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MANAGING GROWTH

Successful kiosk deployment growth strategies include remote management

In a previous job, I sat next to a sales rep (thank you, open concept office planners) who always talked about the “big deal” he was about to close. He never closed any of those big deals and, in hindsight, that was probably a good thing. If he had, and the company had quickly doubled or tripled in size, it likely would have gone bankrupt within nine months.

Management studies suggest businesses that experience rapid growth tend to spend little or no time developing and applying a reasonable growth strategy. Without a strategy in place, businesses face a nightmare of organizational problems, including the real possibility of bankruptcy within months of the initial growth. When it comes to self-service deployments, four key factors should be included when planning for a healthy future.

SERVICE

Deployers often rely on store staff for routine maintenance such as refilling paper. This approach to service doesn't work, partly because your priority (maintaining the kiosk) is not the staff's priority. To avoid this scenario, use your remote-management software to check kiosks' status and to call stores whose kiosks are not up and running at the beginning of the day. When it's time to distribute security patches, content updates and price changes, there'll be no need to turn to store staff. The benefit is less about saving store employees' time; it's about ensuring you have the means to efficiently control the operation of your kiosks.

SECURITY

Most are aware of the need for security measures on their kiosks, from Payment Card Industry security compliance to locking down the keyboard to prevent application hijacking. However, the most

overlooked threat often comes from within. Disgruntled employees account for a growing number of security breaches. As your kiosk deployment grows, so will the number of people who have access. Use your remote-management software to limit access and functionality for different users — each user receives a unique password and each action performed is recorded in an audit log.

MYRIAD SOFTWARE OPTIONS ALLOW YOU TO PERFORM REMOTE ACTIONS VIA A ONE-TO-ONE CONNECTION — AND THAT'S GREAT IF YOU DON'T INTEND TO MANAGE MORE THAN A DOZEN KIOSKS. AS YOUR DEPLOYMENT GROWS, YOU'LL HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN ADDING STAFF AND USING REMOTE-MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE.

This may seem like Orwellian overkill, but audit logs are critical in tracing security breaches and in troubleshooting user-error problems. You'll have no trouble finding the person responsible for posting the Christmas promotion in July.

SCALE

As the size of your deployment grows, the challenge of managing day-to-day operations will increase. More customers mean more content updates, more paper jams, more of everything you need to do to keep customers happy. Myriad software options allow you to perform remote actions via a one-to-one connection from a computer, and that's great if you don't intend to manage more than a dozen kiosks. If it takes you 15 minutes to log into a kiosk, perform an action (diagnosis, run a report, check the paper, etc.) and call your client to let him know the results, that would

mean you could handle 30 calls in the average workday. As your deployment grows, you'll have to choose between adding staff to manage the increased workload and using remote-management software that permits one-to-many connectivity and task automation.

DATA

“All we want are the facts, ma'am” was Sgt. Friday's demand on the 1950s (and later '60s-'70s) television show, *Dragnet*, and that's what board members will ask about your self-service deployment at the next annual meeting. The facts in this case are the core metrics of profit, revenue, usage and availability. You will need a reliable source for extracting this information from your self-service deployment.

Remote-management software can collect and present customer usage data by kiosk, by region, by store or whatever way you want to see it. The added value of tracking customers' activity is that it tells you what's on their minds, giving you the jump on the next big trend.

Analysts agree self-service technology is on the verge of mass adoption, which means more kiosks will be used by a greater number of industries to reach their customer base. To manage that growth, prepare for tomorrow's success today by developing a plan to help you avoid the pitfalls associated with service, security, scale and data. ■

The writer is director of application solutions for Esprida Corp., where he is responsible for the integration and deployment of remote-management solutions.

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