

**Industry Research & Analysis through Lab Validation Testing**

**Business Services  
Technology Validation**

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**Dennis Martin  
President**

**BIO:** Dennis Martin is the founder and President of Demartek, a computer industry analyst organization with its own on-site test lab. Demartek focuses on lab validation testing and performance testing of storage and related hardware and software products. Dennis has been working in the Information Technology industry since 1980, primarily involved in software development and project management in mainframe, UNIX, and Windows environments. These include a variety of large and small end-user customers, and engineering and marketing positions for storage vendors such as StorageTek.

Dennis is the founder of the Rocky Mountain Windows Technology User Group (RMWTUG) in Denver, and

served as its President for its first six years (1994-2000). Dennis was re-elected President of the group in May 2008. Dennis has made numerous presentations at conferences and has authored many industry articles. His current speaking schedule is available.

Dennis is a Microsoft Storage MVP for calendar years 2005-2013.

**Company Profile:**

Demartek provides real-world, hands-on research & analysis by focusing on industry analysis and lab validation testing of server, network, storage and security technologies, for the small and medium business (SMB) environment and the large enterprise.

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

**CEOCFO:** Mr. Martin, what is the vision at Demartek? What does the company do?

**Mr. Martin:** We are industry analysts with a test lab. We like to take cutting edge server, networking and storage technologies, deploy them in our lab and provide the best information for both users and vendors about how things work and how to deploy them.

**CEOCFO:** What is the key to really understanding a product well enough to be an expert in analyzing it?

**Mr. Martin:** We like to run it, actually. We do what an end user would do; install it, run it and put it through some paces. Then we can write about it with quite a bit of knowledge.

**CEOCFO:** How do you remain objective? Sometimes going in there may be, not even a realized bias, but a particular way of doing things or a

particular brand. How do you keep that real objectivity?

**Mr. Martin:** We try to use consistent, repeatable processes when we run our tests, and we work with a wide variety of vendors and technologies. Over time, we can have a good idea of the expected results for any particular test. Because we work with many vendors and many technologies, we're comfortable with all of them and cannot really say that we have one favorite. We remain objective by just making sure that we have a broad enough scope of all the things that we do. We try to be as even as we can.

**CEOCFO:** Who is using your service? Technology is a big, wide area.

**Mr. Martin:** There are two main audiences. The first group are the vendors who produce the gear who need independent validation of the capabilities of their products. The second group are the I.T. professionals who read our reports and view our videos. We work with all the major computer product vendors. We have deployed many storage systems from the major storage vendors, such as EMC or NetApp. We also work with the component vendors like LSI, Emulex and Intel and many, many others. We work with entire server, networking and storage systems that end-users purchase and we work with the components that an end user could buy to put in their systems. We have a data center, enterprise focus. Although we have consumer products ourselves, we do not really test consumer products. We know that people from around the world are reading our reports, because of our web logs.

**CEOFCO:** Are there many companies in your space that do the kind of testing that I suspect you do?

**Mr. Martin:** There are some. I am sure there are some we do not know of. There are a few that we do know of; at least we see some overlap. It is kind of a niche though.

**CEOFCO:** Why would a company choose Demartek rather than someone else to test for them?

**Mr. Martin:** We try to have a reputation for being very, even handed, and we have a very heavy technical focus. We do not do market research as far counting units shipped and revenues and all those kinds of things. We strictly focus on the technical aspects of these products. We like to actually run them ourselves and we are known for that. Therefore, that helps to narrow down us as a good choice. We have been doing this a while. We get feedback from the people who read our reports that show they like us. That is because they are written well, but they are neutral.

**CEOFCO:** Do you find that most of the companies that contract your services pay attention and make changes based on the information that you are able to provide for them?

**Mr. Martin:** Yes, they definitely pay attention. We do give them feedback that we know that they take back and it works back into the product cycle. Because we have relationships with most of these companies we are also engaged in dialog with them, even if we are not doing a particular project for them, so there is another source where we can provide feedback; we ask questions. Therefore yes, there are multiple ways for us to provide that feedback to them.

