

TOP TWENTY

Systems Integrators 2014



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TOP TWENTY

System Integrators 2014

The case for systems integrators

Why do you need a systems integrator for your IT projects? The answer is simple – the wide-reaching impact of IT on most business processes has made it difficult for enterprises to keep pace with technology advancements and retain skilled workers.

The purpose of systems integration is to automate and bring all processes, applications and underlying infrastructure under one integrated system. Systems integration involves multi-platforms, multi-technologies and multi-vendors. A good SI will help you improve productivity and optimise resources to lower cost of ownership.

When an organisation's business needs change, its IT infrastructure needs to support it better by introducing new technologies. However, given the complexity, integrating the new and old technologies and maximising returns on investments is easier said than done.

Enterprises opting for technology upgrades turn to SIs for assistance as they need to make sure that the new application are able to seamlessly integrate with the existing infrastructure. Most of the SIs can go beyond just amalgamating the two different technologies and environments by managing your whole IT systems, with a bit of consultancy thrown in.

In this year's SI guide, we have turned the spotlight on some of the leading SIs in the market that have the expertise and skills to bring together disparate systems, take full accountability and work well with third-party vendors. These companies are absolutely crucial when projects are mission-critical and where the business cannot afford delays or downtime.

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CONDO PROTEGO



Andrew Calthorpe, CEO, Condo Protego

From enterprise to SME-sized customers, Condo Protego focuses on data storage, virtualisation, security, and data protection – providing not only 24x7 support coverage, but also unprecedented 30-minute response time. Condo Protego is entirely customer-centric and believes “business is about people”.

Can you briefly outline your company's major achievements over the last 12 months?

We closed 2013 with numerous professional and financial achievements. We were honoured with the 2013 EMC Best Enterprise Storage Division Partner award, and we were also nominated for two Symantec awards at their regional partner summit. All of this positively reinforces our position and our efforts in sustaining their businesses in the country and the region.

We are witnessing continued success in 2014. Revenue streams were higher first quarter of this year than they were during the same period last year. Our expansion into security has proved successful, with numerous public and private clients already signed up for our data security and protection products and services. In Q2 alone, we signed a number of contracts with key customers, for a range of security solutions from all three of our security vendors. This include an RSA security information and event management solution for a major financial institution, a large Websense email and web security solution for a key government account, as well as orders from two of Abu Dhabi's key holding companies for Symantec DLP solutions and Symantec Protection Suite. We believe that within this short time, we have already established ourselves as a competitive market player in security, and we are not doing any less business than a focused security company in terms of generating revenue and pulling in large deals.

What are the emerging technology trends that you see influencing regional enterprise IT in the next five years?



In the next five years, we expect to see more virtualisation and consolidation of data as companies migrate to cloud, with a larger focus on data centre security, data trending and analytics. These are the major trends we forecast specifically related to Big Data.

What is the relevance of a good SI to a successful IT project in an enterprise?

Choosing the best technology and quality products is key for enterprises to gain true IT-lead business value. However, in this region, it is equally, if not more important, to choose a local partner who can use the selected technologies, integrate them together with their own consulting capabilities to bring business value by setting up the IT solution to meet the company's specific business requirements. When it comes to enterprise solutions, local partners must be true systems integrators and not merely 'resellers'. Selecting a good systems integrator can make the difference between technology deployment that leads to significant benefits because of its alignment with business objectives, and a failed project or a wasted investment.

What are the points end-users should keep in mind when choosing an SI to work on a project?

Enterprises should not underestimate the importance of developing technology partnerships with the right local partners. Those who have appropriate technical certifications for consulting and service delivery will have an added advantage as they are not just reselling a technology. We at Condo Protego clearly demonstrate this as not only do we have the right technology partnerships with the top two storage and security market players, namely EMC and Symantec, but we also have the highest partnership levels with our key suppliers. For example, we are an EMC Signature Partner and Direct Partner, a Symantec Platinum Partner, and we are also certified as an EMC Services Partner

to provide the design and deployment of various EMC technologies. We are also a Symantec Master Specialist in all four areas of Symantec Availability technologies. This is the reason why we have an enviable track record for successful projects and are the preferred storage and security partners for many large enterprises in the UAE.

What are the most common mistakes that end-users make which endanger a project's capacity to deliver on its goals?

The most common mistake that many customers and vendors make is that they try to cram too many solutions into a single project simply because they were all acquired in one purchase order. An example of this is clubbing an archival project and backup project together with high availability and data recovery – it's like trying to eat a 15 ounce stake in one bite. This tends to happen because sales representatives are attempting to maximise their deals, or customers are looking to avoid the exorbitant paperwork that comes with the approval process.

However, we believe that projects must have a clear-phased approach, with not only a clear scope, but also clear deliverables and milestones in each phase. Trying to squeeze multiple solutions into a single project is both inefficient and ineffective. It is an unnecessary complexity that will not only cause huge delays in getting prerequisites ready, but also in deployment.

How does your company work with clients in order to ensure that their projects give them the business benefit they require?

Every Condo Protego proposal begins with a solid documentation of a company's business requirements since we dedicate much of our time understanding them and use them as a basis for our proposed solution. The project design and deployment phases are established in line with those business requirements. For example, if the assigned project is to deploy

a centralised automated enterprise backup system, we would not simply install the backup software, demonstrate a few sample backup and recovery tests, and sign-off. Our backup projects include conducting a workshop that helps the customer select backup and retention policies that meet business requirements, and are best suited for the type of data being stored. Based on this, we would then develop a comprehensive backup policy document that we would implement. Another example – our knowledge transfer service is not merely product training, it is the operational handover of a working environment with training on all topics covering day-to-day housekeeping tasks, common operational issues, and troubleshooting.

Define your company's strategy for the next 12 months

Although we have a strong base of customers using our security solutions, this has not been our main focus in the past. However, as of Q2 2013, we have set up a dedicated security practice and are now looking to develop the same degree of strength and capability in our security products and services that can be found in our data availability business. We will do this by working with customers to design, deliver, implement, and provide local support for the solutions that we offer. This reflects our determination to be a true local solutions partner to our customers, and not simply a product reseller. Data storage and security must work hand-in-hand and we are able to provide our customers a comprehensive and holistic solution by aligning data storage methods and platforms with best security practices and business objectives.

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