

Superior I.T. Solutions for Small and Mid-Sized Businesses

Technology
IT Support

PACE Technical Services Inc.
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Shael Risman
CEO

BIO:

Shael is behind PACE's reputation for professionalism and reliability, overseeing PACE's integral operations. He created and maintains a structure and procedures that ensure the highest level of accuracy and efficiency, focusing on transparent client communications and accountability.

Shael brings to PACE over 25 years of experience in business administration and operations. His previous roles included senior producer for a New York-based marketing company and director of regional operations for a national chain of music stores. A very active member of the internation-

al Managed Service Provider Community, Shael has been recognized several times on MSPMentor's Top 250 List, identifying the world's top managed services experts, entrepreneurs and executives.

About

PACE Technical Services Inc.

Nestled smack in the middle of the thriving Technology sector of Richmond Hill, Ontario, PACE Technical Services Inc. is comprised of a dynamic group of professionals dedicated to bringing Fortune 500 I.T. solutions to small and mid-sized businesses in the Greater Toronto Area. Certified as MICROSOFT™ SMALL BUSINESS SPECIALISTS, PACE understands the distinctive needs of this niche market and has based our business model around providing them with a superior quality IT solution that has been previously out of reach due to cost and personnel factors - a solution that is extremely versatile, scalable to company size, and can be customized to virtually any business sector.

Interview conducted by:
Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor
CEOCFO Magazine

CEOCFO: Mr. Risman, what is the focus at PACE Technical Services?

Mr. Risman: Our mission is quite simple. That is just to provide a superior business life to our clients. The focus that we use to achieve that mission is essentially to conglomerate and integrate their technologies and to be able to consult and guide and instruct in best practices.

CEOCFO: How does that work day to day?

Mr. Risman: It is a very simple managed service model with the addition of a very high value on client experience. We have a team of people; CompleteCare Technicians that are assigned to specific clients. We have a dedicated in-house Support Center that deals with every day reactive tickets and problems. We have Business Technology Advisors that are assigned to each client, whose sole purpose it is to speak at a business level with C level executives and owners and guide them into the proper best practices and help them see the value and benefit from their technology.

CEOCFO: Is there a particular type of business that you work with? Is there a common thread?

Mr. Risman: There are a couple of specific verticals, but they are not large as far as verticals go. We run the gamut from manufacturing to colleges through to various small and medium sized business levels.

CEOCFO: How do you reach perspective customers or does everyone know you now?

Mr. Risman: We have worked for ten years to really get our name and our brand recognized. However, we have a well-established sales engine that is dedicated to lead generation through various means, and a Business Development team that take us directly to the doors of organizations that need us the most.

CEOCFO: How do you foster the culture of being very customer centered? What do you look for over and above technical skills to ensure that the level of attention or the level of concern for your customer is in every one of your people?

Mr. Risman: Let's face it, everyone who works in this industry says, "We pride ourselves on customer service." However, we really "put our money where our mouth is." When we are looking for people through the recruitment process, we look not only for technical skills, but more importantly at social aptitude and a 'great client face'. Elements like excellent language and communication skills are just as important as any kind of technical skill. We also have our own dedicated in-house training program called PACE Client Experience Certification, which is a three months program that every employee of PACE has to undergo and write an assessment exam to get that certification. We run seminars and webinars and have educators come in specifically to discuss client experience. On the other side, we are always very actively checking the temperature of clients to make sure that they understand and are seeing the value of what we deliver. It is a huge focus for us. In the commoditization of managed services, which whether we like or not is happening, this is the kind of thing that makes PACE rise above regular managed service providers.

more efficient than anyone else out there who is offering this service.

CEOCFO: How is it evident when they come into your office? What are they going to see that might surprise people?

Mr. Risman: You will see what we call our "bull pen" wall filled with televisions that are marking "real time" metrics, how many tickets have been started, which clients are needing the most attention, how many tickets we have closed that day, how many tickets have been closed by each technician as well as an entire wall taken up with uptime monitoring of our entire stockade of client servers. This is just an example. Also, they see people walking around following process; we demo the software and tools that we use so that they see the

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– Shael Risman

CEOCFO: When you are speaking with a new potential customer is there an "aha moment" when they understand that you are different and that you have that superior level, or does that really come when they start using the service?

