

## PRODUCT FLASH

### Network Support Options

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#### IN THIS PRODUCT FLASH

This IDC Flash reviews the importance of network maintenance support and discuss the unique features of one service provider in particular, Network Hardware Resale (NHR). NHR is a provider of networking solutions that specialize in reducing IT costs. Based in Santa Barbara, California, the company is an independent reseller of preowned Cisco, Juniper, and Brocade networking equipment as well as an authorized reseller of Force10 Networks. NHR also offers cost-effective network management, asset management, alternative maintenance, and technical support services. Founded in 1986, NHR provides global technical support from its California, Dallas metro, New York City metro, Amsterdam, London, and Singapore locations. NHR recently announced a major expansion of its NetSure family of fully managed network service and support programs. NHR provides resources for network monitoring, technical support, and assurance for multi-manufacturer network environments. NHR has also launched its NetSure LifeScan service, which focuses on a network's operational performance, risks, and costs. The LifeScan diagnosis has the ability to identify ROI improvements by focusing on extending the life of your existing network.

#### SITUATION OVERVIEW

In the world of networking maintenance, customers have options on who they use to support that asset. These include:

- A vendor or an OEM
- An authorized service provider
- A value-added reseller
- A third-party maintainer

In *The Vendors Strike Back (Against the Third-Party Maintainers)* (IDC #228183, May 2011), IDC reviewed the differences between these entities. I will now talk about the importance of having a support contract and a good go-to partner for services:

- Uptime:** No matter how hard enterprises try to make all systems redundant and fault tolerant, the inevitable will occur: network outage or downtime. To that end, hardware contracts play a crucial role in getting equipment back up and functioning within a well-defined service-level agreement (SLA).
- Product compatibility:** In this era of the "cloud" network, configurations are more complex and compatibility matrixes are key in building a datacenter network solution properly. When choosing a vendor, look toward one that has a deep understanding of the components going into your environment. Providers that not only sell but maintain equipment will have a very good understanding of these matrixes, which will help prevent downtime.
- Tools:** The standout support providers are going to have the tools in place to determine the health of your network and point out potential problems. They will alert the proper personnel when issues do arise and will provide inventory and contract management capabilities. Knowing what is under contract and where equipment is located is crucial.

To that end, Network Hardware Resale has just enhanced its offerings to include components that round out a more end-to-end network maintenance and service solution. The expanded service offerings include Network Management (performance monitoring, incident and event management, and security management), Proactive Provisioning, Professional Services, and Network Assurance. They are backed by 24 x 7 x 365 SLAs, global network operations centers, personalized technical support (via phone, email, and online), and guaranteed next-business-day hardware replacement. With the addition of these added-value services, NHR is now armed to provide support in a multivendor, complex, global network architecture.

#### FUTURE OUTLOOK

In this very competitive maintenance industry, and with IT environments becoming more complex, support providers are going to have to think outside the box to provide true multivendor networking support. They will need to bring the tools and response times customers are looking for to solve business-critical networking issues. The service providers that rise to the top will have feature-rich product sets that are cost effective. These solutions will not always come from the vendor alone; companies like NHR are developing the tools that can help business with these global network issues.

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