

Certification the way to go

Uwe Brandkamp, business unit director for the networks business unit

How many people are in your team, and what do they do: The Network Business Unit consists of eight channel managers, taking care of 3Com, Cisco, Dialogic, D-Link, LeGrand, Linksys, MGE UPS, Netshield, Nortel and Packeteer. In the Gauteng Networks sales branch we have three account managers responsible for taking care of our largest customers and the service provider market. Two sales assistants support the account managers. Comztek also offers services to complement the networking product range and we have a business development manager responsible for this. We have a great team of people in this division that are passionate about their products and customers, and will all go the extra mile to service the distribution market.

What products are in your division: 3Com, Cisco, Dialogic, D-Link, LeGrand, Linksys, MGE UPS, Netshield, Nortel and Packeteer, as well as related services.

Please give a brief outline of each of the product lines/brands:

Data networks - 3Com, Cisco, Nortel, Netshield, Linksys, D-Link and LeGrand;

Telecommunications - Nortel, Cisco, 3Com, and Dialogic;

Bandwidth optimisation - Packeteer; and

Power protection and cabling - MGE UPS, Netshield, LeGrand.

What is the current highlight of each product line/brand: 3Com is a leading global provider of enterprise and small-business networking solutions that help organisations achieve their business and networking objectives; Cisco Systems is the worldwide leader in networking for the Internet; Dialogic is a leading provider of open

systems platforms for the converged communications market; D-Link is a leading manufacturer of networking, connectivity and data communications products; LeGrand is a world leading manufacturer of electrical equipment, cable management systems and wiring accessories; Linksys is a specialist in VoIP, wireless and ethernet networking for home, Soho and small business users; MGE UPS is one of the world's largest manufacturers of power protection systems for data centres, networks and PCs; Netshield designs and supplies networking and communications equipment in South Africa for the local international markets; Nortel focuses on leveraging today's networks while providing cost-effective evolution to the networks tomorrow; and Packeteer is the global leader in WAN application optimisation.

In your experience, what is the biggest challenge that resellers are facing today: With the recent acquisitions and mergers in the IT industry, many pundits have said it is a sign that the industry is consolidating. This has largely been precipitated by the credit crunch in our industry, skills shortages and the convergence of technologies. I believe that resellers should look at the benefits of the solutions they provide to their customers and align themselves to vendor partner programmes which will differentiate them.

How are you working to help them in this regard: I believe training, certification, and adopting Vendor partner programmes remains the most effective way by which a reseller can stand out amongst their peers. Comztek works with our channel continuously to assist in achieving this.

In your experience, what is the biggest challenge that distributors are facing today: The slowdown in the IT sector's spending will have an influence on our market, although at this point government still continues to spend on expansion and new projects, which is a positive sign for the whale industry. Also skills availability will continue to



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be a challenge for us until a new generation of skills enters and is trained in our market.

What do you think the solution is: Together with our channel partners and vendors focus on market segments which will augment their revenue streams and profits. Promote training to expand the skills availability in our market.

How is your division at Comztek changing and growing to meet current and future demands: The Networks Business Unit was the cornerstone on which Comztek was built, and has changed and grown over the years to stay ahead of market demand. Currently we are investing our efforts in SMB, the mid-market and service provider space.

How does your division work with others in Comztek to offer the dealer a complete solution: The product brands in the Networks division cater for quality, stable and converged networks and enable reseller to develop their business by providing customers with end-to-end services enhanced skills and more flexible implementations.



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