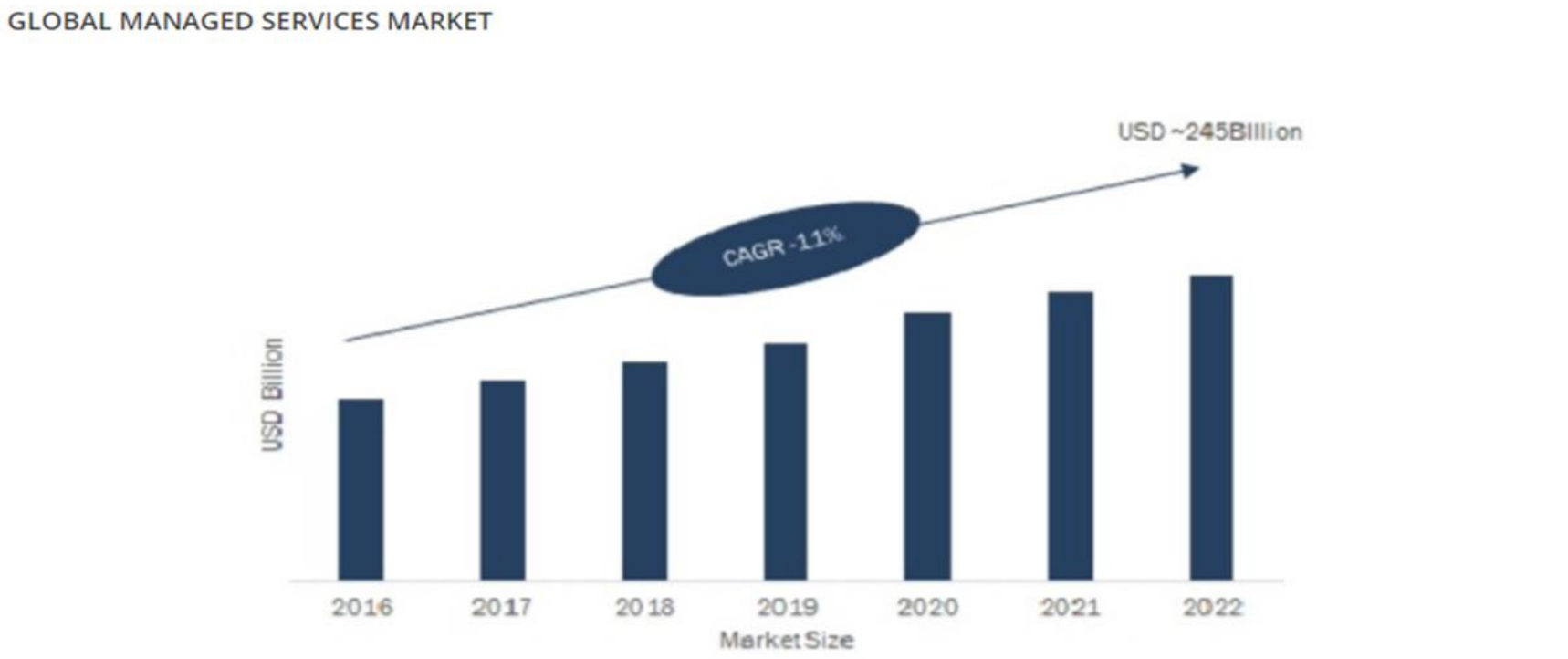
Projected Global MSP Market Size



The global managed services market is expected to reach USD ~245 billion by the end of 2022 with ~11% CAGR during forecast period 2016-2022

Source: marketresearchfuture.com 2018

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What Trends are We Seeing?

- Where are MSPs having success?
  - Vertical markets => Specialization
  - Applications: non-mission critical => mission critical
  - Line of business implementations
  - Security: defensive to offensive preventing breaches ahead of time and employee education
  - Customer mindset shift from tech-based features to business benefits
  - Consultation / education => Optimal outcome

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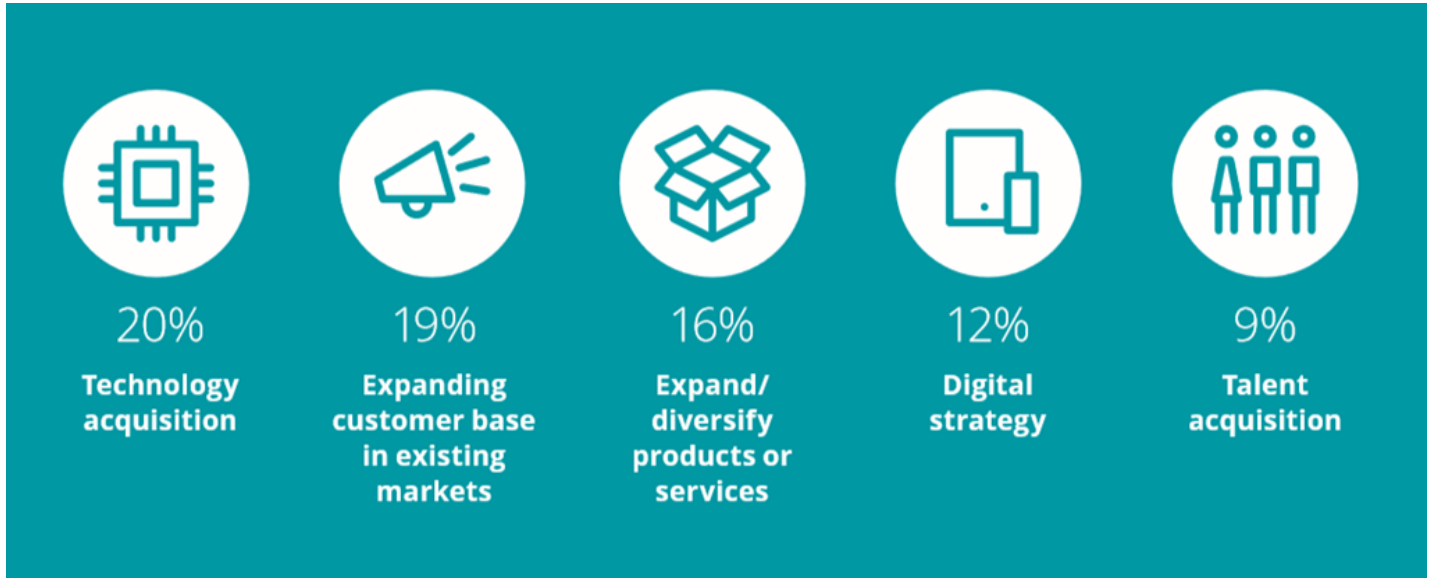
What Trends are We Seeing? continued

