Nominee: SimpliVity

Nomination title: Hyperconverged: Designed to Optimize and Protect

CEO Doron Kempel founded SimpliVity in 2009 with a mission to simplify IT, and within seven years the company has become a leader in the market by enabling IT to be secure, scalable and flexible for customers.

Doron led the SimpliVity team to launch the first generation OmniStack Data Virtualization Platform – its flagship software – after 43 months in research, design and development. SimpliVity's OmniStack Data Virtualization Platform is designed to provide simplification with the flexibility of any x86 server, any hypervisor, any public cloud provider, and any industry-standard management or orchestration layer. In 2015, SimpliVity launched the third generation of its technology – the most robust product offering since the company's founding, available on Cisco or Lenovo hardware, or on SimpliVity's OmniCube appliance. SimpliVity also offers hypervisor support with VMware and KVM, with Hyper-V in development.

SimpliVity's hyperconverged infrastructure has revolutionized the IT space much like how the iPhone has changed the way the world views cell phones. By combining digital cameras, day planners, camcorders, GPS, portable video game devices, calculators, watches and so much more, the iPhone completely changed the personal device category by dramatically simplifying the lives of the average person. SimpliVity has done the same thing for the overworked and often understaffed IT department: simplified their environments so they could spend less time "keeping the lights on" and more time on innovation and new business initiatives.

Within the first 23 months of shipping product, SimpliVity completed its Series D funding round of $175 million in March 2015. This round was led by Waypoint Capital, a SimpliVity customer turned investor that was inspired to make the investment after transforming its own IT environments across five global sites. Prior investors Accel Partners, Charles River Ventures, DFJ Growth, Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers (KPCB) and Meritech Capital Partners confirmed SimpliVity's promise to simplify IT by contributing to the round bringing the company's total funding to $276 million.

This round of funding was significant for SimpliVity for two main reasons. First, it set the company's valuation at $1 billion, making it the third "unicorn" in Massachusetts. Second, this was a record achievement as SimpliVity hit the $1 billion mark just 23 months after it first began shipping product.

Not long after this milestone, SimpliVity signed its largest customer to date; a European service provider who purchased nearly 200 Cisco servers to run entirely on SimpliVity OmniStack. In addition to the rewarding partnership with Cisco, SimpliVity signed an agreement with Lenovo in 2015 to make its highly-versatile, enterprise-grade servers available with SimpliVity in North America and Europe. SimpliVity's other enterprise customers include the world's largest mass media group, a Fortune 50 financial services firm, a top five oil and gas company, a top five entertainment company, a top five telecom company, one of the largest producers of U.S. dairy products and one of the three military departments of the Department of Defense.

SimpliVity has also been 100 percent committed to the channel since day one. In fact, SimpliVity was a CRN 5-Star Partner Program winner for three years in a row and was named the 2016 CRN Annual Report Card for Overall Best Converged/Hyperconverged Solution. In early February 2016, the company reported an almost 200 percent year-over-year increase in active partners in 68 countries, and 330 percent year-over-year growth in deal registrations through resellers. This year, SimpliVity announced the latest update to its partner program called PartnerAdvantage, which offers disruptive solutions, business value and high growth opportunities to its many partners around the globe.

SimpliVity's employee base grew in 2015 as well, doubling to nearly 750 people in 24 countries, and continues to grow in 2016. The company has regional offices in France and Germany, with additional support centers in Raleigh, North Carolina and Cork, Ireland. Since 2014, SimpliVity has won four Top Places to Work awards including the 2015 Computerworld Top Places to Work in IT award and the 2015 Boston Globe Top Places to Work. Additionally, SimpliVity was recognized by BostInno as one of the 50 on Fire companies in 2015.

The company's solution is also marked by achievement, named a CNBC Disruptor 50, Cloud Computing Product of the Year, as well as the Modern Infrastructure Award for Best Converged Infrastructure. Most recently in 2016, CRN awarded SimpliVity its fourth Channel Chief award as well as its second CRN Virtualization 50 award.

Thanks to the phenomenal global team, SimpliVity offers data center choice, speed and flexibility to the global mid-market and enterprise community including several global 2000 companies.

Why nominee should win

Impressive Technology: SimpliVity's hyperconverged infrastructure is a scale-out architecture that is software-defined, offering flexibility and elasticity on the customer's preferred x86 servers, Cisco, Lenovo or Dell, providing imperative functionalities like data protection, data efficiency and global unified management.

Increasing momentum: SimpliVity continues to demonstrate rapid growth and sales momentum, increasing total customers in the last quarter by 177% year over year with a repeat purchase rate of 30%.

Channel Partner enablement: SimpliVity launched new initiatives this past year like the Technology Alliance program and the Cloud Service Provider Program, and established training and strategic revenue opportunities for solution providers.