

## **Boutique Managed Service Provider**



**Chris Parry - CEO**

enkompas Technology Solutions is committed to a team model. Each team member has a specific, measured role in a client-centric business model. The enkompas team leverages many best practice methods including both internal and external Service Level Agreements (SLAs) to ensure we exceed client expectations.

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

**CEOCFO: Mr. Parry, what is the philosophy at enkompas Technology Solutions? How do you approach IT?**

**Mr. Parry:** We approach IT more from the perspective of solving business issues, not from the perspective of the latest and greatest. Certainly, keeping our clients current is always a requirement, but first it is understanding what the business challenge may be that needs solving and going about finding the appropriate solution that actually takes care of the issue and helps the organization grow.

**CEOCFO: Often what a company sees as a challenge may not actually be. When you are talking with a client and particularly a potential client, how do you differentiate between what they think they need and what they really need?**

**Mr. Parry:** First things first, there is a best practice approach towards how we build, deploy and manage the foundation of their technology environment. From there, understanding the business that they are in and the way technology is utilized within

that business and anything there are looking for that may help to differentiate themselves or separate themselves in their marketplace. I think it really comes down to understanding them first and their business and layering that on top of the best practice foundation. Only then can you start to really even do things on a one-off basis, but they may want to do. Perhaps the better answer to your question is that we always ask them to do a good business case on what they expect to accomplish with the idea that may be presented as well. That way, they can see that they are not just putting money into something that may not turn out the way they want it to. It is really helping them to think through from our perspective and from their perspective. You do it strategically, which is the way we arrive at the ultimate decision point.

**CEOCFO: Is there a typical customer for enkompas?**

**Mr. Parry:** Our typical customer is probably going by number of seats in a company or head count. The typical or classic size and type is somewhere in the 20 to 75 or 100 employees or seats. We do in fact have a handful – six to eight – that are in the 300 to 600 seats, so we do have some larger ones. When you look across the board, the vast majority fit the other mold.

**CEOCFO: What are some of the challenges for that size of company?**

**Mr. Parry:** Typically in the small to medium market space, the biggest challenge is the mentality of the business ownership towards technology. In other words, they have come to rely on it, they know they cannot do business without it, and at the same time you will find in many cases that smaller businesses do not really do year to year budgets, and they certainly do not do year to year technology budgets. Sometimes it is the mentality of ownership toward leveraging technology, embracing it and understanding the benefits of it and the benefits of keeping themselves current and so forth that can be a challenge. You sometimes go into an environment that is aged still trying to get every last nickel out of that investment, and it can start to cause problems. You have failures or you end up with a large budget requirement to refresh the environment, or certainly at a point in time like where we are now where Microsoft is eliminating the XP operating system in support of that. Now, companies that have been holding on to those PCs too long have some very big budgets that they have to come up with to fix that and replace them. It is the third party software providers that will not support them any longer, and it is the pieces they need to have in order to run their business that will no longer support them if

they do not upgrade. I think it is trying to educate and manage the mentality forward that we do a rolling three-year technology budget for you and we do a rolling three-year hardware refresh for you. We are doing the things that are going to help that ownership team and management team start to understand the benefits of that.

**CEOCFO: *How do you know when a new technology is going to be around for the long haul?***

**Mr. Parry:** There are so many different layers and moving parts within the corporate IT infrastructure, so you have to take it piece at a time. Most people do realize that Cisco gear is very well built with firewalls, routers and switches, and they last very long. They will just continue to work, and it is almost to Cisco's detriment, because things are not breaking. When they ask for that annual support contract, people are reluctant to do it and end up buying one extra device just to have on the shelf in the event there is a rainy day rather than continuing to pay Cisco. It is almost that the quality of their product is so high that it has hurt them in terms of an area of revenue for them. I think the Microsoft world is just becoming enough of a certified partner level. It is at a high enough level where we understand how their product turns in terms of the timelines of the life. It is generally a ten-year term. We go through a serious degree of testing before we will go off and endorse or sell an operating system or any new device, and there is a set process that we will go through. For instance, no one really cared for the Vista world, so they eventually pulled that back and came out with Windows 7, XP and all the other pieces and parts that quickly moved past that. They were much more stable. I think most understand that you are working with tier one organizations, and I have to consider Microsoft and Cisco as that as well as EMC and other people who have been around and their product has been on the market as very mature. You still need to go through due diligence, you cannot go into it with blind faith. You have to make certain of the technology before you can make that recommendation. If you see something that does not look right or smell right, we will tell our clients that we would rather them not go down that path, and we give them an alternative.

**"In today's market, Managed Service Providers take on many different roles. Here at enkompas our market position is that of Stewardship of your companies technology and how best to strategically align business and automation for maximum benefit. We love what we do!" - Chris Parry**

**CEOCFO: *Are many of your clients taking advantage of the full range of your services or are you still working with a population that picks and chooses?***

**Mr. Parry:** Most of our clients take advantage of our full range of services. We are a little unique in that we have a wider breadth of offering for the size of client that we believe we do the best job. We are not trying to go whale hunting. We want to focus on where we know we can deliver the best value and the best service. That said, it is a packaged arrangement with our clients, so we bring many different pieces and parts to the game. As mentioned earlier, it is a wide breadth of services that we have available. Now, we will always keep an eye for additional value added components that they can look at, and eventually we put in place a full range of services for them.