Mr. Risman: There is definitely an "aha moment." When we go in and we talk to a prospect they are used to a certain level of service. We have been delivering managed services in the Toronto area for ten years. We were one of the first ones to do this. We have made our mistakes a long time ago, while others are making their mistakes now. It has taken us a long time to develop the process and the infrastructure and the people that we need to deliver this service. Right from the "get go" when prospects come to visit our office; and we are always asking them to come in and visit our office, it is very evident that we are

process at work. They are obviously seeing our commitment to process at work, because it is happening right in front of them.

CEOCFO: What is the IT industry secret?

Mr. Risman: I do not think there is an IT industry secret. I think that if you can take information technology and do two things with it; make it understandable to your client and put your own skin in the game - that is the secret to a successful delivery of managed services. If you cannot do either one of those things, you cannot deliver it properly.

CEOCFO: Would you tell us about the CompleteCare IT™ that you offer, why that is the best way?

Mr. Risman: As I said, it has taken us ten years to get to this place. We have been through numerous changes of

tools and products. We are at a place where we are confident that we have the perfect suite of security, reactive, proactive and consulting services, because we have tested everything else. It gives us a unique delivery method – we only sell one product. You cannot come to us to deliver security. You cannot come to us to deliver reactive service. We deliver this as one piece, because the entire infrastructure is symbiotic and you cannot separate one thing from the other.

CEOCFO: How do you keep up with all of the changes in technology? How do you know what to pay attention to and what might go by the wayside?

Mr. Risman: That is a very simple answer; the clients tell us. We can gauge by what a client needs where we should point our research. We saw the growth of the iPhone and how it overtook the Blackberry in real time, and we ramped up while it changed. You see that happening before anyone else starts "calling it," because you are dealing with it on a real time basis. When you see these trends you just have to be agile enough as a company to accept them and to figure out, within your organization how you are going to make it work for you.

CEOCFO: Are there services that you would like to offer that you are not offering now?

Mr. Risman: We have already been looking into the different products that the cloud offers to be able to integrate into what we are doing. We already have a full suite of cloud products that we offer, but we are actually considering other areas such as wireless telecom. As broadband opens up there is an opportunity for managed service providers to start including that in their offerings. Things change so quickly in this business that it is hard to even look a year down the road. That is something that is extraordinarily unique to the IT industry.

CEOCFO: You have been on the Profit List, so clearly business is good. How do you continue with the trajectory?

Mr. Risman: We are a sales focused company and that is, again, a unique thing about an IT managed service company. Most of these IT companies are started by technicians and their focus on sales is not really even a focus per se, it is about having things trickle in. Myself and my partner, we have essentially non-technical backgrounds. My background is twenty five years in operations and business administration and his is twenty five years in sales. Neither one of us is a technician and I think that is a huge plus for us in that we can focus on the sales part of this and keep moving forward. That has been part and parcel to being on the Profit List two years in a row and being on MSPMentor's Top 250 Managed

Service Providers in North America three years in a row.

CEO CFO: Would you tell us a little bit about the Disaster Recovery portion of what you do? Clearly that is important when it happens.

Mr. Risman: Absolutely! That is one of the things that is included in our service delivery. Like I said, we offer one product. You cannot just come to us for backup and only backup. When you come to us, we have an appliance that is included in our monthly fee that we bring in, drop into the environment, isolate the backup file there as well as transfer it to the cloud. There is triple redundancy and it is something, again, where there is no further cost the client – just part of our service.

CEO CFO: Why should investors and people in the business community pay attention to PACE Technical Services?

Mr. Risman: As I said, I have twenty-five years experience in business operations and my partner has twenty-five years in sales. We have been together for about fourteen years and PACE, in this incredibly volatile industry, has just celebrated its decade of business. While other MSPs are closing down, we are still profitable enough to be recognized by a national magazine. Again, I do not think there is a secret here. Our team is driven by the idea that if we can deliver a product that makes business life better for people, they will come to our door and ask for it - and that is exactly what is happening.



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