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## Mission Critical Industry! What is that?

Anyone who has worked in this industry can probably relate to this question. I remember living in Iowa for several years, in the heart of the grain belt. I was a member of the local Optimist Club and was asked to provide a talk about what I did for a living to a room of mostly farmers, local banker, mortician, and reverend as well as the local brewer and restaurant owner. I told them I helped plant server farms. You should have seen the look on their faces. "What the heck is this guy talking about? Server farms?" So I showed them a picture of a Data Center white space with the rows of servers next to a picture of a field with rows of corn in it. That peaked their interest. By the time we were done some of them had a better understanding of how this whole fangadled internet worked behind the scenes.

Needless to say I still always hesitate a little when asked "What do you do for work?" The reason why is that I am trying to gauge that person's understanding so I can communicate it to them. Sometimes I try to explain and sometimes I just say, I didn't build the cloud but I help keep it in the sky. CPSI has been in this industry for 25 years now helping to keep it afloat. I personally have worked in power quality for 27 years now. Twenty of those years directly with this industry and seven years in utility power quality solutions. Still can't believe I am old enough to say that, and most don't believe it since I have aged very well. Thanks Mom and Dad for good genetics and work disciplines.

What is it we do? Primarily sales, maintenance, monitoring, and service of UPS's, Rectifiers, PDU's, Power Conditioners, ATS's, STS's, Generators, DC Environment and of course a lot of batteries. Batteries in Telecom, Switchgear & UPS's. But as we have learned from surviving several recessions, it is the maintenance and service that keeps the company afloat. I spent the first half of my career doing that work of a field technician. Today I enjoy getting in on the front end of new solutions involving equipment, monitoring, and service. My years in the field were far more valuable to my understanding of this industry than any school could have provided. The people who really know what is going on are the people doing it and who were grew up in this industry organically.

I have watched CPSI go from a company that had a lion's share of its business spread out across lots of small contracts, to fewer but larger customers over time. We have watched many of our customers that tried to do everything in-house make the move to co-location facilities. Let someone else deal with the maintenance, design and upkeep of the power, security, and cooling needed to run a data center. So many companies have come to the understanding that Data Centers are not part of their core business practices but a necessary part of doing business. Let someone else do what they do best so they can focus on what they do best.

Where are we headed in this industry? Technologies will advance and change the landscape, but one thing I see that is predictable, is the need for better information. Without information we cannot measure the success or failure of new technologies and ideas. Without information we cannot make good decisions on everything from emergency response to predictive maintenance and service.

Information is key in the current information age, and I don't see it shrinking but expanding at a rapid rate. Information is driving the data center boom and the data center boom is creating more demand for information. It reminds me of the thermal runaway cycle that can happen to batteries, another subject altogether. This need for information has been recognized at CPSI. This is why we launched our new ONWATCH program. Data without meaning is just noise. We are offering interpretation of the data we monitor. This will help create actionable items that customers can use. And because they don't have to worry about internal employee turnover, they can receive consistent data from a team that focuses on it as their core competency.