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Full-Service IT Solutions Provider, Ntiva is delivering Managed Services To Small and Mid-Sized Businesses and Nonprofit Organization that Support Network and Cloud Applications, Infrastructure Cabling, Software, Web Development, Full Hosting and Procurement

**Business Services
Computer Networks**

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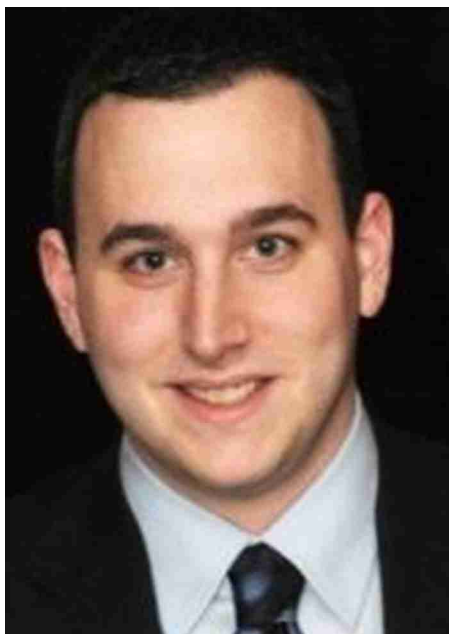
**Steven Freidkin
CEO**

BIO:
Steven J. Freidkin, President of Ntiva, Inc. founded his company in 2004 after running a successful IT consulting business throughout his high school and college years. Freidkin's love for technology, obsession with customer service, and intensely value-driven mindset are all at the core of the company he leads today. Add to this a constant quest to find the brightest, service-oriented team members; Ntiva has grown simply via word of mouth by leveraging the value of service with a true understanding of each client's business needs. Today, Ntiva, Inc. has over 70 full-time engineers that share a common goal of providing bottom-line driven technical value for its clients. Steven and Ntiva are responsible for IT strategy and support for clients ranging from start-ups to half a billion dollar companies. Ntiva, Inc. has been named one of the Best Places to Work in the Washington DC Region for 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012. Ntiva is headquartered in McLean, VA with additional locations around the U.S. Steven studied accounting and finance at the University of Maryland's Robert H. Smith School of Business and resides in the DC metro area.

About Ntiva:
Ntiva is a people-focused, full-service IT provider. From day-to-day managed support to long-term strategic planning, Ntiva delivers flexible and affordable technology solutions that are customized for each client's unique business requirements.

**Interview conducted by:
Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor
CEOCFO Magazine**

CEOCFO: Mr. Freidkin, Ntiva is the solution for all your IT needs as it shows on your website. Would you tell us what you do?
Mr. Freidkin: Ntiva is a full-service IT solution provider, so the core of what we do is provide managed services to small and mid-sized businesses, as well as nonprofit organizations; our clients either completely outsource IT management to us, or we provide supplemental outsourced IT services to those companies. In doing so we provide core support for networks and cloud applications, we also have components of our company that focuses on infrastructure cabling, software and web development, full hosting and procurement.

CEOCFO: What type of services do you prefer to do for your customers?
Mr. Freidkin: That is an interesting question. Without sounding sappy, our love is to solve peoples' problems with technology. Sometimes that is very simple and other times it is complex; it is about taking those complex challenges and making them simple. We enjoy doing both as long as we have achieved that initial goal.

CEOCFO: Would you give me an example of a company and their problem and how you helped them?
Mr. Freidkin: There are a handful of different scenarios to choose from, but I will focus on a relatively recent one. This organization's challenge was that they had multiple branch offices and they were paying an inordinate amount of money to have special internet connections that brought all of those offices together. It was about fifteen offices and they were paying somewhere in excess of **sixty thousand dollars a month with their internet service provider**. In addition to that, the speed and performance of that network was very poor. What we were able to do, after analyzing their needs and how they

