

Time For A Name Change: Synergy is now Forthright.

Forthright's rebranding is built on what its marketing chief calls one of the company's biggest drawing cards: its honesty.

After 23 years as Synergy Development Consulting, the Miramar, Fla.-based solution provider has a new name: Forthright Technology Partners. The rebranding took effect Jan. 1 and is part of a trend in the managed services provider market, according to a technology industry analyst.

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The rebranding initiative was the primary focus for Carl Gersh once he took over last summer as Forthright's first director of sales and marketing, and the customer feedback the company received - from its own research and that of an outside company it hired - focused chiefly on its honesty and candor.

"One customer said 'They always tell me the truth, even when it hurts,'" Gersh said. "If you think about the IT market in general, it's not unheard of for people to stretch the truth and try to sell you something you may not need ... There is a lot of mistrust in this market."

So, as the New Year dawned, the company's new name did as well, with a new corporate tagline, "Honest, and we know IT."

Although the Synergy moniker might have differentiated the company when it was founded in 1993, the word has become over-used in a time of increasingly collaborative technology, according to Gersh.

"We needed to have better differentiation," he said. "The challenge with the name 'Synergy' is that a lot of companies are now using that name ... Citrix (a Forthright vendor partner) even holds a conference called 'Citrix Synergy.'"

However, Gersh said he did not want the new name to be different just for the sake of being different. He said the name the company chose had to reflect how it differentiates itself in the market. "We thought - 'we aren't going to go with some esoteric nonsense name like 'FrÖghammer' or go with something super trendy -like Blankcloud Solutions."

Forthright saw growth throughout 2015 thanks to increased demand for the company's engineering and managed services, Gersh said. That prompted the company to increase its 24/7/365 proactive monitoring and support with the addition of a second network operations center in North Carolina at the end of the year, a unique offering for a mid-sized solution provider.



Forthright partners: Steve Zoberg, Richard Santamaria and Andrew Medina.

Forthright expects that its new NOC - which will provide Forthright with a new "local" market - as well as increased engagement with such vendor partners as Citrix, Nutanix, AppSense VMWare and Microsoft will lead to continued growth, said Gersh, who projects that the company will double its sales (currently around \$15 to \$25 million) in 2016.

As for the new branding, Gersh said he expects it will provide a foundation that will introduce more people to the company while it grows.

Melanie Posey, a senior analyst with IDC, based in Framingham, Mass., said there has been "a bit of rebranding in the MSP world in the last few years ... and most of it has been driven by the emergence of cloud."

With the advent and popularity of cloud, Posey said, many MSPs have changed their names and rebranded from an "old school" IT orientation to a newer approach that focuses on a more consultative approach to customer engagement.

Gersh said honesty is an attribute the company has embodied from its birth and is one that will not fall out of style. "Forthright will guarantee the success of each project it works on," he said. "We are comfortable setting that expectation."

"Ten years from now, people are still going to want honesty," he said. "No one is saying, 'Bring in the liars as long as they are called 'Dot cloud.'"