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SMB Nation and Microsoft SMB Licensing

The upcoming focus on SMB is starting now

A Web Exclusive from Windows IT Pro:

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From September 28 to October 1, the fifth annual SMB Nation conference hosted over 600 attendees, including Small Business Specialists, registered Microsoft partners, TS2 attendees, resellers, SMB consultants, VARs, and VAPs. The attendees I talked to were delighted with the quality of the information in the sessions, with the opportunity to network with each other and Microsoft representatives.

I also had the opportunity to talk to some of the vendors who had exhibited at the conference. In particular, Jeff Connally, president and CEO of CM IT Solutions; Bob Godgart, CEO of Autotask; Curt James of StorageCraft; and Babek Salimi and Matthew Brown of Workshare.

The theme of all these conversations was that the SMB space is poised for growth. Of course, the upcoming launch of Centro is also testament to interest in the market and will drive great attention to and investment in the SMB space in 2008.

CM IT Solutions (www.cmitsolutions.com), Jeff Connally explained, is a company that supports SMB consultants and systems integrators (SIs) by helping them manage their business to make more money by eliminating the dilemma of dealing with everyday business problems. CM IT's business model is to franchise independent businesses (CM IT now has about 100 franchises across the country). The benefit of franchising is that it frees the technical business owners from business management and lets them focus on their core competency in technology. Franchising also provides the advantage of being able to purchase equipment and software at a discount because of CM IT's overall ability to buy larger quantities than an individual small businesses could afford. One of the most interesting aspects of the franchise model is that it creates a nationwide community of experts who can draw on each other's specialized knowledge to solve problems for local customers.

Jeff was highly optimistic about the opportunities in the SMB segment. Jeff foresees growth for the services industry and his business, specifically.