Chapter 6
What Do Cars and Computers Have in Common?

Both cars and computers are indispensible, complex and will eventually break.

Do you change the oil in your car? You probably do. But WHY? You do this to prevent problems that you **MIGHT** have in the future.

When was the last time you changed the oil in your computer? I know computers don't have oil. But they do have parts and software that break . . . usually at the worst possible time.

What if …. (please use your imagination) the next time that you saw your car mechanic he said to you, *We have a new technology that about 100 of our customers are using and I think it would really work for you. Let me tell you about it.*

We install a part in your car that tells us everything about your car all the time. If your tire pressure is low, we know about it. If your brake pads are wearing out, we know about it. We know all your fluid levels, the amount of dirt in the motor, your gas mileage, the condition of your spark plugs and everything else about the condition and workings of your car.

Then here is the great part. When we see that something needs routine maintenance or repair, we fix it for you. If it is a maintenance issue, we come to your garage at night while you are sleeping (so that we don't disrupt your use of the car) and take care of

it. Other things we can fix remotely from our shop while you are actually driving your car. You will never even know that we are working. Sometimes we might need you to be with us while we resolve the problem.

Our customers have found that they love this service. This is because they don't need to worry about the condition of their car. We take care of it. They get better gas mileage. Their car lasts longer. Their car performs better. They are not inconvenienced.

You might be thinking this must cost a small fortune. At the beginning, as we got our systems and processes in place, we did have some challenges making this affordable and effective. However, since we have 100's of cars using this service, we have systems and processes that help us make this financially affordable for our customers.

We charge $100 per month for your car to be on this service plan. That includes everything except parts.

What would you say to your mechanic?

Well, to my knowledge the car repair industry does not provide this service. Although, I'm sure they are working on this technology.

But the computer industry does. And that's exactly what we do. We have software that we install on every PC, laptop and server in your network. We then watch and monitor your systems 24-7-365. The system will alert us about minor issues like your hard drive space is 80% full. If it is a major issue, like your server is down, the system will call our phones afterhours to let us know there is a problem.

The software also allows us to do preventive maintenance. We can access your computer and fix issues while you are working. We can shadow you so that we see exactly what you are doing when you have an issue.

Aside from the fact that we just love technology, why did we make this major investment in our business?

We started providing this service for two reasons:

1.   We can provide a better service for our clients than ever imagined.

2.   We now have the opportunity to really help our clients grow their business and use technology effectively.

So now you are probably asking … why didn't we have the opportunity to help clients in this manner before? Well, to be frank, it is because of the billing process. Charging by the hour creates two problems.

The first problem is that I am financially rewarded the longer it takes to fix your problems. I'm not saying that we (or your current provider) intentionally waste time or pad your bill. But what I will tell you is that our focus and measurable key performance indicators (KPIs) were on billable hours per technician.

Now our focus is on how efficient your systems run. In other words, we are focusing on how to reduce your downtime and increase your productivity.

Secondly, because we billed by the hour, our clients had a tendency to push us out the door. Understandably, they wanted to keep their costs low. They would tell their employees not to talk with our technicians. However, had they been talking to us more, we would know about small annoying issues that could have been easily resolved and we could have improved their productivity. We could have been providing monthly server checkups and backup restores to ensure that if a disaster occurred they could recover their data. But in many cases our clients just wanted to save money … and took their chances.

As you can imagine, this change has dramatically impacted our business and our relationships with our clients.

I have seen the benefit to our clients. You will be amazed at the difference that this type of switch in thinking and service will make in your relationship with your computer consultant.