YOUR BUSINESS HAS NEVER BEEN THIS SAFE!

Outsourced IT Department for SMBs Providing Computer and Infrastructure Support and Network Services throughout New Hampshire and Massachusetts

Joerg Laves
CEO
IT Secure Services

CEOCFO: *Mr. Laves, would you tell us about IT Secure Services?*
Mr. Laves: IT Secure functions as an outsourced IT department for small and medium sized businesses. Since the information technology infrastructure has become an important leg for companies to stand on, it has become important for efficient and continuous operations. We take that worry off the minds of small businesses.

CEOCFO: *What is it about your approach that is stronger and more effective for your clients?*
Mr. Laves: We work in a controlled and proactive manner. We document what we do and follow that documentation extremely well so there are no surprises. We set our clients sites up in a manner that we benchmark to what is best in class.

CEOCFO: *What is best today may not be best six months from now. How do you help a client plan?*
Mr. Laves: We act as the client's virtual Chief Information Officer and help make sure that the infrastructure satisfies the business owner's future plans. But most of all, we need to protect the data. We put multiple layers of security between our clients' data and the internet. We look at what is available and what is economically feasible. There are new threats appearing every day. One needs to study their adversary to beat them. I study the adversaries and try to find out what they are doing and how they are doing it. That makes it a lot easier to be prepared. There is a trade-off. Theoretically, the safest way to deal with a client's data is not to let anybody see it, but then it really does not do the client any good. The other way is to share everything out but then you would be in trouble with abuse, theft or even malicious destruction. There is a happy medium. What we always say is that we try to build a strong shell on our customer's environment where our customers can play freely inside that environment. We put multiple safeguards in place so that threats that roam around do not have a chance. We need to keep current on that since it is always changing.

CEOCFO: *Do clients come to you looking at the security side first or is it an enhancement for clients looking at an MSP?*
Mr. Laves: I must have had a lucky minute when I picked the name of the company because people are concerned about security. We see something on the news or in the newspaper almost every day where breaches are happening and businesses get hurt. Sometimes people think we only do security. I have to always clarify that we do all that other stuff. I am not entirely sure why people turn to us but there are different trigger points. Yesterday I had a call from a client that ended up on our website looking for IT service and found out we install and maintain VoIP phone systems and that made them pick up the phone. I think the name is important because security is the biggest threat to the data infrastructure, which has become so vital to businesses; many businesses cannot function without access to their data.

CEOCFO: *What is your geographic reach?*
Mr. Laves: We are based in southern New Hampshire. Our client base is mostly southern New Hampshire and northern Massachusetts. We are working our way up 89, still in New Hampshire to the upper valley. We have some remote clients. We have one client that just moved to Hong Kong and we are continuing to support them.

CEOCFO: *Do you do much on premise these days?*
Mr. Laves: We do very little on premise. It is just like in the kitchen: it is all in the set-up. I used to work with a guy that was a chef in New Orleans. It was fun to go to lunch with him where you could see the kitchen. Observing, he would tell

1

me what would go wrong and why; it is all in the set-up. We set it up so we have early warning from any pending issues so we can react to them before they impact the client's business and usually before they require an onsite visit. On site is a very small part. There are still ads and changes that cannot be done remotely.

CEOCFO: *Do clients like the fact that you are local even though most of what you are doing might be remote? Do they feel more confident?*
Mr. Laves: I think the buy-local is a factor in our business because people like the fact that we are local. People like the fact that we are involved in the community.

CEOCFO: *Would you tell us how you are involved in the community?*
Mr. Laves: We work with many nonprofits and we do nice things for them. I am personally involved in some nonprofits.

CEOCFO: *What is a typical client engagement?*
Mr. Laves: Usually the first thing is we go out and chat with the client and see what prompted them to pick up the phone or send us an email and what the pain points are. We then look at their environment. We usually do a site assessment, which looks at their configuration and maintenance data of their systems to do a risk assessment. We look to see if they are subject to any compliance. In healthcare, HIPAA is big and we see if they are at risk anywhere to be cited for violations. We present a summary to the client of what we are finding and then make some recommendations.

