cStor

Putting Clients on a Path to Success

In 2015, a renowned firm approached cStor with their concern about deploying new technologies; owing to a smaller team, cStor knew they could surely transform them with unique innovations. cStor developed an offering between deployment services and full managed services where one of their experts would be on-site, after deployment, for three days a month, giving the client the deep expertise they needed to maximize their investment without hiring someone or going to full managed service. "A lot of our innovation has come from listening to our clients and their needs," says Larry Gentry, President & CEO of cStor.

cStor, Custom Storage Inc., was born in August of 2002 because the founder saw a need in the market that was not being met by most IT resellers/integrators. "Our founder, an engineer by training knew how to solve problems. So instead of selling he talked to clients and found out what their pain points were or what their business aspirations were and just tried to help them meet those objectives," explains Larry. "Most competitors at the time were selling products with cool features, not solving problems or thinking about business outcomes."

Larry and his team help organizations create, strategize, and implement data center, digital transformation, and cybersecurity solutions that address their evolving business needs and demands of today's enterprise. It starts with the client, where they are at, where they want to go, and how fast they want to get there. "Some are early adopters and we can help them map out a strategy that helps them move quickly, however most are not early adopters but want to let others set the new paths. For them it starts with where they are at today," elucidates Larry. "Do they need to modernize and update what they are doing, how do they want to use the cloud, do they develop their own apps or buy those from others, etc." Larry observes how

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the biggest change in the last 3-4 years has been how cybersecurity is part of every discussion instead of operating by itself. It has to be woven into everything one does from firewalls, servers, storage, backups, email, endpoints, cloud, etc. "You can't make any other decisions with including how will ensure our data, the life blood of every organization, is secure if we make this change."

Sharing an instance, Larry says they had a regional financial institution that needed a storage refresh of their five-year-old storage systems. As cStor worked through the project with them and learned their needs and wants, they began to have discussions about ensuring backups were done on the appropriate schedule, they were secure, and they were off-site to prevent failure due to a site failure. While their backups were off-site, they were only a few miles away. They were buying the storage devices to store the backups on and paying for the colo-space where the backups were being stored, and they had to manage the remote site. After listening to them, their objectives and pain points, Larry and his team of experts knew the backups should be over 100 miles away for disaster issues. They hated having to manage the remote site for the backups, and that they had to refresh that storage equipment every five years or so. "We recommended a remote site over 120 miles away where the cloud provider would manage the backups, ensuring they were run nightly, and only charging them for the amount of disc space they needed for that amount of backups," says Larry. "They needed to purchase new backup software so data was secure moving over wire, but they no longer had to buy backup storage, pay for colo-space, or manage their backups any longer."

For Larry, the most important aspect of growing as a company and gaining success is listening to the client actively and working accordingly. "What do they need, what do they want to get done, how can we help? Too many companies still try to sell. If you are filling a need, then you don't have to sell very hard," says Larry. "Plus, being creative when it comes to meeting those needs is important. It's harder to do this as we continue to grow, but we encourage our teams to listen and not immediately say no. We tell them to come back to us internally and, if it really is a need, we can see if we or one of our partners can help meet that need." cStor is constantly and currently looking at what service offerings their clients need. "How can we meet them? Build it, acqu-hire it or acquire it. Most of our clients struggle to keep up so how can we help them with the services, skills they need to be successful," explains Larry. ITO