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Infinity leads by example with no debt and new clients

Check from its first client marked company's start

Tampa Bay Business Journal - by [Michael Hinman](#) Staff Writer



Alexis Muellner

Terry Hedden, CEO of Infinity Business Systems, uses his varied business background to grow his company.

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TAMPA -- Company executives typically shy away from some of the more technical aspects of information technology, but not Terry Hedden.

When he founded **Infinity Business Systems** in 2003 as a managed IT service provider, Hedden wasn't an executive with a technical background. He was a project manager with Ernst & Young who found success in managing the more technical sides of companies such as one-time customer relationship management company **E.piphany Inc.** and **Lectra Systems Inc.**, where he was director of IT for North American operations.

Hedden's strength has been managing businesses, not helping to take apart networks. Yet Infinity is seeing year-over-year growth in overall revenue.

"I figured that if you could construct the business model just right, you could provide the level of support that the big boys get at a price point small businesses could afford," Hedden said.

Best ways to expand

With a background concentrating more on running businesses rather than providing technical help, Hedden started Infinity with nothing more than a check from his first customer for \$24,500 and a little bit of office space next to that client, ValienteHernandez on North West Shore Boulevard. Infinity recently moved into 5,000 square feet on George Road to nearly double its workspace and make room for nearly 30 employees, six of whom were hired in the last two weeks.

Infinity carries no debt, Hedden said. Expansions to Atlanta and within Florida, where it already has customers, use existing capital.

"If you run a poor business, you're not going to be there for your customers when they need you most," Hedden said. "When things get challenging, and the economy gets tough, it's very important to find ways to keep cash flow positive so that you can be a reliable resource for your customers."

Poking its head above the sea of other IT managers, Infinity stays away from charging hourly rates to small and medium-sized businesses. Instead it offers a fixed-price model that's an incentive to eliminate problems by investing in the right technology to monitor sparks before they become fires.

"If you're a mechanic and you offer a plan where you said for \$50 a month, you'll do unlimited maintenance and repair on a car, you would have the incentive to be sure that the driver was never stranded on the side of the road, or nothing would happen to the engine that would destroy it and come out of your pocket," he said.

Striking a chord

Sam Sandusky, CEO of **Big Sur Technologies Inc.**, concurs that acting proactively and avoiding "pay as you go" strategies is lucrative. His IT firm also looks to provide more of a fixed-price strategy.

"When a company has a relationship with an IT person or an IT company that is just on time and material, it tells me that you have a relationship that is more reactive than proactive," Sandusky said. "If you give them a reasonably monthly fee they can budget for, if you have a month where problems escalate and it blows the budget, you can expect it to go down in the following months to make that back, if you do the right assessments ahead of time. Customers love to have just one budgeting number."

Infinity uses the proprietary monitoring application Infinity Management System that's designed to monitor all client networks at a central station in its main office.

"It's better for our bottom line in the long run to invest in systems like IMS and be able to prevent issues than to send an engineer out to a job site every single day," Hedden said. "We're also able to prevent or resolve 95 percent of our issues remotely."

On top of the geographic expansions, Hedden said he's adding a client every couple of days and he'll have to look at physically growing Infinity's headquarters again, perhaps to the suite next door.

"We're just doing the best we can," he said. "I'm not a genius or anything, but we've definitely struck a chord in this market."

Info

Business: Infinity Business Systems

Address: 4801 George Road, Suite 150, Tampa 33634

Naturee of business: IT management

Number of employees: 29

Phone: 813.514.4427

Web: **infinitybusinesssystems.com**

mhinman@bizjournals.com | 813.342.2477