

Global Data Recovery for Individuals and Large Organizations



John Benkert - CEO

About CPR Tools, Inc.

CPR Tools Inc. was originally formed in 1995 in Royal Palm Beach Florida by former employees of Seagate hard drive manufacturing. In 2011 John and Sue Benkert purchased the company and have taken it from a small 'home business' to a 30 person thriving business.

At CPR Tools we perform data recovery for individuals and large organizations from around the world. We recover everything from pictures to financial programs from all types of storage media including hard drives, smart phones, tablets, flash drives and more.

"Since you are experts at getting the data back who better to make sure the data is gone forever?" That was a question a customer asked us a few years ago and because of that question today we provide 'End of Life' data security products and services for our clients. These services include data eradication from computers, laptops, phones, tablets and more and all meet or exceed government standards such as HIPAA, HiTech, FACTA, PCI and others.

Without our great team of engineers, technicians, and administrative staff none of the above is possible. Their creativity and ability to get things done is what makes CPR Tools a great place to be!

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

CEOCFO: Mr. Benkert, CPR Tools was recently named as a 2014 Florida company to watch. Why should we be watching; what do you do?

Mr. Benkert: We are doing some really cool things including a ton of research and development. We have spent a great deal of research and development dollars into data recovery and end of life data security. All over the news today are stories about data breaches and identity theft and it is a big thing in the headlines but we have actually been working on that for the last seven years. From our standpoint, end of life which means computer equipment, phones, everything that stores our data, that you want to get rid of, recycle, or donate it, you want to make sure that your data is gone. With technology always changing, the way that you eradicate the data and insure that the data is gone has to change as well. We are doing a great deal of research and development in that area and want to protect people's identity and protect people from data breaches. That is where our focus is and that is why people need to pay attention to what we are doing and probably part of the reason why we won the award.

CEOCFO: Do you find that the average consumer or company with their own data still do not pay enough attention to the end of life and still not really aware that they need to protect at the end as well as during use?

Mr. Benkert: I think people focus on whatever they are told to focus on. In the news right now, we are focused on the fact that companies are being hacked, their servers are being hacked, but there is a big problem out there with what happens after those servers and those data and server farms no longer serve their useful purpose. As a technical person, I can tell you I am just as guilty as most technical folks. Whether you are a person in business or you are sitting at home we tend to always want the newest stuff. Then when we get the newest stuff, the old stuff gets pushed to the side and we forget about it. It is one of the biggest things I stress when I talk to folks at conferences and seminars. We call it 'shiny object syndrome'. The problem is that the old thing happens to store people's data, in many cases, their personal information, so we have to make sure that we do not ignore it and that we take care of it.

CEOCFO: What have been the traditional ways and what are you working on to improve the process/results?

Mr. Benkert: I guess the easiest way to explain is to use an example like hard drives. With hard drives 10 years ago you could overwrite them with software or hardware and pretty much expect that the data is gone. The old style of hard drive, magnetic media, still exists today but they are starting to introduce newer technology using flash memory. Your phone for

instance, has flash memory chips on its solid state hard drives, thumb drives, and camera cards, that is all flash memory. As I said previously technology is changing and our methods of eradication have to change as well. Without getting too technical, those flash memory chips have a finite number of times that they can be written. The manufacturers know that, so once they reach a number of writes, they will start writing to a new chip or to a new area. Because of that, that old area can never be written to again. Which means when you are ready to eradicate the data overwriting does not work. Another example is hybrid drives, which use the older magnetic media concept but also have some flash memory on them. You can overwrite the magnetic media but there is still going to be some data contained in that flash memory. We are doing research on not only what is there, but then how to get rid of it.

CEOCFO: Are many companies like yourself doing research or are you able to be in the forefront because you have been paying attention for so long?

Mr. Benkert: I think we are in the forefront. The market for data security or end of life data security has for about the last five years started to grow, but most of the folks in these spaces just buy products from overseas and resell them and very rarely do they actually do any research or build their own products. We do. We have been recovering people's data since 1987 which puts us in a unique space...we know how to get people's data back, so we know where to look to make sure that the data is gone. That is how we got started in the data security business eight years ago.

CEOCFO: How can you ever be 100% sure it is gone?

Mr. Benkert: We cannot ever be 100% sure about anything and that is what we tell everyone. I am 100% sure that our products will eradicate the data when used properly but not 100% sure that the products will be used properly! It is why all of our products include a 'verify' function and why we push the standards to include verification as well.

“We are the best at what we do, without a doubt. We care and we are committed. If you bring your data here or your equipment here and you need data recovery, I can tell you that we are going to do everything within our power to get your data back.” - John Benkert

CEOCFO: Do you have products available now? How are you capitalizing what you have developed?

Mr. Benkert: We do have both software and hardware products now. One of our products is in OfficeMax stores nationwide. You can go into an OfficeMax store, tell them you need data recovery or that you need your data eradicated and they can do it right in the store.

CEOCFO: Would a consumer do it themselves?

Mr. Benkert: You can do it yourself. You can go online and do some research just like anything. You can buy software and hardware to do it, but typically with the cost of that, it is much less expensive just to take it into a local OfficeMax or computer store and let them do it for you.

CEOCFO: How do you get attention?

