



May VAR of the Month: Solbrekk Business Technology Solutions

Larry Phelps credits much of his success to his extensive marketing efforts.

May 11th, 2009 by [Hobey Echlin](#)

“Yes, people are more cautious, but there are pockets of organizations in nearly every field that are looking to spend money on document imaging technology this year and my job is to find them,” says Larry Phelps of Minnesota reseller Solbrekk.

His sales history over the last year supports his optimism. He’s had significant success with Community Action Agencies and ancillary government agencies like the [Rice Creek Watershed District](#). His work with the [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#)’s legacy systems helped the newspaper win a [Run Smarter Award at last year’s Conference](#).

Phelps credits much of his success to his extensive marketing efforts. “When money’s tight, organizations are not necessarily looking for the best price, but the best value. That’s where your customer stories, case studies, and references all lend credibility to your sales process,” he explains. “People want to pick the supplier who everyone knows was a wise choice, a product that works, and a product they know how to use.”

He’s been [blogging about document management for three years](#), while [utilizing YouTube to post his own instructional videos](#). “I had a person contact me about my online demo. It turns out it was a Laserfiche VAR in South Africa and I was able to help him make the demo available to his prospects,” recalls Phelps. “That shows the power and magic of this technology where two VARs from totally different continents can help one another.”

He also uses e-newsletters, seminars, user groups, mini-websites and auto-responders. But, Phelps says the most important marketing tools are his case studies, where users like [Laserfiche Luminary Dick Crumb, CIO of Shoreview, MN](#), detail their success working with Solbrekk.

“Posting these stories on the web and linking them to Laserfiche’s website helps build brand awareness to the search engines and helps prospects find Laserfiche and its VARs,” he adds.

Phelps himself first became aware of Laserfiche from enthusiastic users over a decade ago. While researching cost-effective replacements for a client’s outdated microfiche system, he discovered another organization using Laserfiche five hours away. “They were so excited they wanted me to drop everything. ‘It would be worth it,’ they said. ‘You’ve just got to see this software.’”

He saved himself the trip and instead called Laserfiche. After several conversations, he not only purchased Laserfiche for his client, he became his area’s reseller as well.

“In those early days it was really important to educate our prospects on the basic concepts of document imaging. They’d never seen anything like Google; they were totally amazed at the ability to search their documents for any word or phrase,” he says. “It was educate, educate, educate.”

Especially in the current economy, he says, it still is.

“More than ever we need to help prospects understand the power of a real document management system. You’d think users know the difference between Laserfiche and a product that attaches PDF’s to their proprietary system,” Phelps says.

“In fact, I think now, more than at any time, it is important to help clients clear away the noise and find a solution that will help them run their businesses more effectively.”