

## THE CLIENT



Solinus has been helping organizations “protect the message” since shortly after e-mail became the killer app for business. Founded in 1998, the company provides two basic methods of filtering e-mails for all sizes of organizations: its MailFoundry line of anti-spam appliances that install in the organization’s server room; and, HostMail, a hosted e-mail service. The company also provides carrier-grade messaging filtering solutions for the telecommunications industry. The key differentiator between Solinus and other anti-spam solution providers is Solinus’ use of human intelligence rather than software to create spam signatures,



> For over four years MailFoundry has been eliminating spam from e-mail for over 2 million mailboxes worldwide.

helping eliminate the false positives that plague other products.

and his team to seek other options. After evaluating several manufacturers, Solinus selected MBX to be their sole hardware supplier.

## THE CHALLENGE

Solinus had been selling anti-spam appliances for two years and had established an excellent reputation for the quality of its software. The company, however, was running into some obstacles with the hardware platform. Because it was being manufactured by Sun, Solinus was locked into a particular hardware configuration. There was no ability to customize the appliance to a particular market segment, or extend the line with additional versions. They also had a desire to move to a Linux operating system, which they couldn’t do with the current hardware since it was tied to the operating system.

“What first led us to MBX was their experience with appliances,” Troup says. “They have a very laser-like focus, whereas for other manufacturers appliances were just a very small part of their overall business. As we dug in deeper and looked at the whole picture, the value MBX provided was unbelievable. That made it a pretty easy choice.”

One of Solinus’ main concerns was being able to remain focused on their software rather than dividing their attention between software and hardware concerns. Working with MBX allowed them to meet that goal. “MBX will do more than they probably have to in order to help us out,” Troup says. “They do a lot of things that I don’t need to know about. I like having that

In addition, many of Solinus’ resellers who didn’t carry this particular vendor’s other hardware were reluctant to sell a product based on its platform. Even those resellers who did carry that vendor’s lines didn’t like the way the vendor was treating this product because hardware sales credits were being given to Solinus instead of them.

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## THE SOLUTION

These factors and others led Dave Troup, President and CEO of Solinus,

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### CLIENT OVERVIEW

- > Privately-held technology company
- > E-mail filtering and hosted e-mail
- > Office in Green Bay, WI

### BUSINESS CHALLENGE

- > Wanted to offer more models, more customization than existing supplier allowed
- > Need to stay focused on the software, not hardware

### THE SOLUTION

- > Partner with experts at MBX Systems to create a turnkey program that is both flexible and reliable

### THE RESULTS

- > Selling many more appliances than expected
- > MBX has been able to keep up with growing demand
- > Relationship has been everything Solinus hoped and more

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Another plus for the Wisconsin-based software company was finding a partner who shared Solinus' Midwestern work ethic. Troup says their attention to detail and dedication to doing the job well is far higher than what he's experienced from tech companies on either of the coasts. Both companies are like-minded in their approach, and Troup feels they have a real relationship rather than simply an arrangement to buy and sell products, as they had before.

"I know the people at MBX," he says. "I know their values, and I know if there's a problem, either on the technical or business level, we can figure it out together. I know it's trite, but I really feel like they're a partner rather than a vendor."

Solinus' desire to avoid going into the hardware business directly made the

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technical capabilities of its hardware supplier all the more important. The company has been impressed with MBX's technical knowledge and ability to deliver a very high quality product at a very competitive price. Given the fact that customers in the messaging/anti-spam space expect to purchase an appliance, rather than having to be convinced to buy one, this performance factor is extremely important to the company's overall success.

"Many of our competitors went out and bought the cheapest hardware they could find, with little concern for quality," Troup says. "As a result, they have exponentially higher failure rates and customer dissatisfaction. We're not the cheapest anti-spam appliance on the market, but MailFoundry is priced competitively. The result is a much higher perceived value in the field, which is exactly the position we wanted to occupy."

Although there was already a base product and sales mechanism in place, MBX was instrumental in creating and delivering improvements to both. For example, MBX was instrumental in finding the components to convert the appliance from a hard drive boot to a flash boot, which reduced the boot time from five minutes to 30 seconds. The flash boot also helped reduce downtime and make the unit more field-serviceable, further adding to Solinus' reputation for quality and reliability.

MBX not only assists with the design and manufacturing, but also manages the inventory, drop ships units all over the world, handles return merchandise authorizations (RMAs) and issues

reports on all activities to Solinus. "We're able to offer the all-in-one appliance our customers want while still operating internally as a pure software company," Troup says. "What's not to like?"

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## THE RESULTS

Sales in Q1 of 2005 went well beyond Solinus' most optimistic forecast which, while sounding good on the surface, also presented a potential disaster from a customer service standpoint. Troup credits MBX with helping Solinus through this initial rush.

"They bent over backwards to help us through it," he says. "I can't think of too many other suppliers in any field who would've done what they did for us. Once a prospect expresses interest in one of our MailFoundry products, we need to have a unit in their hands in four or five days or the chances of making the sale go down dramatically. MBX understands that and makes sure we hit that metric every time."

Sales have continued to grow rapidly since the MBX-manufactured product was introduced. Not only has production kept up with demand, but it's done so while maintaining a high level of quality.

"Can you get an appliance manufactured cheaper?" asks Troup. "Sure, there's always someone who will do it for less. But if you're in it for the long haul, price can't be your only criterion. To put it simply, you are doing your business a disservice if you don't look at MBX."

### MBX VISION

Our vision is to be the most respected system producer to the OEM appliance market. We create systems of unparalleled quality that support and surpass OEM demands, and we want to support these products with incomparable service in order to increase customer loyalty.