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# Achieving exceptional customer experience

The key differentiator to MSP success

Commoditisation
What's all the noise about?

The emergence of new cloud services and solutions show no signs of slowing down, as more businesses outsource IT needs in order to streamline and create cost efficiencies. With enterprise customers facing the challenge of selecting the best technologies from thousands of SaaS, IaaS and PaaS vendors, the competitive landscape for service providers gets tougher day-by-day.

Where many service providers fall short is in their lack of service differentiation and customer transparency, which impacts customer confidence and weakens the business partnership.
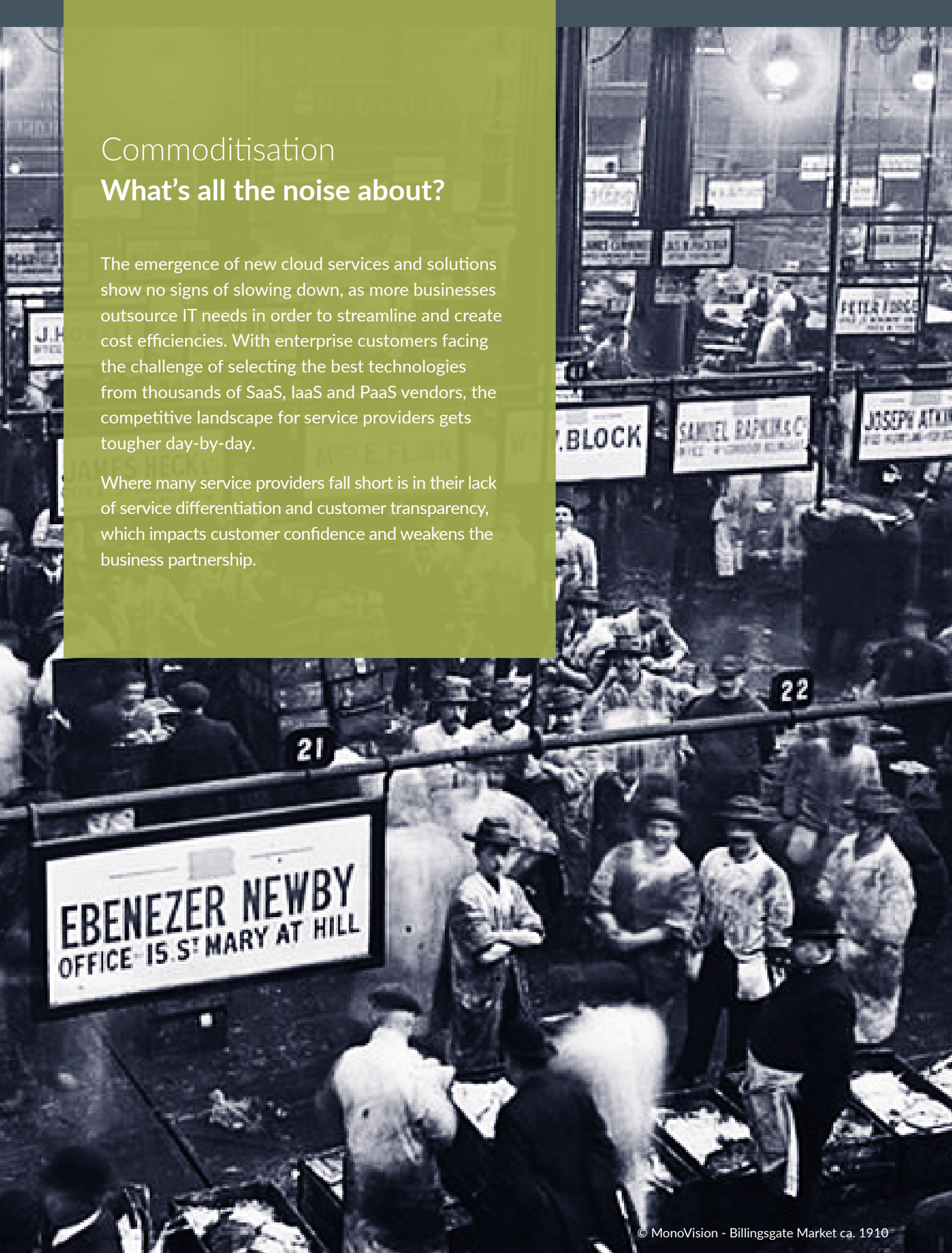
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"Practice what **you preach**"

Knowing how to talk the talk but not walk the walk of "good customer service" is a common theme.

