Making the Right Choices

The Key to Operational Efficiency as an MSSP

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Intro

For managed security service providers (MSSPs), operational efficiency is essential, and the key to operational efficiency is making the right choices. The same is true for MSPs aspiring to become MSSPs. This includes keeping up with the trend toward flexibility, simplicity, and usage-based security. Picking the right partner for security technologies and services is also vital to your operational efficiency in serving your customers.
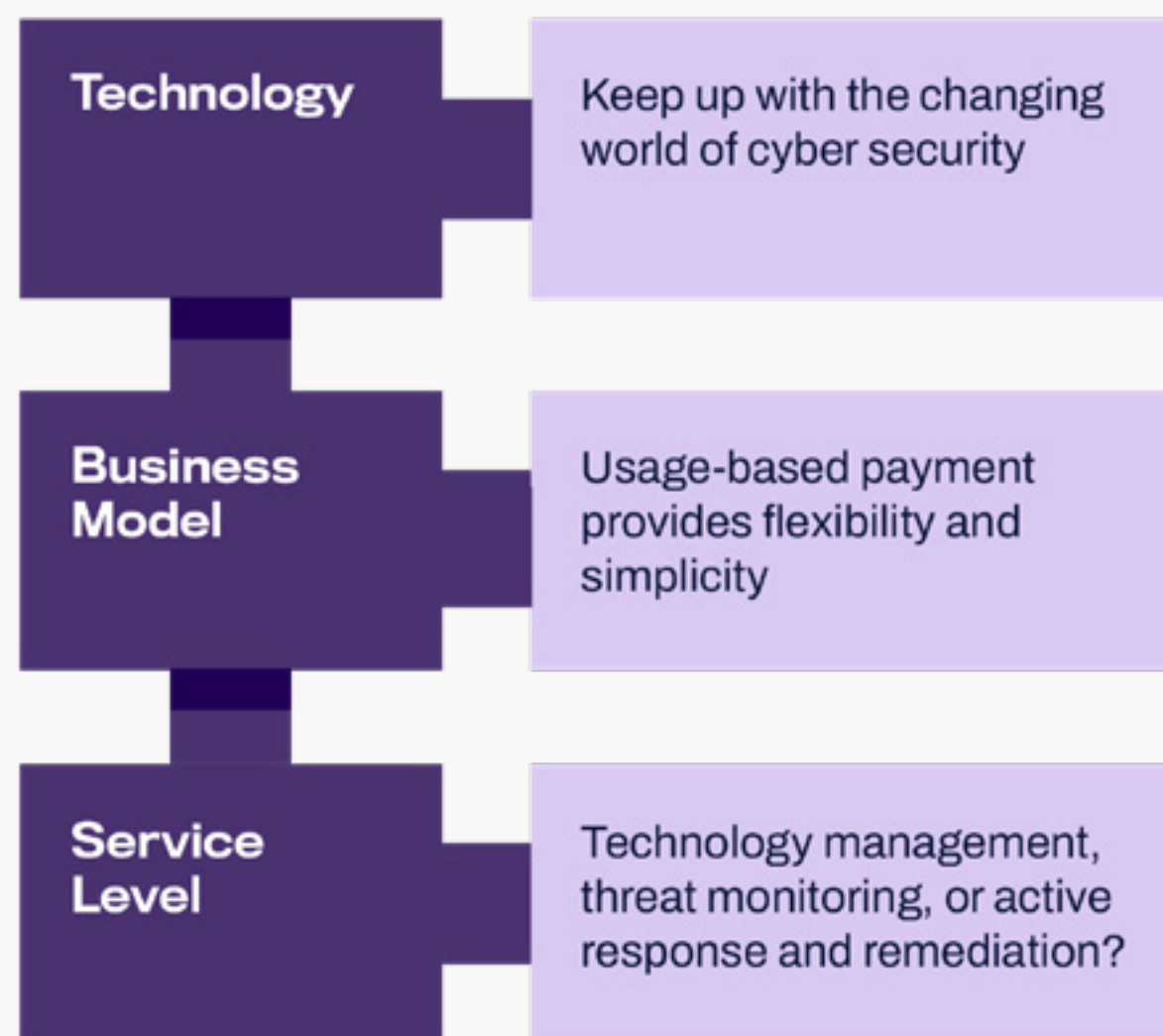
As a managed security service provider in the WithSecure™ Partner Program, you will have all the help you need to achieve operational efficiency and grow your business. We will be your trusted partner as you launch or expand your managed security service offering. As Andrew Ehlen of Ictivity says, "The bottom line is you're always working together, on technical questions, sales questions, marketing questions. That's what makes the partnership special."

