

Managed Infrastructure Service Provider for Nationwide Businesses



Matthew Lombardi - CEO

Atlantic Metro is a Managed Infrastructure Service Provider delivering innovative IT solutions to businesses nationwide. Our comprehensive solutions include cloud computing, nationwide network connectivity, and secure data centers. Atlantic Metro's suite of customized, affordable, and reliable services enables customers to secure mission-critical data and operations, as well as complement their current IT infrastructure.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine

CEOCFO: Mr. Lombardi, what is Atlantic Metro Communications?

Mr. Lombardi: Atlantic Metro is an Infrastructure as a Service provider. We supply a variety of infrastructure services to customers that no longer want to do it themselves.

CEOCFO: Do you focus on a particular industry or size of company?

Mr. Lombardi: We are headquartered in the New York City tri-state area and many of our customers are from the New York City area. We also have customers in about a dozen countries and different states. We have datacenters in California, Illinois, Virginia, New York and New Jersey.

CEOCFO: What type of company would tend to use your service?

Mr. Lombardi: We sell mostly to the SMB but we do have a couple of customers that are \$5 to \$10 billion in revenue. From a vertical standpoint, we sell to companies that need high volume networks and tons of storage and powerful processors, so it tends to be the media industry or the legal industry even some retailers, application services providers and those folks that are serving up applications on the web that have a lot of resource requirements.

CEOCFO: Is it because you have the capacity or is there more to it than that?

Mr. Lombardi: You have to build the capacity that is for sure. There is all plumbing and you have to have the technical knowledge to make it all work. You have to stay ahead of the customer and their needs so that their systems never slow down. You have to have the support infrastructure, which is 24 by 7 with a quick response team and immediate resolution. It is an online world and we are out there supporting it.

CEOCFO: How do you make the process run smoothly?

Mr. Lombardi: It all pretty much automated. We built a back-office software system that starts with our sales quotes. The customer signs that order electronically and it goes into our provisioning group. Once the technology is provisioned, it alerts the customer and feeds right into the invoicing system. The customer is invoiced all automatically. If they pay with a credit card on file or however they choose to pay, that is done automatically as well. If there is a problem and they make a phone call and send an email everything goes into an electronic ticket that is part of their account so it is all in this one back office system. This automation allows us to provide great customer service and add more customers without increasing our staff size.

CEOCFO: What is involved in an implementation?

Mr. Lombardi: Most of our sales are a combination of services and they are infrastructure solutions. It could be two or three services or it could be a hundred and two services. Our provisioning team has to coordinate all those different services and components. It might be that the customer bought a metro Ethernet service from

us and they are going to have their file servers and applications running in the cloud at one of our datacenters. Then they are going to switch out to the internet at one of those datacenters. There is also a certain amount of redundancy that they require whether it is backups or business continuity. There are many components and to do something like that you need networking engineers, systems engineers and project managers that are tracking it all. You may also have vendors that you might have to use to deliver this service so there are many moving parts to get it in place initially.

CEO CFO: Are there typical points in time when companies come to you?

Mr. Lombardi: They come to us when they need more infrastructure, meaning network capacity like a faster network or they are trying to solve a business problem where they need to do backups out of state or want to provide some kind of fast recovery solution to get the auditors off their back. It is a combination of those types of things.

CEO CFO: How do you reach potential customers?

Mr. Lombardi: We get a ton of recurring business from our existing customers they just keep growing. We also get a great deal of reference work, meaning that our existing customers and our partners refer us work. We have a strong agent program where agents who do not work for the company bring us business for a referral fee. We also leverage the internet with our website and social media initiatives that generate a lot of interest, so we get many inquiries and the inside sales team follows up with them.

“It is all about customer service and understanding the customer’s pain point and business objectives. Our goal is to help them meet those objectives and make them successful within their own organizations and the result is a win/win on both sides. My advantage is I sat on the other side of the desk for eighteen years and now I have been in the services business for the last sixteen years, so I have a nice balanced approach to making our business successful and also making the customer successful.”- Matthew Lombardi

CEO CFO: How do you deal with the immediacy that seems to be more prevalent in big cities?

