

Becoming a Trusted Advisor

Executives from five VMware partner organizations reflect on how they transformed to achieve trusted advisor status.





The Path to Becoming a Trusted Advisor

While most organizations had already started their digital transformation journey prior to the global pandemic, the events of 2020 shined a light on the power of the cloud and accelerated the pace of change.

From ensuring security to empowering distributed workforces to stay connected and be productive, digital transformation technologies are complex. This is why IT and business leaders alike are looking for guidance and solutions every step of the way.

Together with our partners, VMware has never been better positioned to help customers succeed. This ebook highlights how five savvy technology partners became trusted advisors to their customers, and the positive impact this transformation had on their business.

Anunta

The Rise of the Distributed Workforce

Anunta has been relentlessly focused on developing, managing and optimizing solutions that delight buyers and users on an ongoing basis as opposed to selling and implementing technologies.

“The future of work has been our focus since the company was founded in 2011,” says CEO and Deputy Managing Director Siva Ramamurthy. “Our unique approach to distributed workforce enablement is why customers rely on us to be their trusted advisor.”

They were a pioneer in providing enterprise virtual desktops that reduced costs while improving end-user experience. When the events of 2020 created widespread demand for their expertise, Anunta was ready, willing and able to help.

How a Trusted Advisor Delivers

Developing a reputation for delighting both buyers and end users wasn't happenstance.

Here are the strategies Anunta put in place to become a leader in end-user computing and the go-to partner for enterprises in multiple industries.

1. Invest in ongoing success

Anunta has always made investing in both people and innovation a priority. After gaining initial traction with their innovative VDI offering, the company created an in-house Center of Excellence. It's staffed with seasoned experts who are focused on understanding trends in end-user computing and researching new technologies to leverage.

The company also developed an end-user experience lab where they test new technologies. In fact, Anunta partners closely with technology providers such as VMware on product innovation, as well as on go-to-market strategy.



ABOUT ANUNTA

Anunta is an industry-recognized Managed Desktop as a Service (DaaS) provider focused on Enterprise DaaS, Packaged DaaS, and Digital Workspace technology. Since inception, Anunta has successfully migrated 500,000+ remote desktop users to the cloud for enhanced workforce productivity and superior end-user experience.

2. Provide exceptional experiences for everyone

“To grow with your customer, you have to gain trust from your customer,” says Siva. “In our business, that means providing an experience that is second to none.”

The team never goes into a pitch meeting without knowing the technologies and applications the prospect uses, which stakeholders will be in the meeting, and what problems they are trying to solve. Should an organization decide to move forward, Anunta makes sure they have the tools in place to demonstrate meaningful, measurable results early in the pilot stage, and a runbook for executing a smooth and successful rollout.

3. Focus on innovation at the core

Anunta leads continuous innovation by helping organizations achieve operational efficiency and enhance their customer experience. Over the years, their technology competency and capabilities have evolved to deliver bespoke solutions that accelerate the customer’s digital transformation journey. They are now helping enterprises address the business priorities of a distributed workforce model, security, and compliance, and manage the dynamically changing EUC landscape. Anunta approaches this by focusing on innovative technologies and developing technical skills and capabilities to help customers maximize the value from their cloud investments.

4. Create continuous opportunities to deliver value to customers

A partner’s credibility is at stake every time a customer encounters a problem. As Siva says, “We are only as good as the last issue we resolved.”

Only when the Anunta customer success team takes an active role in monitoring, managing and optimizing the environment can they ensure it will continuously outperform expectations and delight end users.

ANUNTA’S STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Being a trusted advisor requires

- A commitment to innovation
- A relentless focus on delighting buyers and users
- Showing customers your value on a daily basis

AHEAD

Helping Clients Unleash the Full Power of Digital Transformation

AHEAD works with complex Fortune 1000 enterprises that most often are in the midst of undertaking some type of digital transformation initiative such as automating a process, defining a new product line, or developing a new route to market.

“Many of our customers come to us because they are struggling to move their digital transformation initiative forward,” says AHEAD CEO Dan Adamany. “They are stuck, and our job is to get them unstuck.”

AHEAD believes that digital transformation requires fundamental changes in culture, communications, and processes that many organizations don’t anticipate when they get started. With AHEAD’s guidance, customers can prioritize investments and strike the right balance between innovation and operational efficiency.

“Some of the biggest challenges we see are not technology issues, but organizational issues and people issues,” explains Dan. “We help customers figure out how to transition to a DevOps mindset, and how to efficiently scale modern application development practices across the business, in a secure and compliant manner.”

AHEAD

ABOUT AHEAD

Founded in 2007, AHEAD weaves together advances in cloud infrastructure, intelligent operations, and modern applications to help customers fast-track digital transformation initiatives and improve business results.

AHEAD helps customers rethink the ways they develop, deliver, consume and manage applications and IT services.

