Enterprise IT Solutions for Small and Medium-Sized Companies

About ThrottleNet, Inc.
ThrottleNet has served the same purpose it set out to accomplish – to provide small and medium-sized companies with professional technology solutions that only large corporations could afford. Although our purpose has not changed, we have grown and evolved into a complete IT business solution by aligning our customers' technology needs with their business goals.

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

Mike Heil - CEO

CEOCFO: *Mr. Heil, would you tell us about ThrottleNet?*
Mr. Heil: We are an IT company that supports small/medium-sized companies. We bring enterprise IT solutions to everyone, and we do it by structuring a business's IT needs inline with their business objectives. We try to educate business owners on how to move IT from the expense side of the profit and loss statement, to the profit side.

CEOCFO: *When you talk with a prospective client when do they understand that it is possible?*
Mr. Heil: That should come across during the earliest meetings that we have with them. We sell an understandable four-block method that shows what we do to maintain their network and to change IT within their business. We go for a proactive solution rather than reactive. We start from the point of view of taking their current IT and finding what pain they have and then extrapolating that into business solutions or ways that we can help them. For instance, if we are talking to someone in the organization that is currently serving as an IT consultant, but they are actually supposed to be the CFO, then we can help them come up with solutions that can put them back doing what their company originally hired them to do. We also have a proactive solution that we call a VCIO (Virtual Chief Information Officer). The VCIO meets with the client and acts as the CIO for the organization. We meet with them quarterly, and create six month, one year and five-year plans to guide their IT in the direction we feel it should go.

CEOCFO: *Your philosophy is that everyone is important. Would you tell us how that plays out?*
Mr. Heil: We respond to everyone's needs on a reactive basis as necessary. There is no favoritism between clients. If your business needs emergency help, you are our greatest priority, whether this includes 5 people or 50. On the proactive side of support, we do not have a one-size-fits-all solution; we tailor our approach to fit your needs. For example, if you are a medical client and you are under HIPAA compliance, we understand you, because we are also under HIPAA compliance.

CEOCFO: *Who is your typical client?*
Mr. Heil: A business that has a network, but does not have its own IT staff. We can supplement companies that have their own IT staff, but this is the exception rather than the rule. We focus on the medical, legal and accounting vertical markets, and work with many other professional services and manufacturing clients.

CEOCFO: *How do you reach out to potential customers and how do they find you?*
Mr. Heil: Primarily through TNtv, a weekly internet web show that we film and produce. We help business professionals understand how IT can help their businesses, and bring awareness to new technologies and security threats. We also show them how to evaluate IT; many people think that if their computer turns on it is good IT and if their computer does not turn on then it is bad IT. Their technology should be working for them and we show them how to recognize if they are wasting money and how to increase profitability based on simple evaluations that they could do themselves. All this while injecting humor to keep it fun and interesting. This show can viewed at ThrottleNet.tv

CEOCFO: *Are there some common problematic areas for most companies?*
Mr. Heil: I do not think they budget for the future, or truly understand when they actually will need to move on to the next equipment or software purchase. I understand that they try to squeeze every bit they can out of what they have, but by keeping machines too long, more money is wasted because your people could be far more profitable and able to work faster with newer technology. I think that many people are not proactive with IT and they try to cover their eyes and ears

because IT is scary when you do not understand it. Another thing is that people also underestimate the importance of security and best practice education for their employees; such as opening attachments and having good security password policies. Some of those things could have prevented some of the latest data breaches. There are simple solutions to difficult problems, if implemented.

CEOCFO: *Regarding new technology, how do you evaluate what you need to incorporate it?*
Mr. Heil: At an ever-accelerating pace, new technologies are developed. Many of our best practices come from looking at how various vertical markets use computer networks, and how they could become more secure and efficient. Once you get down to it, the fundamentals of good network philosophy have never changed; it is just that the components improve over time.

CEOCFO: *How has your approach changed over time and what have you learned through the years in the business that you might do differently now than in the beginning?*
Mr. Heil: In the beginning, we were reactive. If it broke, we would fix it. Now we proactively manage and monitor network for a monthly fee. If someone's server goes down, it is on our dime to fix it and thus puts the onus of efficient support squarely on our shoulders. The customer knows that we are working in their best interest to keep them up and running. When their networks are efficient, it means more for both of our bottom lines. The path to profitability for our client and ourselves is then in alignment. Rather than receiving a bill for a broken server, we foot the bill for it. Our clients know it is in both of our best interests to make sure it never breaks in the first place.

CEOCFO: *You mentioned being HIPAA compliant. How do you keep up with it all?*
Mr. Heil: We have our company evaluated by external HIPAA consultants. They help medical clients, other IT companies, and anyone who has to have a business associative agreement to stay compliant. We regularly self-test and send out educational materials to our employees and we test our own network to make sure that we are meeting those standards. We work with the security side of HIPAA; there is the privacy rule and the security rule. The privacy rule refers more to people who have EPHI or electronic medical information. The security rule, the IT centric side of HIPAA, governs us. Focusing on that side of HIPAA allows us to stay on top of best security practices, and that in turn falls in line with good overall IT practices. Thus, every network we touch benefits from these security measures.

> **"We make IT a profitable part of your business, not just another expense." - Mike Heil**

CEOCFO: *How is business these days?*
Mr. Heil: Business is great! We are adding new business every month. We are incorporating the cloud into business IT profiles. Thus, saving businesses costly capital expenditures to replace aging equipment. It is an exciting time for us.

CEOCFO: *How do you handle the challenge of finding appropriate talent for your company?*
Mr. Heil: It takes a lot of searching, testing, and interviewing. We evaluate many candidates to insure they can meet our standards, and our standards are stringent. It is difficult to find someone technically skilled who can speak to an attorney, doctor or business owner on his or her terms. We say it is like finding a magic unicorn. We also utilize our support desk as a talent incubator, bringing employees up from the earliest levels of their career. Squashing bad habits early on and creating IT consultants that are knowledgeable, confident, and most importantly, courteous.

CEOCFO: *Why is ThrottleNet a noteworthy company?*
Mr. Heil: We put your business first, not IT. We understand how businesses operates, how IT functions, and bring the two together. We make IT a profitable part of your business, not just another expense. We make your bottom line the basis for your strategy rather than selling you technology for technology's sake. Clients have no contracts and our employees enjoy profit sharing. Our team takes it personally if you leave. They strive to give you the best service they can because it affects their take home pay. This combination results in award winning customer service for our clients.

BIO: Michael Heil is CEO and Owner at ThrottleNet Inc., a technology firm he founded in 1999 with Partners, George Rosenthal, and Marc Arbesman. The firm provides an array of services and products to help business owners achieve their corporate goals and accelerate business growth including cloud computing, customer software and mobile application development, and outsourced Managed Network Services. An award winning executive, Heil is a multiple recipient of The MSPmentor 250 signifying the top Managed Services Provider Executives in the world. In addition his firm has won multiple accolades, received recognition as a Top 20 IT Firm by Small Business Monthly, and named one of the Largest Information Technology Consulting Firms by the St. Louis Business Journal. ThrottleNet has offices in St. Louis and Boston (Salem) MA. For additional information visit http://www.throttlenet.com.

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