were using that infrastructure, is create a solution using IPSEC tunneling which is secure tunneling through the internet. That brought the approximately $60 thousand dollar a month solution down to a cost of about $8 thousand a month for savings of just over $600 thousand dollars a year. The network performance improved because those lower cost connections had better throughput. That is one example of where our experience can help navigate a company to a more cost effective solution that meets their needs. Another example is a client who came to us with the problem that their office space was really expensive. They did not know how many employees they were going to have and noted that there were large fluctuations given the economy. By large, I mean about five or ten employees plus or minus per month. They wanted to have their workforce work from anywhere. They needed a solution that could cost effectively scale both up and down and allow people to securely access voice and data from any location. We were able to come up with a virtual desktop solution that allowed their entire infrastructure to cost-effectively sit in our datacenter within the Ntiva cloud. Their costs came from making a large CAPEX in infrastructure to move to a variable model that provides access to their technology, data, voice, and support should they need help or assistance with anything at a per user cost per month. It took the brick and mortar concern out of the equation because they could take their seventy-user company and allow those seventy people to work from anywhere. If in one month they only had fifty working employees and the next they had ninety, there was no additional investments required to make that happen. Unlike the first example that was strategically altering internet connectivity, this example provided the connectivity software and support.

CEOCFO: With all the changing technologies how do you know where to focus and what you can put on the backburner?
Mr. Freidkin: The goal is to pay attention to everything. The way we do that is by having a full-time chief tech-

nology officer responsible for using their scope and breadth in technology to scan the field and make sure there are secure, effective, and new solutions for any technology need and that these solutions are constantly vetted for all the industry verticals that we support. Moving past that, our organization of about eighty technical people are all **geeks** so when we have our free time on the weekend, or we are hanging out and talking, that topic is what we gravitate towards. It is not like we do our day job and then stop caring about the technology. Those are not the kind of people we have. We are constantly listening to our team and trying out new things and experimenting with the lab that we created to really stay on top of everything that is out there, and of course, play and have a little fun with it too! Organizations always benefit from a look at their technology every six months or a year at the most. It is more than just technology; it is making sure that the technology in use matches their work flow needs - not just getting the latest version. It is effectively making sure that the results of a technology audit are alive to the organizations. We do both – look to the future and real-time, as well as audit where we at and where we've been.

CEOCFO: What are some of the industries that you focus on and would you like to see a broader mix?
Mr. Freidkin: Our key areas now are healthcare, professional services, and nonprofits. We, of course, support many other organizations outside of those industries, due to of the nature of our business; any small or mid-sized business can use our support. Because we have grown and because our company is all engineers and no sales, every new client has come from current or previous work. Are there any verticals that we want to be in? I wish I could better articulate a business plan or model to grow into verticals but I cannot. We have been (knock-on-wood) incredibly successful with our word of mouth and referral approach and we want to help those that need help that we know we can help well.

CEOCFO: What is your geographic footprint?
Mr. Freidkin: We support companies nationwide and a few outside of the country with our 24/7 support team out of Tyson's Corner, which is in McLean, Virginia. In terms of our physical footprint and our ability to actively and quickly get onto clients sites, if needed, we support DC, Maryland, Virginia, New York, Florida, Texas (Houston), California (Los Angeles and San Diego), and Colorado (Colorado Springs and Denver).

CEOCFO: You describe yourself as a geek for many years and early on life. What do you bring to the table from your experience?
Mr. Freidkin: During that period of my life I learned the most from clients first. Then there was school. From the clients, a unique thing that happened

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was that I had the opportunity to go to many businesses and absorb how they run through word of mouth referral. I was more curious about how their businesses ran than the technology and then it sort of melded together. I would listen to incredibly successful business people tell me about the things they do well and the things they do not do well. I had this experience while attending the Smith School of Business. It gave me an incredible opportunity for enlightenment experiencing theory through education and real life practice simultaneously. It was a weird time right after the tech boom and then the housing market started to go up and our first clients were mainly mortgage and banking. I would see everything from the good, the bad, the ugly and the truly brilliant happen within the system. That all happened while I was in school and had this unique expo-

sure. I attended a fantastic university; where I learned a great deal of technical business none of which had anything to do with technology. I focused on accounting and process and just how businesses run. It was a unique opportunity and I went with it. In terms of my high school, it was a very tough school and it was very hard to do work and go there simultaneously but I did. That taught me a tremendous amount of work ethic.

