

Business Technology Aid for Small Businesses

**Technology
MSP**

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**Rene Miller
CEO**



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President & CFO**

About Ener Systems, LLC:

Ener Systems was founded in 1997 to help small businesses in the Greater New Orleans and Northshore area get the most out of their business technology. Over the years we've helped many small businesses relieve their technology worries so that they can concentrate on growing their businesses and realizing their goals.

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

CEOCFO: Ms. Miller, briefly, what was the concept when the company started and where are you today?

Ms. Miller: We started in 1997. Before this we were both working as mechanical engineers and we could not find good technical support for our computers. We just started investigating and researching. We gained all this knowledge and other people would ask us for help. We thought this could be a business to go into and we started doing it on the side. Then in 1998 we decided to make it a full time business and both of us jumped ship and we have not looked back since.

CEOCFO: What were some of the issues that you were finding when you could not get the service you wanted and how are you able to provide them today?

Mr. Miller: The computer issues that we ran into were constantly reoccurring. Things were never getting fixed, only patched. The fix would be a "band-aid" to cover the problem. The next day the same problems would come back. We were finding that we were more knowledgeable than many of the IT people out there. With a background as professional engineers, we are trained in processes and

standardization, along with a lot of technical knowledge. We found that we knew more than the technical community we were asking to assist us. Not just more technical skills but also project management skills. From small things like how to roll out a server to the bigger projects.

CEOCFO: Your website indicates that you have lightning fast response, customer service, ability to deal hassle free technology solutions. How are you able to provide a better level than your competitors and maybe an example of how that shows up?

Mr. Miller: Primarily it shows up around our ability to deliver process. What ends up happening is that businesses typically come in and ask 'how to make technology cheaper for them'. Our first question is "Do you believe that your total cost of a problem is what you write a check for?" They then ask, "What do you mean?" Then we have a 20,000 ft. conversation and they realize the total cost of a problem is much more than what they write the check for. It also includes the downtime, lost productivity, and lost opportunities with a customer. Where I am going with this is that we charge more than our competitors do, but we have to deliver a different end result than our competitors--the processes required in order to prevent problems from ever happening and to deliver the solution that our clients need for their profitability. This end result ends up being cheaper for our clients.

Ms. Miller: Our clients do not want technology holding them back. They do not want to deal with the nit picky things. They do not want to know how to fix technology, they just want to use it and have it working when they need it.

CEOCFO: Do you find that many of your prospective clients understand the difference when you explain it to them?

Mr. Miller: Yes, they understand. This understanding of how IT should be done leads the prospect and us to dive deeper to see if that 'end result' matters to their bottom line. If yes, then we have a future together. If the 'end result' won't help them; then we go our separate ways.

CEOCFO: Are there particular types of businesses that you work with? Any common thread other than understanding what you do?

Mr. Miller: We find that these principals apply in most industries. We have not specialized into one particular vertical. We have everything from medical clients to engineering clients. Like you said, the common thread is that they all depend on technology and use technology to move their businesses forward.

CEOCFO: Do many of your clients take advantage of the full range of your services?

Mr. Miller: All of them do. For example, we like to use the analogy of a chocolate cake. We are not a "by the ingredients" business. What do I mean by ingredients: antivirus, firewall, patching a computer. Those are all ingredients. What makes the difference is how the ingredients are put together—what we call 'process'. That is what makes the chocolate cake taste great!

CEOCFO: What is your geographic reach?

Mr. Miller: Geographically we service from Biloxi, Mississippi westward to Baton Rouge, LA. Most of our clients are in the Greater New Orleans and Northshore area. However, there are remote users that are outside that footprint. We have clients with users outside of the country, and we support them. We have partners that we can call on to be our boots on the street in San Diego or Chicago if needed—basically every decent size city.

CEOCFO: How is business these days?

Mr. Miller: Year over year we are blessed in that we will probably see another 25-30% in growth.

CEOCFO: How are you able to handle that?

Mr. Miller: The biggest challenge is always building the team. Without our team we could not get there. The right people in the right seats on the bus take us to new heights.

CEOCFO: Over and above the technical skills, what are the intangibles you want for people representing Ener Systems?

Mr. Miller: Are they willing to deal with the client as they would want to be treated? That means that they will stay until the job is done, even if it is 8pm. If Saturday rolls around and a client needs help, we want our people to have the initiative to take care of our clients. When I am interviewing, I am finding ways that people exceeded the expectations of the people that they worked for.

CEOCFO: Are there services you

"Ultimately it is all about our clients being successful with their customers." – Rene Miller

would like to add to the mix? Are there areas such as a mobile that you would like to have a greater involvement with?

Mr. Miller: We are customer driven. We know where the customers need us to be. When mobile became more prevalent, we went there because the business needs of our clients put us there. We do not take our clients kicking and screaming to the forefront when we are doing our business planning with them. We see the newer technology on the horizon and if it is a fit for a client, we are there. For example, not everybody is 100% cloud compatible. Some of the cloud is a fit for all of our clients. But 100% cloud will not work for everybody, so we do not force all of our clients into the cloud—just what fits. If there isn't a business reason to get into a particular technology, then we hold off providing those services.

CEOCFO: Although you mentioned that you are customer driven in the sense of technologies, how do you

judge what you might keep on your radar and what might fall by the wayside?

Mr. Miller: We do that a couple different ways. One is that we vet technologies through attending quarterly meetings with industry leaders. We talk shop and seeing how they are using new technology. This is often a good way to find out the downside to the latest and greatest technology out there. On the other side is that we take new ideas into our quarterly meetings with our clients. We tell them "Look, here is some gadgetry. This is where the industry is going. Let's talk about how this might help you". That is how we vet technology out to the client to see if there is something that can help them serve their customers better. Ultimately we know that it is not about finding more customers that we can sell more gadgets to. We know that if we make our clients successful with their customers it always comes back to us.

CEOCFO: What surprised you as the business has grown and developed?

Mr. Miller: What continues to surprise me is how technology such as the Internet is constantly changing everything—for good and bad. The benefits of the Internet seem to be never ending—how we have become more efficient and effective. On the flip the side, the Internet will continue to be used in malicious ways that often could not be foreseen. It is our job to be on the front lines to help our clients use this technology in positive ways; while at the same time protect them, their teams and their families in an ever changing threat environment.

CEOCFO: Put it all together for our readers who are primarily in the business and investment community, why does Ener Systems stand out as an exceptional company?

Ms. Miller: Ener Systems brings process around IT so that we can drive the profitability of our clients.

Mr. Miller: I would add that ultimately it is all about our clients being successful with their customers. If our clients are successful, success comes our way.