

Problems Solved, Solutions Granted: How This BlackBerry Partner Changed the Game for MSPs

Solutions Granted

Industry:

Security

Location:

Woodbridge, VA

Products:

CylancePROTECT[®],
CylanceOPTICS[®]

Website:

solutionsgranted.com

“It was around 2010 when everything sort of clicked into place for me,” muses Michael E. Crean, founder and CEO of Solutions Granted. “I started seeing that managed service providers were struggling with security. That was when I decided it was time for a pivot – there was a problem, and we were going to fix it.”

And fix it they did. Today, Solutions Granted is a leading provider of cybersecurity services, specializing in “protecting the protectors.” As a BlackBerry managed security services provider (MSSP) partner, [CylancePROTECT[®]](#) and [CylanceOPTICS[®]](#) are among the solutions it helps managed service providers (MSPs) deploy to clients, either as individual managed services or integrated into a SOC-as-a-service offering.

“I’m asked pretty often what our niche is, and how we classify our customers,” says Crean. “Our niche is security. I don’t believe there is any one business that needs security more or less than anyone else. Our clients are MSPs, MSSPs, VARs – basically anybody who believes they have clients that need cybersecurity and can’t do it themselves.”

Collaboration, Teamwork, and Shared Responsibility

Solutions Granted did not begin with a specific focus on serving the channel, but instead evolved over the years. Starting out as an IT consulting firm, the company has also served as a value-added reseller and a government contractor. In 2010, Solutions Granted made the decision that would reshape its future, pivoting into offering intra-channel cybersecurity services and expertise.



At the time, Crean's business model was a rarity. The idea of an MSSP that worked exclusively with other service providers was unusual, at best. Many businesses outright balked at the idea of tier-2 selling, and even those that worked with Crean and his colleagues were wary of doing so.

"It was almost like we were this dark little secret nobody really wanted to acknowledge," says Crean. "But the numbers were fantastic, and we were doing good enough things that they really didn't want to stop us. It helped that we were never in it just to try to sell something, it was always about the service."

It was this attitude that would eventually inspire the company to partner with Cylance — in spite of Crean's misgivings about endpoint protection vendors in general — and continue on as a BlackBerry partner following the BlackBerry acquisition of Cylance in 2019.

Rethinking the Meaning of Endpoint Protection

"Before I started working with Cylance, I absolutely hated the entire endpoint protection space," Crean recalls. "When I started hearing rumblings about Cylance and its signatureless, AI-based security, I blew it off. I didn't believe it was possible."

Crean even went so far as to refer to the CylancePROTECT solution's design as little more than technological "pixie dust." Until, that is, he learned about the involvement of Stuart McClure, Cylance's founder and then-president. Intrigued by McClure's involvement, he decided to investigate further.

"The more I looked into it, the more I saw the potential," continues Crean. "It wasn't just empty hype. I spoke to our sysadmin and sent him to Ohio for training, then once that was done, they offered to let us join the program as an MSSP."

There was just one problem—the program would require Solutions Granted to commit to managing 500 endpoints, and at the time, the company had none.

From Pilot to Partnership

At that time, Solutions Granted wasn't responsible for the deployment of hardware. Clients were largely responsible for purchasing their own infrastructure, with the company operating largely on the software side. If it were to become a Cylance partner, however, that would need to change.

"We ended up just going out and telling everyone an honest story," says Crean. "I sold [Cylance licenses] at cost because I just wanted to break even. With help from Cylance, we got through the first 500 endpoints in less than 90 days, and got to a place where we weren't losing money."

From there, Crean describes the partnership as "a gift that just kept on giving."

"As we started to gain more and more success, Cylance started getting all of these partners which were a bit too small for them," Crean continues. "They weren't as mature as the company needed them to be, so they asked if they could send them to us."

Mutual Success, Mutual Growth

Solutions Granted found working primarily with small to midsized businesses (SMBs) to be both profitable and fulfilling.

