Meeting The Demands of Next Gen Retail Technology:

How New Technology Requirements Are Driving The Need For A Consolidated & Customized Maintenance Approach

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It's become increasingly evident that retailers are feeling unprecedented pressure to keep their stores running efficiently in the digital age. In fact, according to Aberdeen Group's November 2015 report, "35% of retailers believe the top strategy to be successful is streamlining operational workflows, manual sales processes and order errors."

But maintaining this ultimate retail requirement has changed drastically over the years as technology has evolved. While a retailer's primary concern used to be keeping the traditional and non-traditional aspects of POS technology up and running, today it's about POS — handheld and wireless — and broadband connectivity. Not only are all of these various technologies in the stores, but they are all interconnected and frequently end up on different refresh cycles, which requires a certain level of maintenance in order to keep the store running smoothly.

What's more, all of this state-of-the-art technology coming into the stores and onto the network has challenged the antiquated thought-process of the legacy maintenance model which, on average, consists of 7 - 10 vendors splitting a variety of services. As the lines of communications increase, so does the risk for confusion and delays, which can cause setbacks due to inefficient use of time, money and valuable internal resources.

Aside from the numerous breakdowns in communication that can arise from a silo'd maintenance model, it's usually the most expensive approach for retailers to deploy because of the de facto POS service where every store is treated the same way, every single day of the year. When SLAs (service level agreements) aren't properly aligned with the specific needs of a retailer, these unnecessary repair services can cause a slow leak that, over time, has the potential to drain millions in an already exhausted IT budget.

As a result of all the new challenges facing CIOs in today's ever-changing digital environment, more and more retailers have succumbed to the "multi-vendor syndrome" because they simply don't have the time or the resources to research and implement better solutions.

What we have found is that by consolidating vendors and customizing services, many of the retailers we work with have not only saved money, but improved store uptime, secured "market-readiness" and ensured customer loyalty along the way.

A Customized, Consolidated Approach To Next Gen Maintenance

Aside from the many challenges of having too many proverbial "cooks" in the kitchen, the issue of maintenance has become even more critical as lifecycles have begun to shrink.

According to Boston Retail Partners' 12th Annual POS Benchmarking Survey, nearly 40% of retailers have plans to increase their spending on POS hardware maintenance over the next 12 months. As a result, many retailers have started researching and implementing alternative maintenance approaches to help them save money and improve their store operations.

Because Level 10 is a small, flexible company, we have the ability to operate for less and pass those savings on to our customers. In fact, by consolidating, customizing and managing less vendors and processes, our customers are achieving greater efficiencies and 20% to 45% cost savings.

In order to ensure seamless store operations, we extend even greater value to our customers by consolidating and customizing three essential areas in retail IT for a tailored maintenance solution:

Consolidation of Vendors and Processes:

- Hardware Procurement;
- Maintenance Vendors;
- Consumable Management / Auto Replenishment;
- Warranty Management / Entitlement;
- MAC / Store work; and
- Help Desk.

Customization of Maintenance Services:

- Service levels by product type, season and store location;
- Depot / On-site Options; and
- Invoicing / Reporting.

At Level 10, we believe that increased visibility is crucial to a seamless experience between all aspects of the work scope, which is why we provide around-the-clock access to our online web portal.

Centralized Data:

- Data Transparency;

- Custom Reporting;

- Serial Numbers;

- NTF / Trend Analysis; and

- Spare Consumable / Inventory Levels.

Finding A Cure For The "Multi-Vendor Syndrome"

As a result of all the new challenges facing CIOs in today's ever-changing digital environment, more and more retailers have succumbed to the "multi-vendor syndrome" because they simply don't have the time or the resources to research and implement better solutions.

In reality, more time is lost and more resources are spent on determining things like, who is responsible for which asset? Which repair services are offered for the barcode scanners, mobile tablets, etc. — are they covered under warranty? If not, which vendor is responsible for repair? Do we know exactly what is wrong, or do we need someone to come take a look at it first? Is it necessary to have a four-hour response for lane 5, or is there a way we can skirt costly premiums?

Instead of having one vendor handle phone services, another handle data cabling and another manage POS terminals, let Level 10 take the time to fully analyze your store, POS equipment and failure history and design a maintenance and repair service model that's right for your store.

Here are some of the key differentiators that many of our customers are leveraging to achieve a best-fit solution for their stores:

- Customized Service Levels Managing equipment lifecycles becomes especially important given the seasonal nature of most retail businesses. Not every store is the same, so why should they be serviced the same way? At Level 10, we offer flexible options based on seasonality, service level and items within the store, so that you aren't paying for a level of service on a product or store that isn't needed.

- Qualified Technicians Our unique independent contractor model allows us to extend significant savings to our customers and reduce the need for a costly middle man. With access to over 11,000 qualified technicians rated on knowledge and expertise, Level 10 extends greater value to retailers through customized, on-site service, 24/7 nationwide.

By tapping into Level 10's broad knowledge base of technology and industry trends, companies can be sure they are making educated investments the first time with best-fit solutions that we bring to them.

- Volume Discounts The math is simple: the more products you put under the Level 10 umbrella, the more you can save.

- Ready Spare Pools Eliminate down time with our Exchange / Advanced Exchange Services. Level 10 will house and maintain ready spare pools of your equipment that can be dispatched as needed. A swap vs. repairing model means fewer business interruptions and the most flexibility for in-store POS hardware maintenance and repair options.

- Auto Replenishment Make sure your consumables are always in stock when you need them. With Level 10's Auto-Replenishment service, we'll work with you to determine the right inventory levels that are automatically reordered so they're always at your disposal.

- Warranty Management With an influx of new technologies entering stores, retailers are finding it more challenging to keep track of all of the warranties.

- At Level 10, we can manage your warranties so that you have easy access to term renewal/conditions, and can eliminate unnecessary repair costs for consumable items still covered under warranty. When warranties expire, equipment can be shifted over to the contract for a seamless transition.

- Centralized Data Source It's easier to proactively manage your maintenance needs with round-the-clock access to a centralized data source. At Level 10, we believe that increased visibility is crucial to a seamless experience between all aspects of the work scope, which is why we provide around-the-clock access to our online web portal.

- In addition to offering NTF/Trend Analysis to help you make better business decisions off of real-time, transparent, consolidated data, the portal allows instant access to valuable information, like IT assets, failure history, available inventory, deliverables, serial numbers, shipping/tracking and field service events.

- Consolidation Options By rolling all of the various "arms" of retail IT (such as hardware purchasing, technical services, field services, maintenance and help desk support) into fewer resources, you will not only increase your efficiency by dealing with less processes and vendors, but there will be fewer business interruptions to store operations and faster implementation to ensure your store is always up and running.

More importantly, by tapping into Level 10's broad knowledge base of technology and industry trends, companies can be sure they are making educated investments the first time with best-fit solutions that we bring to them. We also offer assistance in designing technology implementations based on real-world examples from other Level 10 customers to ensure seamless store operations.

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About Level 10

Level 10 is one company, everything IT. With more in-store technologies, less personnel resources and quicker deployment needs , we recognize retail IT teams need less partners to do more. By strategically bundling our services-hardware procurement, software development, asset management, maintenance & repair, in-field technician support and a 24/7/365 service support desk—we create solutions that allow an easy and enjoyable work life. We act as an extension of your IT team through technology & mobile deployments, store openings/closing/remodels, and in-store support work by increasing your service levels and project ease while decreasing cost and risk.

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