

Meru Networks announces new channel partner program that delivers more support, fewer costs and higher profits

London, UK – 2nd June 2008 - Wireless LAN pioneer, Meru Networks is to roll out a series of channel initiatives as it plans to ease the pain points in Wi-Fi implementation for both customers and reseller partners.

In June, Meru Networks announces a plan to transform its existing channel programme into a new, fine tuned, upgraded version. Like all exquisitely engineered products, the channel programme, the ease of engagement deceptively hides a sophisticated range of benefits and clever functions that can be delivered. The new system will be easy to follow for its users – the resellers – while delivering a host of clever and sophisticated features, which enable the programme to be personalised for each individual.

The new programme will have the classic three tier channel structure, with aspiring partners invited to improve their profitability by rising up the hierarchy of Value, Pinnacle and Distribution partners, through their commitment to knowledge acquisition and volumes of business.

A good channel programme must be simple to follow, policed efficiently and bring value to the partners, according to Meru Networks. So it has a model that endeavours to protect resellers' margins and sales prospects. Resellers will be given the option to register an interest in a customer, for example, in a partner preference system that recognises the pioneering work of resellers in finding new clients.

The new programme is thought to be such a dramatic move forward that Meru Networks decided it is only fair that existing partners re-apply to the new system. All previous knowledge and experience, of previous reseller partners, will be taken into consideration, however.

The objectives of this new programme are three fold. To create and protect the income available to reseller partners, to improve the efficiency of knowledge transfer between Meru Networks and its partners, and to make working with Meru Networks as easy and profitable as possible. There will be a series of initiatives to enforce these three objectives, which are listed further down. Further announcements will be made as these innovations are launched to the channel.

Meru Network's new channel partner programme is launched in response to a series of issues identified by the vendor's internal market research team. Meru has evolved a new scheme that builds on the strengths of its existing offering to resellers and offers a new range of services and support to the channel.

Following months of extensive research by Dave Kelly, Meru Networks's VP of EMEA and his team he has identified the essential needs of the channel, and created a programme that sets out to meet those demands.

"A good channel programme is like a good product," explains Kelly. "It has to be easy to understand, and easy to follow, but with the sophistication to adapt to any individual reseller's needs. Hiding the complexity of a great product, to make it look simple, is the ultimate engineering discipline. And a lot of care and engineering went into building this channel programme."

Meru has built the following components into one simple and engaging channel programme. Joint sales engagements and demand generation, access to all Meru products and services, a unique sales proposition through lowered cost of installation and a well established 'Magic Quadrant' brand that is not over distributed.

Meru Networks was recently recognised by Gartner Research as being a Visionary vendor in its Magic Quadrant, which identifies the top tier of vendors in any technology market. The Gartner study on Wireless networks identified Meru Networks as a top tier vendor in recognition of its product strategy.

Demand for Meru Networks's Wi-fi solutions soared, fuelled in part by the fact that the product is not over distributed. *"There is nothing more attractive to a reseller than an emerging brand that is a long way from a commodity,"* said channel analyst Guy Matthews, of Transom Media. *"It gives the systems integrator a powerful differentiator from the competition, and attractive margins."*

In anticipation of a surge in demand for Meru Networks products, Dave Kelly has set out to create the optimum reseller programme: one that endeavours to protect reseller margins, as far as possible, helps the resellers to create a market, and maximises the vendor's coverage without compromising its partners' profits.

"There are three pillars on which any great channel programme is built," explained Kelly, *"higher profit and margin potential, an uncomplicated programme and a vendor that is easy to do business with."*

Higher profit margin will be delivered through a series of new initiatives, such as a time saving, simplified programme. Joint sales and demand generation initiatives will supplement this objective, and profitability will be complemented by a plan to give resellers access to all the Meru products and services.

The challenge of maintaining Programme Simplicity will be met by adhering to value based transactions and leveraging of industry certifications. The acquisition of product knowledge will be a key differentiator for Meru Networks. Delivery of training will be structured, so that the cost of investment is reasonable, affordable and manageable. An enhanced demo programme is also planned for the channel.

Meru Networks has also set out to provide economies for the channel by being an easy company to do business with. As a leader in WLAN technology and a recognised Magic Quadrant (MQ) brand, resellers should enjoy an environment where the product sells itself.

One of the strongest weapons in the armoury of the Meru Networks reseller will be a cost saving incentive for end users that obviates the need for expensive site surveys.

The new improvements represented are:

- Simplified levels of partner accreditation, with partners being classified according to their business model, into either Pinnacle or Value resellers.
- Accreditation being extended to distribution partners
- Improved Certification requirements
- Recognition of industry standard Certifications
- A Web based application process
- A flexible Online training programme
- Priority Access to Technical Support
- The option to sell a Meru Packaged Service
- Marketing and promotions for all levels of product, service and partner
- Access to marketing funds

Though the Meru Networks reseller channel is expected to be a broad church, Dave Kelly outlined the typical target reseller:

“Resellers with WLAN experience, particularly in resolving the challenges of multi-cell technology, will be a first priority,” said Kelly. “partners who sell VoIP or video will be particularly useful too, as they understand how wireless should be rolled out as an extension to the network.”

Vertical market knowledge will also be highly valued. Those with experience of providing services in healthcare, education, hospitality, retail, logistics and large enterprises could be form a profitable partnership with Meru Networks.

“We want to create a channel where it’s equally in both our interests for the reseller to be making money,” said Kelly, “as long as you’re happy, we are happy.”

Meru Networks is initially looking to recruit 20 partners in the UK, and 100 across EMEA.

Partner Requirements [What We Want From You]

1 Post sales engineer
1 pre sales engineer
1 sales person
A business plan
A Demo Suite for WLAN and VoWLAN
Project Deal Registration
End User Information via POS
Acceptance of Terms and Conditions

Benefits [or: What We Give You]

60% demo products to resellers (discount?)
70% demo products to distributors
Priority Tech Support for T2
Service Discounts for Meru Support Packages
Demo Software Downloads
Product Promotions
Pinnacle Partner Logo
Joint Sales/SE Engagement
NSP for Registered Deals

Partner Preference for Deal Registration
Partner Extranet
Free Online Training
Demand Generation
MDF Eligibility
Exec Engagement
Beta Test Invitations

About Meru Networks

Meru Networks develops and markets wireless infrastructure solutions that enable the All-Wireless Enterprise. Its industry-leading innovations deliver pervasive, wireless service fidelity for business-critical applications to major Fortune 500 enterprises, universities, healthcare organisations and local, state and federal government agencies. Meru's award-winning Air Traffic Control technology brings the benefits of the cellular world to the wireless LAN environment, and its WLAN System is the only solution on the market that delivers predictable bandwidth and over-the-air quality of service with the reliability, scalability and security necessary to deliver converged voice and data services over a single WLAN infrastructure.