From Reseller to Trusted Advisor

While AHEAD started out as a value-added reseller, the company has been committed to its own transformation. In 2010, they expanded into strategic consulting and managed services, and when the technology began to change, they invested in developing practice areas in cloud, security and automation.

AHEAD works with customers to understand their goals, educate them, and help them move forward with strategic planning services, design and implementation. Their current services portfolio has expanded to include expert education, strategy development, design and planning, and deployment and management offerings.

The Path Forward

While AHEAD has guided countless enterprises along their path to digital business transformation, they continue to prepare for, and invest in, their own future. A VMware Principle Partner, AHEAD holds multiple VMware Master Services Competencies (MSCs) and continues to invest heavily to build its knowledge of VMware solutions and modern application development practices.

“Our understanding of VMware strategies and expertise with VMware technologies have consistently paid off for us,” says Dan. “VMware NSX®, VMware Cloud Foundation™, and VMware Tanzu® are pioneering solutions that enable our customers to drive change and transform their businesses.”

AHEAD also has continued to expand its capabilities and scale by merging with Data Blue and acquiring Sovereign Systems in 2019, followed by acquisitions of RoundTower Technologies and Kovarus in 2020.

AHEAD SUCCESS STORY

Customer

- A large midwestern energy utility

Goal

- Evolve its legacy enterprise IT architecture using VMware Cloud Foundation and VMware Tanzu

Outcomes

- Accelerated application delivery
- Greater service agility and scalability
- Improved alignment of infrastructure expenses with evolving business demands and capacity requirements

comdivision

Making “Work from Anywhere” Work for Everyone

The global pandemic ushered in an era of work from anywhere, which made virtual desktop infrastructure (VDI) critical for organizations with widespread distributed workforces. With extensive experience designing, running and operating IT infrastructures—combined with proven expertise in end-user computing—comdivision was perfectly positioned to help organizations when they needed it most.

The Path to Becoming a Trusted Advisor

comdivision has been focused on providing customers with transformative digital technology solutions for over 20 years. Customers consider comdivision to be a true partner on their modernization journey, because as Yves says, “They know that when they pick up the phone to call us, they have an expert at their fingertips. That is why they keep coming back.”

While comdivision is a medium-sized company, some of their customers are among the largest enterprises in the world. Yves feels that the company’s longstanding and multi-faceted partnership with VMware has been a catalyst in enabling them to become the trusted advisor that they are today.

comdivision:

ABOUT COMDIVISION

Based in Muenster, Germany, comdivision is a virtualization and cloud computing consultancy that provides strategy, implementation, training and emergency support to organizations in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and North America.

Here are three ways that comdivision has leveraged the relationship with VMware to grow their business.

1. Develop expertise across VMware solution sets

comdivision, who has worked with VMware since 2001, is the first partner in Europe's DACH region (Germany, Austria and Switzerland) to earn all available VMware Master Services Competencies (MSCs). Now, comdivision aims to be the best of the best across the entire VMware portfolio. "No matter what kind of help customers need, from virtualization and application design to network and storage, we have the right expertise," says Yves. "Most of our team members spend a quarter of their time on education and building up their skillsets."

Yves says that the VMware MSCs are a key reason why they are invited to strategy discussions, and why customers look to them to solve their current problems and position them for success in the future.

2. Work with VMware on joint go-to-market planning

comdivision is more than just a VMware solutions expert—they are a true go-to-market partner. The two companies regularly collaborate on identifying opportunities, pitching their combined expertise, and designing and implementing solutions. VMware and comdivision also frequently work together on massive technology undertakings, such as enabling a German car manufacturer to migrate tens of thousands of desktops from an on-premises data center to the cloud.

3. Collaborate with other IT partners on VMware solutions

Recently, comdivision worked with a large public cloud provider to migrate a German bank's infrastructure from an on-premises data center to the cloud. While the cloud provider is expert in many VMware solutions, they had limited experience with VMware Cloud Foundation™.

comdivision has an MSC in Cloud Foundation, and thus was able to partner with the cloud provider to help the customer achieve their goals.

COMDIVISION STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

"Even when people say it can't be done, we'll still try to make it happen. Our goal is to help customers achieve their desired business outcomes."

YVES SANDFORT
CEO
COMDIVISION

Softline

The Digital Transformation Disruption

It was six years ago when customers began talking to Softline about wanting to get out of the data center business and embrace the cloud instead. Fortunately for Softline, Sergey Chernovolenko, Global CEO was ready when it happened.

The Path to Becoming a Trusted Advisor

Softline knew that in order to become the type of trusted advisor organizations needed, they too would need to undergo their own organizational transformation.

Following are five ways Softline reimagined its business to pivot from selling products to helping customers solve meaningful problems.

1. Operationalize the cloud for customers

More often than not, achieving meaningful business outcomes requires some level of cloud adoption. However, many organizations don't know how to get started and don't have the in-house expertise with cloud native technologies that's required.

