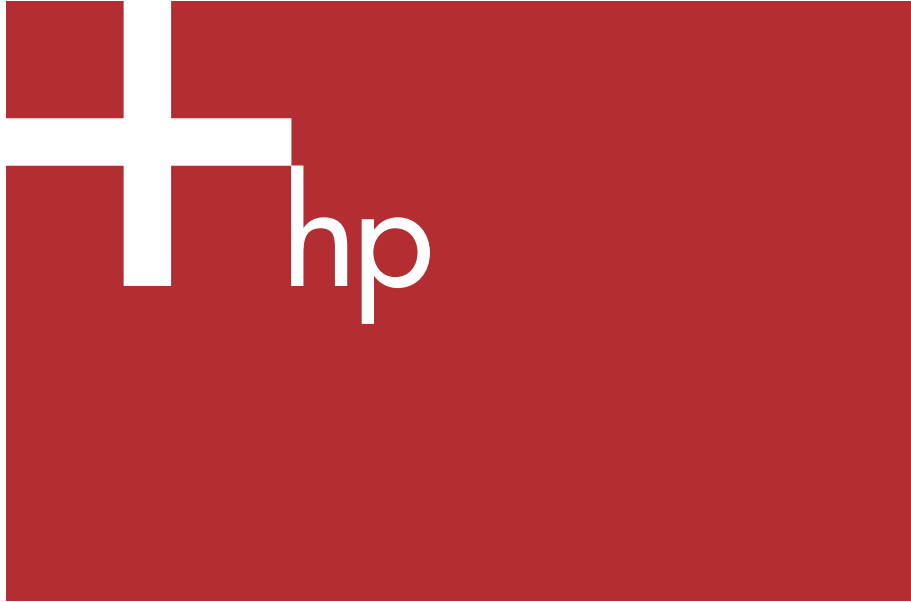


HP helps MEI build credibility and increase revenues



“We maintain our competitive edge by delivering everything we promise and then some. When we have a new challenge, HP meets our specifications for performance and competitive pricing. It’s a great value for us.”
– Ed Muñoz, CEO, Muñoz Engineering Inc.

The history of Muñoz Engineering (MEI) in Houston, Texas, reads like an entrepreneur’s most ambitious daydream. When retired U.S. Air Force veteran Ed Muñoz founded the company in 1992, his only employee was a part-time contracting specialist. Thirteen years later, the company has more than 800 employees and revenues of \$100 million a year from public and private engineering contracts.

Under these contracts, MEI engineers help the U.S. Air Force test military technology in space, help test solar arrays that will power tomorrow’s satellites and help develop plasma rockets that may someday send astronauts to Mars. Technology tested by MEI is cur-



rently linking field commanders in Iraq to vital intelligence data and helping military vessels and vehicles around the world navigate during bad weather.

The Muñoz success formula? “Our credibility is what separates us from others,” Muñoz says.

“Most companies are honest and do a good job, but we try to take it to another level. We have been known to give government agencies their money back when we felt like we didn’t earn it.”

That degree of integrity goes a long way toward winning credibility and additional contracts, according to Muñoz, who also notes that reliable suppliers are key players in maintaining credibility. “Reliable products and innovative solutions like those provided by HP and its channel partners keep our systems available and give us the resources we need.”

In fact, HP and Royston IT of Houston, an HP partner, recently supported MEI in winning its largest contract, an Electrical Systems Engineering Services (ESES) job from the Applied Engineering and Technology Directorate at Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland.

“We couldn’t have done it without Royston and our HP representative, David Soyk,” Muñoz says. “Now





that we have the contract, they're supplying the local expertise to help us expand the infrastructure of our Maryland office so that we can deliver what we promised in our proposal."

On the Goddard projects and others, Ed Muniz considers technology compatibility a major challenge for MEI. "Our computers have to interface with state-of-the-art equipment used by our customers and our collaborators around the world," says Muñoz. "In short, we have to anticipate what's coming and stay compatible."

Safer technology investments

MEI's computing needs are complex. For business computing, MEI relies on HP Workstations with Microsoft® Windows® XP operating system, running Microsoft Office and Costpoint accounting software. For manufacturing design and engineering, MEI uses Pro/E and other CAD software. In other arenas, MEI uses whatever applications their customers and collaborators are using. In some cases, massive amounts of computational power are required.

An efficient infrastructure and constant system availability are critical to MEI's business goals. "Good isn't good enough," says Brian Berry, IT manager. "We have to have superior technology. That's why we rely on HP Workstations, HP ProLiant servers and an HP StorageWorks 1500 MSA-based storage area network (SAN) to support our widespread computing environment."

The MSA 1500 SAN simplifies IT management, increases asset utilization and accommodates rapid growth. For example, MEI can run Microsoft Exchange on one server and database services on two other servers, with storage for all services handled by the StorageWorks SAN.

"With the combination of ProLiant servers and the StorageWorks 1500 MSA SAN, we have servers that suit our exact requirements for computing power and memory. At the same time, we can configure our storage requirements to the nth degree," says Berry. "That means we can easily add storage and computational power as we grow, without overbuying in either area."