It's time to rethink your partnerships with the companies you rely on. Each of your customers has specific needs and requirements, and the key to providing the right offering is to accurately identify which mix of options works best for them. This is especially true in the increasingly fluid world of remote and hybrid work, characterized by "Bring Your Own Device" and reliance on the cloud.

The corporate cyber security market is evolving rapidly, driven by new threats and changing strategies for keeping companies safe. How can you design a simple, flexible, and efficient service offering that will keep your customers safe while meeting their specific needs? Making the right choices is the key to operational efficiency – and maximum profitability – as an MSSP. This whitepaper will show you how.

Operational efficiency

What is operational efficiency for an MSSP? Operational efficiency means doing everything in the simplest and most flexible way possible – but how can you achieve this? In our view, operational efficiency can be achieved by making the right choices when it comes to technology, business model, and service level.

Technology	Keep up with the changing world of cyber security
Business Model	Usage-based payment provides flexibility and simplicity
Service Level	Technology management, threat monitoring, or active response and remediation?

What this looks like will vary from one MSSP to another. For instance, Scott McClain, President & CEO of Network Design Consultants, says that his company "chose WithSecure™ as our partner partly because of their outstanding level of support, continuous product improvement, and flexible pricing." Meanwhile, Kris Roath, the President of Sirkdot, states that "We often turn down vendors because our customers are malware-free – and we want to keep it this way. We chose WithSecure™ partly because they come out on top in third party testing almost every single time."

As you can see, different MSSPs have different priorities when it comes to choosing a trustworthy partner. However, there is a common denominator. Every MSSP wants a highly responsive partner capable of providing flexible, cost-efficient, and highly effective solutions. Serving customers better is always the priority.

Technology

Choosing the right underlying technology is key for operational efficiency and ultimately profitability, regardless of which service model you use to deliver security services.

How do you pick the right technology? Start by comparing your options using independent benchmarks such as AV-Comparatives, AV-TEST, and Mitre ATT&CK®. According to Adam Matthews, Lead Analyst at KryptoKloud, "When we started evaluating the solutions we looked at some of the different ratings and metrics and found that WithSecure scored highly on AV-TEST".

Look for features such as a centralized management system with effective data sharing. It's not efficient to have multiple management systems, especially if they don't share data with each other. You need a single, easy-to-understand user interface designed specifically for MSSPs. It's also a good idea to pick a system that filters out alert noise, so you don't have too many support cases to deal with.

Business Model

Usage-based payment models are the future of cyber security[1]. Licenses will continue to be the best choice for some customers, but the movement toward usage-based security is undeniable. Demand for this model has been strong ever since WithSecure™ first opened discussions with customers on this topic in 2018. Why? Because flexibility and simplicity are the two top priorities for most businesses when choosing a cyber security solution, and usage-based security is the model that provides that. If you want to keep up with the changing business of cyber security, your business model should be built on usage-based pricing. You can read more about this topic in "Usage-Based Security," below.

Service Level

Customers used to be satisfied with just buying a product, installing it, and forgetting about it. That's no longer enough to protect against sophisticated threats. According to Morten Norup, Director of Sales and Marketing for ADmire, "It used to be that pushing boxes was enough. Customers wanted products they could basically install and not worry about. But that doesn't cut it anymore because the threat environment is so much more sophisticated."

So, how much security do your customers really need? The answer is different for every customer, with options ranging from simple technology management to threat monitoring to active response and remediation. Our most successful

partners offer threat monitoring with some element of active response and remediation. How can you determine what level of service your company should offer?

This is a choice WithSecure™ can help with. Our service design workshops help our partners develop the most efficient business models for providing services for each of their clients[2]. During the workshops our experts will guide you through the steps and decisions that need to be taken to launch a well-designed and carefully targeted service. We have our own model for calculating resourcing needs, based on factors like the average number of alerts generated and the number of alerts a typical employee can handle in a month. We'll help you determine what level of service you should offer as an MSSP.

