



# Channel Chief view

## Exclusive Networks bridges skills gap

### Value-added distributor Exclusive Networks is using professional services to open up new opportunities for Australian resellers.

The cybersecurity and cloud specialist has technicians in Perth, Melbourne and Sydney providing professional services to resellers of products from Fortinet, Nutanix, WatchGuard Technologies, SentinelOne, Barracuda Networks and others – and it provides the only local presence for some emerging vendors.

It's not only benefiting emerging vendors by giving them boots on the ground, but it's also helping resellers access new technologies and extend their geographical reach.

"I'm finding that with a lot of our partners, their resources are already deployed and a lot of tasks probably don't warrant having an engineer full time. They can turn to us for that expertise," says Kaarena Chapman, Exclusive Networks' National Sales Manager, noting that the company only sells via the channel.

### Specialist skills

This approach earns praise from Sydney-based reseller Virtual Graffiti Australia. It sells hardware and subscriptions to schools, government customers, hospitality companies and other medium-to-large organisations. It doesn't have a services team and few of its customers ask for technical assistance. But when they do, Exclusive Networks technicians are invaluable, says the reseller's CEO, Alan Wahlhaus.

"We would have lost some opportunities if we were not able to provide professional services," Wahlhaus says. "It keeps us in the conversation."

Wahlhaus sees an advantage in using Exclusive Networks' specialists instead of hiring a more generalist technician or integrator for cybersecurity work. "We have a couple of integrators we work with to put in access points or something like that. But Exclusive Networks provides just a much higher level of expertise," he says. It helps that

the distributor's technicians have plenty of real-world experience – some have been with the company for five years.

That experience is valuable when dealing with senior IT people, explains Wahlhaus. "They know when they're speaking to somebody competent and when they're not," he says.

And it helped the reseller record an impressive win in 2019 – the sale of Barracuda Networks' Message Archiver to the subsidiary of a major multinational automotive manufacturer. Exclusive Networks helped scope the project, and configured and deployed the hardware, slashing the time it took the client to access its email.

"Every deployment is different, so it has to be tailored, based on the existing network setup and the client's litigation holes," says Exclusive Network's Senior Technical Engineer Rashid Mohiuddin.

Meanwhile, Melbourne reseller CSW-IT tapped Exclusive Network's team to win a 5,000-seat SentinelOne deal with a major healthcare provider in New South Wales. Exclusive Networks was involved in discussions about the rollout and installed and tested the machine-learning enabled endpoint protection during a 50-user pilot.

The Exclusive Networks team says the ability to deliver a solution, rather than a product, was key to the healthcare deal – and its professional services were invaluable. "If we had not been able to provide them with professional services, I doubt that customer would have gone forward with SentinelOne," explains Paul Hocksena, Exclusive Networks Technical Manager.

### Flexible approach

Another feature of Exclusive Networks' partnerships is flexibility. Its services team do everything from deploying products to helping with presales and running training sessions. "We like to think of ourselves as an extension of the reseller. We'll wear their



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Kaarena Chapman



T-shirt if they like," says Chapman.

Fast response is especially important to Virtual Graffiti's CEO. "Our business model is based on providing quick response times with quotes and precise information. That's how we find working with Exclusive and that's why we choose to work with them," Wahlhaus says.

Even the way Exclusive Networks charges for its services helps Virtual Graffiti. The reseller's Sales Executive Thad Legg explains: "Maybe the customer just wants to call up and ask a few questions when they get halfway through an install. A vendor support team will say, 'now you should have bought professional services with this.' But Exclusive Networks can do 15 minute increment blocks of professional services."

There's plenty of demand for this flexible, specialised approach, according to Exclusive Networks. No doubt there will be plenty more as the cybersecurity and cloud markets continues to grow.