



## Letter from the Publisher

By Scott St. John

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In my seven or so years working for OSS companies, I've noticed that very few of them fully understand the scope of the impact OSS has on a service provider organization. Even fewer seem to have this scope articulated into a value statement or ROI model to which service provider executives can relate. In the August issue of Pipeline, we spent quite a bit of time trying to unravel this phenomenon.

Early in my career, I saw this type of trend in engineering-lead organizations in the CAD/CAM industry. This was back in the time when Computer-Aided Design was something of a novelty. The problem was that software engineers knew how their CAD software worked and why they thought it was necessary. This generally was a founding principle - why they created the software in the first place - and sooner or later became the sales message. However, they often failed to understand the business benefit to their customer, in terms to which the customer could *relate*.

In the OSS space, there are two distinct "buyers" – the end user, often a network engineer, and the executive. Many OSS companies do a fine job explaining the technical merits and functionality of their product to the end-user, but few do an adequate job creating a compelling business case for the executive. The result is that OSS becomes under-valued and is typically bundled with new services and hardware projects. Without a consistent value model for individual OSS systems (provisioning, inventory, fault, etc.) the business case becomes harder to prove and service providers become more skeptical of the results touted in marketing literature. It now becomes the OSS provider's responsibility to clear the air.

Our next issue will focus on service providers as we ramp up for our special TeleManagement World issue, distribution, and media sponsorship. This month's issue is devoted more to OSS providers. I'd like to hear from our readers on this topic, especially if you have a ROI Model or solid business case to talk about. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank those readers who have sent comments to Pipeline in the past - you'll see some of your requested topics in upcoming issues.

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