

'Dedication Like Nothing I Have Ever Seen': en-terpret.co works round-the-clock to get client back to business

BACKGROUND

It is 8 a.m. on a Friday, a time when most Chicago-area business people are stalled in rush-hour traffic or reaching for another cup of coffee to jump-start their day, but Laura Konczyk is already bubbling with enthusiasm, and perhaps a little relief. Laura is Administrative Assistant for Plastic Bottle Corporation, a leading container manufacturer based in Libertyville, Illinois. The day before, her entire workplace had been turned inside out. The company was in the middle of its annual year-end review, a complex and rigorous process during which employees and managers work long hours and face a series of urgent deadlines. This time, the staff at Plastic Bottle faced an additional and potentially overwhelming challenge: a server switchover. Anyone who has ever changed servers knows how grueling it can be. Nothing ever works right the first time. Computers and work stations can be off-line for extended periods while IT people struggle to find solutions. Productivity plummets. Even the most critical tasks are left undone. Nerves are stressed. Tempers flare.

Yet less than 24 hours into what could have been a nightmarish ordeal lasting days or even weeks, Laura sounded positively ecstatic. The switchover had gone better than she could have imagined. All of Plastic Bottle's computers were reconnected and back online. Employees were back to work and the company was back to business. Laura had effusive praise for Chicago-based en-terpret.co, Plastic Bottle's Information Technology consultant, and Dennis Sohn, the principal "en-terpreter" who led the project. "They did a terrific job," she says.

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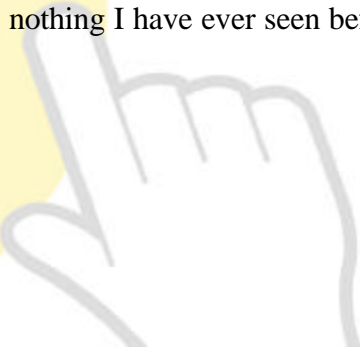
24-HOUR SERVICE

Plastic Bottle Corporation has been an en-terpret.co client for more than a decade. According to Laura, the relationship has flourished because Dennis and his colleagues at en-terpret.co have worked hard to understand and meet Plastic Bottle's unique needs.

"They have always been very pleasant to work with and they certainly know their business," she says. "I work very closely with them and I think they prefer that." Dennis is a regular visitor to the Plastic Bottle offices. He knows the business almost as well as any Plastic Bottle employee and he makes himself available whenever Laura or her coworkers have a question or a problem, regardless of the time of day.

The server switchover is a good example. Plastic Bottle had recently upgraded the ACT Customer Relations Management (CRM) software package, which exceeded the capacity of the company's existing server. It was critical to have the program up and running as soon as possible, even if that meant switching servers during the middle of the busy year-end period. Dennis spent time meeting with Laura and her coworkers to carefully plan the operation. He painstakingly moved over all of Plastic Bottle's applications – accounting, project quoting and customer databases – one at a time to minimize the disruption. "We went to every computer in the office," Laura says. "He was very thorough."

When the actual switchover took place, Dennis stayed in the Plastic Bottle offices until 9 p.m., long after everyone else had gone home. "We trusted him to be there alone," Laura says. "Dennis and everyone at en-terpret.co are like our friends." When Laura returned to the office at 6 a.m. the next day, she was very pleased to find that nearly all of the company's computers were online. "There were just two or three computers that were not responding," Laura says. "I sent an e-mail to Dennis and by 6:30 a.m. he had responded and the problems were solved. Their dedication is like nothing I have ever seen before."





RESPONDING TO CHANGING NEEDS

Laura and her colleagues have come to expect such responsive service from Dennis and en-terpret.co. A few years ago, the firm even modified its billing procedures to meet Plastic Bottle's needs. "Rather than charging us by the hour, they agreed to work with us in setting up a project timeline," Laura says. "That helped us out a lot because we knew beforehand how much the project would cost and when the bills would come."

To help the company address its changing IT requirements, Dennis and other en-terpret.co consultants meet regularly with Plastic Bottle officials to plan new initiatives. "It seems we have something planned every year," Laura says. "And they are always there to help us out with things like e-mail security and disaster recovery planning. Overall, their focus is on keeping our technology current."

One project in the planning stages is to replace Plastic Bottle's existing and outdated project quotation software. "Dennis helped us to reach that decision because we could no longer get support from the manufacturer," Laura says. "In the meantime, we were lucky that Dennis knew the one person who still writes for that program."

MORE THAN A CONSULTANT

For Laura and her colleagues, Dennis brings much more to his job than just an encyclopedic knowledge of technology. He knows how people and computers interact. Two years ago, for example, Plastic Bottle converted its accounting software from MS-DOS to Windows. "It was a frustrating process that took an entire year," Laura remembers. "Like any humans, we were comfortable with what we knew. Dennis really helped us to get through that. He told us that within a few months we wouldn't even remember how we used to do it. And he was right."

When Dennis was unavailable for a short period a few years ago, Laura said she was very nervous about who would replace him, even temporarily. "We had come to rely on him so much," she says. "We were OK, though. The other people at en-terpret.co



came over here and spent some time getting to know us and we felt comfortable again.”

LOOKING AHEAD

Basking in the sights and sounds of a busy, productive office that she feared might be quiet for some time, Laura was eager to talk about her experiences with en-terpret.co and Dennis Sohn. “Keeping up with technology is an ongoing process,” she says. “I really feel like they are our partners. I give them an A+.”

