ROUNDSTONE SOLUTIONS

Why it makes sense to look at newer VARs for Next Generation Technologies

Like you, we're experienced at what we do. We understand how IT Infrastructures function, what's needed to make them improve, and how things work in corporate environments.

Many of the companies we approach have existing relationships with other companies that can provide products and services; our competitors. We're familiar with our competitors and what they're good at, and what they're not.

Most of them are good at traditional IT infrastructures, like HPE and Dell servers, EMC/NetApp/Dell storage, and Cisco networking equipment. I'll bet a lot of those relationships are on "autopilot" and it's just automatic that you go to them for your next equipment purchase. I know this, because you tell me.

But let me ask you, how many of them are introducing you to newer, Next Generation technologies? I'll bet not many. Here's why; these companies are tied to the vendors that they've been selling for some time, and they don't want to do anything to jeopardize the "run rate" business they count on you for. So, they don't show you the next, best thing.

When I started Roundstone, I decided that I wanted to make my life a whole lot harder than it had to be by representing vendors that were delivering newer technologies. I gotta tell you, it's not easy getting you to listen to information about the new stuff, but it's working.

We work with some of the newer companies in the business, but all of them have proven products. You just haven't heard of them because your existing VARs aren't doing so. Maybe some have, but most don't. I know this because our vendor partners tell us that.

In order to learn about these newer technologies you have to be willing to let others tell those stories. Companies like Roundstone are ready to tell those stories. All we need is a chance to tell them.

The next time you get an email from us (like today) or get a phone call from us, how about you take a few minutes and talk to us for a bit? You'll find it's a different conversation, in that we're going to introduce you to some newer ways of doing things. Better ways of doing things.

You have absolutely nothing to lose, and everything to gain.

Roundstone is all about delivering value to you, our Client. We do so by working hard to understand the project you're working on, what the goals are, understanding various alternatives to achieving those goals, and then getting special pricing from the manufacturers to be able to provide the best price. Combined with the rest, that's real value, we think.

Give us a call at 415-963-9366 or 925-217-117 or email us at sales@roundstonesolutions.com and we'll be happy to sit down and discuss your unique requirements. Get value in your Next Generation IT infrastructure discussions by working with Roundstone Solutions.

We send this email version of the Roundstone Solutions Quarterly Newsletter to over 20,000 contacts every quarter. We try to keep our mailing list current, and only wish to send it to those who find it useful. If you're getting this newsletter and you like it, terrific. If you're getting it and you don't wish to continue to receive it, please let us know. We'll remove you from our mailing list right away. Thanks.

Technologies we like in 2017

We're a quarter of the way through 2017, and there are some technologies that are getting a lot of attention from End Users and from Roundstone:

Here's a round-up:

Hyper-convergence (HCI):   HCI continues to be, and is accelerating as, the direction where data centers are heading. Real benefits are being realized by companies which have deployed HCI, and we think that will continue, and accelerate.

HCI combines server and storage hardware into one appliance, and allows companies to truly acquire IT services as they need them, for workloads. We make this distinction because for the most part, companies have had to acquire IT equipment based on how the manufacturers serve it up. No longer.

The overall benefits are simplified operations, easier scaling at your pace, greater performance, and lower operating costs. Additionally, Nutanix provides its own hypervisor, giving you the ability to eliminate your cost of VMware software and services.

Roundstone partners with Nutanix and a couple of others in this space. Check out Nutanix at www.nutanix.com.

Security: Huge topic these days, and a lot of money is being spent here. That makes sense, because the underlying premise of having secure systems is what enables commerce on the Internet. Up to now, Roundstone has not been that active in security, but we have now partnered with a new company called Cybereason. Cybereason provides a way for companies to find security issues by constantly testing the systems for known signature of viruses, malware, and other violations. It's referred to as Next Generation AntiVirus, but it's so much more than that. Check them out at www.cybereason.com.

