Cetrom's cloud mantra: Minimize downtime

Summary: *Founded in 2001, the cloud integrator is a Microsoft Gold-level business partner and is also aligned with Citrix, Dell, EMC, Lenovo and CenturyLink.*

By Heather Clancy for Next-Gen Partner | June 5, 2013 -- 12:00 GMT (05:00 PDT)

If there is one characteristic that all of integrator Cetrom Information Technology (http://www.cetrom.net/) 's customers share, it is this: they have very little tolerance for downtime.

"We take on applications and needs that a lot of other cloud providers won't touch, that they can't touch," said Christopher Stark, president and CEO of the company, which was just named one of the 50 fastest-growing businesses in the state of Virginia.

Founded in 2001 and based in the city of Vienna, Va., Cetrom is a Microsoft Gold-level business partner in multiple competencies, including Hosting and Server Platform. Some of its other key technology partners (http://www.cetrom.net/about-us/technology-partners/) include CenturyLink, EMC, Dell and Citrix.

Faced with possible disintermediation -- like other traditional IT resellers and VARs caught between the on-premises and cloud delivery models -- the company decided to turn its expertise in security and managed infrastructure into a hybrid, private cloud practice, rather than reselling the infrastructure services of some of the big public cloud providers.

"We haven't forgotten who or what is really needed in an IT partner -- someone who can tailor a solution around [a company's] business needs," Stark said.

Who are Cetrom's traditional clients (http://www.cetrom.net/resources/) ? For one thing, it tends to be small and midsize businesses (SMBs) that happen to be pretty demanding, including accounting firms, law offices and medical offices. "These industries have very specialized needs and security requirements," he noted.

To support its service level agreement (SLA) promise of 99.9 uptime, the company has created a network of SAS 70-compliant data centers in Virginia, Maryland, Ohio, Colorado and Washington, Stark said. It can support more than 170 different applications within this cloud infrastructure: built into its core SLA is geographic failover from one coast of the United States to another.

Many of Cetrom's new clients these days are businesses that are seeking to migrate from one cloud service to another. So, aside from its aggressive uptime metrics, the integrator also spends a lot of time nurturing its customer service practices. "Just because we are working with computers doesn't mean we need to treat our clients like computers," Stark said.

One final note: Cetrom offers this resource for businesses in the process of evaluating cloud providers: "How to Choose a Cloud Computing Provider: 10 Questions You Must Ask." (http://www.cetrom.net/blog/how-to-choose-a-cloud-computing-provider-10-questions-you-must-ask/) Might be worth adding to your list of evaluation criteria.

Topics: Cloud, Channel