Mr. Lombardi: I do not find that the case. We have a bunch of Israeli companies as well as Malaysia, China and UK. I think New York is so diverse and so international that it pretty much represents the typical customer nowadays. A lot of the solutions that I just described, customers are focused on getting them delivered immediately. One of our differentiators is that because we are not a big organization, we can deliver faster. We can do in twenty days compared to what others can do in ninety days and customers do not want to wait ninety days.

CEO CFO: You have had many experiences in the industry prior to Atlantic Metro. What have you learned that has helped you over the years as Atlantic Metro grows?

Mr. Lombardi: It is all about customer service and understanding the customer’s pain point and business objectives. Our goal is to help them meet those objectives and make them successful within their own organizations and the result is a win/win on both sides. My advantage is I sat on the other side of the desk for eighteen years and now I have been in the services business for the last sixteen years, so I have a nice balanced approach to making our business successful and also making the customer successful.

CEO CFO: What is ahead for Atlantic Metro?

Mr. Lombardi: Much growth is ahead. The world is moving more towards outsourced IT infrastructure, so particularly in the SMB market they would like to get those computers out of the closet and know that things are getting backed up properly and potentially even out of state. It is more economical for them to outsource their IT infrastructure. We are seeing that initially people might have been a little hesitant with the cloud because they thought security was an issue. Then again, AOL and Google and everything that they are doing on a daily basis is in the cloud, so I think they are becoming more comfortable with that and therefore our phones are ringing.

CEO CFO: Are you able to ramp up quickly or is it so scalable that is not a consideration?

Mr. Lombardi: It ebbs and flows. We do not have to hire many staff to do what we are doing but we do have to have the technology experts and the network operations center which is 24 by 7. It is just how fast that it

comes at us as far as provisioning and deployment because once it is deployed, it is all automated and it does not take that much manpower. Much of our cost goes to building the infrastructure, just like the movie, build it and they will come. We have to build the networks ahead of time in a variety of states. If somebody calls and says they need twenty servers to run their new mobile app on, we have to be able to turn them up quickly. We have customers that want additional storage in fifteen minutes or additional VMs in fifteen minutes, so we have to be able to turn that technology up, which means we have to stay ahead of the customer demand.

CEO CFO: What is your focus day to day as CEO?

Mr. Lombardi: As CEO, you wear so many hats in a small company which is what makes it so much fun as opposed to running a department in a large company where you are in silo. The accounting side of things and cash flow projections are an important piece of what I do because everything requires cash management. We have a partner in Silicon Valley Bank, which has made our life easier and our growth a little faster so just managing relationships like that is important. Secondly, the sales side is always important in making sure that the sales and marketing dollars are being utilized intelligently and that our team is delivering new customers and building new relationships. Lastly, we have an operations meeting everyday and I attend them. We make sure that we understand what is being deployed and what open tickets we have. Those three things keep me busy: cash, sales and delivery.

CEO CFO: Why Atlantic Metro a company to notice?

Mr. Lombardi: It is funny that people ask us who is the competition; with our target customer, we do not see many competitors and we do not lose much business to similar type companies. Our competitors are the internal staff of the target customer that wants to keep their job and use Rackspace or somebody else's cloud storage and manage it all themselves. What we do is provide that infrastructure, but we also provide the services that go with it, which is where the real savings is for the customer. Those guys that are afraid to lose their jobs, but what I do not think they understand is their next job is going to be working for an Atlantic Metro type infrastructure service provider. That is where the infrastructure jobs will be in the future.

CEO CFO: Final thoughts?

Mr. Lombardi: What is going on in the industry is just the next phase of outsourcing and it is mostly US based outsourcing. The infrastructure is a relatively easy thing to outsource and it becomes an operating expense as opposed to a capital cost and thus a cash flow improvement on the customer's side. The sale should be made directly to a CEO or a CFO as opposed to an IT director that is really not looking at it from a business or financial standpoint.

BIO: As Chief Executive Officer, Matthew is responsible for Atlantic Metro's day-to-day-operations, as well as leading the company's growth and development of managed technology services. He is dedicated to helping Atlantic Metro's customers succeed, overcome IT challenges, and enable their business growth. Matthew is responsible for creating and expanding strategic relationships, as well as overseeing the company's business strategy alongside founders Stephen Klenert and James Cornman.

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