MILES TECHNOLOGIES

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For many in the channel, 2009 was a challenging year. With companies limited in their ability to secure capital combined with lower revenues yielding less free cash flow to invest in technology, many IT projects scheduled for 2009 did not materialize. And with the economy expected to recover slower than in previous recessions, channel partners must adapt their solutions offerings to meet the demand of how customers want to purchase technology solutions.

As we head into 2010, a growing number of small to midsize businesses will look at options like hosted technology solutions and outsourcing IT infrastructure as a means to deal with limited IT budgets. Hosted technology offers the benefit of low monthly fees and no major upfront capital investment in IT infrastructure when deploying enterprise wide solutions. Often these solutions can be implemented in days not months allowing internal IT departments to spend more time focusing on day to day operations not long-term implementation.

Other businesses will look at alternatives like outsourcing many or all of their IT functions to reap the savings that reduced headcount can bring. Reseller organizations that can offer the ability to meet not only software application needs but also handle hardware, training, service, and ongoing technical support will be well positioned for future growth. Businesses that utilize a "total solutions provider" will also find that decision will lead to less headaches and an overall lower total cost of ownership for their IT solutions.

MMF CASH DRAWER

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End users will be looking for products that have expanded feature sets that can help them achieve multiple goals and or improve their bottom lines. Peripheral suppliers will be expected to understand all the concerns of their end users and then design products that, if possible, address as many of those concerns as are within the normal functions of those products.

A case in point is Loss Prevention. As retailers seek to reduce costs and improve their bottom line, there is an added focus on shrinkage at the POS. By working closely with end users and the VARs who service them, we stay on top of their areas of concern and whenever possible add features or options to our cash drawers to help them address those concerns. Another example is product obsolescence. As POS system change or are replaced, there's nothing worse than having to scrap perfectly good hardware because it's not compatible with the new or upgraded system. We have seen a lot of cash drawers get dumped over the years because they had the wrong interface when a new system went live. Although that was a major problem for the end user, it was a sales opportunity for the cash drawer suppliers.

But our value (and our future) as a supplier is tied to how many concerns we can address with each sale. So, we patented the upgradeable interface concept that allows our drawers to be easily modified in the field to work with any interface requirement. In 2010, we expect to see more demand for products that address more and more retailers concerns.

MOTOROLA ENTERPRISE MOBILITY

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2010 more than any year in recent history will be the year that separates the truly successful from the almost successful. As the economy begins to rebound, we can expect to see a "return of competition" between healthy partners who intend to ride the recovery to record growth levels. While the recovery will not be as steep of an incline as the rate of decline seen in late 2008 and early 2009 there is still significant upside particularly in areas like the mobile workforce. Those partners who plan for profitable growth with a comprehensive plan for success will win. Channel firms that competitively press forwards towards growth in 2010 and don't give in to the urge to lean backward from residual 2009 fear will take full advantage of the opportunities afforded them as businesses that survived the worst recession in recent history, and grow at record rates.

Gone are the days of enterprise customers being willing or able to spend upwards of 40 percent on IT capital expenditures simply to achieve status quo results. 2009's economic conditions caused businesses to reevaluate their previous IT financial architecture where significant capital spends were made on IT infrastructure merely to keep the company running at a base level. From leasing and financing to complex computing models such as software-as-a-service, enterprises around the world will look to their solution provider to ensure their IT spend is more elastic, flexible and responsive to business needs. Money will be refocused and invested in the solutions that deliver cost containment, productivity gains and individual empowerment to achieve results for the enterprise.