**CEOCFO: *When you are speaking with a prospective client, is there a moment when they understand the depth of what you provide, how you do your services and why you may be a better choice than others? Is there a typical aha moment?***

**Mr. Parry:** I think there is. I think it is once we go through our early technical sales review of the environment then come back and report what we found and be able to talk from a pricing standpoint. We then go through all of the inclusions of our offerings, the process and procedures and our service level agreements and so forth. Our company, while it is not a large company, it is set up to run more closely to a large outsourcing company with the way we do things. I think the clients start to realize that under the various scenarios that we can discuss with them that they really are going to have good value for what they are giving us in terms of the financial investment on their part. I think we will start seeing the eyes open up and the heads start to bob as we start to present various scenarios, how it is handled and what they should expect and so forth. It is typically different than what they have come to expect from competitors. It is a full service and more vast, and at the same time it is better in terms of the performance.

**CEOCFO: *What is your geographic range?***

**Mr. Parry:** Geographically, we are situated in Southwestern Pennsylvania. We have customers with either offices or satellite offices all around the country, and we have a tool set that allows us to be able to get to an environment as long as there is electricity and an Internet connection, which is more prevalent today than ever. However, where we sell outwardly is here in the local market, so it is more of a Pittsburgh, Southwestern or Western Pennsylvania type of an approach. In and around the city of Pittsburgh and the surrounding areas, but we do support people that are in New York, Napa Valley, Texas, Florida and Virginia.

**CEOCFO: *How do you reach prospective clients?***

**Mr. Parry:** We have a sales team, and we leverage a guerilla marketing-based approach for lead generation. We have various messages that we will blast out, and there are various ways of determining who may have looked at the blast, opened it up or have actually tracked back to our landing page and so forth. There are some calls that we will go out, and we will follow up and set our meeting schedules. We also get referrals from clients and from other business partners we work with, so those are the primary methods.

**CEOCFO: *How is business these days?***

**Mr. Parry:** We grew about 15 to 17 percent last year. Our profitability has increased and improved, and we are on pace to probably see the same type of growth or slightly better since we have added our cloud services. We are now an official cloud provider, so business is doing fine.

**CEOCFO: *Did you have higher profitability because you have more clients or because you have changed some of your methods?***

**Mr. Parry:** It is likely a little bit of both. There are more clients, that is for sure, and that helps bring things in, but I think the other part of it is that we added our cloud environment that has brought in some significant incremental revenue that does not carry a lot of overhead to it. I am leveraging a one to many type of approach here out of our cloud environment, so it drives a greater degree of profitability.

**CEOCFO: *Do you find people come to you looking to move to the cloud or is it one option that you are able to provide now?***

**Mr. Parry:** Not as many come looking. I think it ends up being an option as we start to engage at the front end of a sales process and/or our relationship management team when we get to where we are looking at refreshing a client's server hardware. That is whenever we introduce this because it basically gets them out of the hardware business and keeps them to the forefront with the newest hardware and the best performance that they can get. I think we try to strategically find the right times for existing accounts, and we certainly introduce that through the sales process to any new prospect.

**CEOCFO: *How long has the company been in existence?***

**Mr. Parry:** ITPI Group Holdings has been around since April 1 of 1997, so we have a birthday tomorrow, and enkompas as it sits today started right around 2000 or 2001.

**CEOCFO: *Does the history count when you are talking to prospective clients? Does it matter or not as much anymore as it might once may have?***

**Mr. Parry:** I believe that there is always something to be said for being able to demonstrate longevity and your ability to weather the economic storms that pop up here and there. Because of the wherewithal that the business has demonstrated and the nature of what we do, it is not something that people want or intend to make changes with any regulatory. Unless there is a reason with poor performance or something negative happens, you do not see a lot of that turnover take place just because somebody can save a dollar here or a nickel there. I think being around does demonstrate your longevity or your abilities to navigate the issues and so forth and remain vital. I think it is important.

**CEOCFO: *What surprised you as your company has grown, developed and changed over the years?***

**Mr. Parry:** I think what continues to surprise me is two things. One, the changing methods of managing younger staff members and what is important to them and how to drive long-term employment with your staff. I think the other side of that is that with each client you bring on or each new prospect that turns into a client, continuing to be able to effect the mental change toward what they do and how technology needs to work within their organization. .

**CEOCFO: *What are the intangibles you look for in your people?***

**Mr. Parry:** I think it is really the work ethic and attitude toward your self-accountability to what you do as a professional, and how serious a person takes that. That is evidenced by their willingness and ultimate outcomes of getting additional technical certifications and being able to dig in whenever you need to dig in and not being the clock watcher or leaving right when your shift is up. We do not advocate people being here any longer than necessary, but in this business there are times when you are still working on something and it is five o'clock, the client still needs it to be fixed, and you are working to get it fixed so you might leave at 5:30 or 6 o'clock that day. Attitudes are the best way to look at it.

**CEOCFO: *Put it all together for our readers. There are many companies in your industry to look at. Why enkompas Technology Solutions?***

**Mr. Parry:** We are fancying ourselves as more of a boutique type of a manage service provider, not one of the large data center operators, owners and just somebody that is so heavily transactional. We are more boutique relationship-based,

yet we do and are able to offer such a wide array of services. I think that is a uniqueness and something where once you get so far up the ladder into these manage service providers that are mid-sized to large size, it is just so transactional. It is all about the next point and click. In our case, it is really about the relationship and longevity. I think that is one of the telling differences.

**CEOCFO: *Final thoughts?***

**Mr. Parry:** I think it is important to mention that we are fully staffed 24 hours a day, and we have a business that we started in Mysore, India where I have software developers and network engineers that work during our overnight hours, and some even during our work hours. We do not outsource anything to anybody. We own that business, so we are very committed to the 24/7 model and the high level of service offering and service levels. I think with that uniqueness of the boutique and the relationship-based model, I think we have a bright future in front of us.

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**enkompas Technology Solutions**  
**4900 Perry Highway**  
**Building 1, Suite 200**  
**Pittsburgh, PA 15229**  
**412.415.6330 OR 888.257.3198**  
**[www.enkompas.com](http://www.enkompas.com)**