

Managed IT and Cloud Services for Small and Mid-Sized Businesses



Eric Schlissel
CEO
GeekTek IT Services Inc.

CEOCFO: *Mr. Schlissel, what is the idea behind GeekTek IT Services?*

Mr. Schlissel: Our mission is to empower small- and mid-sized businesses to capitalize on the rapid evolution of technology by providing forward-thinking IT leadership and exceptional customer service. I founded this company in order to assist other business owners in leveraging their current investments and thinking ahead as to where their businesses are going in the future, and how IT can align with that to improve both their return on investment and their business operations. The big idea is that our clients were typically underserved before we started working with them, and our goal is to provide the level of service that all businesses require and deserve. There are many businesses out there that just do not use IT to its full capability. Our goal is to help every business in Los Angeles achieve these goals.

CEOCFO: *With IT and technology changing so rapidly, what is the key to keeping a customer current?*

Mr. Schlissel: When we start with our clients we examine where they have already made investments. We analyze how their business operates, how they are using technology today and how they see their business evolving in the next three to five years. We will then overlay the perspective of where the industry is going and where the computing world is going. Our goal is to figure out a three to five year roadmap of for their IT and then make decisions to make sure that we are evolving their technology in order to take advantage of these changes. Nobody knows exactly how this is going to play out, but we do know some key themes that we can plan around and make sure that their infrastructure is nimble enough to take advantage of these changes. We also take a measured approach to make sure that we are not diving too deep in the technologies that are unproven. We do not like being on the cutting edge in all cases, because in some cases we have found that businesses that we have brought on as clients has invested in technologies that are no longer relevant to their business or to the industry as a whole. Therefore, we do take a measured but forward thinking approach. We do not look at the five year plan and say that we are going to predict the future. However, what we can say is that we know works and we have an idea of where things are going and we can position our clients to take advantage of as much of that as possible.

CEOCFO: *Who is coming to you for service? Is there a typical customer?*

Mr. Schlissel: Our typical clients have twenty to two hundred and fifty employees. They have either outsourced their entire IT, are considering outsourcing their IT in one area, or are looking to augment their current IT. Therefore, they are either understaffed or they are looking for an outside consultancy to have on-call on a retainer basis. Our clients tend to have a few things in common. One is that they want more control over their IT. Another is that they want to control their costs. They are looking for security, both in terms of digital and technical security, but also in terms of feeling secure that their IT is being handled and they don't have a lot of risk associated with IT. Our clients vary in industry, but they all have those same needs.

CEOCFO: *Are people coming to you because they understand the depth of your offering and the philosophy to really help them or are they surprised to find out how you really care about what they are doing?*

Mr. Schlissel: When we go into our initial client meetings, it is clear that when I sit down at the table that there is empathy and compassion and that we understand their business and we have been there before. That comes across pretty quickly, both in initial phone conversations and in meetings. We back that up in few ways. One is to provide references. When we provide references of our current clients that tells our prospects that we live up to that promise. As you said, there are many companies that do what we do. This is a competitive market place. However, there are not many companies that do

this well and retain their clients at the rate that we do. That is actually one of the key metrics that we look when we look at the success of our company. The fact is that we do not lose a lot of clients, because we truly take on their IT as though we are part of their company. I am on a speed dial basis with the CEOs of many of our clients. They look to us for leadership and they look to us for consistency and we deliver on all of those promises. We get calls from prospective clients who are being underserved by their current providers or are being taken for granted, because they have been working with them for so long. I spend a lot of time thinking about how we can improve our service to all of our clients, regardless of the size or regardless of their tenure with us. My goal is to not only bring on new clients and bring them into our program, but to retain the clients that we have and make sure that their needs are being met. When I go into a meeting with a prospect and they have said that they have been underserved the first thing that occurs to me is, "Am I serving all of my clients to the point where they will not have this meeting with someone else?"

CEOCFO: *Would you give us a concrete example of how GeekTek goes above and beyond?*

Mr. Schlissel: One example is a national food manufacturing company that we have been working with for three years. We are their full IT department. They are a household name brand that you would recognize. For the last few days they have had a series of outages on their ERP system. This is critical to them. If this is not running they cannot run production and their business is affected. We had them back up and running in a matter of hours. If we had gone down the typical trouble shooting path and looked at each component in isolation it would have taken us days to figure out where it was because this was a non-obvious problem. Most companies would have assigned a single engineer to the problem and have that engineer follow their trouble shooting list; go down the basics, is it connected, is it up, what part as down, as opposed to me saying, "Okay senior support team, the entire team is on this. Work on this until this is solved, we need a solid answer of why this happening and we need a resolution immediately, because this is mission critical to this client." Most providers would not go that far on a simple server outage. However, to me, when our clients cannot run their business that is when we step up and that is when we prove our worth. That is why they hire us and they stay with us.

