uplevel SYSTEMS

Uplevel helps
The Michael L. Larson Company
NOT GO BACK TO WORK
[A Case Study]

Synopsis

TeamLogicIT of West Portland was one of our managed service providers (MSPs) to use Uplevel technology to help clients make the leap and stay productive working from home—for however long they choose to do it.

Client Description

The Michael L. Larson Company, P.C. is a well-regarded and growing accounting firm founded in 2001 by Michael Larson. It offers tax and financial consulting and accounting services in healthcare, manufacturing, energy, real estate, and other industries, focusing primarily on serving mid-size corporations, small business ventures, and private individuals with complex tax and financial advisory needs who desire experience and approachability from their advisors.

The Solution

TeamLogicIT of West Portland owner Ray Bayer helped set up new connections to the main office using Uplevel Systems' Secure Remote Worker gateways without having to make any house calls. They helped the Michael L Larson Company, P.C. avoid both physical and digital risk as its staff of 20 tackled tax time remotely.

The Challenge

The Michael L. Larson Company, P.C. had been using NetExtender virtual private network (VPN) technology to connect to the systems in the office but found that it disconnected often.

"Uplevel creates a 'virtual secure room' so employees can open their laptops, log in and see everything exactly as they would if they were sitting in the office," says Bayer. *"Having an always-on, nailed-up tunnel back to corporate headquarters is faster and much more convenient than having to deal with a typical VPN client."*

Client Testimonial

"Before 2020, we had a few outliers working outside the office. But during the pandemic everything flipped," owner Mike Larson recalls. *"Suddenly, we had lots of people accessing servers from multiple locations using multiple providers and home configurations. Being able to normalize things with Uplevel had great value."*

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How Uplevel Transforms Work-From-Home

Uplevel's point-to-point VPN connections extend the company LAN right into people's homes so that they're instantly connected without users having to interact with the system. The Michael L. Larson Company saw far fewer disconnects, and was able to remove the previous VPN clients from employee laptops.

"Simplicity made the transition easier, but Larson places even greater value on Uplevel's seamless, enterprise-class security."

The Uplevel Benefit

Built-in Firewall Keeps Privileged Data Safe

Working from home creates new cybersecurity challenges, as traditional VPNs offer no way to cordon off company business from other online activities.

Uplevel Secure Remote Worker solutions solve the problem with built-in firewall capabilities isolating corporate traffic to protect company assets and data from individual home users.

The Uplevel firewall blocks everything that looks suspicious, while wireless access point (AP) capabilities ensure bandwidth gets isolated.

Employees can safely move around within the home or workspace while keeping the company environment completely separate from other activities.

"It could be very dangerous for clients if the information we handle fell into the wrong hands, so we try to improve security every year," Larson says. "With Uplevel, we get a secure connection with standard security protocols that let our team connect quickly and safely without having to take extra steps that slow them down."

The solution gives The Michael L Larson Company added protection against attacks now befalling many remote workforces. "Malware attacks take a very opportunistic broadcast approach," says Team Logic's Bayer. "An exploit essentially walks down the street checking every door, and it's much easier to infiltrate a home user. Uplevel gives SMBs comparable protection to large companies that have more controls in place to detect these kinds of attacks."

Rethinking Returning

Larson's employees are spread out around Portland and nearby suburbs, with many commuting 45 minutes to an hour each way. The appeal of functioning securely without physically being in the office stands to outlast the pandemic. Along with the obvious convenience, connecting from home using Uplevel's Secure Remote Worker solution saves businesses money.

"We were thinking about expanding our office space before COVID hit," Larson recalls. "The fact that we had everybody working from home and didn't see productivity fall off has us rethinking that. It's a new normal, with people coming in part-time and less than half the team in the office on any given day. No one will ever work 100 percent from the office ever again."

Making It Simple For The MSPs

The events of 2020 brought another Uplevel advantage to the forefront: cloud-based management by MSPs on the device of their choice. "We do some configuration on the enterprise server side that typically takes about ten minutes," says Ray Bayer. "After that it's pretty much a cut/paste. Gateways get drop-shipped to employee locations and users can install them and be up and running within a few minutes, even if they're not at all technical. We haven't had to visit a single house and it's rare that anyone even wants help with the setup."

A Safe, Elegant Solution to Unforeseen Chaos

Larson and Bayer agree that the number one reason to choose Uplevel's Secure Remote Worker solution is securing remote workers. "To maintain any sort of compliance and meet insurance requirements, more and more insurance companies are wanting to see that you have a strategy," says Bayer. "Uplevel is the most elegant solution for that. It's simple to implement, makes economic sense, and it meets the true needs of companies looking to stay secure. We trusted Uplevel for all these reasons even before the pandemic, and the solution makes even more sense now."

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