Florida Networx Uplevels Managed Services for Small Business

MSP is Migrating Customers to Unbox Gateway/Firewall/File Servers to Streamline Installations, Management and Support.

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> **Owner, Florida Networx**

Managed IT service providers (MSPs) face the same challenge their customers do: choosing the right technologies and vendors to grow their business while at the same time lowering cost. Uplevel Systems' managed service infrastructure fits the bill, making things easy and affordable for MSPs and clients alike.

One Uplevel partner, Tampa, FL-based MSP Florida Networx now uses Uplevel to install and upgrade networks across a diverse customer base. "Within our first year, we deployed Uplevel at seven clients," says Florida Networx owner Sebastian Jimenez. "We have two law firms, an accounting firm, and several retailer sites running now, and other professional services companies coming online soon."

The MSP continues to migrate its small to medium business (SMB) clients to Uplevel to achieve compelling performance and savings advantages. Uplevel's Unbox gateways combines networking, firewall, file server, virtual private network (VPN) and SD-WAN capabilities in one device managed remotely via the cloud. Along with easy installation out-of-the-box, Uplevel provides services on a subscription basis so MSPs and clients never have to invest capital to buy, upgrade or replace equipment.

According to Jimenez, Uplevel's enterprise-class firewall and cybersecurity features deliver compelling benefits compared with traditional solutions. "We had been using Barracuda but it was very complicated and hard to deploy," Jimenez says. "You need a high-level person who knows a lot about networking and about firewalls to do anything. Something as basic as opening a port could take an hour and you would need to have the skills to do it."

Uplevel provides a powerful alternative. "Uplevel is easy to deploy, the dashboard is very simple, and the

support is awesome," says Jimenez. "As customers' Barracuda contracts are ending, we've been migrating them to Uplevel, and now we don't have to go onsite to fix firewall issues."

A Smarter Approach to User Access and End of Life (EOL) Challenges

One of the MSP's newer deployments, a pool supply retailer, leverages the Uplevel gateway, firewall and file server as well as newly announced domain management capabilities in lieu of Microsoft servers and Active Directory (AD) service. Like many growing businesses impacted by Microsoft ending support for certain Windows servers, Florida Networx needed an easy, affordable way to manage user access across three customer locations.

Before migrating to Uplevel, the retailer did not use onsite severs to run applications or store files. Every employee's documents resided on their own computer, with no centralized control or backups taking place. "It was a bit of a nightmare," Jimenez recalls. "With no

centralized file servers, we were getting about ten calls a week about issues accessing scanners and other networked resources."

To remedy the situation, Florida Networx put in Unbox gateway/file servers and used Uplevel's AD-type functionality to manage shared drives, user logins and passwords. With Uplevel deployed at the primary location, the MSP finds it simple to assign users to different storage volumes, control remote access and troubleshoot issues across all three locations without going onsite.

"There were virtually no issues that couldn't be solved," Jimenez says of the rollout itself. "We just installed Uplevel and got all the documents centralized so everyone could have access. Since then all the calls dealing with scanners have completely stopped."

Jimenez believes that for sites with dozens (versus hundreds or thousands) of users, Uplevel's domain management services provide a far simpler, more affordable alternative to Microsoft's Active Directory. "We have several clients that don't require a Windows server to run applications and would only buy one to get the file server and Active Directory capabilities," he says.

As with configuring standalone firewalls, Windows deployments require highly specialized expertise. "You have to know how to set up Windows servers and do it right, and know how to manage the updates, backups, anti-virus, anti-malware, and all the other extras at the end of the day," says Jimenez. "With Uplevel our customers get those same capabilities—along with a firewall—and the whole thing is very easy to maintain. Moving forward, this solution is going to make a big difference for these types of clients."

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Growing Forward: Uplevel Keeps Things Simple

"We liked the idea of having everything in one box so much that we asked a long-term client to let us test it in their network early on," Jimenez recalls. "We put in the gateway and everything worked so well we just decided to keep it."

Ultimately, the simplicity of Uplevel's approach makes it easier for MSPs to scale their business while supporting rapid growth among clients. "The solution is super easy to install," says Jimenez. "The box comes nearly ready and it just takes a few minutes for a Level 1 technician to get the system set up and running. That means that, as we take on more clients, we can hire less experienced technicians and have them take care of installations with no problems."

MSPs, and in turn customers receive reliable, high-quality service. "When we do have a question, the Uplevel team is always very responsive," Jimenez says. "No matter what time of day we call, there's someone there to answer the phone and help us find the best solution."

In the end, Uplevel delivers reliable technology solutions with no upfront capital cost, few if any issues, and easy remote management. The stability and predictability free MSP partners and their SMB clients to grow faster while investing fewer resources to improve performance, uptime and security. "Our Uplevel deployments are working really well," says Jimenez. "Our customers have been very happy. For most SMB clients, we're going for Uplevel every time!"