ChannelPro

IT and Business Insights for SMB Solution Providers

You ARE in the Security Business

Admit it, then prepare for long-term growth by following these tips for scaling your security practice **PAGE 14**

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TRANSPARENCY=TRUST

LammTech's "no surprises" business engagement and assessment process turns prospects into customers, says Robert Lamm (pictured)

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TRANSPARENCY=TRUST

An open, process-driven business engagement and assessment method turns prospects into customers who entrust LammTech with intimate business knowledge and goals.

By Robert Lamm • Photography by Alastair Tutton

LAMMTECH has a philosophy for working with prospects and clients: No surprises.

From the moment our sales and business development teams engage with a prospect, we start setting expectations. One expectation is that we're not just going to give them a price based on a device or user count. Instead, we are going to spend a great deal of time during the assessment to learn about their company so we can align their technology needs and decisions with their business goals.

Our business engagement and assessment process is both thorough and transparent. It's a differentiator that has earned us loyal customers who consider us a partner in their business.

We use our marketing and prospecting activities to identify potential clients we believe are a good fit. Our sweet spot is 20 to 25 seats, though we have customers with 150-plus users and multiple locations. We have a horizontal focus, and about 90 percent of our customers are under a managed services contract. Our solution stack includes RMM, business continuity and BDR, cybersecurity, VoIP, videoconferencing, and security cameras/video monitoring.

Process-driven Engagement

We start our engagement by asking prospects about their business and culture. Many of our competitors don't do this, and sometimes it takes people aback.

We reassure them by likening our inquiries to how an accountant would get to know their business. We want to develop that same level of trust as their IT provider.

Some prospects, of course, are only interested in price, or tell us they don't have time to spend on the assessment process. That's our barometer for identifying a customer that is unlikely to be a good fit for LammTech. We are process driven; shortcuts don't usually end well for us or our customers. If a customer is only interested in price, it tells us they are not looking for a true strategic partner.

Our initial assessments are two-pronged. The account manager addresses the business questions, which include, What's your annual revenue? How many employees do you have? Where do you make your money? Is it selling parts? Is it selling life insurance policies versus automobile policies? The answers help us understand how the prospects view their sources of revenue and what's most important to them. For example, if a situation arises that requires a customer to make adjustments in business strategy that may have financial bearing on them, we have a full understanding of how technology may or may not impact that decision.

A technician conducts the technology assessment and spends time interacting with the users, who often open up about issues with printing or computers freezing, or their experiences with their current IT provider. Insight into their day-to-day struggles is something you can't learn simply by running a utility that gathers information on endpoints.

After the on-site assessment, our team formulates a proposal based on the prospect's budget and goals. We cover every expense in the proposal, including new equipment, maintenance costs, telephony, and data if applicable, and what that picture looks like five years out.

We treat the assessment and proposal process like a service ticket. It takes about six days, and we communicate with the prospect as we go through the steps. That way, the prospect is already getting a taste of what it's like to work with LammTech and the level of service we provide.

Once a prospect becomes a customer, we fully share all the information we gathered during the assessment. This is where LammTech really shines. We provide them with a roadmap that shows precisely where their spend is going, and then we work to create a relationship between the revenue they drive versus their IT cost.

Our biggest successes, and the customers we've had the longest, are the ones who have gone through our entire engagement and onboarding process. We have an intimate knowledge of their business, and they know they can trust us because our ethic is transparency.

