

# Avnet-sponsored Road 2 Virtualization Seminar Helps Evolving Solutions Extend its Marketing Reach

*Evolving Solutions is a professional services and systems integration firm specializing in storage consolidation, virtualization and disaster recovery solutions. Leveraging its technical and consultative skills, Evolving Solutions works with customers to improve efficiencies and reduce costs via the implementation of improved technology. Evolving Solutions is headquartered in Minneapolis, MN.*

IT environments are always changing; business expansion, set against a backdrop of emerging technologies and industry and government compliance issues, virtually guarantees it. But as needs are identified and changes to systems and infrastructure contemplated, companies are wise to assess the extent to which they are exploiting their existing IT resources and understand how those resources could be better utilized.

Avnet and IBM Premier Business Partner, Evolving Solutions—2008 Beacon Award Winner for Outstanding System x Virtualization—specializes in helping large and mid-size companies understand the value of virtualization, a technology that makes it possible to run multiple operating systems and applications on the same system at the same time. By providing expertise in virtualization and storage consolidation, Evolving Solutions demonstrates to customers that adding servers is not a prerequisite to growing their IT capabilities.

As demands increase and existing IT systems reach their capacity limits, companies experience slow server response times, says Judie Van Keulen, Evolving Solutions' Director of Marketing. "This may only happen at certain times of the month, such as when the finance department is working through month-end or marketing is running a promotion. The obvious solution is to buy an additional server," she says. "That's how companies create server farms. Each server has an application running on it and companies can get to the point where they physically do not have the space in their data center for another server."

Leveraging its proprietary assessment tool in mid-size companies, and employing VMware's tool Capacity Planner for larger enterprises, Evolving Solutions presents an alternative to the high equipment, energy and maintenance costs of server farms.

"Both ITxRAYsm and VMware's Capacity Planner assess the IT environment, for server and storage utilization," says Van Keulen. Once the assessment is complete, identifying server space allocation and system inefficiencies, Evolving Solutions designs solutions to virtualize the environment, redeploying the company's IT assets to optimize workload and capacity utilization. "Generally, servers in a data center are only being utilized between 10-15 percent."

Van Keulen goes on to point out that depending on the applications and business needs, VMware's server consolidation solution can reduce a data center of 25 servers down to two by placing virtual machines on each one of those servers, increasing the capacity utilization to 80-85 percent.

## **"Road 2 Virtualization" identifies 25 net-new prospects**

Virtualization has long been a key solution within Evolving Solutions' market area (Minnesota, Western Wisconsin, Iowa and the Dakotas) and target verticals—healthcare, manufacturing and retail. Each of these industries requires companies to manage and store tremendous amounts of data, and healthcare companies, in particular, grapple with stringent compliance issues that require large hardware and application infrastructures for their administration.

So, when Avnet approached Evolving Solutions to co-host an executive IT briefing event called the "Road 2 Virtualization," Van Keulen viewed it as an important opportunity to raise the company's profile to a ready audience that had not yet been exposed to their message. "We do several presentations and



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—Judie Van Keulen, Director of Marketing, Evolving Solutions, Inc.

seminars for our clients. With the Road 2 Virtualization we wanted to reach companies we weren't doing business with. Our goal for this event was net-new customers. We leveraged Avnet as much as possible, because we knew they had the right people and contacts to make it a success.”

Indeed, Avnet managed the event from inception to completion, including securing guest speakers and providing tangible deliverables for attendees. Most important to Evolving Solutions was that Avnet spearheaded and funded a multi-touch attendee outreach effort designed to ensure a highly qualified audience. “Tapping into new people and getting them there, that's a very hard and expensive thing to do,” says Van Keulen. “Avnet set up the registration Web page, invitations and telemarketing, they took care of all the creative work and the messaging.”

In the end, Avnet's e-mail and telemarketing outreach was a success, generating 25 new attendees. Van Keulen was impressed with how well qualified the attendees were. “Avnet had lengthy conversations with prospects, asking specific questions relative to their IT and virtualization environment, and their business pain. The attendees knew that this wasn't just an event you attend to get a giveaway, it was going to address their business pain.”

Avnet did fund a high value incentive for an audience serious about virtualization: One Virtualization Road Show attendee would be nominated to receive a comprehensive VMware virtualization, consolidation and capacity planning assessment. An Avnet-funded assessment was a win from Evolving Solutions' perspective as well. “It gives our consultants the opportunity to engage with the prospect, collect actual data and present the findings to them,” says Van Keulen. “At that point, we can talk about areas where they

are experiencing pain and discuss solutions such as virtualization to help them reach their goals. It gives us the opportunity to better understand their environment and help them manage their storage more efficiently.”

The Road 2 Virtualization Seminar also enabled Evolving Solutions to show value to another important partner, IBM. “Any time you put on a top quality event, you can showcase your areas of technical expertise. Having IBM attend an event where you demonstrate your skills and the solution sets you bring to the market can help when the local team is looking for a business partner to work an opportunity. They have seen your skill sets and know you can help them close the opportunity, says Van Keulen, it's a win-win situation.”

However, the bottom-line goal for Evolving Solutions and its participation in the event was the generation of net-new prospects, and by that measure Van Keulen credits Avnet with a mission accomplished. “I think the people who attended the event are comfortable with who we are. We're going to continue to touch them, form partnerships and identify strong new business opportunities.”

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