

Kaspersky Snags Dell Channel Star To Lead Sales Charge

By Steven Burke and Stefanie Hoffman

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Kaspersky Lab, which is in the midst of an aggressive enterprise channel expansion, has hired channel superstar Nancy Reynolds as senior vice president of corporate sales, the company said Tuesday.

Reynolds joins Woburn, Mass.-based security firm Kaspersky after only six months on the job as Dell (NSDQ:[Dell](#))'s top global enterprise channel executive responsible for recruiting new enterprise partners for Dell.

Dell, Round Rock, Tex., refused to comment on Reynolds' departure and whether it signals a change in the company's channel strategy. A Dell spokesperson said Dell as "a matter of policy" does not provide statements on personnel changes.

Reynolds, having most notably served as the vice president of channel and [SMB](#) sales for the Americas at Kaspersky rival Trend Micro, comes to Kaspersky as the security vendor is making significant gains in the security market. Kaspersky has taken the top spot in CRN's Annual Report Card [Client](#) Security [Software](#) category for two consecutive years.

Reynolds, who is highly regarded in channel circles, spent five years at Trend Micro, and brings 18 years of channel experience to Kaspersky. Reynolds first public debut as a Kaspersky channel executive will likely be next month at Kaspersky's America's Partner Conference in the Dominican Republic.

Several solution providers said they will look closely at bringing Kaspersky on board as a partner now that Reynolds is leading the sales effort.

Leo Bletnitsky, president of Desktop Valet and Las Vegas Med IT, Las Vegas, Nev., said the Reynolds move has big implications for both Kaspersky and Dell.

"It's a great move by Kaspersky," said Bletnitsky. "This will definitely get us to look at the Kaspersky products. We need to evaluate what the programs look like. Kaspersky has always had a very good product line. If they are making a big channel play, we'll look at it."

"The fact that she left Dell is also telling," said Bletnitsky. "One of the reasons she likely left Dell is because they were saying they wanted to be channel friendly but weren't moving that way. I have always viewed Dell as having a weak channel commitment. They talk a really good game, but I don't think as a corporate culture they really work that well with the channel."

Steve Brown, vice president of sales for BlueHawk Networks, a top Dell enterprise partner based in Campbell, Calif., disagreed. "Dell has done a tremendous job in barely two years with its channel program," he said. "They have done an amazing job of envisioning a change for the company that was necessary in today's world moving from a direct mentality to a channel mentality and doing so in a way that is more innovative than their competitors."

Brown doesn't believe Dell's channel charge will suffer with Reynolds' departure. "It is sad that she is gone," he said. "She has a lot of strong points and was an asset to Dell. But Dell has done a great job of picking up when stellar players have left the company. You don't want to lose an A+ player, but that kind of thing happens and you have to move on."

Brown said he is definitely interested in looking at Kaspersky as a potential partner. "Kaspersky is getting bigger and better, there is no doubt about that," he said. "I would love to get closer to them. We have a couple of customers using their software. We'll definitely look more favorably at Kaspersky with the addition of Reynolds. Kaspersky is taking a different approach than their competitors. They are hungry, aggressive and smart. They are refining the model of getting security solutions to the market."

Bob Venero, president and CEO of FutureTech, a Holbrook, N.Y., Dell partner, said he sees the Reynolds hire as a "strong move" by Kaspersky. "She's a big player," he said. "There's no question about that. But we'll have to see what she can pull off in that new role."

Venero cautioned that it would be foolish to make significant channel moves based on one executive change. "In this business, the rule is you never follow one individual," he said. "There is risk associated with that when you have built up processes, procedures, alignments and partnerships. Just because an individual moves doesn't mean the programs that are in place are changing."

"If one person leaving turns your world upside down, it means you haven't built the right strategy around a team and organizational structure," added Venero.

As for FutureTech's Dell partnership, Venero said the one-time direct vendor has made significant progress in its channel efforts. In fact, FutureTech recently won a global multimillion dollar deal in partnership with Dell. "It's a big deal, and Dell was a very good partner in this case," he said. "We've had some very good successes with Dell."