

Demand Generator: Ed Ginty, VLSystems

The Client: Comarco Wireless Technologies

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By [Scott Campbell](#),

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Sean Anderson considers himself a pretty technical guy. So when Comarco Wireless Technologies lost e-mail service after its Exchange server failed last December, he had an idea how to make sure it didn't happen again.

But the solution provider he asked to help him had a different idea—one Anderson ultimately was convinced was a better choice.

Anderson, director of IT for Irvine, Calif.-based Comarco, which produces wireless benchmarking equipment, envisioned a clustered Exchange environment using a Fibre Channel SAN to prevent incidents similar to the motherboard on Comarco's 10-month-old Hewlett-Packard ProLiant server failing.

"We thought this was a failure we could have survived if we had had a cluster," Anderson said. "I cooked up what I thought was the best solution." And then he called VLSystems, an Irvine-based solution provider, for a quote. Anderson got his quote, with a caveat: VLSystems' sales rep didn't think a clustered environment was the best solution for Comarco.

Instead, the rep designed an alternative iSCSI solution and took it to his supervisors for approval. It was then brought to the attention of Ed Ginty, executive vice president of VLSystems.

"Once Steve [Driesens, the sales rep] explained what [the customer's] environment was like, it was a no-brainer," Ginty said. "We knew we would have to introduce [Anderson] to this technology, but we knew we could use what he already had."

So VLSystems prepared to tell its client it wouldn't fill the original order because it was the wrong choice, a conversation that requires tact, no matter who the customer is, Ginty said. "Is it the best fit for the customer rather than us just taking the order? We knew this solution. We don't want to just be hawking logos or shoehorning in something that's not right," he said.

After hearing VLSystems' pitch, Anderson was skeptical. But the solution provider had done its homework and took the time to explain the crucial differences between the two potential solutions.

"I've heard of iSCSI, but I had no idea there were marketable solutions in place. I've seen iSCSI cards, but not a whole solution," Anderson said. "They provided a lot of information. They got people on the horn from Intransa to help me understand the solution. They addressed our immediate problem and [offered a plan for] going forward."

The iSCSI solution had a price tag similar to the clustered-only system Anderson originally requested, but it could be expanded easily and likely would save Comarco money in other ways, such as training, he said.

"We don't have to train staff on Fibre Channel infrastructure," he said. "The iSCSI product rolled nicely into what we already have."

For its alternative solution, VLSystems used the Intransa IP5500 system and QLogic iSCSI host bus adapters. "What I ended up with is a full enterprise solution, very modular, very flexible going forward," Anderson said.

The project may have cost VLSystems some margin, but building customer loyalty made it worthwhile, Ginty said. "If I had put my sales hat on, it would have been an easier closed sale, rather than spending the time to introduce them to a new technology. ... There was a trust factor there," he said.

VLSystems' desire to act in the customer's best interests did not go unnoticed. "They demonstrated an interest in my problems," Anderson said. "They made sure they had all my questions answered. That's a cooperative environment."

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