New approaches to backup: One of the areas users still struggle with is backup. It's kludgy, expensive, and very difficult to manage. There are a few "old-school" companies that make a ton of money keeping the gravy train going with older backup schemes. That's changing, with newer technologies being deployed. Companies like *Rubrik* are going to make a huge impact here, and Roundstone is a partner. We also think companies have to rethink what they backup and for how long. Tape is still around, and it's inexpensive. Roundstone partners with *Quantum*, and there's a rebirth of interest in this form of backup. Check out Rubrik at www.rubrik.com and Quantum at www.quantum.com.

Tools to prevent Ransomware: This is a big topic. Some companies were hit hard by Ransomware in 2016, and it really messed things up. Having a solid approach to backup is the best way to combat Ransomware. If you have good backup, your exposure to Ransomware is minimized. It's also important to have a solid intrusion prevention and intrusion detection systems in place. One company that can help is Extrahop. They are all about systems management, and their platform is perfect for determining the health of the IT environment and where issues are occurring. Check out Extrahop at www.extrahop.com.

Unified Communications as a Services (UCaaS):   Companies gained a huge advantage when, for the most part, they embraced Cisco, Avaya, and a few others as vendors for telecom services. They moved their phone systems onto servers and storage in their own data centers, replacing proprietary equipment from the "phone company". Well, we're onto the next phase of this, which is to get rid of those servers and storage, and let it be run in the Cloud. You'll find lower costs, easier management, and a better overall experience. Roundstone partners closely with *Fuze*, one of the leading vendors is this space. Check them out at www.fuze.com.

Software Defined Storage (SDS):   Users of NetApp and Isilon storage are the most loyal of customers. For years, they have paid a premium for NetApp in NFS storage, but that's no longer necessary. There are vendors offering Software Defined Storage on various hardware platforms. The benefits are better performance and lower costs. One of the leaders in that space is Qumulo, and you can learn more about them at www.qumulo.com.

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HPE on a buying binge

So far in 2017, we've seen a lot of activity in more traditional companies buying relatively newer companies, namely HPE. Here's a run down of what's happened lately:

HPE buys Simplivity

For a number of years, HPE has been behind the curve in Hyper-Converged Infrastructure (HCI). They've had a product in the market, but most agree that it's not particularly well formed. All HPE did was cobble together some Proliant servers, add a bunch of storage to it, and let VMware do the work of virtualizing the while thing. In fact, it's not really HCI unless you re-wrote the file system, which HPE definitely didn't do.

So, rather than lose even more time, HPE bought Simplivity, an HCI vendor that has been around for a number of years, and which had to pivot at least once to get into the HCI business. Simplivity had been valued at over $1B or so just 6 months ago, when Nutanix went public. HPE bought Simplivity for $650M, far below what Nutanix's value is. Fire sale?

At any rate, HPE has begun to port Simplivity software onto their Proliants and sell it as a package. That's already bothering customers who bought Simplivity and ran it on Dell or Cisco. Expect some dissonance to happen from the HPE purchase.

The takeaway? HPE is still pretty far behind in the race. Nutanix is pulling away and are about to announce some pretty cool stuff related to Cloud. When considering HCI, put your money on Nutanix.

HPE buying Nimble Storage

It's like money's burning a hole in HPE's pocket. They have announced they are buying Nimble Storage.

Nimble was a pioneer in hybrid storage, where SSD and HDD storage is combined to offer a better alternative to traditional SAN storage.

What makes this acquisition unusual is that HPE bought 3Par for over $2.3B a few years ago. Apparently, there are some gaps in the 3Par product line that required the spending of $1B for Nimble to solve. We wonder why they couldn't have just created a version of their 3Par offering that bridged the gap? Must have seen something that didn't bode well.

So, HPE is going to absorb Nimble Storage. We're not sure what to make of this, other than Nimble was growing both in terms of revenue and net loss every quarter. Not sure how the net loss part of that is going to change with HPE running the place, but we'll see.