**CEOFCO:** Is it typically for a company comes to you with a finished product or might they come during various stages in development?

**Mr. Martin:** Most of the time it is a finished product. Sometimes it is well along in development, but not quite finished.

**CEOFCO:** What are one or two of the things that you have looked at that have been most surprising in how they worked or did not work? What surprised you as testing has been done over the years?

**Mr. Martin:** Some of the surprises, although sometimes not a complete surprise, is to use different technologies in the same context to see how well they work compared to each other. For example, a different set of storage interfaces running the same test, but with different interfaces such as an Ethernet or Fibre Channel or something of that nature. Based on our experience we have our suspicions going in about how it is going to turn out. However, sometimes we are surprised by either the difference that we see, or how close they are. Those are the kinds of things that sometimes surprise us.

**CEOFCO:** When you are looking at a new version of a product that you

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have already tested do you treat it as a brand new test? Do you look at the old data? Does it factor in?

**Mr. Martin:** For the most part, we treat it as a brand new test. Occasionally, we get a new version of the product and are asked to run the same test that we have previously run. Quite often, however, the customer will want us to do something completely different than what we did last time. Therefore, if it is completely different we might look at the old data, but the context is not the same. Therefore, we treat most things as a brand new test, even if we have some experience with the product or technology.

**CEOFCO:** On the other end, are people paying for your reports? Do they buy a report at a time? Is it a service that you contract out? What is the business model?

**Mr. Martin:** The end users do not pay anything for the reports. They can find

them through their favorite search engine or just go to our website. All of the public work that we do is free on our website. Our primary business model is that vendors come to us and pay us to run an independent validation test, usually in our lab. Therefore, it is similar to the “free over the air” TV model. When you watch a “free, over the air” TV program you do not pay to watch the news or watch your favorite drama or your favorite sports show. However, there are advertisers who are paying money to the network to pay for the cost of producing and distributing that content. Users do not pay to get our reports.

**CEOFCO:** Would a company typically have more than one lab test their product?

**Mr. Martin:** They might. Usually, they do not; at least as far as I can tell or at least they will not repeat the same test with someone else. They might ask someone else to do a different test. Generally speaking it seems to be that each test is unique.

**CEOFCO:** How is business today?

**Mr. Martin:** Business is good! We have grown over the years in

terms of staff and equipment. We are very busy so it is good.

**CEOFCO:** What do you look for in your people? Is it all technical skill? Is there a certain mindset or a personality type, along the tech skill?

**Mr. Martin:** There are two things. It is a combination of technical skill and the passion to do this; the very high interest level and just being passionate about what they do.

**CEOFCO:** Do you provide reports in more than one language as well?

**Mr. Martin:** We do sometimes. Yes.

**CEOFCO:** Are the companies that you work for globally? Is there a geographic area that you see room for growth in?

**Mr. Martin:** Because we are in the computer industry the vast majority of the companies that we work for are in the US. However, most of them have

international reach, international offices and international customers.

**CEO CFO:** What is ahead?

**Mr. Martin:** There are always new technologies or new ways to deploy these new technologies. We are doing lots with SSDs right now. We are doing lots with high-speed network connects. There is always something new. It is fun for us, because we get to play with the new stuff. When I say play; we like what we do, but it is work, but it is also like play. We tend

to work a lot with “cutting edge” technology. Therefore, whatever is new, we are probably working on it.

**CEO CFO:** What did you work on early on that you realized was going to be a big winner as far as technology?

**Mr. Martin:** At first it was simply exciting to perform lab testing on a wide variety of products and technologies in our lab. As for big technology winners, solid state storage, or SSD technology is

definitely a big winner over the long term.

**CEO CFO:** Why should investors and people in the business community pay attention to Demartek? What makes Demartek an exceptional company?

**Mr. Martin:** We really like what we do! We try to be objective. We really focus on the heavy technical side of things. As I said, we like what we do. We have fun doing it and I think that comes through in the content that we write.



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