CEOCFO: *One of the things you offer is training for your clients. Do many take advantage?*
Mr. Laves: Training is a small portion of it. We do training when somebody gets a new phone system. We sometimes do a little bit of training as part of our helpdesk where a client has some issues in figuring something out in one of the applications and they call the helpdesk. We just walk them through it.

> **"Our clients tell us all the time that they hate having problems but they love calling us. I think that is a strong testament to the people here." - Joerg Laves**

CEOCFO: *Why have you included phone systems?*
Mr. Laves: It is an integral part of most business operations and these days a lot of phone systems are VoIP, meaning that the traffic is entirely carried over the same network that their computers are on. This creates interdependency and if something is wrong with the network, there is a strong chance that the phones will not work right. We found that to be a way to make sure that communication works for the client, and there is also a single point of responsibility for the data communication because the phone systems are a part of the data communication.

CEOCFO: *Would you help a client decide what system to use?*
Mr. Laves: We try to figure out what is best for the clients. There are some significant cost savings that we can bring. We look at the options and make recommendations to the client on what we think is best for them.

CEOCFO: *How do you stay on top of that?*
Mr. Laves: I do that through intelligent partnering. I partner with companies that focus on that and do that very well. We bring the capabilities of IT Secure and the respective partner together for the benefit of the client. You cannot do it all yourself.

CEOCFO: *What do you look for in your people?*
Mr. Laves: It is very important and to some extent I say we are looking for the impossible. We are looking for somebody who is approachable, friendly, outgoing and analytical. Those things often do not go together. I have been very fortunate and have found people that are just wonderful. Our clients tell us all the time that they hate having problems but they love calling us. I think that is a strong testament to the people here.

CEOCFO: *Can you tell right away when you are talking to people if they are a good match?*
Mr. Laves: It does not take too long. Usually the first impression is pretty good.

CEOCFO: *What is next for IT Secure?*
Mr. Laves: We love what we are doing. We want to do more of that but we are doing that in a controlled manner. We are making sure that when we talk to potential clients these clients fit our model. That is the secret; we do not do everything for everybody but we do some things for some people and we do it very well.

CEOCFO: *When you say fit our model what do you mean?*
Mr. Laves: I try to put things in a box. For example, if I have somebody who says they want me to supervise their network but to not touch their systems. This is a recipe for disaster and I stay away from it. I want to make sure that whatever we do, we can do right. I do not want to branch out into too many different directions. The example in the automotive world for that is Honda where you get three variants. We have similar approach to it where we make sure that our customers work in a specific way and that reduces the trouble for them and increases the speed of resolution if something starts to happen.

CEOCFO: *Do you need to encourage your clients to call you when there is a problem?*
Mr. Laves: They are pretty good about it because we are not threatening to call. We have agents on all machines and if something is starting to go wrong, we usually know about it before the client notices, and we take action based on that. They are not worried about calling because nobody looks down on them. We are easy to deal with and friendly.

CEOCFO: *How is business?*
Mr. Laves: Business is good. We are very happy and we are looking for new opportunities all the time. We make sure that we are right for the customer and the customer is right for us.

CEOCFO: *Final thoughts?*
Mr. Laves: One of the things I hear a lot is people saying that IT service is expensive. It is not just what we pay the repair guy when something goes wrong, but what happens to your productivity, employee satisfaction, and customer satisfaction. Those are all factors in the soft cost which adds to the cost. In the end, a managed proactive approach tends to be a lot less expensive than waiting for things to break.

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

IT Secure Services

For more information visit:
www.itsecureservices.com

Contact:
Joerg Laves
603-668-7733:
jlaves@itsecureservices.com