HPE rumored to buy Veeam

This is rumored to be another $1B or so purchase. Wow. Is HPE's storage backup software so bad that they need to spend $1B to fix it?

Veeam is a solid company, and we would like to see them remain independent. We'll see.

So, that's $650M for Simplivity, $1B for Nimble, and possibly $1B for Veeam. On top of $2.3B for 3Par. HPE sure must like storage.

Roundstone is one of the most experienced and hands-on Solutions Providers/VARs in Northern CA. We know technology well, and we'd like to understand your environment and goals so we can help you select the best approach for your company.

Call us at 415-963-9366 or 925-217-1177 or email us at sales@roundstonesolutions.com for more details.

Brocade becomes Broadcom, Arris, and Extreme

For those keeping score, Brocade is ending its time as a public and independent company by splitting into three parts.

Broadcom is purchasing the entire company, and that deal is expected to close in July or so. Once that deal is done, Broadcom will be keeping only the Fibre Channel part of the business.

Broadcom is selling the Ruckus wireless business, along with the Brocade ICX campus switch line to Arris. That transaction is expected to close a month after the Broadcom deal is done.

Finally, Broadcom is selling the Brocade VDX product line and any other pieces to Extreme. That transaction should be completed a month after the Broadcom purchase is finished. Roundstone can help with your networking requirements. We can be reached at sales@roundstonesolutions.com or call us at 925-217-1177.

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How can you possibly manage your Communications?

One of the biggest line items in IT's budget, after personnel, is communications. It's also one of the least understood costs in IT's budget.

Communications has changed as much, if not more than, the data center. It's because of the speed and availability of high speed internet that information technology has been able to change as much as it has. Forget the speed of the processor chip; it's communications that really make an IT environment do what it needs to do. As well as reduced costs for circuits and usage.

Let's take a look at what comprises your communication budget, net of personnel:

- Line costs (circuit costs from AT&T, Comcast, etc.)
- Usage costs (costs of usage on those circuits)
- International costs (if you have international communications)
- PBX equipment costs (like Avaya, Shoretel, Nortel, Lucent, etc.)
- UC equipment costs (like Cisco UCS servers and storage, etc.)
- Support costs for equipment (these increase every year)
- Costs for separate video services (like Zoom, Lync, etc.)
- Costs for separate collaboration services (Like WebEx, GoToMeeting, etc.)
- Costs for separate chat/messaging services (like Slack, Lync, Yammer, etc.)
- Cellular services (Like Verizon, AT&T, etc.)
- Cost for Cell phones themselves (Like Apple iPhone, Android, etc.)

If you're a large organization, you know you have "shadow" IT as well. Some of your employees probably just expense some of these, and these don't even show up in the right budget. So the cost is higher.

Face it, it's a lot to manage. How do you do so effectively? How can you? **We have an idea.**

Replace most of it with Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) from a vendor like **Fuze**. Check them out at www.fuze.com. You'll be surprised with how much easier your communications will be to manage, how much less you'll spend, and how much additional function you'll be able to give your users.

You'll also be able to redeploy your skilled workers into more productive tasks than dealing with the administrative tasks of handling dozens of vendors. We'll show you how.

About Roundstone Solutions

Roundstone Solutions is an IT Infrastructure solutions provider based in San Francisco. We help our Clients transform their IT infrastructure through the use of Next Generation IT Infrastructures. The end result are much higher performing, lower cost, simpler, enabling infrastructures.

Roundstone Solutions was founded in 2012 by experienced IT infrastructure executives. Our relentless focus is to be the Northern CA VAR/Reseller with the highest level of satisfaction by our Clients. We accomplish this by understanding our Clients' business objectives, and then matching the appropriate technology solutions to get the job done right. **We succeed by providing superior value to our Clients.**

Please see more about Roundstone Solutions at www.roundstonesolutions.com. Our blog can be found at

Let us help you transform to a Next Generation IT infrastructure!

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