CEOCFO: Your website indicates that giving back is important for the company. Why is that important?
Mr. Freidkin: I was raised in a home where giving back was critical. Our success as a company is not just defined by making money, but it is our ability to deliver value through the services we provide. It is to help people do more; I believe that we are able to make meaningful improvements to peoples' lives and organizations that in turn help other people by leveraging the same technology and solutions. Many of these companies and organizations that we are able to support cannot afford to hire us. There are a number of organizations throughout the country that we have helped with time and equipment. We have a quarterly budget that we work on as a team and look at who [nonprofits/struggling organizations] needs help and we do what we can for them. There have been times when we started with organizations and a particular technician really took a liking to them and that tech wound up spending additional time. I personally allocate a certain amount of my income annually to provide to philanthropic causes and the company sponsors as much as we can within our affordability budget.

CEOCFO: What are the intangibles you look for in your people?
Mr. Freidkin: It is very hard. We look for passion, enthusiasm, and dedication. There is no one working in the company now that thinks of it as just a nine-to-five job, no one that comes in just for their paycheck. That outlook is very important. Our technical team must be passionate about our clients and how we support them through

technology. Our team is built of individuals who go home at night and log back on, because they care so deeply and don't want us to fall behind. That has been who we have actively recruited. We have worked very hard to create a company culture that fosters helping one another and learning. Anytime somebody does not know something, they are able to reach out to the entire team, get near immediate responses no matter what day or time. In turn our techs use those responses to help them solve a problem and grow personally. We achieve this from extremely open lines of communication across the organization. We allow people to have access to tools for collaboration. We are flexible with our team, and look for people who are creative and collaborative. We look for team-oriented Rockstars.

CEOCFO: You mentioned referrals; how else do you reach potential clients?
Mr. Freidkin: To date it has really been a focus on referrals. We have an initiative for 2013 to begin developing our marketing approach, which will include a revamp of our website, and a clear communication of our products and services, presented in a meaningful way. Right now we do many different things. Communicating that at times is a challenge, so we want to focus and communicate it better and grow from there. Our core business is in the DC metro area. We want to experiment with outreach marketing in our branch office area and look forward to seeing how effective it is and ultimately try different approaches in different areas.

CEOCFO: Why is this the time for that new strategy?
Mr. Freidkin: It is probably because of me. I am ready to start developing sales and marketing for the company beyond my personal involvement with clients to close a new contract or to bring on a new product or offering. I am ready to share that load because I am about to get married and want more personal time for my family. That does not mean I will not continue work 24/7, but I want to make sure that other Ntivians are involved and

that our organization has increased redundancy. Redundancy is the primary driver. Right beyond that, we have grown to a point where we have resources and we are building those resources up. We want to make sure that there is a clear pipeline of new opportunities coming in as opposed to just referrals – a source that we cannot necessarily project out. We can look back now and say every year we have grown by 20% based on word of mouth and referral. But, how long can that continue to happen even if we do a fantastic job? Can we expect as we went from $5 million a year to $15 million? Can we expect to get a million a year of referrals to $3 million of referrals?

CEOCFO: Why should the business and investment community pay attention to Ntiva?
Mr. Freidkin: We honestly care. The thing that is most important to us is client satisfaction and delivering value to our clients. If we feel like we are not delivering value, we proactively raise our concern to the client and make changes. If we are providing services that are not bringing them any benefit, we will bring it up ahead of time to make sure they are receiving a benefit. Everything that we do for our clients is just like they were an extension of our family. We really want them to be successful. By the way, we acknowledge we are not going to be able to grow to be the next IBM because it is impossible to continue to execute that depth of personalized care at that scale. We want to grow as much as we can while keeping those principles in mind. As long as I am in control of this, that is not going to change. The truth is you would want to work with us. You would want to talk to us because we care the most and we will make sure that for every dollar spent you are seeing value. In addition to that, we happen to have in my personal opinion some of the best and brightest technical minds in the world and those technical minds can be leveraged to make sure that we are creatively solving problems through technology.

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