IT Services and Consulting for Small and Medium-Sized Businesses

RMON Networks, Inc. aims to be the leading company of IT services and consulting to small and medium-sized businesses that do not have a dedicated or complete IT staff. We strive to achieve this goal by constantly improving the value of our technology services by making our customers more efficient, productive, and satisfied with their information technology investments.

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

CEOCFO: *Mr. Howard, what is RMON Networks?*
Mr. Howard: RMON Networks is a valuated reseller systems integrator based out of Plaistow New Hampshire. We primarily focus on servicing the needs of the small to mid-sized business and around the New England area. We are not necessarily vertically focused. We truly try to act as consultants to be impartial to help the customers assess their situation and best implement solutions that fill the needs that they have today, but ensuring that they are scalable to stay within the road map that we help create with them for the future.

Timothy Howard
President

CEOCFO: *What is the key to doing an impartial assessment when clearly you have services to sell?*
Mr. Howard: It really is our ability to step back. Once upon a time I was on the other side of the desk. I always take the approach when meeting with our prospects and existing customers to sit back and really try to understand what their needs are and because technology changes so rapidly, what solutions or technologies we can help recommend that will best fit their needs. We surely do partner with customers or vendors such as Microsoft and HP, but if they are happy with Dell or some other solutions, networking is and always has been the integration of multiple technologies into an environment.

CEOCFO: *Speaking of changing technology, how do you know what to pay attention to and what might go by the wayside?*
Mr. Howard: The beauty of being in our industry is that we have good partnerships with vendors out there that will offer us the ability to 6 months to a year ahead of a release, get into the beta programs to test what technologies will be coming to market. We can actually sit there and really start to hone in on some of these technologies so that when we are sitting down with existing customers or prospects and we are helping to develop an IT roadmap. Because having that plan is extremely important, we can then have that foresight in thinking about your budget. It is early 2014, but if this was thinking about 2015, we can start to put together that roadmap. If we know that XP is coming to end of life and we have a heavy deployment of XP. Depending upon the number of machines you may have out there, we are looking at your service infrastructure. We know that your servers are server 2003, (which is also coming to end of life) and maybe you are a customer that was caught in a downturn of the economy and you still may be running with office 2003 (which is also coming to end of life). We can actually sit back and ask what we can do to potentially virtualize some of this environment and what we can do to help you use some cloud technologies. They are some subscription-based cloud technologies that will help you move from that 4:35 to a 4:39 type of environment.

CEOCFO: *When you are talking with a potential customer, is there an aha moment they understand the difference and realize that you really are looking out for them?*
Mr. Howard: I hope so. Typically when we do sit down with a customer, we always come in with solution A and solution 1 a. We will tell them that, "Surely you came to us, you wanted to implement a new technology and

this technology is going to cost x". You can see that their eyes open up and their heads sort of shrug down a little, but then you come up and say, "We would not be truly consultants to you or a good business partner to you if we did not enlighten you to this other technology". They then see that we truly have a vested interest in their business. As a couple of our customers have mentioned to us, it is like we have skin in the game. I will come back to them and say, "We most definitely have skin in the game because we want you to be successful with what you are doing". When they see and hear the sincerity and see how we work through the process with them, they really get that this company truly cares about our business.

CEOCFO: *How do you reach out to prospective new customers?*
Mr. Howard: We will do some social media or engage with local chamber events or we may go out to a vendor get together, which may be impartial vendors or some solution providers as well as customers. We really network. I think network today in cost conscious organizations has truly been a way that we have been able to be successful over the last couple of years.

> **"It is extremely important that a vendor realize that if you are leaving the door open just a fraction, it is an opportunity for us to come in because we are pitching solutions to customers that they want more information about." - Timothy Howard**

CEOCFO: *Do you find there are some common areas where people just do not understand what should be done and where they fall short?*
Mr. Howard: I definitely do in and around business continuity. When I say "business continuity", it specifically is offsite, data backup. Many customers are skeptical of putting their data out in the cloud because they truly think the NSA or Big Brother is going to have access to their data. No matter how many times you try to tell them that the data is encrypted and show them that the data is really contained to their environment or the hosted environment, they are very skeptical. Not only with that but what we have seen a little bit last year or the year before, even the hosting of offsite email in the cloud, people were very tentative to go about doing that because their communications back and forth with their company or internal employees or business partners, they always felt would be compromised. As we all know, the ability to take the on premise service and move them toe the cloud has been well received. To think about the aha moment, we always tell the customers that you've never had a problem signing up for a Gmail or Yahoo account, so why would you be skeptical to put your business account hosted on either a Microsoft hosted environment, or Google hosted environment? Then they get the "Oh you're right, I have been using hosted email for x amount of time."

CEOCFO: *How is business at RMON?*
Mr. Howard: Business is great. A couple years ago, I made a conscious effort to take look at cloud technologies and they would help specifically the SMB customers that cannot necessarily afford these huge datacenters and redundancy. I went to a round table at a partner event where I was one of 27 systems integrators man service providers and through the event; they were talking about the different technologies. All of a sudden at the last half hour, they were, oh by the way we have this cloud technology we would like you to introduce to your customers. From person 1 through, say I was person 20 through person 19 said, there is absolutely no way I will ever move my customers to the cloud as far as email as concerned. I remember saying the same thing, that virtualization will never happen and I came back to the office at the end of the day and said this is where we are going. Ever since then, as we pitched the to some extent or hybrid models, we have been able to gain traction here in the northeast with word of mouth, press or whatever it may be because we have embraced this technology. It is proven and it is sound. Companies want uptime and redundancy. If they understand that that I am actually another aha moment, if I take my email and move it to the cloud, that means when I renew my antivirus, I do not have to get an exchange filter. When I renew my UTM for my firewall, I do not have to have an exchange module and I am going to save how much money? Aha!

CEOCFO: *What do you look for in your people? What intangibles are meaningful for you?*
Mr. Howard: To be honest with you, the one thing that I will do when I am looking to bring on talent here is the interview process is not just Tim Howard or the screening person here within the organization. When I bring the candidate back for round two of an interview process, that interview is not with me anymore. It is with every engineer or help desk person in the organization. I want my team to know that they have a say in the people

that we bring on. More importantly, I want to make sure that they feel comfortable and that he or she would be a valuable asset to this organization because we want people here that will share knowledge; not just try to be the keeper of the keys. It is important that the candidate as well as the existing team feels comfortable and feels that the person would be a great asset to the team or the person just did not seem to have that feel.

CEOCFO: *Why pay attention to RMON Networks?*
Mr. Howard: Pay attention because we are gaining traction here and we are out to continue to grow not only here in New Hampshire and northern Massachusetts, but we are out to grow in the northeast and east coast inevitably throughout the US. It is extremely important that a vendor realize that if you are leaving the door open just a fraction, it is an opportunity for us to come in because we are pitching solutions to customers that they want more information about.

CEOCFO: *Do you have a concrete plan for expansion of RMON Networks or is it more in the thought process today?*
Mr. Howard: Right now, it is more in the thought process because we are continuing to grow the team. However, I would not say it is sort of in between the far end concrete plan. I do have a plan to open up offices elsewhere in the US cities in the next couple of years.

BIO: Tim guides RMON Networks' overall business strategy with an eye toward becoming the leading managed services provider of IT Support for small and medium-sized organizations. Tim also oversees the company's technology strategy to ensure resources are utilized in creative ways to drive greater business value for our clients.

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