When Continental Technologies, Inc. (CTI) was founded in 1985, the company’s young business revolved around supporting free-standing IBM PCs with early-generation Intel processors. Words like LAN/WAN, the Internet, and cyber threats had not yet entered the vernacular of the IT services industry. But as the IT world evolved, so did CTI. Co-founder and CEO Kip Einbrod expanded the Hunt Valley, Maryland consulting practice from PC-based services to systems design and integration and beyond to network security and disaster recovery planning. Today, CTI is delivering integrated solutions for the 21st century, using Symantec products to help ensure that its customers in Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Pennsylvania have the proper infrastructure security posture for the future.

Expertise in overlapping areas

CTI’s value statement is “We Connect and Protect Your Network,” a commitment it supports with expertise in systems integration, network security assessments, intrusion detection and prevention, and business continuity and disaster recovery planning. The company’s 20 customer-facing engineers—all with nine-plus years of industry experience—are trained across the spectrum of CTI’s offerings, which include Symantec products in the categories of security management, IT compliance, endpoint security, and disaster recovery.

“Many of the solutions we go to market with today are far different than they were in the past,” Einbrod observes, “In today’s world, it’s all about networking everything together and tying it to the Internet. Global security threats, corporate compliance requirements and the need for high availability demands that we secure the networks, perimeters, and ensure that our customers’ environments are compliant with mandated practices.”

CTI’s evolution into this more mature IT support model is reflected in the changing composition of its client base of more than 400 primarily commercial customers. “We continue to serve the many small to midsize businesses that we’ve had for many years,” Einbrod notes. “But as we’ve grown and matured, we’ve focused on the mid-market and the data center of larger organizations in the health care and financial industries to bring them the technologies that will help them grow and expand their networks and their horizons.”

"The Symantec Partner Program is outstanding. The account managers from Symantec have become an extension of our own sales team.”

Kip Einbrod
Founder and CEO
CTI
CTI delivers its integrated solutions through overlapping consulting practices in three areas: security, compliance, and disaster recovery/business continuity. Einbrod describes this approach as “three converging circles, where all three parts are required for customers to have a proper overall security posture.” Not only does CTI deploy Symantec solutions in all three practices, but it also brings Symantec’s account managers into the process early on, thereby building strong relationships between its customers and Symantec in the journey from initial bid to sale consummation and post-integration support.

The circle of security

In order to optimize the solutions that CTI implements for each unique client, the company’s Professional Services Group first assesses the customer’s security, compliance, or disaster recovery posture against industry best practices and regulatory requirements. After the team comes back with a gap analysis and recommendations tailored to that organization’s needs, CTI’s Integration Services Group then engineers and deploys the recommended solution.

“Every solution that we bring to market today has a strong security footprint—we wouldn’t even offer it if it didn’t,” Einbrod declares. A key component of any data security evaluation CTI performs is the assessment of what Einbrod calls border security—the protection of data at the endpoint. The go-to solution CTI deploys is Symantec™ Endpoint Protection for antivirus and malware defense for laptops and desktops. “With Symantec Endpoint Protection 11.0, we’re making sure that we are locking down all of the individual PCs throughout the client’s network, using the firewalling capability of Symantec Endpoint Protection and making sure the customer has the appropriate antivirus and anti-spyware protection that the solution provides,” Einbrod explains.

CTI also looks to see whether a business has a security policy that governs access to its corporate networks and how it enforces that policy. Since it is built into the Symantec Endpoint Protection agent and console, Symantec™ Network Access Control meets whatever need exists in that area. “With Symantec Network Access Control, regardless of how endpoints connect to the network, customers can grant access only to PCs and notebooks that comply with their security policies and block non-compliant devices from accessing their network,” Einbrod says.

Closing compliance gaps

Because IT security needs often have a compliance component, CTI’s security practice and compliance practice are frequently intertwined. “Compliance is huge today, and it’s

“Among the different partner programs that are out there, Symantec’s bubbles to the top.”