"Our mission is to empower small- and mid-sized businesses to capitalize on the rapid evolution of technology by providing forward-thinking IT leadership and exceptional customer service." - Eric Schlissel

CEOCFO: *When you are bringing people on to your team how do you know that they have the right mind set and understand the philosophy?*

Mr. Schlissel: We have an interview process that is pretty long. We have at least three or four interviews for every candidate that passes the initial screening. You can get a pretty good feel of who a person is pretty quickly. Of course technical skills matter, but they also have to be able to effectively communicate complex problems to a layman then to be a good fit for the company. We look for a caring nature, an ability and willingness to have empathy on every single call that comes in and every single ticket that they are working on. That is why hiring is so challenging. If I had to list the problems or the challenges that I face as the CEO of this company, one of the biggest ones is finding the right talent. It is finding the people that will match our company culture and that will execute. It has been challenging, but we do have a very solid team.

CEOCFO: *How are you able to help your clients with security issues?*

Mr. Schlissel: That is very timely topic. Companies are more security focused and they are security minded. We come in and we look at security from a number of different angles. The first is physical security. Do they have physical safeguards for someone tampering with their systems? Do they have locks on their server rooms? Do they have servers in house or is it in the cloud? Then we look at their education or their internal programming. Do they instruct their employees not to give out passwords over the phone unless it is someone that they can verify that should have their password? Do they teach people not to write down their passwords? Do they show people how digital security can be compromised by leaving their sessions open? Do they have anything like that in their handbook? We also look at digital security. We look from the outside in by doing a penetration test from the outside. We look for firewalls to make sure all of the rules make sense. We make sure that the logs are being monitored. You can have all of the security in the world, but unless you are keeping an eye on it on a minute by minute basis you will not know that you are being attacked or that someone is trying to get in. We then look at end point security. Do the systems have any security monitors installed on them? Do they have a preventative antivirus? Do they have the software that they require to make sure that each individual work case and each individual server not only blocks incoming requests that are unauthorized, but that report back? We then look at policies. Are the group policies set to lock out sessions after a certain amount of time? Is there a proper password complexity set? Is the organization security focused or security inept? We base our solutions around what their requirements are. We have clients that have requirements from the MPAA who releases guidelines on how digital assets should be handled. We look at all of their particular requirements and then we develop a plan. We execute the plan and

then we have ongoing strategy for making sure that these policies in place, are acted on and that we are monitoring their security on an ongoing basis. Security is not a one-time thing. It is a mindset and it is an action plan and it requires ongoing action.

CEOCFO: *What might be different a year from now at GeekTek?*

Mr. Schlissel: We are moving more of our clients to the cloud and creating cloud solutions for our clients. We are moving more into security. We are continuing to expand at a very rapid pace. For the last two years I have been named as one of MSP Mentors Top 250 Executives in the world. Our company is now listed as one of the Top 501 MSPs (Managed Service Providers), globally. That is how well we are executing. My goal as the CEO of this company is to continue that growth, but in a very responsible way, so that we do not drop any balls. We are very interested in where we are going with the cloud. We are very interested in where we are going with security. We are very interested in continuing to provide our baseline services that we do. Our virtual CIO services are being utilized by our clients more and more. Our clients tend to not have an entire IT department. They might have one or two people or they might have none. My goal is to provide all of the aspects of a large enterprise IT department to the small and mid-sized market. That means that we do everything from the service desk to the director level to the escalated level to the CIO level. We are very flexible with our offering in that when a client or a prospect comes to us and says, "We have a Tier I guy on site, how can you help us?" Then we look at all of the other aspects of IT. There is a broad spectrum of what IT can do for a company. We mold our solutions to our clients needs. I see more of that. I see more clients coming to us saying, "How do we handle the cloud, how do we handle the fact that we just do not want to pay this much for IT and we have our investments, but we really want a better solution?" That is the stuff that excites me. It really excites me when a business owner comes to me and says, "What do we do? We have got these problems that we know of. How can you help us?" I love that part of what we do. I love helping business owners and I love helping employees. Our goal is to make everything run smoothly. I often say that our clients do not usually call to say hi; they call because there is a need and our goal is to make sure that that need is addressed and met and resolved to their satisfaction.



GeekTek IT Services Inc.
www.geektek.com