To support its new contract at Goddard Space Flight Center, MEI is using a simple, reliable HP StorageWorks 500 MSA G2 RAID storage system at its Maryland facility.

Most engineers and businesspeople at MEI use single-processor, high-performance HP xw4200 Personal Workstations. "We typically see a lot fewer errors if our users have robust amounts of computational power," says Berry, "and the IT staff gains efficiency by deploying a standard model across most of the organization."

Power users who need to crank through massive amounts of real-time data get customized HP xw6200 Personal Workstations equipped with dual processors, two or more SCSI hard drives and robust graphics cards. "Both the HP xw4200 and HP xw6200 Workstations are easy to manage and easy to work on, and our users like them. It really boosts morale when employees realize the company is giving them quality tools," Berry says.

Simplifying IT management

Berry and two other employees make up MEI's full-time IT team. One technician is assigned exclusively to the new ESES operation in Maryland. Third-party vendors provide routine maintenance when needed, and consultants supply expertise for special projects, but mostly, MEI's system is managed automatically

At a glance

- **Company:** Muñiz Engineering Inc.
- **Location:** Houston, Texas
- **Employees:** 800
- **Telephone:** 800.895.3014
- **URL:** www.munizengineering.com
- **Primary business:** Provider of engineering, safety and product assurance and information technology and management services to government and industry

Partner at a glance

- **Company:** Royston IT
- **Location:** Houston, Texas
- **Telephone:** 281.584.0226
- **URL:** www.roystonit.com
- **Primary business:** IT consultant and HP Business Partner

and transparently. A robust Web environment that mirrors the company's internal network and a sophisticated quality control system (Capability Maturity Model Integration, or CMMI) ensure quick response to user problems and proactive prevention of downtime.

As IT processes and services become more critical to the company's operation, Berry is calling more on HP channel partners like Royston IT for assistance with special projects. "We look at IT as a strategic advantage for our company, rather than a basic necessity," says Berry. "We use these systems to compete." In the case of the Goddard ESES contract, Berry says HP and Royston IT have already saved MEI infrastructure design costs, and he expects more savings as the project proceeds.

System availability is also critical to MEI's operations, and for that reason, the company would like to reduce the number of vendors it deals with. "A direct vendor relationship is an obvious choice, and we're moving more in that direction every day," says Berry. "I'm trying to maintain a finite list of quality partners to work with, and HP certainly seems to be able to fit the bill in a lot of areas."

Berry does most of his purchasing research on an HP.com Business to Business Web site designed especially for MEI. When he's ready to buy, he calls his HP representative for pricing and input. A line of credit arranged through HP helped MEI ramp up quickly to satisfy its Goddard contract.

Sometimes Berry prefers to purchase products through HP resellers. He likes being able to choose the level of service he wants in different situations. "Sometimes I want advice and special attention. Sometimes I just want to place an order," he says.

Currently, Berry is developing a service-oriented architecture that will enable MEI to comply with government reporting requirements more quickly and efficiently. With it, the company will be able to respond almost immediately to customer requests for information. "I can tackle this new project because I don't have to constantly worry about system availability. The reliability of HP products gives me time to concentrate on important business tasks."

MEI has built its reputation by offering its clients a lot of value. "To do that, we have to look at value when we invest in technology," says Muñiz. "Some of our competitors don't see that, and they still use manual systems that introduce a lot of error and potential for error. So our HP products really do give us a competitive advantage over other small businesses."



Challenge

- To win and successfully execute government and private engineering contracts

Solution

- HP ProLiant servers DL 360, DL 380 models
- HP StorageWorks 1500 MSA-based SAN
- HP StorageWorks 500 MSA G2 RAID storage system
- HP StorageWorks SDLT Autoloader
- HP xw4200 and xw6200 Workstations
- HP printers and multifunction devices

Results

- Infrastructure design cost savings due to expertise of HP and HP reseller Royston IT
- Reduced IT maintenance costs
- Increased system availability
- Improved ability to achieve contract deliverables
- Increased IT time available to improve customer service

HP supports Hispanic entrepreneurs

Businesses owned by Hispanic entrepreneurs like Ed Muñiz are growing three to five times faster than the average U.S. company. To support this dynamic business community, HP has created a division dedicated to helping Hispanic-owned small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs).

One of its first accomplishments was an HP Spanish-language SMB website. Recently, it added the HP Hispanic Business Center, a Spanish-language technology training series. Through the center, entrepreneurs can get advice on creating marketing materials, building a website, using handheld devices to cut down on paper, business networking and more.

In another arena, the HP SMB website offers a Spanish-language version of the SMB catalog to support customers who want information in Spanish. Bilingual HP telemarketers who speak Spanish when customers prefer it are another part of the company's commitment to Hispanic business owners.

"We want these customers to know that we are proud to support Hispanic business owners," says Denise Marcilio, general manager of HP's U.S. Hispanic- and Women-Owned SMB Customer Solutions group. "We want to help them grow their businesses faster and be more successful."

For more information on how working with HP can benefit you, contact your local HP service representative, or visit us through the Internet at our world web address: <http://www.hp.com>