

NEWS

The Support Column: Which are you: upscaler or streamliner?

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There are two tribes in the ICT channel eyeing big opportunities in UCaaS and collaboration in two different ways.

Everyone is either an upscaler or a streamliner – and which camp you occupy defines how you use smartsourcing to achieve your goals.

Upscalers: going for lean growth

If you're all about scaling up and selling more then you're an upscaler. Yours could be a buy-and-build strategy or targeting opportunities to deliver purely organic growth – it doesn't matter.

What's important to understand about upscalers is that they're speeding up and expanding and don't want to create drag. They don't want to be slowed down by the need to create new internal infrastructures and processes.

Streamliners: focused on efficiency and profitability

Streamliners also want growth, but they're at least as focused on retaining existing customers as acquiring new ones.

If you're a streamliner then customer experience is key, but so is avoiding unnecessary risk and expense in acquiring skills. That's difficult in new and evolving technology areas.

Many partners with an eye on a possible exit act as streamliners to make their businesses as financially attractive as possible.

Picking the best smartsourcing strategy

The uncomfortable truth about upscalers looking at fast, aggressive growth is that they're always in real danger of customer churn. Technical departments have limited capacity, and if the sales team is winning lots of business, orders start backing up and customers get angry. It's the classic case of being a victim of your own success.

So smartsourcing here is really about backfilling a technical operations capability that isn't yet big enough to cope with the scale being achieved by sales. Smartsourcing professional services around deployment, onboarding and enduser training enables upscalers to act big before they get big.

The main difference with streamliners is the longer-term, more strategic outlook on streamlining internal operations and skill sets.

One of our smartsource services is in-life support, where we act as the full-time, white-label support desk for technical enquiries once the partners' customers are onboarded. Some streamliners make the strategic decision that they never want to fulfil that role, particularly if it's a non-core technology area for them.

Whichever tribe you belong to, smartsourcing can be a long-term arrangement or a short-term stopgap while you upscale internal technical operations capability.

Smartsource projects, insource BAU – or vice versa?

Some ICT channel players put a dividing line between business-as-usual, and special projects like big implementations and migration. On one side is the in-house team, geared up to deliver. On the other is the smartsource capability, working with a pro services partner like Support to Win.

Smartsourcing can be very flexible and just fit in wherever it's needed – either to pick up slack or provide very specialist skills. If you want to see how it could work for you, give us a call!