- M&A increasing
- Consolidation of smaller players
- Leverages existing systems, overhead and processes



Source: Deloitte, The State of the Deal Report, M&A Trends 2018

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Pros and Cons of This Evolution

Pros	Cons
Recurring revenue model = higher valuation	Lower margins
Predictable revenue	Fewer opportunities for break fix business
Ownership of customer relationship vs VAR structure	
Customer base may be serviced virtually = larger pool of customers	Increased competition due to being able to be serviced virtually
Improves retention as service offering expands	More services to become familiar with
Greater opportunity for specialization (Specific platform – ie Quickbooks hosting and support, target specific industries etc)	General confusion on where opportunities lie

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How to Launch a New Service?

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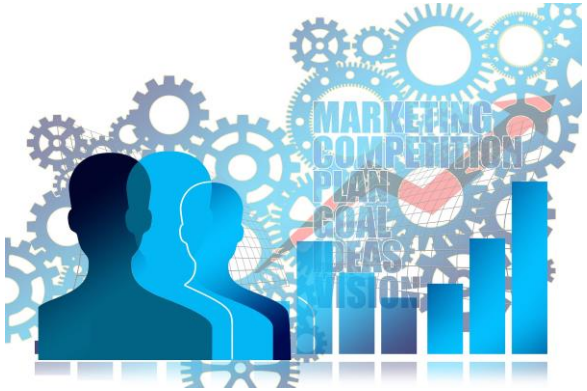
Go-to-Market Plan



- A Go-to-Market plan is not focused solely on marketing. It includes:
  - Target market/customer
  - Product roadmap
  - Pricing model
  - Sales channel: direct/partner model
  - Customer engagement: self-service vs. direct sales

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Go-to-Market Plan continued

- Market research: survey customers, engage sales team, mine support tickets
- Leverage brand equity for services provided by 3rd party (Veeam backup)
- Partnerships (bundling) with industry-specific providers
- Marketing communications:
  - Brand awareness
  - Demand generation: Newsletter, Website, Blogs, Retargeting, Lead nurturing

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Why Channel Development?

- Questions to Ask:
  - Why do you want to build an indirect channel? What is your goal?
  - What does your solution have that channel partners can't live without?
  - Are you trying to get channel partners to do things you can't do?
  - How much interest was there for your solution from direct customers?

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Considerations for Launching a Channel Program - Partner Recruitment

- Build ideal profile
- Create a list of candidates and score them
- Get out there and develop relationships: industry events, conferences
- Potential partners are looking for solutions to round out their portfolio or differentiate their business. But…..

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Considerations for Launching a Channel Program - Marketing

- Potential partners unlikely to engage unless you are an established brand.
- Challenge isn't finding potential partners but convincing them to come onboard over alternative providers. Build your value proposition.
- Create partner case studies and feature partners on webinars, podcasts, newsletters, etc.

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Considerations for Launching a Channel Program – Partner Evaluation

- Interview them like they are interviewing you.
    - Are they focused on:
        - new customer acquisition?
        - retention?
        - driving ARPU?
    - How frequently do they switch vendors?
    - Are they successfully selling complementary offerings?

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Considerations for Launching a Channel Program – Partner Support and Structure

- What resources do you have to make this successful?
  - Consider dedicated customer success team
  - Partner portal (still need personal relationships)
  - Customizable marketing tools
  - Who is responsible for demand generation – you or them?
  - In-field support
  - Coop/MDF marketing funds

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Considerations for Launching a Channel Program – Partner Support and Structure

- Ask partners how they want to hear from you – newsletters, emails, social media, monthly calls?
- Who owns the customer relationship?
- What ability do you have to connect with that customer?

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Best Practices for Service Excellence

- **Support is transforming into an additional Growth Engine**
  - 68% of service teams leading CX initiatives generating new sales opportunities and improved brand experiences.

- **Single View of the Customer is the Key**
  - 79% of service teams that share a single view of customer enable agents to provide consistency and continuity in every interaction.

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Best Practices for Service Excellence

- **Service KPIs Pivot Toward the Customer**
  - Service team KPIs are changing from tech support to true customer care (customer effort score and NPS). 79% of service teams prioritize customers' needs over hitting their performance metrics.
- **Top teams are using Intelligent Service**
  - Emerging smart technologies: AI/predictive intelligence/chatbots used more often. Top teams are 2x more likely than underperformers to excel at implementing these tools.

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Take-Aways!

- Whether direct or through the channel, your offering needs to fit the existing model.
- A go-to-market plan requires everyone's involvement – not just marketing.
- Customers want a *solution* from a *single provider*.
- Treat your channel as you would treat your direct sales force.

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QUESTIONS?

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