

CASE STUDY

Virtual CTO Helps Ensure Cable Manufacturer Continuously Meets Customer Needs



This cable manufacturer has offered comprehensive solutions to tackle a wide range of manufacturing needs. The company partners with leading companies to find better ways for designing and producing products—from cable assemblies to complex box builds—and then quickly ramps up to meet target dates and volume requirements.

The forty-year-old manufacturer operates a 28,000-square-foot corporate headquarters/manufacturing facility, and additional overseas manufacturing facilities.

The Challenges: Prevent System Downtime and Forecast Future Technology Needs

The server running this manufacturer's primary operations nearly crashed due to reaching its computing capacity. Realizing how close the company came to having to shut down operations, the company's president knew the time had arrived to advance the relationship with its IT provider Bryley Systems.

Bryley had provided general IT consulting, solution deployment and troubleshooting services to the manufacturer for many years. But the president wanted to elevate the partnership to the level where Bryley would proactively monitor the health of IT systems and help plan the company's technology future.

"We needed a mechanism to recognize in advance when our IT systems will reach capacity, and we wanted to forecast which technologies we will need down the road to support anticipated future growth," the president said. "Up until that point, we played 'hot potato' with our internal personnel as the senior management team took turns managing IT over the years. But given their primary job responsibilities, they did not have sufficient time to dedicate to the task. And while we are experts in our core operations, we are not experts in IT."



The Solution: Virtual CTO Enables a Proactive Approach

To enable the president to proactively plan for future growth, Bryley recommended its Virtual CTO (Chief Technology Officer) service, which provides expertise in applying technology to achieve business strategy and goals. Virtual CTO also ensures the manufacturer gains as much value as possible from its current technology investment while defining and setting the standards for future requirements.

Bryley then assigned Michael Carlson, Chief Technology Officer at Bryley Systems, as the Virtual CTO for the manufacturer. He serves as a trusted adviser on technology issues and designs solutions based on the technologies that cost-effectively ensure that the manufacturer IT investments support the strategic business direction.

“We receive tremendous value with Mike as our Virtual CTO,” the president said. “After our near server crash, we realized we did not know when trouble was heading our way. But Mike prevents such occurrences by proactively monitoring the health of our IT systems.”

Through the Virtual CTO service, the manufacturer and Bryley have established a high level of trust. The manufacturer provided confidential projections on company growth and the technology expectations of its customers. Armed with this information, Carlson then planned which technologies the company needed to deploy in order to scale to the correct level of IT resources. As a result, the manufacturer has come to rely on Carlson to inform them in advance when to upgrade existing IT systems.

“When it comes to IT computing power, we don’t want to be left short, but we also don’t want to overspend,” the president said. “Mike advises us just as though he’s our internal CTO. He presents the options and the costs to make sure we have the right technology balance in order to keep providing a high level of service to our customers.”

The Deployment: Virtualization Reduces Server Count, Enables Software Upgrade, and Permits Failover

Under the guidance of the Virtual CTO program, the manufacturer turned to Bryley Systems to virtualize its server infrastructure. In addition to reducing by fifty percent the number of servers the manufacturer requires to support its seventy-five employees,

Bryley – with project management and system engineering resources to support Carlson’s virtual CTO services – also deployed a disaster-recovery failover server for the manufacturer. In the unlikely event the onsite server at the manufacturer should crash, Bryley can quickly restore operations via the off-premises failover server.

“When presenting the virtualized server and disaster recovery proposal, Bryley gave us three options,” the president said. “Each option came at a different price level, and Bryley clearly explained the benefits of each approach. We felt comfortable knowing what we were paying for as well as the differences in the capabilities that each option offered.”



The Benefits: Cost Savings with Assurance IT Systems Will Perform as Required

Bryley Systems' Virtual CTO service empowered the manufacturer to allocate their IT budget more efficiently. For example, under Carlson's guidance, the manufacturer has improved the way they configure employee workstations, reducing IT costs. "We previously spent twelve hundred dollars per workstation when factoring in the hardware, software and deployment time," the president said. "But we lowered that number down to eight hundred dollars per workstation thanks to a recommendation from Mike."

By analyzing the business processes within the manufacturing facility, Carlson determined that some workstations did not require the standard Microsoft Office suite. End users needed to view business documents, but they did not need to edit documents. Carlson thus created a configuration that uses Microsoft Viewer software, which reduces the cost per workstation by approximately four hundred dollars. The manufacturer expects to add about eighty such workstations as the company grows over the next three years, so the new configuration will save the company \$32,000.

"This is another example of how Bryley always strives to reduce our IT costs as much as possible," the president said. "As another example, we estimate that the options they gave us for our virtualized server with failover capability saved us about \$40,000."

The company's president also emphasizes how it's difficult to find someone who is a good fit and has the necessary skills. "Anyone we hire would also likely have less experience and fewer skills than Mike," the president said. "And in addition to his services, it's beneficial that Bryley provides access to any additional resources when we need them for project management, technical support and deployments. As we grow and our needs change, Mike will identify what we need, and Bryley will always have the resources to meet those needs."

But the greatest value the manufacturer derives from Bryley is the assurance that IT resources will continue running at peak levels, and the company no longer has to fear whether any unknown IT disasters may be lurking. "Bryley ensures we stay up-and-running and also provides a way to recover should a disaster beyond our control strike," the president said. "They also look ahead so that as we grow and change, we know the technology will adapt and we can continue to function efficiently in servicing our customers."

Major Benefits of Virtual CTO Provided by Bryley Systems

-  Enables advanced planning of required technologies to support future company growth.
-  Identifies when existing IT systems near capacity to prevent system failures.
-  Prevents over-spending on IT resources.
-  Ensures sufficient computing power to meet operational and customer needs.
-  Aligns long-term technology and business plans.
-  Minimizes IT spending by presenting multiple options for resolving IT challenges.
-  Eliminates need to hire internal CTO and the cost of salary and benefits.