Whilst most service providers have acknowledged that their portfolio has been driven into a commodity marketplace, they still don't make active changes to customer service processes, or they fail to deliver upon their customer promises. Instead, they look for shortcuts by overselling services to gain quick prospect wins, overlooking these customers shortly after acquiring their signatures on contract.

"All service providers talk about customer service, but unfortunately many of them fail to take the tangible steps to deliver the customer experience and engagement that their customers want," says Edmund Cartwright, Highlight's Sales and Marketing Director.

Without excelling in customer service experience, there's not much else to compete on other than price, and businesses face the risk of trading one poor service provider's customer service environment for another.

Re-working sales strategies and continuing with the same approach to customer service whilst hoping for a better result is unproductive and produces zero positive results.

So, **what is the solution?**

Offer a unique value proposition.

Changing how the state of a customer's network and application performance is reported and communicated in a meaningful and easy format in which the service provider and customer can understand, collaborate and agree on corrective actions.

How can anything improve when the root cause of the issue itself is not addressed?

Removing **the dark cloud**

Transparency must be a priority at every level, whether it's account communication, financial reporting or network and application performance.

Making the status of network and application services visible and obvious to all is fundamental – from senior management to sales and service management teams. Service providers who are open and transparent with performance data empower decision-makers within customer enterprises to better analyse and craft informed

strategies (data-driven decisions) from solid evidence to fulfill their business needs. Not only this, but they can appreciate the quality of service being delivered.

> *"What's missing is a shared, accurate picture of service performance reality – clear evidence of the customer's situation providing insight for the right action to be taken."* – Edmund

Continuous improvement requires **the right means**

Successful service provider businesses are built on fostering a continuous improvement capability, and a desire for long-term relationships with their customers. A culture of 'continuous improvement' is the hardest thing to get right and sustain, but it is also the most influential in satisfying and retaining customers. It is an impossible business goal to achieve without equipping employees with the right tools that create the foundation for excellent customer service through a high-quality and dynamic service.

Traditional service provider tools are designed for engineering and operations teams making them unsuitable for less technical employees and customers. The main barrier that service providers face when adopting new tools is political; engineering still has a big voice, and assumes that their monitoring and management tools are

sufficient to enable sales and service management to deliver the right level of service engagement.

But the reality is that these customer-facing teams cannot be expected to produce extraordinary business outcomes with no "data to hand" or fragmented data pulled together from disparate sources which is too complex to be understood by themselves, and their customers.

> *"Delighting your corporate customers is much easier when the tool used to communicate service performance is designed to be easily understood and shared between the service provider and customer."* - Edmund

How do these engineering and operation centric tools **negatively affect customer experience?**

- Lack of automation and access to adequate data, makes it difficult to produce customer-focused reports that show how well or poorly services are performing

- Causes disconnects between highly technical SLA reports and the quality of service experienced by the customer

- Customer contact time is spent defending against service defects and heightened perceptions of poor experience as conversations degenerate into finger pointing and opinions, rather than being fact-based

- Lack of proactivity in reviewing and improving customer services and experience through recommendations and remedial activities in real-time

- Failure to improve customer satisfaction results in difficult, or impossible, contract renewal negotiation

Consequently, service reviews hold no value to either the service provider or customer, since there are no clear and tangible routes for improvement.

Lift the lid on networks **with Highlight**

Highlight's powerful monitoring, alerting and reporting solution provides at-a-glance status of the entire ICT estate. It enables service providers and their corporate customers to have a shared graphical view of events taking place on critical networks and business applications through a single pane of glass, rendered in near real-time.

