



Spyder Active Sports and OneNeck IT Services:

Pushing the Limits of
High Performance

A ONENECK IT SERVICES CASE STUDY



The Company

Spyder Active Sports is the largest ski-specialty brand in the world. The company is renowned for integrating high-tech fabrics, fashion and functionality. It prides itself on a relentless commitment to creating the ultimate performance experience for athletes and focuses on every detail in engineering superior ski wear.

Beginning in 1978, Spyder revolutionized ski racing with the introduction of the first padded slalom sweater designed “for racing, by racers.” Today, Spyder products are the choice of the U.S. Alpine, Austrian Alpine, Canadian Alpine and Freestyle World Cup Teams. Rigorously tested by top athletes around the world, Spyder products range from casual sport-lifestyle clothing to outerwear for any outdoor pursuit. Numerous products from the company’s ski apparel line have been showcased on many Olympic podiums, accessorized by Gold, Silver and Bronze Medals.

With global headquarters in Boulder, Colorado, Spyder has approximately 125 employees worldwide. It sells products to more than 550 high-quality, specialty retailers in the United States and Canada. Spyder products are sold outside North America into 50 countries through the company’s Spyder-Europe office and through independent distributors around the globe.

The Challenge

When a company offers to pay its IT outsourcing provider more money in return for more services, and the provider not only refuses the offer but its service levels continue to go downhill, it’s time to look for a new provider. That’s precisely what happened to Spyder’s Information Systems Director, Kevin Smith, when their outsourcing provider had been purchased for a second time.

The provider’s declining service levels hit rock bottom when Spyder’s headquarters office in Boulder experienced an IT outage that forced its operations to go down for four solid days. This happened during one of the busiest times of the year for Spyder: its shipment of apparel to more than 550 retailers throughout North America. This peak period begins in July and lasts through December.

As a result of an improper back-up system, Spyder lost nine days worth of critical shipment data. Since invoices to customers were lost and unable to be retrieved, they had to be recalculated and manually prepared. At the same time, the company was unable to electronically generate orders to its retailers. To make matters worse, Spyder’s outsourcing provider had been experiencing





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*Kevin Smith,
Information Systems Director,
Spyder Active Sports*

turnover problems given its second acquisition. So, Smith and his internal IT team had to rely on a small and dwindling IT staff to resurrect the system. “Those were some of the worst days of my career when the system was down,” remembers Smith. “And I wasn’t confident in the outcome.”

Once bitten, twice shy, so the saying goes. And that’s how Smith described his level of distrust and lack of confidence when he set out to hire another outsourcer. In evaluating potential vendors, Smith identified three cornerstones requirements: First, he was seeking an IT outsourcer with a proven track record that could guarantee reliability and performance. Secondly, the new outsourcing company would have to answer an important question: How do you intend to support Spyder’s business continuity? For Smith, that meant being proactive and possessing expertise in disaster recovery standard procedures. Finally, the new provider would be expected to operate as a partner with Spyder — an extension of its business — and possess a similar culture in terms of size and growth.

It came down to three potential vendors — a tough choice according to Smith. He said cost wasn’t an issue since all vendors offered similar pricing packages. However, a number of factors lead Smith to select OneNeck IT Services. Among them, he explained, were the OneNeck team’s “undeniable technical expertise,” and “genuine interest in forming a partnership.”

Further, the OneNeck team was open to two-way communication. Smith experienced this first-hand when he was invited (prior to becoming a customer) to OneNeck’s Executive Forum. OneNeck hosts the annual event to bring customers together to share the state of the company and update them on industry best practices. In addition, attendees share ideas and candidly discuss OneNeck’s performance.

While attending the Executive Forum, Smith observed that OneNeck executives were asking their customers for input on how to improve performance. “OneNeck’s relationship with its customers is a two-way partnership — words in action,” said Smith, who continued, “I also liked the fact that OneNeck has grown its business organically, that they have never lost a customer due to poor performance and that they are highly reference-able.”

OneNeck provided its entire customer list to Smith and he started talking to customers with like businesses. “Ultimately, it was the customer references that sold me,” remembers Smith.

The OneNeck Solution

With OneNeck IT Services as Spyder’s official IT outsourcing partner, attention turned to the transition from the previous application service provider. It had to be as seamless as possible for Spyder’s 125 users worldwide. To insure the transition would go smoothly, Spyder began sending tapes that contained system data to OneNeck for testing eight weeks in advance of the go-live date. The process was tedious, and there was no innovation on the part of Spyder’s

previous ASP, according to Smith, affording him little confidence that the complete transfer of all files would be successful. With that, members of the Spyder/OneNeck IT team drove to the prior ASP's data center to physically pick up the hard drive and boarded a plane to OneNeck's Arizona data center.

The layers of testing leading up to the ASP transfer, as well as the in-person, hand delivery of critical data, paid off when the new system was up and running on schedule in mid-February 2006. It also set the stage for a collaborative partnership between Spyder and OneNeck.

Soon after the cutover, OneNeck focused on stabilizing and securing all systems. Smith credits OneNeck for securing Spyder's global network. "We have more secure access across the board and tightened access to data no matter where you are located," said Smith, referring to the Boulder office and Spyder-Europe in Switzerland, as well as warehouses in Bangkok and throughout Canada where a secure gateway now exists to hosted applications. Added Smith, "When it comes to security, OneNeck has taken a proactive approach."

What's more, OneNeck and Spyder have worked closely to improve processes, explained Smith. OneNeck has implemented a formal change-control process in keeping with Sarbanes-Oxley Act compliance. While Spyder is a privately-held company, OneNeck believes in demonstrating Sarbanes-Oxley compliance for all its customers as a sign of financial soundness and honesty in reporting. "It's something we've needed to do all along," said Smith of instituting a change-control process. "Diligence on the part of OneNeck forced us to structure and write the protocols."

The Benefits

Through application expertise and technical savvy, regular communication and proactive systems improvement, Spyder has found in OneNeck peace of mind. Smith describes the relationship as a "partnership where people are technically competent and able and willing to provide outstanding service." In fact, when a member of the Spyder IT support team at OneNeck transitioned into another role, she continued to work with Spyder on unfinished projects. "There's continuity in hand-over support staff when someone transitions," said Smith. "People see their projects through."

In addition, OneNeck's ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library) philosophy — based on industry leading best practices — has provided Spyder with a framework from which to enhance its IT infrastructure, a critical component to running a high performance company. And when it comes to high performance, Spyder has built its reputation on it.



SPYDER Facts

Organization	• Spyder Active Sports
Industry	• High Performance Ski Apparel
Business Challenges	• Spyder was in an unsatisfactory relationship with its previous vendor. This vendor was unresponsive to Spyder's business needs and lacked customer intimacy. Spyder was looking for a new partner who would support The company's business continuity and emphasized high quality customer focus with strong references.
User Environment	• 125 Users • 5 Locations Worldwide
Application Environment	• JDE EnterpriseOne ERP • Symantec Virus Protection • Business Intelligence/Reporting Tools
Technical Environment	• 13 Windows Servers • SQL Server 2000 • Citrix • ICS rfsmart Wireless Data Collection



For more information, contact:
 OneNeck IT Services Corporation
 5301 North Pima Road, Suite 100
 Scottsdale, Arizona 85250 USA
 Phone: +1-480-315-3000 Fax: +1-480-609-4308
 info@oneneck.com | www.oneneck.com

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