

Challenge

eFolder was founded in 2002 on the premise that data protection was not what it could be; backing up and restoring data should be secure and easy. Since its initial launch, the company has grown considerably and was recently named one of CRN's 20 Coolest Cloud Storage Vendors of 2015 CRN's and one of CRN's 100 Coolest Cloud Computing Vendors of 2015.

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John Goerzen
VP of IT and Engineering
eFolder

These annual lists recognize the most innovative cloud companies supporting the IT channel today.

The CRN awards enhanced eFolder's already rapid growth, and with the acquisition of Cloudfinder, a provider of backup, instant full-text search, data restore and reporting technology, solidified it going forward. According to a press release issued in 2014, eFolder experienced 35 consecutive quarters of growth since the company launched its first product in 2005. Through Q3 of 2014, the company's recurring revenue increased 108% versus the same period in 2013, and eFolder's employee base grew from 35 people in 2012 to about 200 currently.

The explosive company growth thrilled eFolder executives and investors, and as a result, the IT team needed to work quickly to scale the company's High-Performance Computing (HPC) systems. As VP of IT and Engineering for eFolder, John Goerzen's primary job description is to operate system design and development; deploy large-scale servers, build out of storage and virtualization, migrate eFolder's end users to Linux on the desktop and manage and execute major IT projects.



"Building out datacenters was aspirational, but certainly not expected on the scale we have adopted," says Goerzen. "We started operating a petabyte-scale cloud. To make things even more difficult, I was running out of resources internally from a people perspective as we started building out our datacenters, and those employees were integral in the design of each datacenter."

As a result of these forces, in 2013 Goerzen needed HPC equipment badly, but was having major issues with his hardware vendor, which according to Goerzen, "consistently sent the wrong products, didn't meet delivery times and provided zero support."

Solution

eFolder turned to Silicon Mechanics, a leading provider of servers, storage and High-Performance Computing technologies, to get the project done quickly and within spec. Goerzen had worked with Silicon Mechanics at a previous job, and based on a problem the company had solved for him while there, he trusted the system integrator to deliver on its promises. When Goerzen was officially tasked with identifying a suitable hardware partner to outfit eFolder's first datacenter, Goerzen's previous positive dealings with Silicon Mechanics – and an in-depth pre-sale consultation with one of the company's systems experts – sealed the deal.

Exceptional Growth Demands Exceptional Service

"We were familiar with specifying machines down to the rate card," says Goerzen. "My team is incredibly attentive to detail, but through the process we were able to leverage the expertise of Silicon Mechanics' sales engineers. None of their competitors can match that level of knowledge or service. In fact, at this point I feel completely comfortable outsourcing tech evaluations to them, which saves us a ton of legwork and presents us with viable options."

After significant consultation, Silicon Mechanics recommended shipping integrated racks of storage and computing horsepower. eFolder then used a combination of products assembled by Silicon Mechanics and some custom solutions, all built to its unique specifications. It's a platform Goerzen claims is, "Plug and play. We now buy the whole rack from them and simply add our drives when it arrives."

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Results

Working with Silicon Mechanics gave eFolder the ability to scale quickly, building out two datacenters in the United States, one in Canada and one in Europe over the course of two years, all of which were necessary given the rapid pace with which eFolder was acquiring customers. Goerzen and his team were able to keep pace on the technical end thanks to Silicon Mechanics' speed and efficiency in identifying solutions, building them and shipping the systems on schedule.



Since engaging with Silicon Mechanics, Goerzen says the company has, "Saved us nearly 100 man-hours annually."

Going forward, Goerzen says he, "feels secure" knowing he has a reliable, single path to contact support, engineering or sales at Silicon Mechanics, which is something he also thinks makes the company unique. And it gives him comfort for whenever he needs additional assistance.

"It's not all about the money we save buying from Silicon Mechanics. They are a trusted partner that we can turn to when we have unique needs that we can't necessarily resolve elsewhere," says Goerzen. "For instance, having hard drives available in quantity during global hard drive shortages, or owning hardware certifications for less popular operating systems, and more."

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