> *We treat the assessment and proposal process like a service ticket ... and we communicate with the prospect as we go through the steps.*
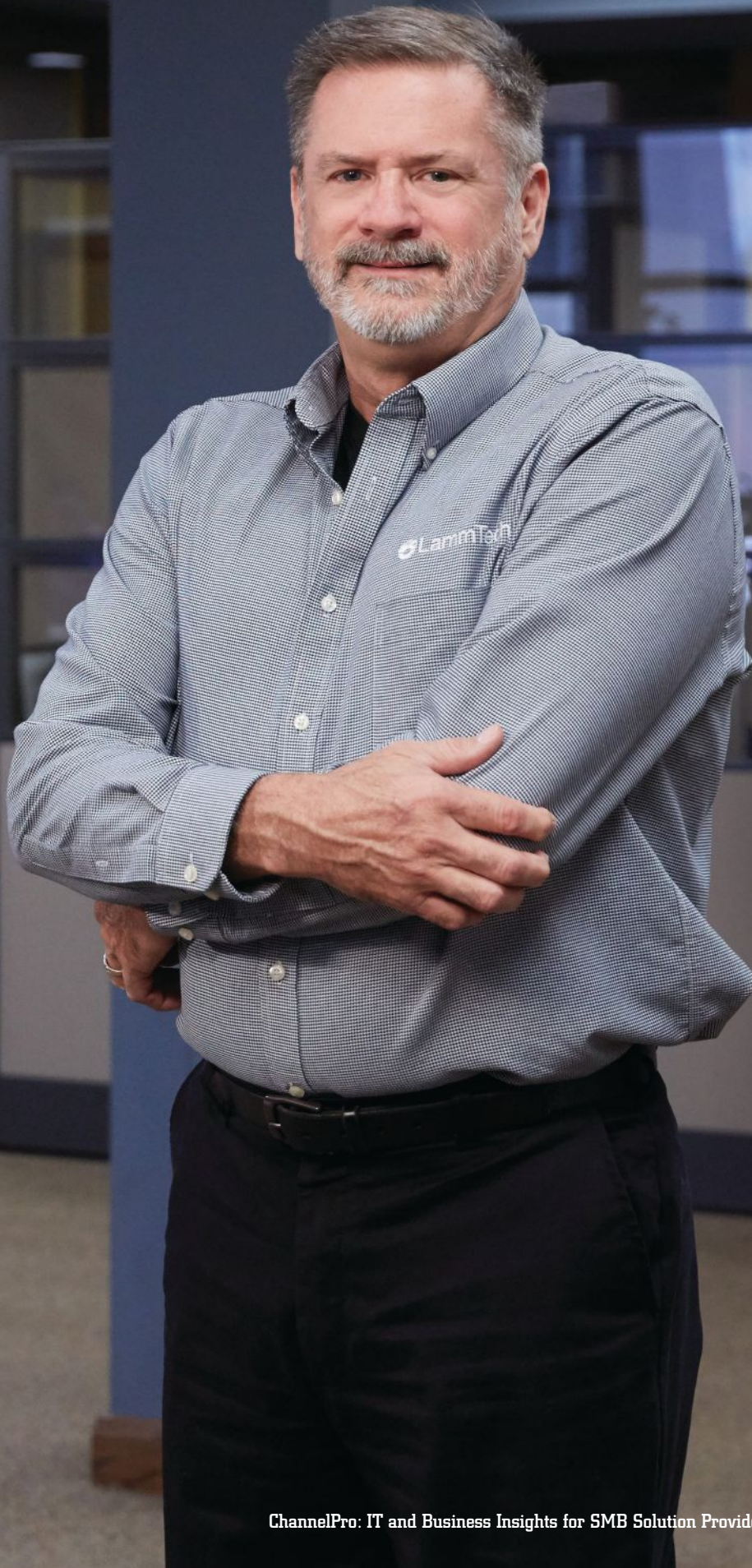
Robert Lamm
**President and CEO
LammTech**

LOCATION Sedalia, Mo.

FOUNDED 1999

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES 20

WEBSITE lammtech.com

COMPANY FOCUS To work with our clients and prospects to understand their company and create a technology roadmap that aligns with their business growth plans

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP
HTG Peer Groups (now IT Nation Evolve)

RECOMMENDED BOOK
Traction: Get a Grip on Your Business by Gino Wickman (EOS, 2007)

FAVORITE PART OF MY JOB
The strategy—trying to evaluate where we've been successful and how we can improve, and how I can develop team members to join and be part of that success

LEAST FAVORITE PART
Understanding and adjusting to changes in employee culture and expectations

WHAT PEOPLE WOULD BE SURPRISED TO KNOW ABOUT ME
I grew up on a farm and today I make my own wine.