



CisCom Solutions CASE STUDY

CisCom Solutions is a Louisville, Kentucky based IT services company that provides small and medium businesses with fully managed services, or as-needed time and materials technical assistance. Founder David Ely, and his partner Scott Walters, strive to deliver both cost-effective and proactive technical services to every customer. To help get the job done, CisCom utilizes the LabTech remote monitoring and management (RMM) solution. Built by system administrators, for system administrators, LabTech manages the entire technology infrastructure from one central interface to increase the efficiency of technical support.

To Ely, LabTech represents a vital tool for managed services providers (MSP). "I've been in the industry since 1984, and there are very, very few products—probably I can count on one hand the number of products that excite me—like Windows Small Business Server 2003 or Windows XP," he explains. "But I tell you, when I saw LabTech, I was sold. . . It is one of the slickest products I've seen."

Walters remembers a surprising call from one of his techs just after the LabTech demo was loaded onto a server. "He called me that night and said 'You've got to log in. This is great. It's awesome!' We got excited about it pretty quickly." After the first night of using LabTech, Walters was convinced of its value. "We pushed it out to probably 100 machines before we even bought it . . . It was just so powerful."

LabTech is more affordable and easier to use than other solutions

CisCom had tried other remote monitoring solutions—most recently Kaseya—and Ely was concerned about making sure costs stayed under control. "With Kaseya, their pricing was convoluted and difficult to understand . . . the cost could fluctuate depending on a variety of factors. With LabTech, I have a fixed monthly fee, and we actually purchase it through them."

It was equally important to Walters that his team of technical professionals could quickly learn to use LabTech. "For me, it's quite simply ease of use," says Walters. "Anything we wanted to do in Kaseya, we had to research for a week before we could learn how to do it. With LabTech, we log in, play around with it for a few minutes, and we've figured out exactly what we need to do. With a Windows interface, everything looks like you'd expect it to look, and is basically where you'd expect it to be."

Saving 'considerable' time helps boost profitability

Because it's so intuitive, LabTech helps CisCom team complete projects faster. When asked to quantify time savings, Walters replies "It's considerable." He continues, "With LabTech, we'll talk about something we need to do, log in during our meeting, figure it out right then and there, and we're off and going."

For Ely, the extra efficiency with LabTech translates directly to the bottom line. "You get things done faster. And when you have managed service clients, time is of the essence and efficiency is the way to being



Company:
CisCom Solutions, LLC
Year founded: 1996
www.ciscom.com

Challenge: To manage customers' networks proactively, even when techs are not on-site.

Solution: LabTech remote monitoring and management (RMM)

Results: Improved customer service with the ability to resolve issues and kill viruses remotely—often before customers realize they have a problem. Now, on-site visits can focus on projects that add value for the customer and bring new revenue to CisCom.



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profitable. With LabTech, a lot of times, what we're doing at the customer locations isn't even fixing problems. We're doing new projects and expanding their technology as opposed to putting out the fires."

Remote management is like 'magic' for customers

LabTech can solve an end-user's problem before he or she even knows a problem exists. Customers are often able to keep working without disruption while CisCom fixes issues. "It's the energy force behind the system that to them is just magic," observe Ely. "Things are getting done and clients don't really know. They call in and complain there's a problem, and while you're talking with them, boom, it works."

Walters provides a quick example: "Last week I had a customer call me up and they couldn't print any more so I logged in [to LabTech] and saw that her print spooler was stuck. From the agent, I just restarted the print spooler. I didn't have to log into her machine. You do it all from the LabTech agent and console. It took me about 30 seconds. I called her back and asked her if she could print now and she could. She couldn't believe that I was able to fix it that quickly."

"No matter where we are, if a customer has a problem, using LabTech, we can get in and take a look at it. The response to the customer is much better," acknowledges Ely. "It's being on top of monitoring their systems and doing the proactive maintenance that will hopefully head off a lot of the problems."

75% of IT issues can be fixed without taking over the machine

The LabTech agent makes it possible to proactively monitor systems and resolve issues remotely, often without even needing to log in to the problem machine. "Before LabTech, even when we did things remotely, we had to log in to that machine through RDP or VNC. We had to be on that machine remotely," Walters explains. "Now when we work on a machine, 75 percent of the things that we do, we can do with the LabTech agent, and it affects the machine, but the end-user has no idea we are on that machine. We're not really on that machine."

Kill destructive viruses remotely, without rolling the trucks

With LabTech, it is very easy to kill a virus remotely in the background, without losing valuable time driving to the client's site. For every MSP, keeping client networks safe from the ravages of viruses is a round-the-clock



David Ely, Founder
CisCom Solutions



Scott Walters, Partner
CisCom Solutions

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– DAVID ELY, FOUNDER, CISCOM SOLUTIONS



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effort where time is of the essence. Lately, the number of potentially devastating viruses in circulation has been rising.

"We had an incident yesterday with a server that was acting a little weird, and we logged in to and figured out that it did have a virus on it," says Walters. "Within minutes, we killed the virus process and killed where it was starting up and it was gone just like that. Before LabTech, we had to find an alternate program, boot in the safe mode and install an alternate antivirus to kill the virus. A lot of times the virus had done so much damage that we had to reinstall the antivirus—really, it was a lot of work. Now with LabTech, we know when we have a virus pretty quickly and are able to kill the process. End of story."

Ely agrees that this is one area where LabTech really exceeds expectations. "The beautiful thing is that before, viruses always required a roll of the truck. Very, very seldom were we successful at killing the viruses remotely. That in itself is a wonderful feature of LabTech."

Inventory reports help customers plan future IT purchases

LabTech features a number of standard reports that help Ely and Walters manage their business effectively, track important aspects of service to clients, and even help customers plan future IT purchases. LabTech also provides inventory reports that CisCom professionals use to help customers plan for new hardware or software upgrades. Providing proactive advice to customers adds to the value of CisCom's service, and enables customers to plan future hardware purchases around cash flow.

"I like our inventory reports," says Ely. "It's something nice to take to the customer when you are meeting with them. Go in and say 'ok, let's take a look at your network. Let's look at the servers, desktops.' It helps me provide information so clients can budget IT expenditures beyond the main services piece."

Staying proactive with LabTech

CisCom carefully monitors antivirus updates and data backups for each customer site using LabTech. They also view reports that show them the overall health of the networks, including disc space usage and bandwidth utilization patterns.

"We would much rather be proactive than reactive," affirms Ely, "and LabTech helps us get from point A to point B."

Using LabTech, CisCom has been able to deliver more responsive managed services. They enjoy faster updates of standard software packages such as antivirus. As they monitor the health of the network, technicians troubleshoot the majority of issues proactively—before minor issues can turn into larger problems. CisCom employees know that great customer service is about being on top of issues early and resolving problems without disrupting their customers' jobs.