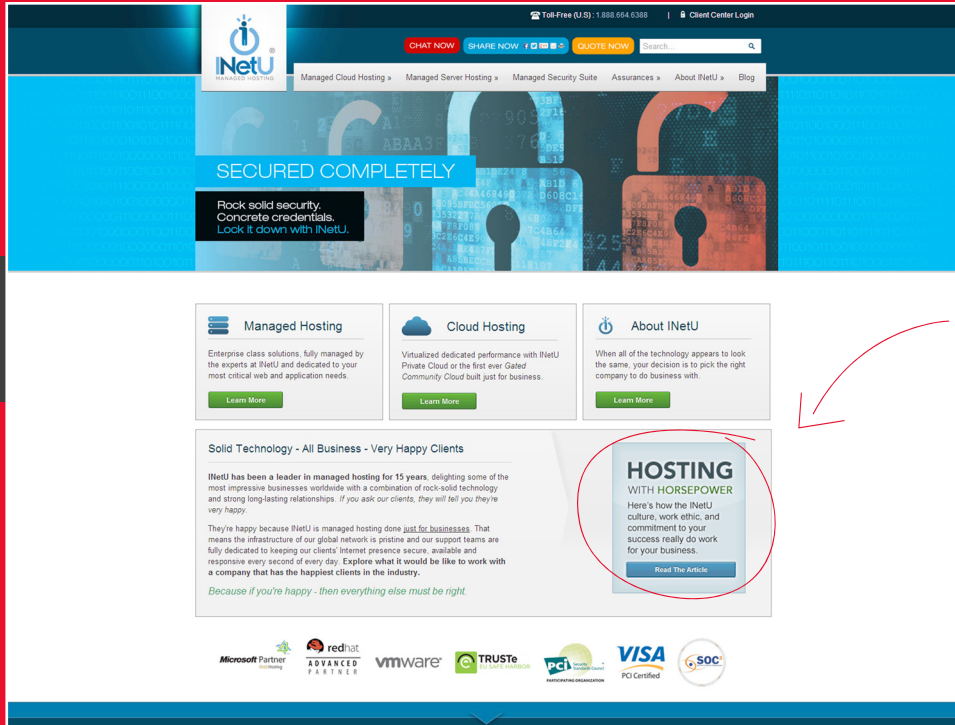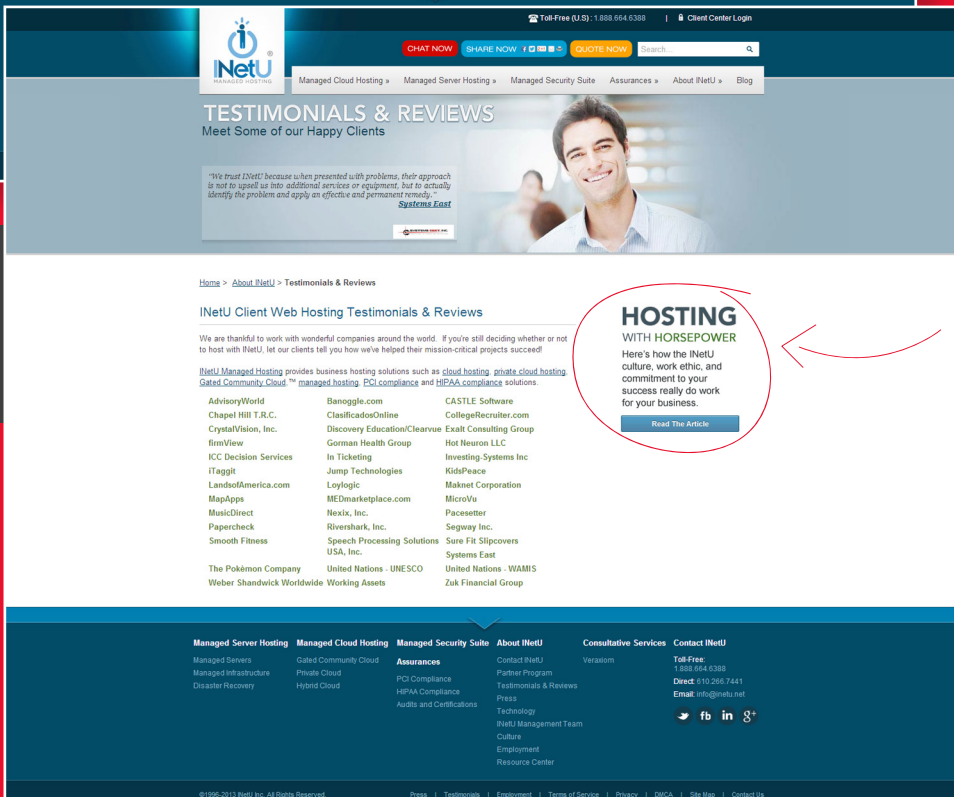# ROBYN WEISMAN

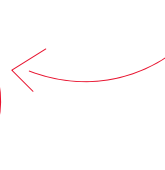*Bringing your complex IT solutions to life*

Robyn wrote the INetU case study "Hosting With Horsepower" for *Processor Magazine* in 2011. INetU thought Robyn's piece so effectively captured its corporate essence that its marketing team now uses her story as its showcase company profile:

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by Robyn Weisman

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Hosting With Horsepower

INetU Provides BMW With Effective Hosted Services & Efficient Customer Service

David Chek, learning sytems technology manager at BMW of North America, or BMWNA, is in charge of maintaining and enhancing a Web-based training system used by the auto manufacturer's dealer body, and the company's previous big-name hosting solution was becoming untenable as an option. Said hosting provider's hardware had been in place since before Chek started in his position back in 2003, and the provider not only hadn't made any motions to upgrade its solution by consolidating servers and leveraging newer technologies, its customer service and tech support was inattentive at best.

