

The True Name Of The Game

VARs: It All Boils Down To Value

By Bob Venero



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What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other word would smell as sweet," Shakespeare wrote in "Romeo and Juliet." Some may think this is a stretch, but the same thought applies to the channel today.

We VARs have many names: solution providers, service providers, systems integrators, channel partners and so on. The term VAR, itself, has become somewhat base, an acronym that reflects a bygone era.

So, as someone recently asked me, what does it mean to be a VAR today? More important, what does it mean to be a successful VAR? It's all in the "value add."

A true VAR is architecting solutions—not just selling equipment. A true VAR walks into his customer with no particular agenda or intent to sell the latest and greatest gadgets and gizmos. A true VAR sits and listens to the customer's needs, and then leverages technology to create solutions.

Yes, we use technology, but that's secondary to how we define ourselves.

To that end, so many of us have invested in managed services to bring more value to our customers, but that's only a piece of the puzzle. It's also the relationships with the industry-leading manufacturers and the ability to take what is sometimes a commoditized product and redefine the ways in which our customers can benefit from the technology by making it a part of an overall solution—all the while leveraging our proprietary applications, services, resources and, most significantly, our experience.

A successful VAR invests in the customer relationship. Customers know that, whatever their challenges, their VAR is going to craft a solution that works. It means being so good at what you do that they regard you as integral to achieving their business goals, as a part of their team.

So, does it make a difference whether we're called a valued-added reseller or solution provider? Not really. So long as we're bringing value to our customers through solid technology, systems and guidance, we're fulfilling our role in the IT marketplace.

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