The Elements of Operational Efficiency

How can we be so sure that we can improve your operational efficiency? WithSecure™ Elements is our new all-in-one security platform. It simplifies our entire offering to provide our partners as much flexibility as possible. We've built efficiency into WithSecure™ Elements at every level. With a single agent for Endpoint Protection, Endpoint Detection and Response, and Microsoft 365, you don't have to install multiple agents on your customer's endpoints to roll out security. Your customers will enjoy efficiency of operations with a single installation.

One of the problems with SIEM is that it can generate so many alerts that the people monitoring the system become less

alarmed when an alert occurs, a condition known as "alert fatigue." WithSecure™ Elements uses Broad Context Detection to only show what really matters, an approach that saves time, increases operational efficiency, and minimizes risk.

Flexibility and simplicity are both important, but flexibility isn't much good without simplicity. Unless users can easily see how to do what they need to do, they'll never be able to take advantage of the solution's flexibility. That's why WithSecure™ Elements shows you all the information from every module through a single pane of glass, allowing you to monitor your client's true security situation with ease. The knowledge from our consulting teams and threat hunters is integrated into the technology instantly for even greater efficiency.

1. https://www.withsecure.com/en/expertise/resources/usage-based-security-the-future-of-corporate-cyber-security

2. https://www.withsecure.com/en/expertise/resources/designing-your-managed-security-service-processes

Learn more about
WithSecure™ Elements

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Usage-based security

The demand for flexibility and usage-based pricing surged during the pandemic. Businesses scrambled to minimize their fixed costs, but they sometimes found their MSSPs unresponsive. Even though their usage had dropped significantly due to staff furloughs, some MSSPs wouldn't lower their license usage below baselines.

Some customers became frustrated and simply chose to cut their investment in cyber security, although this was more dangerous than ever with the transition to remote work. Other companies moved to a usage-based security model, a prudent middle-ground solution that offers a range of potential advantages.

Advantages

Usage-based pricing is beneficial for companies in a period of fast growth because they may not know ahead of time how many licenses they'll need. Some companies prefer usage-based pricing because they aren't sure about the extent of their security needs. Users of WithSecure™ Elements can pick and choose which solutions are installed on which devices.

Some companies are worried about the effect of the current business environment on their bottom line. WithSecure™'s offering is available with no up-front costs or long-term commitments, allowing companies to reduce their fixed costs at short notice. Other companies simply want to minimize the administrative work of ordering and renewals. Usage-based security removes the need for this entire process. Finally, the lack of up-front costs is attractive to companies that are already outsourcing all or most of their IT, as it frees them up to invest in other areas.

With usage-based pricing, your customers can choose how much security they want to install on each of their endpoints, and it can all be done through a single monthly bill. It's the perfect combination of security and flexibility.

Characteristics

Usage-based security has a few characteristics that set it apart from traditional license-based billing:

Flexibility: with license-based billing, the client has to guess how many licenses they will need ahead of time, even though real-world needs are constantly changing. That can't possibly be efficient. What if they end up needing one more license than they originally thought, or one fewer? What if they're growing rapidly and they suddenly need ten more licenses? With usage-based security, your clients will have the flexibility they need to adapt to business conditions in a rapidly changing world.

Simplicity: WithSecure™'s usage-based pricing system is flexible, simple, and based on a single monthly bill. Simple pricing is a huge benefit for your clients, and there's nothing simpler than knowing exactly what you're paying for. With usage-based security, your clients only need to pay for the services they actually use.

Agility: flexibility means agility. When the business situation changes, as it did for so many companies at the start of the pandemic, your clients will be able to adapt to the situation in real time. No more frustrating and costly delays in responding to events.

WithSecure™ Elements, our consolidated product portfolio, is all about these three advantages. It's the most flexible cyber security package out there, allowing customers to easily pick and choose which modules they need. With that kind of flexibility, your clients will have the agility to respond effectively to changes in the market. Pricing is usage-based and simple, and the monthly billing is easy to understand and administrate.

The Withsecure™ Partner Program

Good partnership is one of our core values at WithSecure™ and being a managed security service provider is the highest level of partnership we offer. Our expertise will support you as you support your customers – and grow your business. Close collaboration with our partners to help businesses combat their cyber security threats is the key to maximizing both the effectiveness – and the efficiency – of true security.