Mr. Benkert: We go to trade shows. I personally go out and do a great deal of speaking and training. We are a small company, so our marketing department is my wife and I. Of course winning awards like “Florida's Companies to Watch” doesn't hurt!

CEOCFO: Is the focus today at CPR Tools still on the end of life? Are you still doing data recovery? What is the structure of the company now?

Mr. Benkert: We will always do data recovery. We have two business lines, data recovery and end of life data security. Data recovery is where my passion lies. I have been doing it forever and I love it. Getting people's data back is such a wonderful feeling. A few months back two ladies that were driving on their way to Palm Beach from Ft Myers stopped at our shop. They were on their way to their father's funeral, and had a thumb drive which held pictures of their father that was not working. They were going to have a slide show at his funeral. My guys and gals stayed here until about nine-thirty at night, did the recovery, got all the data back for them, they were crying, we were crying. That feeling is so awesome that I never want to get away from that, but end of life data security is important as well. I have had my personal information stolen and have gotten the letter saying they would provide me protection for the next year through xyz identity protection company. I have gotten seven letters from all different companies from the last five years. That has to stop and we are committed to finding ways to stop that.

CEOCFO: What might be different a year or two down the line for the company?

Mr. Benkert: I think we will be bigger. We are starting to grow already. I am looking for about five new employees now, so I think size, and with that comes problems of its own. We are a small business and my wife and I can only do so much, we only understand so much, so I think our roles within the company, probably within the next two years will change as well. I read many books and articles online and one of the biggest things they talk about is that small business owners can take

a company so far and then ninety nine times out of a hundred, they will hit that wall where they need help to take it further. I see that happening probably within the next two years with us.

CEOCFO: *What do you look for in your people? As you are going to be adding people, how do you know when someone is right, not just technically, but culture wise?*

Mr. Benkert: When we interview folks, we have a two-step process. The first thing that we do is we look at their resume and find out if technically they are what we are looking for, then they will come into the first interview and the technical folks will sit down with them and talk about the technical things that our smart people know and do and what we look for here. If they pass through that phase, then they come back for a second interview and that is when I sit with them. I am an old Air Force guy, retired from the military and I am a real teamwork, “rah rah”, “we are all in this together” kind of guy. We need that and I understand because of that how team dynamics work. I will sit with them ask some questions and I will just get a feel for them. It is really more gut than anything. It is just a feeling that you get when you talk them and what their values are. Honesty is my biggest thing and loyalty is my second biggest thing. I really ask questions and key in on those and just go by what they answer and how they react when they are asked a question.

CEOCFO: *Are you ready to give up some control? As the company grows, clearly there will be many more changes than just new people. How do you prepare to adapt for the transition?*

Mr. Benkert: We already see it and it is definitely one of the hardest things. We try to prepare for it today by giving a little bit of control to folks that we have in place and stay away from them and let them do their job. That is where good people take over and run with it. It is difficult and if I had the answer, I would certainly blurt it out and let you know but I do not. I am looking forward to it.

CEOCFO: *Put it all together for our readers. Why pay attention to CPR Tools today?*

Mr. Benkert: We are the best at what we do, without a doubt. We care and we are committed. If you bring your data here or your equipment here and you need data recovery, I can tell you that we are going to do everything within our power to get your data back. It is one of the most important jobs in the world. I told you the story about the ladies that showed up with the bad thumb drive. I have a thousand of those stories where people on the telephone or in person are crying because they do not have the pictures of their wedding or their granddaughter or their grandson and it is just heartbreaking, so we do everything we can to get your data back and we promise you that. On the other end of it, on the data security side, we understand what that means as well. We have all been involved. I would say nine out of ten employees here have gotten that same letter I have gotten that said hey by the way, we may have compromised your social security number, so here is a free year of identity theft protection on us. We have all gotten that and it is aggravating, so we understand that part of it and those emotions passions are what we bring to the table. When you buy a service or product from us, you get that and it does not ever go away. We are here 24/7 and we care. That is why you can count on CPR Tools.

BIO: John is currently the Chief Executive Officer for CPR Tools Inc. in LaBelle, Florida. He leads CPR Tools’ business creation, communication, vision, and implementation strategy for both the Data Security and Data Recovery business solutions within CPR Tools Inc.

John joined CPR Tools in 2004 as a senior computer scientist. After two years he was promoted to the Director of Research & Development and in September 2011 became the Chief Executive Officer of the company. He has a diverse background in both commercial and government organizations, with over 25 years of accomplishments in the areas of technology and data security.

John served in the United States Air Force for 20 years. While in the USAF he flew on Compass Call, an airborne tactical weapon system, tracked deep space satellites as a member of Air Force Space Command, and served as a host liaison in the American Embassy Oslo, Norway. His last assignment was at the National Security Agency where he received the prestigious National Scientific Achievement Award for his technological innovations in the field of data security.

John has degrees in Communications, Management, and an MBA. John is very active in the Southwest Florida region as a member of the Board of Directors Hendry Economic Development Council, and the Board of Directors Hendry Regional Medical Center.

CPR Tools, Inc.

**905 Industrial Blvd
LaBelle, FL 33935
888 674 DATA (3282)
www.cprtools.net**