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How Columbia River IT Solutions built a modern MSP on Nerdio from day one

ColumbiaRiver
IT SOLUTIONS

Industry: Managed service provider
Platform: Nerdio Manager for MSP
Region: North America

RESULTS

25%
fewer support tickets after customers move to Azure Virtual Desktop (AVD).

90%
of customer users delivered through Nerdio-managed AVD as the MSP scales.

Stronger
customer trust and cost predictablity using Nerdio's Cost Estimator as the starting point for Azure + AVD scoping.

Challenges

- A newly launched MSP needed to deliver secure, seamless remote work for SMB customers without the added headcount required to manage Azure Virtual Desktop manually.

- VPN-based remote access created daily security exposure, increasing urgency for a more secure, Microsoft-native approach to remote work.

- Azure cost uncertainty risked harming customer trust and MSP margins, making predictable scoping and cost control essential from day one.

Solutions

- Columbia River IT standardized its Azure Virtual Desktop deployment and management approach on Nerdio Manager for MSP from day one.

- Nerdio enabled repeatable deployments, dynamic scaling, and a cohesive Microsoft experience (Identity, Teams, OneDrive), improving end-user experience while reducing operational burden.

- Nerdio's Cost Estimator became the foundation for Azure + AVD scoping, helping the MSP set realistic cost ranges and protect trust with customers as usage fluctuates.

Ready to get started?

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Building a new MSP on a local-first model

Columbia River IT Solutions launched in May 2025 with a clear focus: delivering high-touch IT support to local small and midsize businesses. Founded by a seasoned leadership team with deep experience at an established provider, the MSP was built around a service model emphasizing responsiveness, security, and long-term customer relationships.

"We really wanted to focus on being a Pacific Northwest-based MSP that provided local support," said Matt Shadle, CTO of Columbia River IT Solutions.

Because the team had already managed Azure Virtual Desktop using Nerdio at their previous MSP, the decision to bring Nerdio into the new business was immediate.

"We were Nerdio partners at our old business as well, and it was obviously a no-brainer to bring them over here."

Matt Shadles, CTO of Columbia River IT Solutions

Making secure remote work the default without VPN risk

Remote work is now a baseline requirement for SMB customers, but legacy approaches like VPNs can introduce constant security pressure. "Our security vendor catches people trying to log into VPNs that shouldn't be practically every day," Matt explained. For Columbia River, that risk made a secure remote work architecture non-negotiable.

Instead, the MSP standardized how it delivers and manages remote desktops for clients, using Microsoft-native Azure Virtual Desktop with Nerdio. That approach fits naturally for SMBs already living in Microsoft 365. "If you're already in email, SharePoint, identity… adding on an Azure Virtual Desktop is simple," Matt said. "You don't have a second password. When you log into your virtual desktop, your Teams is signed in, your OneDrive is signed in."

Controlling cloud cost expectations to protect trust

For a growing MSP, cloud cost surprises can damage customer relationships and directly hit margins when costs are bundled. "We've all seen scenarios where we thought something was going to cost $500 and it was actually $2,000," Matt said. "If you bundle it in and you screw up in the cost estimate, then you as MSP are eating a bunch of money."

Nerdio's Cost Estimator became Columbia River's starting point for every Azure + AVD engagement. Rather than promising a single fixed number, Matt uses Nerdio to set realistic ranges and explain normal month-to-month variability.

Lower operational burden as the business scales

Columbia River's approach is built for repeatability: Establish a proven AVD pattern, then scale it across customers without needing dozens of employees to manage it. "How else would you do it?" Matt said. "You're not going to do it manually."

That operational leverage matters as Columbia River continues to grow its managed user base, with Azure Virtual Desktop driving much of that expansion.

"About 90% of our near-term growth involves AVD deployments supported by Nerdio."

Matt Shadles, CTO of Columbia River IT Solutions

While Columbia River is still early in its growth, Matt points to a consistent signal from his prior MSP experience: when customers moved to Azure Virtual Desktop managed through Nerdio, support demand dropped significantly. "We could see a clear trend—support tickets dropped by roughly 25%," he said. For an MSP building a high-touch local service model, fewer tickets mean more time for proactive improvements and higher-value projects.

A partner that scales with the MSP

For Matt, Nerdio is an essential partner for building a new MSP with confidence. He described the support experience as consistent regardless of company size. "Their level of support… that's a major factor in when I choose to partner with someone," he said. "As the top technical person, I want someone that I can reach out to when the stuff hits the fan."

He also credits Nerdio's partner community and product cadence as ongoing force multipliers. "Every couple of weeks, there's a new release," Matt said. "Everything that they do is for the MSP… it opens your mind up to the art of the possible."

About Nerdio

Nerdio is a leading provider of powerful, simplified cloud management solutions for businesses of all sizes. Trusted by managed service providers (MSPs) and enterprise IT departments alike, Nerdio equips organizations with seamless, cost-effective management tools for Azure Virtual Desktop (AVD), Windows 365, and comprehensive Modern Work solutions.

With thousands of customers worldwide, Nerdio accelerates cloud adoption, enabling companies to thrive in an era of hybrid work by providing modern, future-proof technology that adapts to evolving workplace needs.

For more information, please visit **www.getnerdio.com**.

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