Q&A with Anthony Oren, CEO of Nero Consulting Inc. an MSP providing IT Support, VoIP Telephone, Cybersecurity, Backup and Disaster Recovery Solutions to Real Estate, Development, Construction, Architecture and Engineering Firms in New York City

Anthony Oren
Chief Executive Officer

Nero Consulting Inc.
www.nero-consulting.com

Contact:
Anthony Oren
347-699-6376
anthony@nero-consulting.com

Interview conducted by:
Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor
CEOCFO Magazine

> "Nero Consulting helps small and midsize companies use technology to succeed."- Anthony Oren

CEOCFO: *Mr. Oren, what is the vision behind Nero Consulting Inc?*
Mr. Oren: The vision behind Nero Consulting is to help small and midsize companies use technology to succeed. When companies invite us into their offices, they are usually asking us how they can be more efficient, profitable and competitive in their industry and it's our job to show them the way using cutting edge technology.

CEOCFO: *Have MSPs been gaining in traction in your area?*
Mr. Oren: We have seen MSPs gaining traction as they transition from "break-fix" support that only show up when a problem has already occurred to a full fledged MSP (Managed Service Provider) that offers to install tools to proactively manage and monitor the network. But since everybody wants to be an MSP nowadays, our big distinguishing factor is our level of customer service and our predictable all-in-one pricing that businesses won't feel nickeled and dimed over.

CEOCFO: *How do you help a company understand what they need so that you can provide service that is of the most value for them?*
Mr. Oren: My value proposition to a company is that when you hear us out and let us guide you, I guarantee your network will be better off after we implement our changes and manage it for you. To back up that guarantee, we offer 100% free consultation to businesses on how they can improve company operations, lower their costs and increase their efficiencies.

CEOCFO: *Are most of your businesses and customers in the New York City area?*
Mr. Oren: Yes. A large majority of them are in the New York City area, specifically the borough of Manhattan. We try to target specific industries

like Real Estate, Development, Construction, Architecture and Engineering firms because we feel that we know their business very well.

CEOCFO: *Is it a little more challenging to get someone to open up about their business and provide information as you do business in New York? The pace is different than virtually any place else! Does that come in to play when you are engaging with your clients?*
Mr. Oren: We get business in New York in two ways which I feel embodies the spirit of New York City. One way is when you get that frantic call asking for help and the person wants the problem resolved not now but yesterday! "Time is of the essence", "time is money," they say and all those New York City clichés. From a business standpoint, you want these types of calls from time to time because by that point the customer knows they have a serious problem that is costing them time and money and they know great technology can fix it and are more forthcoming. The other way we get business is through traditional word of mouth referrals, which by that point, means we've already been recommended in a very positive way by the referring company so there is some level of trust that already exists when we step through that door to meet Mr. Prospect's company. In New York City, trust is everything. People will do business with you if they trust you so that's a very fundamental part of how we try to work with businesses.

CEOCFO: *You are in a very crowded city and everybody that knows anything about IT now wants to be a consultant. How do you standout? How do people find you? How do you reach out? How do you jump off the page as being a real IT company as opposed to some guy in his studio?*
Mr. Oren: We know there's competition in the area from other MSPs (Managed Service Providers) but as strange as it sounds we don't consider any MSPs a threat to our business because at the end of the day all MSPs offer similar types of equipment, monitoring and support packages. Even if I believe Nero Consulting technicians have better knowledge, skill and expertise, to the customer, our offerings are going to sound very similar on paper. So when I hear that an MSP is gaining traction in the area, it usually means they are offering the same IT toolkit that the prospective customers have already heard or seen before. Our approach is a bit different in the sense that we want to develop an intimate knowledge of what is going on with our customer's businesses from day one. For example it is helpful to know what our customers are doing with their day to day operations, clients, etc. We need to understand how they do their job. That's how we can help them make technological improvements to their process. The other guys just apply a cookie-cutter approach that does not always work, we are all about customization.

