

PoE Vendor Reignites Channel Program

By [Andrew R Hickey](#), ChannelWeb

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With Power over Ethernet (PoE) becoming a necessity to run converged networks and its peripherals like [IP](#) phones, [wireless](#) access points and security cameras, VARs are sure to capitalize on the emerging technology to differentiate themselves from the pack.

One PoE vendor, Microsemi Corporation, has seen the PoE surge as an opportunity to reinvigorate its channel by launching its Preferred Partner VAR Program.

Phil Lipkowitz, director of channel sales, for Irvine, Calif.-based Microsemi, said the re-introduction of the partner program is to educate and reward VARs offering its PowerDsine PoE system, a midspan appliance that can upgrade existing infrastructures into PoE networks, eliminating the need to replace existing switches and protecting current investments.

PoE is hitting the market hard, with vendors pushing endpoints like [VoIP](#) phones, IP security, [WLAN](#) access points and access control equipment that are powered by the Ethernet network [backbone](#) as opposed to standard wall outlets.

Lipkowitz said the goal of the partner program is to make offering PoE "a little more tasty to some of the VARs out there."

The new program will have two tiers: gold and silver. Both tiers are based on quarterly revenue and offer training for sales, pre-engineering and professional services staff. The silver level is based on \$15,000 per quarter, while gold is based on \$25,000. For silver level VARs that hit the mark, they will receive an additional two-point rebate on equipment purchases for the next two quarters. Gold partners will receive an additional five-point rebate over the next two quarters when they hit their mark.

"If they miss a quarter, that rebate isn't missed," Lipkowitz said.

Additional rebates for partners include a design registration discount program under which any registered deal for between \$5,000 and \$25,000 earns two points over the next year. Deals for \$25,000 or more earn five points.

Along with rebates and incentives, the partner program includes technical support, a proof of concept equipment program and end-user lead sharing, Lipkowitz said.

Lipkowitz said the program opens a door for VARs to offer PoE to clients who are wary about having to replace their existing switching infrastructures. PowerDsine can be installed without taking down the network and pulling infrastructure.

"A wireless project can be deployed without waiting to buy new switches and infrastructure," Lipkowitz said. "It's an alternative that makes it very easy for a VAR to go in and think of his customer."

Lipkowitz estimated that roughly 75 percent of switches currently deployed are non-PoE, meaning VARs wanting to offer PoE face the challenge of selling costly upgrades. PowerDsine, he said, offers a lower purchase price than new switches to protect switching investments.

Joe Spampinato, president and owner of Corporate Data & Voice, a Salem, N.H.-based solution

provider, said with the boom in [IP telephony](#) and WLANs, many of his customers now require PoE as a staple for their networks, however, many also recently upgraded their [infrastructure](#) in recent years with non-PoE switching.

"The majority of our customers require PoE in their infrastructure," he said. Offering solutions incorporating PowerDsine as an alternative to a full upgrade, he said, gives customers another choice and added flexibility to upgrade switching to PoE on their own time and as budgets allow.

"From a reseller's standpoint, it's huge not having to tell them to upgrade," he said. "It gives us an opportunity to get a leg up on the competition."

Terrance Boylan, president and owner of PacketLogix, a Barrington, R.I.-based solution provider agreed that the ability to deliver a turnkey wireless [networking](#) solution with PoE is a differentiator. He said Microsemi's margins and incentives are competitive compared to other PoE providers and the margins increase as VARs can dedicate more mindshare and revenue.

"The notion of PoE is not a new notion and it's not sexy in my opinion, but it does what it needs to do," he said. "And it's a nice and easy add-on when you ask [a potential wireless customer] 'How are you going to power these things?'"

Spampinato said he also sells PoE solutions from Cisco Systems (NSDQ:[CSCO](#)) and ProCurve Networking by HP (NYSE:[HPQ](#)), but having a selection and alternatives is a key differentiator. He said offering customers a 24-port midspan from Microsemi vs. having to upgrade a high-end Cisco switch could save up to \$2,000 per [switch](#) upgraded.

"It can add up," he said. "Why replace it if you don't have to. This allows flexibility. You can put PoE injectors in and get more life out of the LAN."

And as PoE becomes more of a necessity and PoE equipment like phones, thin [client](#) devices, cameras and access points become the norm, Spampinato said more and more VARs will have to offer affordable PoE solutions.

"I see PoE being a huge necessity in any environment in the very near future," he said.