



# Intel® Enabled Server Acceleration Alliance Helps Level the Playing Field for Seneca Data

## Case Study

Intel® Enabled Server Acceleration Alliance



It's a scenario seen all too often—small companies going head-to-head with well-known and well-established competitors, who typically have the upper hand in size and resources. When Seneca Data found itself up against this particular challenge, the company looked to the Intel® Enabled Server Acceleration Alliance (Intel® ESAA) program, a collaborative alliance of Intel and independent software and hardware vendors (IxVs), to help solve it.

### Challenge: Faced with Tier 1 Competition

Seneca Data is a leading custom computer manufacturer and value added distributor. Its custom built, made-to-order computers are marketed under the brand name Nexlink\* and are sold through a variety of resellers in the United States, focusing on SMBs, education/government, healthcare, and enthusiast markets. When it comes to selling servers, Seneca Data and its resellers are frequently asked whether a system is certified by leading software vendors—something larger companies can easily provide. "Tier 1 OEMs have the clout to get in with the likes of VMware and Citrix to get certification," stated Chuck Orcutt, Server Business Development Manager for Seneca Data. "But for a company of our size, it's more difficult to get your foot in the door. When customers asked for specific certifications, we had to 'sell around them' and find other solutions to offer."

Seneca Data is not the only one faced with this dilemma. For many small and mid-size OEMs and resellers integrating hardware and software offerings, there are many obstacles to pre-certification. Submitting server systems individually to the appropriate vendors for independent certification takes a lot of effort and resources, and can delay system delivery to the customer. This may reduce end-user confidence in the vendor and hinder its bidding process. Most of the Tier 1 hardware vendors competing in this market have a direct relationship with the major software vendors, and have the resources—staff and funds—to quickly and easily get certifications.

### Discovering Intel® ESAA

Seneca Data joined Intel ESAA in February 2008 and immediately recognized the program's value. "I was amazed and couldn't believe

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—Chuck Orcutt, Server Business Development Manager, Seneca Data

that what Intel was offering was for real," said Orcutt. "It really surprised me." As a one-stop resource for pre-validated hardware and software solutions, Intel ESAA helps its members build relationships, reduce engineering costs, and compete with products based on the proven reliability of Intel® Server Products.

The program offers its members free access to hundreds of solution configuration guides ("recipes"), marketing materials, training, and pre-and post-sales support. Detailed recipes from Intel ESAA

### About Intel® ESAA

The Intel® ESAA program provides OEMs, resellers, and distributors with a trusted and globally recognized collaborator to help them compete worldwide. Member benefits include:

- Faster time to market using pre-tested solution recipes that provide step-by-step configuration instructions
- Reduced engineering costs with access to pre-validated and proven technologies across a range of applications, such as HPC, virtualization, and storage
- Certification from companies such as VMware, Red Hat, Novell, Oracle, Symantec, and more
- Alignment with Intel's world-class server technology leadership and pre- and post-sales support infrastructure

Intel ESAA gives its members comprehensive resources to sell complete solutions instead of just hardware components. Free for resellers to join<sup>1</sup>, Intel ESAA helps its members stay ahead of the competitive curve.

have been tested by IxVs on Intel hardware and validated by Intel engineers to take the guesswork out of system configuration.

From the beginning, Orcutt found the program very intuitive and responsive. "There were very simple steps to follow on the Intel ESAA website: finding the recipe, then finding the platform and our product model, finding the certification, and answering a few questions," said Orcutt. "Within one day I had a response, and within one week we had the certification."

## Intel ESAA Takes the Business to Another Level

Now that Seneca Data can get the certifications it needs to compete, it doesn't have to 'sell around' and downplay certifications. "Prior to the Intel ESAA program, certifications were a weakness," said Orcutt. "Now they are a strength. It takes the certification objection off the table right away."

Before using Intel ESAA, Seneca Data had many barriers to developing relationships with IxVs. "First we'd have to find the right contact within the software company, and once we did that, we'd have to convince them that we were worth dealing with," explained Orcutt. "The Tier 1 and multinationals have dedicated employees to establish these relationships. That's where companies similar to our size fall short. However, the Intel ESAA program eliminates these preliminary and time-consuming steps."

Today, Seneca Data and its resellers are able to use the certifications throughout the entire sales cycle. As soon as a solution is identified for a customer, the Seneca Data representatives can

## About Seneca Data

Founded more than 28 years ago, Seneca Data is a leading U.S.-based custom computer manufacturer and a value-added distributor of technology products and associated logistical services. Its Nexlink\* brand of custom-built desktops, notebooks, servers, and storage devices provide cutting-edge technology solutions for business, government, education, healthcare, enthusiast, and Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) customers nationwide.

All Nexlink systems are rigorously tested in the company's engineering lab to ensure platform performance and stability. Its desktops and notebooks undergo Microsoft Windows\* Hardware Quality Labs (WHQL) testing and bear the Designed for Windows Vista\* logo, certifying interoperability between the hardware components and the Microsoft Windows Operating System. Seneca Data's U.S.-based manufacturing facility is registered by Underwriters Laboratories (UL) to the ISO 9001:2000 standard, further establishing Seneca Data as a premier manufacturer of custom computer systems.

To learn more about Seneca Data, visit:  
[www.senecadata.com](http://www.senecadata.com)

To see a list of Intel® ESAA recipe-based solutions from Seneca Data, visit:  
[www.senecadata.com/products/server\\_storage/IESAA.aspx](http://www.senecadata.com/products/server_storage/IESAA.aspx)

show them three or four platforms that are certified. "Our relationship with Intel ESAA puts us ahead of the pack," Orcutt stated. "It's great to be able to point to VMWare's website and show customers that our products are certified. It's also beneficial to show our resellers this too, as they are frequently met with certification inquiries from customers."

"One specific opportunity that we closed recently was for a VMWare ESX server that a customer wanted to have pre-loaded and ready to deploy," said Orcutt. One of the customer's requirements for purchase was that the platform be certified by VMware. According to Orcutt, "The Intel recipe allowed us not only to provide a certified system, but also to give the customer detailed instructions on installation. The client was impressed that he was able to get this level of service on a custom server platform." Thanks to Intel ESAA, Seneca Data can spend less time testing and certifying hardware and more time solving customer problems—giving them increased end-customer credibility and faster time-to-money.

## Solution Recipe Examples

Why reinvent the wheel when you can use pre-validated configurations backed by globally recognized brands? With Intel® ESAA solution recipes, you get step-by-step installation guidance so you can create a proven solution your customers can rely on, such as:

- Virtualization: VMware Infrastructure\* 3 for ESX Server\* 3.0—Intel® Server Board S500PALO
- Storage: Wasabi Storage Builder\* for IP-SAN—Intel® Storage Server SSR212MC2
- HPC: Platform Open Cluster Stack 4.1.1–2.1 on Red Hat Enterprise Linux\* 4.4—Intel® Server System SR1530AH

To explore the Intel® ESAA recipe catalog, visit:  
[www.intel.com/go/esaa](http://www.intel.com/go/esaa)

To learn more about becoming an Intel® Server Products reseller, visit: <http://intel.com/go/reseller>



<sup>1</sup> Membership in the Intel ESAA program is free for Intel® Channel Partner Program Members. For more information on membership requirements, visit [www.esaa-members.com/index.php/pages/join](http://www.esaa-members.com/index.php/pages/join).

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