

Mainline Today

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FRONTLINE: 60 Seconds
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Photo by [J. Paul Simeone](#)

As an Iraq War veteran, Exton's **Jeffrey Lipson** understands the implications of failed communications. If you think it's tough getting through the day without Internet access, it can be fatal in combat—something he gleaned firsthand while stationed on the *USS Guam* and later as a reservist in Fallujah. A true tech geek with the education to back it up, Lipson has held top managerial positions at several prominent technology companies, most recently putting his talents to work as CEO of SaberSource, an IT infrastructure and managed services company in Blue Bell.

MLT: The name SaberSource celebrates your Marine Corps roots.

JL: It's crazy how many names we went through. But after reading an article in the *Philadelphia Business Journal*, two things stuck out: The name should be more descriptive than esoteric, and attaching a weapon to it adds weight. "Saber" resonated on a couple levels: It's a Marine officer's weapon; it's flexible, adaptable, fast, agile and responsive—all the things we strive to be.

MLT: Fixing a superior's computer was a crucial stepping-stone in your future as an IT entrepreneur. What kind of magic did you work on it?

JL: It wasn't anything complicated, and I was able to fix it in a couple minutes. Ultimately, it impressed my commander, so it panned out for me.

MLT: You installed the first shipboard WAN (wide area network). How did you pull that together?

JL: It was definitely a challenge. I was stationed on the *USS Guam*. Back then (in 1996), the Marine Corps was still using Banyan VINES (virtual integrated network service)—one of the first networking packages—and super-high-frequency satellite communications. But we were limited in our reach, and connecting to areas outside the ship was problematic. We needed a network with a wider area. It took a lot of effort, but it was really cool to get e-mail on the ship.

MLT: What are you giving your customers that the competition isn't?

JL: One of the services we rest our laurels on is our help



desk, which we've enhanced by setting up an immediate response system.

MLT: How have you used your career as a lieutenant colonel in the Marines and as a CIO in the civilian arena to benefit SaberSource?

JL: Everything I know about being a good leader I learned in the Marine Corps. It was also an enormous benefit being a communications officer. IT services were crucial in combat areas, but they also enabled us to stay in touch with our families. My wife was pregnant when I was in the Gulf. Being able to communicate with her through technology was a gift.

MLT: What impact did your experiences in Fallujah have on you?

JL: You can't go through something like that without taking a different view. I was there for the big battle in November 2004—every day was tenuous. I came back with an enhanced philosophy: You have to live life to the fullest and for every moment. You need to be at peace with everything and not hold things in.