

Great catch from the folks over at TechCrunch. In their post [“What the hell happened to the free version of Google Apps”](#) , they take note that Google is doing everything possible to channel new users of Google Apps to the paid version. This apparent shift in Google strategy regarding free raises some interesting questions:

1. Google is building a significant reseller channel. The channel is responsible for selling into corporate accounts. Obviously resellers of Google products don't want to compete with free from Google. Which raises the question, “What is the better platform for selling into corporations, the web or direct sales ?”.

2. Is Google now following the MicroSoft lead ? It may well be that we have seen a bifurcation of the free model between corporate and consumer sales. Free has its place with consumers, but where does it work and prevail with corporations ? MicroSoft has long been a proponent of online products being free for consumers, but charge the hell out of corporations every chance you get. Google tried to fight this model for a long time, merely dipping its toe into selling into corporations. Are they now pulling an about face ?

3. Has Google realized that at least in the corporate market (B2B), **if you live by free, you die by free ?** That the rising expectations of support and product enhancements by corporations never end and are expensive to live up to ?

Are there examples of companies who have been able to survive with an exclusively free model in the B2B space ?