CEOCFO: *Would you tell us a little bit about the range of services you provide and what might you do for a client that other companies that do not understand the need to be customer centric might not take on?*
Mr. Oren: As I mentioned earlier, the IT toolkits are all pretty much the same nowadays from MSPs. So yes we offer the essentials to any business that needs emails, voice-over-IP telephone, backup, network security and help desk support. I think in order to be truly customer centric is to become really good at specific industries. For example, we are in the New York City area and we focus on the borough of Manhattan, because that is where we started, where we have our office,

and where all our techs reside, and that is why we are able to provide round the clock service to our clients. Sure - we will support our clients satellite offices outside of New York City and travel when we have to, but we are a New York City/Tri-State area MSP. Our main industry focus is on what they call the AEC industry; the Architects, Engineers and Construction Industries. The networking opportunities are wonderful and the people are always great to deal with. When you get one satisfied company they will refer you to their architect colleagues, who will recommend you to their construction clients and then it expands to the developers and so forth. Therefore, we try to stick along those industries because there is a lot of overlap as far as what their needs are and requirements are and it's always best for the customer when you know their niche, rather than a one size fits all approach.

CEOCFO: *There are so many approaches to cybersecurity. How do you assess, not only where the problems are, but what might be the best approach to preventing a problem?*
Mr. Oren: The Government has made a big point about talking about what they call "The Cyber", but it is a real problem. Being that our main office is on Wall Street & Broadway, there tends to be many financial companies there that care about cybersecurity more than some other industries and we are acutely aware of regulations like 23 NYCRR 500 that was recently announced and is going to be a big deal for years to come. So when we are asked to consult on matters of cyber security, we explain that most security breaches occur from within. We then offer assessments that can uncover and measure risk associated with analysis of the data we collect. The assessment can expose such potential threats as someone accessing or transmitting certain data or it can reveal when users have gained access to otherwise restricted parts of the network. The best preventative measure is having ongoing, objective network monitoring reports delivered by an MSP because an outsourced MSP partner is removed from the internal employee politics for an organization.

CEOCFO: *What do you look for in people that are working with you at Nero? How do you know when someone is right for the company?*
Mr. Oren: That is an interesting question, because today I had a few interviews where we are trying to do staff augmentation for one of our new clients. I will definitely ask the interviewee about what their skill sets are and what their background is as far as education. However, it really comes down to if they are a "people person" or not. That is because, as I always explain, even to my students (I am an adjunct professor), "you can learn IT, but you cannot learn people skills." The interviewee can tell me how many IT certifications they have or how much they like computers, but it really comes down to if they are good with people, who have patience for disgruntled customers and can work efficiently and positively under pressure when solving computer problems. These are the sort of characteristics that I am looking for.

CEOCFO: *What are you surprised that we cannot do yet with technology?*
Mr. Oren: I think my biggest surprise, but I am expecting it to happen at some point in the near future, is that we have all this equipment; we have firewalls and we have the cloud and we have anti-viruses; all of these different tools at our disposal, and yet none of these tools are intelligent enough to independently protect the networks. By that, I mean, as a

perfect example, take antivirus software. You install an antivirus on a computer and you expect it to fight off all your viruses and you just expect it to know. However, the sad reality of antivirus software is that it really doesn't know. You hear about new strands of viruses like ransomware and yet when a computer that's protected gets one of these nasty infections, the antivirus doesn't even blink. It will not even know what is actually happening. The entire operating system can be held hostage, all of your data encrypted, a ransom note pops up and yet most of the "antivirus" software that we have at our disposal will not even register an alarm. Therefore, I feel that in the near term, eventually we are going to have to develop some type of intelligence, an AI (artificial intelligence) that can actually go beyond the ones and zeros (binary), and understand what is happening inside a computer system on a different level and learn to protect and heal itself.

CEOCFO: *Why choose Nero Technology Consulting Services Inc?*
Mr. Oren: At Nero Consulting we understand Business as much as we understand IT. We have IT certifications and the experience to tackle any IT issues. However, it really comes down to our technicians understanding the business we are serving and not applying a one-size-fits-all approach. When we come in to provide consultations to a business, we try to understand the business, not the IT problem. We ask a lot of questions. When businesses become our clients, we become an extension of their staff, and on a higher level we become a partner to the business. Their success is our success.