A Framework for Cooperation

Best in class cyber security depends on technology, but technology alone can never keep an organization secure. It takes human expertise to predict, prevent, detect, and respond to breaches. WithSecure™'s global Partner Program is built on this idea – providing not just the latest technology, but a framework for cooperation. The WithSecure™ Partner Program includes everything you need to make the technology work for you: competence development trainings, ready-made marketing packages, and direct assistance with your toughest cases.

WithSecure™ is always there when our partners need us, as Avantage discovered when they needed help. In the words of Martijn Scheffel, Head of the Avantage Security Advisor Center, "We got an analyst on the phone straight away and they talked us through it and spent time thoroughly addressing every aspect of the response."

Our more than 1000 global partners clearly appreciate the support. For example, Andrew Ehlen, the Head of Innovation and Services at Ictivity, states, "The most important part about being a WithSecure™ partner is having a team of people that's really working together on things like marketing activities, or even having people from WithSecure™ going with us to advise our customers."

Similarly, Daniel Stentebjerg Petersen, Business Manager with ADmire says, "WithSecure™ transferred their knowledge to us, so we no longer need deep support for the products we're using now. But we also know that if and when we introduce new products or services, WithSecure™ will deliver that competence very fast."

Security Outcomes

Four Security Outcomes

1. Operational Resilience

2. Uninhibited Participation

3. Operational Efficiency

4. Professional Pride

Of course, top quality cyber security depends on an ongoing process of feedback and improvement. According to Adam Matthews, Lead Analyst at KryptoKloud, "What we really appreciate about F-Secure is that they ask what's missing and what our clients are looking for and then really listen and implement that feedback."

Feedback is so important because customers aren't really looking for a particular service or solution – what they're looking for is an outcome. When you partner with us at WithSecure™, you'll be able to offer your customers four valuable security outcomes:

Enhanced operational resilience: we make it possible for organizations to manage the risk posed by a cyber attack incident.

Uninhibited market participation: we help organizations maintain a level of security that allows them to participate in their market without constraints imposed by security limitations.

Operational efficiencies: we ensure that security is a business enabler rather than a barrier.

Social responsibility and professional pride: we help to protect society from parties that wish us harm.

Becoming a WithSecure™ MSSP Partner

Every WithSecure™ Partner has their own reasons for pursuing the partnership. For example, Scott McClain, President and CEO of Network Design Consultants, cites outstanding support and communication, continuous product improvement and enhanced reporting capabilities, flexible pricing, and great technical support. John Mee, Network Engineer at Precision Computer Solutions, mentions the painless purchasing process and the fact that "the product just works really well." Sirkdot mentions product innovations and WithSecure™'s consistent top performance on third-party tests.

Do you want to learn more about the WithSecure™ Partner Program? Please get in touch. The experts at WithSecure™ will be happy to discuss the entire program with you in more detail, answering all your questions about how you can improve your operational efficiency as an MSSP partner of WithSecure™.

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WithSecure™ Partner Program

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Case studies

Grow your business with managed services

See how ADmire went from pushing boxes to adding real value as a managed IT security service provider.

Read more

Upgrade your managed service offering

Read how Ictivity and WithSecure™ worked together to transform Ictivity's managed service offering and meet customer needs.

Read more

Level up your cybersecurity portfolio

Read how Avantage upgraded their cybersecurity offering to meet customer needs and how WithSecure™ supported this evolution.

Read more

Who We Are

WithSecure™ is cyber security's reliable partner. IT service providers, MSSPs and businesses along with the largest financial institutions, manufacturers, and thousands of the world's most advanced communications and technology providers trust us for outcome-based cyber security that protects and enables their operations. Our AI-driven protection secures endpoints and cloud collaboration, and our intelligent detection & response is powered by experts who identify business risks by proactively hunting for threats and confronting live attacks. Our consultants partner with enterprises and tech challengers to build resilience through evidence-based security advice. With more than 30 years of experience in building technology that meets business objectives, we've built our portfolio to grow with our partners through flexible commercial models.

WithSecure™ is part of F-Secure Corporation, founded in 1988, and listed on the NASDAQ OMX Helsinki Ltd.

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