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Q&A with Ari Santiago, President of IT Direct, LLC, a Managed Services Provider of IT Solutions, Network and IT Support and CIO Services for Connecticut Businesses with Email Management, Remote Monitoring, Firewall Security, Backup and Disaster Recovery

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CEOCFO: *Mr. Santiago, what is the approach to IT at IT Direct LLC?*
Mr. Santiago: We look at IT as a means to an end. We are in the business of delivering efficiency and productivity to our clients; clients that understand and believe in the power of technology to have a positive impact on their business. Looking at business today, particularly with the rise of the internet over the last twenty years, there is much less focus on managing pricing. The market manages your pricing for you: it is much bigger than before, and your customers can pretty much buy anything from anywhere. Therefore, we believe that the best way to manage your organization is to increase efficiency in the way that you deliver your product or service. Technology must play a huge role in that.

The second thing we look at is how you use technology to engage your customers, differentiate yourself, and enhance your value to your customers. As a managed service provider, we work with organizations of up to five hundred employees helping them leverage technology to make their organization stronger. We are in a critical position at a critical juncture in time to help clients both improve their efficiencies and increase their value to their customers. It is a pretty awesome place to be today.

> "A typical new client engagement starts like any strong relationship, with a plan for the future. We help the business leaders answer their driving questions: Where are we trying to go? What is the business trying to achieve? How are we currently using technology? What are our challenges? What are our successes? What are we hoping to do? How are we hoping to use technology to engage our customers better? How are we hoping to use technology to do the things we do more efficiently?"- Ari Santiago

CEOCFO: *Is there an increasing understanding by businesses that IT is not a necessary evil, but may be a game changer or necessary to productivity? Do you see people understanding the concept these days?*
Mr. Santiago: Yes. I think that many people do understand the concept. They see it on TV. They read it all over the place. You cannot be alive and fail to notice how technologies are changing the way we live. There are the obvious changes; Airbnb, Uber and Lyft, that are changing things that people never thought would change. However, the real challenge is getting people connected to their own reality and what technology really means for them and their business. You cannot take a pill, like an aspirin, and make technology work for you. It has to be a commitment from the CEO level downward,