

# Spotlight on Cloud Services



**Rob Bergman**

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*In the first of our series focused on Services, PlumChoice sits down Rob Bergman to discuss the changes and opportunities he has seen within the industry for Cloud Services*

**Q: Rob, can you describe your role within PlumChoice?**

A: I lead our Cloud Product Management and Service Innovation teams at PlumChoice. We work closely with channel partners, including technology distributors, IT resellers, MSPs, and Telcos. Our focus is on helping these partners design, develop, and deploy high-value technology services that can be wrapped around products that they are already selling to their end customers. We also work closely with our Operations team that delivers these services to the end customers under the partner's brand (white-labeled). Our service portfolio includes assessments, migrations, onboarding, premium support, administrative services, professional services, and managed services.

**Q: What do you enjoy most about working in the Cloud Services space?**

A: I really like the dynamic and fast-paced nature of the space – cloud technology is always evolving and the services that we deliver need to evolve with it to ensure that we continue to add value for our channel partners and their end customers. It is a requirement to be able to understand new technology quickly, realize how the technology is going to be sold, and know how to enable, support and manage it for end customers. It is a unique space that forces you to look at things from both a sales and IT service operations perspective, and that's particularly interesting to me.

**Q: You have been with PlumChoice for a number of years. Over this time, what changes have you seen take place in Cloud Services?**

A: Software manufacturers are flocking to the cloud with their products, and a lot of them are starting to implement CSP (Cloud Solution Provider) programs that enable partners to own the customer's journey into and within the cloud. These partners are realizing that they need to wrap services around the cloud products that they sell to help drive customer value, increase customer stickiness, and increase their revenue streams. PlumChoice has increased our ability to scale and innovate services to meet this demand.

**Q: Looking down the road 5-10 years from now, how do you believe Cloud Services will be positioned?**

A: The Cloud Services marketplace evolves so quickly that its really difficult to envision what it might look like that far out. Some of the trends that we are seeing as of late are the need to build security into products and services, the popularity of hybrid cloud with the need to be able to deliver services for both cloud and on-premise technology, and the move towards managed services for cloud technology. The latter is particularly interesting because it helps drive customer adoption of the cloud products and avoids it becoming shelfware. Our services have needed to evolve quickly from simple support to consulting with customers on a real-time basis to help them enable cloud product features to solve problems.

A great example is Microsoft's EMS products – customers initially adopted it because they wanted the mobility

management features within Intune. Lately, we are seeing an increase in the number of customers wanting to use EMS to meet their security needs as well. Our service has needed to evolve to handle not just Intune enablement and support, but also turning on features for Data Loss Prevention (DLP), Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA), and conditional access. A lot of customers do not even realize that these features exist in the EMS product they originally bought just for mobility management. We needed to evolve from implementation and support into an advisory service capacity to help educate customers on the EMS features they had already purchased, but had not yet utilized. We also needed to provide a professional service that helps customers turn on the features according to best practice, and managed services that helped ensure things continued to run smoothly post-enablement. All of this results in a partner with an increased revenue stream on a static number of seats, and a customer that solved their problems without having to go out and purchase individual security products.

**Q: There are many companies promoting and selling Cloud Services to CSPs, MSPs and the like. What differentiates PlumChoice's Cloud Services from the crowd?**

A: Our differentiating factor is really four-fold: 1) we are able to design services that can be easily and quickly sold by our channel partners to their end customers; 2) our services deliver a lot of value to customers in helping them maximize their use of the technology; 3) we deliver world class service under our partner's white-labeled brand via US-based certified technicians who are great at getting problems resolved quickly and accurately, and 4) we are able to scale really effectively to help meet partner demand. The hardest part of this is to create services that are standardized and can be sold as service SKUs within the partner's channel, because selling SOW-based services at scale simply is not practical. At the same time, the service needs to be extensive enough that it meets customers' needs on a wide scale. We have developed a methodology that enables us to do this consistently.

**Q: Why should a company consider partnering with PlumChoice for Cloud Services?**

A: Any channel partner that wants to increase their average revenue per seat, increase their customer retention rate, expand the number of Cloud Service offerings available within their portfolio, and needs to differentiate their brand from the competition would benefit from our services.

For end customers, the benefit we deliver is in driving technology adoption and helping them realize more value from their investments in cloud technology.