



*Tools For Agriculture*

# Customer Case Study

CNS Stabilizes Solex IT Without Disrupting  
Day-to-Day Business





*"The customer service is great. It's just like talking to a friend. Most of the time, I tell them it's not urgent, but it still gets done quickly. It's a comforting experience."*

**- Josh Thiessen, Network Administrator, Solex Corporation**

## ► The Company

If an implement exists that can get pushed by or dragged behind a tractor, then Northern California business Solex Corporation probably sells it. Based in Dixon, Solex Corporation specializes in importing and distributing farm, landscape and light construction equipment in the western United States. The family-owned company was established in 1956 by Boyd Fountain.

Currently owned by Boyd's sons, Darryl and David Fountain, Solex distributes over 30 product lines from American and European manufacturers to retailers like John Deere and Kubota. Their specialized products range from vineyard equipment and fertilizer spreaders to dusters and mulchers.

## ► The Situation

For the last ten years, Josh Thiessen has done a little bit of everything for Solex Corporation. "I first started in the warehouse and then moved into the accounting department, then moved into sales," he says. "Now I'm in sales, and I'm the IT administrator."

Solex signed up for a managed IT services plan with Capital Network Solutions in Sep. 2018. However, before going with CNS, Solex employed a dedicated, full-time IT worker. "We were having countless server stability issues," Thiessen says. "Sometimes we were down all day because we couldn't get hold of him until the afternoon. It was just bad all the way around."

The adverse effects of downtime proved too much to bear. "If the server was down, nobody could get into the program to look up pricing," Thiessen explains. "We had to write field orders by hand. We would wait for the system to come back online, and then we would call our customer back to tell them if it's in stock."

After parting ways with their absentee "IT guy," Solex contracted with one of CNS' managed service provider competitors in the area. "They never evaluated our system," Thiessen says. "I was the guinea pig. Because they weren't doing it, I was the one figuring it out myself." "I advised the owners that I would like to look for a different company."

## ► The Solution

Solex parted ways with the other Sacramento IT services company and started shopping around for a new managed services provider.

During the process, Thiessen met with CNS Vice President of Sales John Guarienti at Solex headquarters in Dixon. "We were on a terminal server, and we had new computers, but they were junky," Thiessen says. "John comes in here and says, 'If you don't want to upgrade these computers, we don't want to be your service provider.'"

Thiessen appreciated the honesty but also the insistence on quality. "That means he knows what he's talking about," Thiessen says. "I told the owner that it was a little more money, but these guys are going to get it done right."

## ► The Objective

In the days before CNS, Solex operated on three servers, each a different generation with a different business function. "We do a lot of business, but it's just one office," Thiessen says. "Why do we need three servers?"

The objective for CNS: merge three old servers into one new server without disrupting the day-to-day operations of a company that ships parts to five different states. Meanwhile, we needed to install and set up new workstations for about a dozen end-users.

As usual, CNS emphasized preparation, documentation and communication throughout the infrastructure modernization process. "We figured out everything, between our phone system to how everybody does their day-to-day, and how we wanted things to work," Thiessen says. "We got it all dialed in, and then we just waited for the computers."

## ► The Support Team

Once the computers arrived, a four-person crew from CNS came onsite. The CNS crew went through every single machine, switching over the workstations one by one. "We did a lot of prep work during office hours, and then right at the end of the day, we cut everybody off and started jamming," Thiessen says.

When the Solex Corporation employees arrived the next day, the new computers and servers were ready to go. Meanwhile, a senior CNS technician stayed onsite most of the day to answer questions and resolve any lingering issues.

"CNS wanted to make sure that they had somebody here because that's usually when questions come," Thiessen says. "It's good that we had that support; it helps a lot."

## ► The Result

After getting Solex set up on their new server and workstations, CNS' 24/7 help desk remained available to fix problems and answer questions. "I call in, and they create the ticket over the phone," Thiessen says. "It's almost like talking to friends."

CNS also switched Solex from their pop-mail exchange to Office 365, a move that drastically increased productivity.

"We had a shared email between a few of the salesmen, and we were having a ton of problems with miscommunication," Thiessen says. In the past, Solex salespeople would inadvertently submit the same order two or three times. "Office 365 is reducing the problem of double orders, which is saving a lot of money."