While retaining maximum information clarity, Highlight also provides drill-down details with historical trends and patterns, useful for: driving improvements in fault handling, resolution speeds, knowing when and where infrastructure needs upgrading and capacity planning.
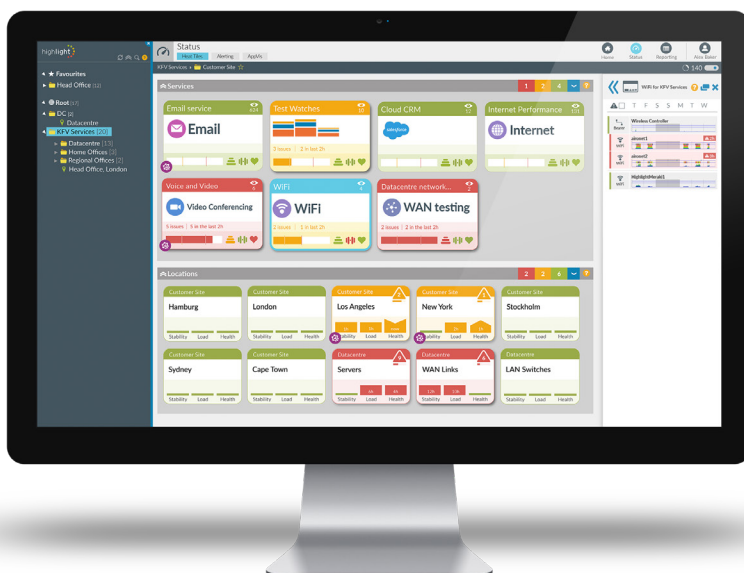
Highlight is designed for users of all departments and technical abilities, improving service management, operations, sales relationships and ultimately enabling MSPs to secure "trusted advisor" status with their customers.

How Highlight enables **true business partnership**

Displays a single truth - shared visibility of impartial data gives maximum transparency and openness, fostering trust between service provider and customer

Enables conversations - service provider and customer can communicate in the same language. When problems arise, both can see that there is a performance issue and during service reviews, value of the service is represented with hard data

Delivers an effective and responsive service, driving speed of issue resolution - service providers can be more proactive, seeing issues build in real-time and acting upon these before the network is impacted

Improves the intelligibility of complex data – all necessary data is there, but is shown in an easy to understand format

Improves customer relationships – service providers can make efficient use of time in customer relationship building rather than data crunching

Highlight is multi-tier and multi-tenant SaaS platform enabling service providers to manage multiple customer accounts in a single tool, increasing operational simplicity and efficiency.

An overview of the **key features**

- **Heat Tiles** – unique to Highlight, Heat Tiles show clear and actionable information through a traffic light system with custom thresholds, which aid in averting potential issues before having an impact on infrastructure

- **Alerts** – enhanced alert management system provides only the alerts needed based on thresholds and sensitivity, which means more proactive resolution

- **Reports** – scheduled reports on-demand designed for simplicity and flexibility, which can be delivered directly to email inboxes for service assurance

- **AppVis** – shows how all applications are performing and monitors the growing use of Shadow IT

- **Performance tests** – credible evidence on the network for assurance that everything is running as it should be

- **WiFi monitoring** – insights into how WiFi networks are performing to accurately meet the quality of experience demands for WiFi access points

- **Broadband Clarity** – visibility on the speed and stability of rate adaptive broadband connections with auto-detection and thresholds

Gamma **shines a light**

Gamma, a supplier of voice, data and mobile services, offers Highlight to its large and medium-sized enterprise customers so that they have clear, real-time visibility into the performance of their managed communications.

David Macfarlane, Managing Director at Gamma, says "Highlight enables us to watch over our customers' experiences as we strive to remove the burden of customers having to manage their own communications infrastructure.

"Highlight was the silver bullet. We use Highlight to monitor the infrastructure and applications across our customers' environments, but the big bonus is that we share the same tool with customers so they can see how everything is performing. No information is redacted, and all data is real-time, so customers can hold our feet to the fire to ensure they get the services they expect."

Highlight has enabled Gamma to move up the value chain in terms of management information, and take on a more consultative and advisory role with a continued focus on improving services.

Get in touch

If you want to know more about how Highlight can help you, please get in touch:

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🌐 highlight.net

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Achieve real business partnership and **become the "trusted advisor"** with Highlight

Displays a single truth – shared visibility of information gives maximum transparency and openness

Enables conversations – customers and service providers communicate in the same language

Creates confidence – data is impartial, fostering trust between service provider and customer

90+ countries, **7,500+** customers including **33%** of the FTSE-100

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