In order to help customers embrace the benefits of cloud, Softline expanded its capabilities to include digital transformation consulting and cloud native software development. They also built a cloud brokerage platform that provides customers with streamlined access to SaaS marketplace services, tracks usage and manages billing across departments.

2. Commit to internal transformation

Previously, partners sold high-ticket, once-per-year hardware transactions and annual services contracts. Revenue was predictable and sales teams received a percentage of that revenue as part of their compensation package.



ABOUT SOFTLINE

Headquartered in London, Softline is a trusted provider of digital transformation, cloud services, and cybersecurity solutions and services to more than 150,000 organizations across the globe.

Now, partners must shift their focus from selling products to helping customers harness the power of digital transformation. This involves retraining transactional sales representatives, or replacing them with customer success professionals who are experienced in helping clients reach their goals. Softline did both.

3. Help all technology buyers achieve better business outcomes

In the digital world, heads of sales, marketing, human resources, logistics and lines of business leaders can and do select, buy and implement their own software solutions. However, many of them are not technology savvy, nor do they have the time to learn about all of the products on the market.

Softline customer success managers and engineers act as extensions of their customer teams. Softline leaders frequently meet with customer leaders from across organizations not to pitch products, but to hear about their latest opportunities and obstacles, and how Softline can help. This is how they developed a reputation as a trusted advisor, and became the go-to partner for a leading international auto manufacturer.

4. Develop expertise in key industry verticals

In addition to a deep understanding of a buyer's business charter, being a trusted advisor also requires a detailed understanding of their respective industry. Softline acquired several companies with employees who had domain expertise in the industries in which they were focused, and with the types of engagements they were pursuing. They also created Centers of Excellence in retail, finance, manufacturing and insurance verticals.

5. Build and nurture relationships with the wider technology ecosystem

Today, Softline works with more than 6,000 different vendors, and has formed strategic partnerships with the top ten worldwide vendors including VMware, Cisco, Dell and Apple. They also attend partner-focused events with VMware, for example, to learn where they are making investments, what products are on their roadmap, and how they can transform and innovate together for the greater good of customers.

SOFTLINE'S STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Being a trusted advisor requires

- Experience in your customer's industry
- Familiarity with their organizational dynamics
- Understanding of their unique challenges and goals
- The ability to architect the optimal technology solution

Presidio

Helping customers securely scale

In mid-2020, a large retail payment processor reached out to Presidio for help. The company had allocated all of their IT resources to support the sudden shift to remote work, and now needed a way to scale to support the fast-approaching holiday shopping season. Supply chains were stressed everywhere as a result of the pandemic, which made it extremely difficult to acquire needed hardware.

“Because of our experience with VMware Cloud on AWS, we were able to show the customer that instead of growing their on-premises data center, the cloud would provide the extra capacity,” says Presidio Engineering Director Mark Vaughn. “We linked their on-premises services with a cloud environment, and the customer was able to seamlessly scale up and scale down as needed by leveraging the flexibility of the cloud.”

In the midst of the implementation, a ransomware attack struck the company that the antivirus software had never seen and had no ability to defend against. Fortunately, Presidio was able to remedy the situation in a matter of hours.

Being a trusted advisor: The Presidio perspective

A global VMware partner for the past 17 years, Presidio provides a plethora of joint VMware solutions including digital workspace. In fact, they have earned multiple VMware Master Services Competencies (MSCs), and both sales and engineering team members are focused on earning MSCs and helping customers succeed.

PRESIDIO®

ABOUT PRESIDIO

Presidio is a global digital services and solutions provider that delivers the secure cloud environments that form the backbone of digital transformation.

“As a trusted partner focused on helping customers run and manage their organization, we make it easy for them to focus their resources on innovation and business outcomes,” says Bob Cagnazzi, Presidio CEO and Chairman of the Board. Adds Raphael Meyerowitz, Vice President of Engineering, “While customers can buy software from anyone, if they don’t have a partner that understands it and can implement it, they’re not going to use it. They won’t know how to integrate it with the applications they already use.”

Today, Presidio is a global, \$4 billion company serving 7,000 clients. In addition to managed services, they specialize in four key areas: modernizing data centers, security, the cloud, and digital workspaces. During the global migration to remote work, their VMware business grew by 130 percent.

PRESIDIO SUCCESS STORY

Customer

- A large retail payment processor

Challenge

- Scaling capacity to meet holiday demand when additional hardware wasn’t available

Outcome

- The ability to seamlessly scale up and scale down as needed by linking their on-premises services to VMware Cloud on AWS

Take the Next Step Toward Achieving Trusted Advisor Status

As organizations aggressively embrace digital transformation, they're choosing to work with trusted technology partners with the experience and expertise to guide them every step of the way.

VMware is committed to helping our partners transform and supporting their long-term success. For additional information or assistance with your accounts, please reach out to your VMware representative.

For more Partner Executive resources, visit [vmware.com/partners/partner-executives](https://www.vmware.com/partners/partner-executives).

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