"I sent my sysadmin to a CylancePROTECT training session. He told me it was a waste of time — before he left. When he came back, he couldn't stop singing CylancePROTECT's praises."

— Michael E. Crean, **Chief Executive Officer, Solutions Granted**

“No matter their size, we treat our partners like they matter,” Crean explains. “They’re not just a number. We want them to feel like there’s consistency here, and they can grow with us – that’s why we do everything consumption-based, with no minimums and no annual commits.”

This attitude served Solutions Granted well, and as Cylance continued to send referrals, the company experienced a period of exponential growth. Today, as a BlackBerry partner, the firm is closing in on 250,000 CylancePROTECT endpoints under its management. And there’s still more to come.

“Numbers like this seemed ridiculous and unattainable back when I was stressing over 500,” says Crean. “That’s a fantastic amount of growth for just about any MSSP, especially one that’s primarily courting SMBs. And it’s largely thanks to our partnership with BlackBerry.”

The Key to Better Security

Per Cory Clark, Vice President of Threat Operations at Solutions Granted, the approach taken by many MDR vendors towards endpoint security can charitably be described as ‘one step forward, two steps backward.’ On the one hand, they offer a wealth of advanced functionality and a level of service invaluable to small and mid-market businesses. On the other, they rely overwhelmingly on signature-based antivirus software.

With CylancePROTECT as part of its SOC-as-a-Service offering, this is a non-issue for Solutions Granted.

“I was on a partner call today where the other party had to deal with a server that was taken down because an antivirus scan overloaded the machine,” says Clark. “That sort of thing simply doesn’t happen with CylancePROTECT. BlackBerry’s product is superior, which allows us to deliver a better product.”

CylancePROTECT also empowers Solutions Granted to provide more comprehensive preventative service in lieu of the reactive approach taken by competitors. The organization’s security team can go beyond detection and response by actively identifying and shutting down potential threats, something its clients – and their customers – greatly appreciate.

“We had one instance where Solutions Granted’s SOC platform detected strange activity on a client’s server at 2 in the morning,” one service provider recalls. “We were able to immediately respond, containing the breach before it could cause significant damage. I sleep better at night knowing Solutions Granted is watching over my client’s network.”

Going Beyond the Endpoint

Currently, Solutions Granted relies on BlackBerry’s CylancePROTECT endpoint protection platform (EPP), and its CylanceOPTICS endpoint detection and response (EDR) solution. The company also has considerable hopes for the CylancePROTECT mobile threat defense offering, which has performed well in testing. In Crean’s eyes, however, one of the most promising additions to BlackBerry’s growing Cylance® AI-based portfolio is [CylancePERSONA™](#).

“While the technology in a partnership is important, I need someone to be invested in me so I can be invested in them. And that’s the feeling I’ve always gotten with Cylance and BlackBerry. They always have time for us and are willing to answer our calls and collaborate with us, because they believe in us, and we believe in them.”

– Michael E. Crean, **Chief Executive Officer, Solutions Granted**

“It could be a game-changer, enough for Cylance products to again redefine the security space,” says Crean. “And BlackBerry’s technology is still top of the chart, as well. The brand recognition is something I can leverage, and they’re providing me with all the guidance I need to excel.”

“I feel like I’m really getting a lot of out of this relationship,” he concludes. “I’m thankful for what we have, and I know we’ll get through whatever market challenges we face. We’re going to get bigger, better, stronger, and faster, all by working with BlackBerry.”

For more information, visit [Cylance Endpoint Security from BlackBerry](#)

About BlackBerry

BlackBerry (NYSE: BB; TSX: BB) provides intelligent security software and services to enterprises and governments around the world. The company secures more than 500M endpoints including over 215M vehicles. Based in Waterloo, Ontario, the company leverages AI and machine learning to deliver innovative solutions in the areas of cybersecurity, safety and data privacy solutions, and is a leader in the areas of endpoint security, endpoint management, encryption, and embedded systems. BlackBerry’s vision is clear - to secure a connected future you can trust.

BlackBerry. Intelligent Security. Everywhere.