"We needed a technology upgrade, and to nobody's surprise, we were interested in seeing if, as part of this, we might be able to get a better price on our hosting costs," Chek says.

So Chek sent out RFPs to a number of competing vendors, looking for the best combination of price and service to host BMWNA's application. After narrowing the choices to two finalists, BMWNA chose Allentown, Pa.,-based hosting company INetU (www.inetu.net). "[INetU] is a great team to work with, and in the context of this business relationship, they have had our best interests at heart," Chek says.

Outstanding Responsiveness

Chek says that prospective vendors going into the RFP process knew only that BMWNA's old hosting provider was a large company that failed to give BMWNA what it needed. Chek made sure to invite several medium-sized companies to bid, sensing that they would be less likely to cause a bureaucratic morass.

INetU impressed Chek by displaying outstanding communication and responsiveness throughout the RFP process. "They were easy to deal with in terms of resolving questions and scheduling. They always had the right people that could get on the phone with you and answer questions quickly," Chek says. "While some of the other vendors would say, 'We can schedule a call in two weeks,' INetU's operations were not only totally streamlined, they were just a pleasure to deal with."

Proactive Hosting Providers

An outstanding sales presentation during the RFP process doesn't always translate into great service once contracts have been signed, but, according to Chek, INetU has over-delivered since BMWNA switched to its service.

"If we have a question or issue, we make a phone call, the phone call is answered by an engineer, and our problem is resolved typically within five to 10 minutes," Chek says. "I've had discussions with engineers at 4 a.m. going over some things, which was not our experience with our previous vendor at all."

Moreover, INetU has both improved and hardened BMWNA's system configurations without any prompting on BMWNA's part. Chek explains that several months ago, the lead engineer assigned to the BMWNA account contacted him. "He told me they had noticed a problem on a virtual server in their own internal system, and the reason they called was because we had a similar configuration, and even though they hadn't seen this issue on our servers, [INetU] would open a ticket and see whether we were vulnerable, as well," Chek says.

> "[INetU's] brand of proactivity is priceless. To have a company head off a potential problem down the road [is] unprecedented at least in my experience with hosting, and that's just one example of the kind of things [INetU] has done for us."

David Chek, learning systems technology manager at BMW of North America.

Hosting with Horsepower

INetU found the same vulnerability in BMWNA's servers and corrected it, Chek continues, even though BMWNA hadn't yet evidenced a problem. "That kind of proactivity is priceless," he says. "To have a company head off a potential problem down the road [is] unprecedented at least in my experience with hosting, and that's just one example of the kind of things [INetU] has done for us."

No Stress On The System

Before implementing INetU's solution, Chek's team and INetU spent about six weeks performing a series of stress tests to make sure the hosting provider could handle BMWNA's needs. "As part of the hosting contract and one of the pieces we specified in the RFP, we had INetU include a couple of rounds of stress testing, and they in turn subbed that testing out to a specialized Web-based stress testing vendor," Chek explains. "They didn't throw the business over the wall. Instead, they managed it and helped us formulate how we were going to do this and then work out the mechanics with this [stress testing] subcontractor."

One of the tests involved maximum application loads, where INetU showed BMWNA the number of people who could be logged into BMWNA's training system before it began to show signs of strain.

Another test demonstrated the number of simultaneous video streams BMWNA could put through INetU's service before it showed signs of breaking down.

Smooth Implementation

The actual migration and implementation process was a smooth one for BMWNA because the company already had such a strong relationship with INetU. According to Chek, INetU was responsible for setting up and provisioning the hardware, the operating system, and the core software, while Chek's internal team deployed and tested the training system application.

The entire process took about three months, although Chek says that a majority of that time was spent tweaking the

application to work on INetU's platform. "The whole thing was managed," he says. "We were having status calls with INetU every other day throughout the process, and they were always available."

For example, Chek points out that his group ran into some setup issues, which were due to moving to a newer operating system platform that included virtualization. But INetU engineers brought their expertise to this and other issues and helped Chek's group think through and then fix those problems. "They would figure out, 'OK, maybe you need to set up the OS this way or tweak this setting so that this function of our application would work and then deploy the appropriate engineering support, as needed, to get it done," he says.

According to Chek, INetU's service performs as he had expected, which he is obviously pleased about, but he is still marveling at the quality of INetU's service delivery and support. "Every week something new comes up, and I say to myself, 'Boy, we sure made the right choice here.' Because what happens after you sign the contract is what really tells the tale, and these guys have over-delivered since we signed the contract, so as you can tell, I'm a huge fan," Chek says.

ROBYN WEISMAN

Bringing your complex IT solutions to life

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