



Möbius values its rep as masters of servers, storage

BY CATHERINE DOMINGUEZ

For Junab Ali and J. Javier Uribe, the phrase “slow and steady wins the race” represents words to live by.

That is the frame of mind the two have used to nurture San Antonio-based Möbius Partners, a value-added seller specializing in IT infrastructure products. Over the past eight years, the pair has managed the growth of the company with a focus on reselling Palo Alto, Calif.-based Hewlett Packard (HP) products.

With a total of 19 employees, Ali says the company has concentrated on what it does best and that is providing customers with the best servers and storage solutions for their businesses while keeping a strategic eye on growth.

“We have had a lot of opportunities come up but we have stayed true to what we think is a great strategy,” Ali says.

Both Ali and Uribe say remaining dedicated to one product line has been key to the company’s success. Adding different vendors can be expensive and dilute a company’s focus and ability to serve its customers, the pair says.

“Everything we do complements our core business, which is HP products,” Uribe says. “We go at it 110 percent.”

In fact, in a recent meeting with HP executives, Ali and Uribe learned their company is HP’s third largest reseller of Business Critical Servers (BCS) products in the nation. BCS are servers that can handle massive amounts of data for large companies.

“Instead of being the jack of all trades and master of none,” Ali says, “we are the masters of servers and storage.”

Finding a niche

While Möbius has carved out a place for itself in the IT sector, Uribe says the company has continued to stay ahead of the curve as the industry has evolved.

“We have been able to be nimble enough



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(L to R) J. Javier Uribe and Junab Ali, founders of Möbius Partners, believe staying true to a core purpose can pay multiple dividends.

and have the foresight to move in the direction of the industry,” Uribe says.

According to industry trends, Ali says that companies with data centers will need to make significant upgrades to equipment to continue handling the needs of their customers. That gives companies like Möbius the opportunity to expand their reach.

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**Junab Ali
Möbius Partners**

“We are very focused on servers and storage but now we are opening that up to service data centers,” Ali says. “HP has made

some strategic acquisitions and we can now resell a lot of HP’s data center services.”

Ali says that Möbius is now helping companies design data centers from the ground up. The company can also help existing data centers upgrade heating and cooling systems and even look at green systems to help them be more environmentally conscious as well as save money on electricity costs.

“We have (in the past) provided a smaller solution but now we are making that solution bigger with the data centers,” Uribe says.

Both Ali and Uribe agree that they do not have any plans to resell products from another vendor. Ali says focusing on the HP product line just makes sense for the company.

“We are approached all the time to represent different vendors,” Ali says. “Does it make sense to branch out or reinvest in something you already have? To me, it

IT: Möbius partners is focused on smart growth that will complement its core business

made sense to reinvest instead of switching gears and going in a different direction.”

Ali says Möbius has added several different software applications to its services that work well with the HP hardware it offers.

Building a foundation

The slow steady growth of Möbius seems to have made the success of the company even sweeter for Ali and Uribe.

It was just eight years ago when the partners conceived the idea for Möbius and went from bank to bank to find one to fund their start-up. Each time the two were rejected. However, that didn't stop Ali and Uribe and together they provided the funding to launch the company themselves.

While the two declined to release current revenue numbers, citing competition in their industry, in 2005, Möbius had an estimated \$31 million in revenues, according to the Business Journal's Largest Private Companies publication for that year. Ali does say the company has far exceeded its projected goals each year and is on track to increase its revenues yet again in 2008.

Möbius currently has more than 45 active customers.

Today, Möbius has offices not only in San Antonio, but in Houston and Dallas as well. Ali says the company is exploring the idea of opening a fourth office in Austin but says that decision has not yet been finalized.

Ali says the company's success has allowed them to reinvest the majority of their profits into training and development of

employees, expanding product offerings and internal infrastructure, and to support several community organizations — such as the Family Service Association of San Antonio, the University of Incarnate Word School of Business, Transplants for Children, and San Antonio youth football and soccer organizations.

Building a culture

As technology continues to change and IT companies work to stay up with new trends, Ali says it can be challenging to find qualified employees who want to take the initiative to learn new things.

“That is one of our top questions we ask (employees): ‘Do you want to learn more?’” Ali says. “This industry requires that. And if the industry requires that, it means there are competitors looking for the same thing. We have to stay one step ahead.”

Möbius, Ali says, takes advantage of training opportunities throughout the year to ensure its employees are up with the latest trends.

“Education is very big for us,” Uribe says. “Our systems architects want to learn. They know the more they learn, the more they can give back to our customers.”

An emphasis on the importance of training and education is part of the culture Ali and Uribe have built at Möbius. In fact, every employee in the company is HP certified, which means that each employee knows the basics about all of HP's products. That costs Möbius between \$10,000 and \$30,000 per employee for certification,

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but Ali adds that it is vital to the company.

“That is a condition of employment,” Ali says. “We try to attract the best people possible, train them and get them certified, and provide that value back to our customers. It's a very simple approach.”

For Chris Loehr, senior vice president of networking with the San Antonio office of Laredo-based IBC Bank, knowing that Möbius has gone the extra mile to train and educate its employees offers him peace of mind. While IBC has its own IT staff, Möbius, Loehr says, is there to fill in the gaps for the company.

“They offer us the professional services,” he says. “They help us when we need some special configuration. When we have a new system going in, they help us determine which software would work best with it.”

Loehr says Möbius has also provided storage solutions for IBC. He adds that it is a plus to have qualified IT specialists locally.

“They are super flexible,” Loehr says. “They can do a lot in a small amount of time compared to the larger companies.”

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