Kip Einbrod
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closely tied to infrastructure and data security, so it was a natural place to look after solidifying our security offerings,” Einbrod says. “Almost every healthcare organization, every financial institution, and all publicly-traded organizations have compliance requirements they have to meet. Our job is to help them get there and be able to demonstrate to auditors that they’re indeed compliant.”

Using the same gap analysis methodology it applies in its other practices, CTI’s professional services team identifies areas that need improvement in the customer’s current compliance posture. “The tools that we find helpful in this area are Symantec™ Control Compliance Suite and Symantec Enterprise Vault™, and we’re also very interested in Symantec™ Data Loss Prevention,” Einbrod says.

Symantec Control Compliance Suite automates key IT compliance activities for CTI’s clients including risk assessment and monitoring, policy management, and remediation. “Control Compliance Suite allows us to help our customers measure their compliance with internal policies and any regulatory requirements they might be subject to,” Einbrod says. “It has the built-in templates necessary to help our customers show progress towards a compliant standpoint.”

From time to time, CTI’s customers are also required to demonstrate their policies with regard to data archiving and retention. “In that space, we always lead with Symantec Enterprise Vault,” Einbrod says. “It’s an incredible tool, and a big part of our practice in compliance as well as in storage.” From a compliance standpoint, Enterprise Vault enables users to archive, manage, and discover unstructured information across the organization, including email stores and file systems. “Historically, that information has been siloed on individual servers,” Einbrod continues, “but once it’s ingested into Enterprise Vault, you’re able to find that information very rapidly, which is a huge win for customers from a compliance and e-discovery perspective.”

Protecting data and infrastructure from business disruptions

The third of CTI’s trio of overlapping practices focuses on disaster recovery/business continuity. As more (and smaller) businesses recognize the importance of protecting their organization’s data and IT infrastructure in the event of an outage, business disruption, or natural disaster, CTI is stepping in to perform risk analyses and help companies fill the gaps in their planning for different threat scenarios and for meeting their recovery time and recovery point objectives.

“Rapid, reliable data backup and recovery is essential for protecting businesses against downtime and disaster,” Einbrod says. “We deploy Symantec Backup Exec™ to ensure that critical information on virtual or physical systems is protected and restored quickly. Symantec Backup Exec™ System Recovery Server Edition is ideal for small businesses, because it restores desktops and laptops in minutes, even to dissimilar hardware or remote locations.”

Partnering for success

With a quarter century of success behind it, CTI is poised to remain at the forefront of companies in the larger security consulting space. When asked what differentiates CTI from its competitors, Einbrod points to the company’s core strengths: a passion for best practices, best-of-breed technologies, and the right strategies for getting businesses where they’re trying to go. On top of that, Einbrod adds, “we look to develop deep, wide, long-term relationships with our customers.” The same can be said for CTI’s approach to partnerships: focus on a small number of partners, and develop deep relationships with them.

“A long time ago, we decided we’d pick vendors who had an interest in seeing CTI succeed,” Einbrod recalls. “There’s a very small subset of those vendors that we feel are real key players for us, and Symantec is one of them. It has a very large product offering and continues to bring technologies to resellers that we can take to our own customers. It helps us on the sales side, and also on the marketing side. Symantec’s account managers have become an extension to our own sales team, and we’ve also enjoyed a long history of working with the Symantec SE’s, who bring our technical team up to speed on new technologies.”

CTI has undergone many changes in the 25 years that it has been in business, but for Kip Einbrod, its future direction is clear. “In days of old, you might make a few points by selling a large number of licenses,” he observes. “But in today’s world, it’s not about licensing. It’s about providing the customer with the solutions they desire and require while at the same time driving profitability to the bottom line. Symantec will continue to be a key vendor that allows us to do that as we roll forward.”

“We’ve been able to achieve great success through the different programs that Symantec has offered up.”

Kip Einbrod
Founder and CEO
CTI