



MARKET LEADING SOLUTIONS IN AN EVOLVING DIGITAL LANDSCAPE

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

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AHEAD OF THE CURVE IN THE EVOLVING TECHNOLOGY SPACE

After 30 years of operating,
Align continues to define
the digital landscape of the
data center world

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TOM VENTURO



For over 30 years, Align has provided next-generation solutions designed to manage client technology needs, optimize their business operations and secure their IT infrastructure. It does this through three key areas – Professional Services, Managed IT Services and Cybersecurity Risk Management.

However, it goes without saying that what worked 30 years ago – or even five years ago – no longer guarantees it will meet the technology needs of today, and of tomorrow.

As such, technology solutions providers have had to evolve and innovate faster than the market in order to not only serve this changing client base but stay ahead of the curve.

“As a company we’ve been extremely fortunate to evolve with the way that technology has changed and to stay on the cusp of what’s happening with the future landscape of technology,” says Art Dooling, Managing Director, of Align.

“Let’s be honest, technology has evolved so much over the last 30 years that we’ve had to. What we were doing 30 years ago is completely different to what we are doing today.”

Align was formed in 1986 in a pre-internet age. In fact, Align was formed merely five years after IBM launched the very first, commercially available, personal computer.

Dooling, along with Tom Weber as Align’s Director of Data Center and Design, both share a unique





A structured fiber
cabling solution

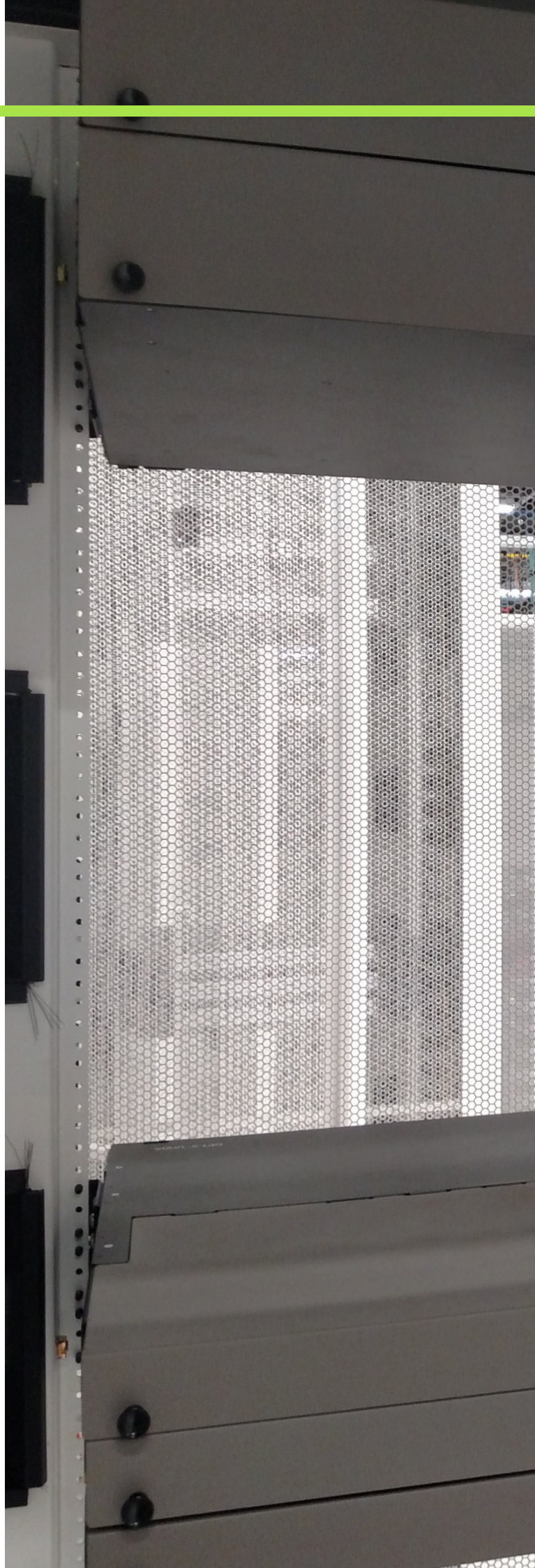
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perspective of the emergence of new technologies — matched with increasing client demands and expectations — and as such they both understand the importance for Align to continuously redefine what it can do for its clients.

“Companies around the world are developing something new on an almost daily basis,” says Weber. “The fact of the matter is that as a firm you simply cannot put your focus into every new solution or product. You have to select the right ones and develop solutions that allow our customers to maximize the efficiencies that these new technologies afford.”

This understanding is written into the company’s very DNA with both Dooling and Weber pointing to a saying that defines the strategic direction of Align: if our firm was doing the same thing it was doing five years ago we would be out of business.

One particular market that is undergoing substantial growth and momentum is the data center space. Over the past decade, data center investments have soared as more and more companies are moving legacy infrastructure into cloud solutions and leasing





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Tom Weber,
Director of Data Center and Design



“They come in with an intelligent group of technologists of their own that support their business and Align has been able to take advantage of this knowledge exchange and take that forward to other clients”

Art Dooling,
Managing Director





Power busway system
for a leading cloud
computing customer

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Build in progress: 2-tier cable conveyance system and cabinet floor grommets for a colocation services customer

purpose-built data center whitespace.

Align has designed power, cabling and pathways for over 250MW of production-ready data center space as it looks to provide “a solution for everyone.”

This is Weber and Dooling’s domain as Weber takes charge of the design and build of the whitespace and Dooling oversees the physical implementation of data center technologies – the migration of the data and moving of applications and workloads.

“It’s an amazingly hot market with

competition increasing daily,” says Weber. “But Align is defined by being ahead of the curve. So, what do we do to push our solutions offering further? We strive to provide more cost effective data center designs, workplace technology solutions, audio visual technology, Wi-Fi and big data. These are hot topics right now, but it’s important to understand what is ahead and think about a year, or two or three years’ time. You’ve got to continually refresh and upgrade the skillsets on



\$75mn+

Approximate
revenue

1986

Year founded

165

Approximate
number
of employees

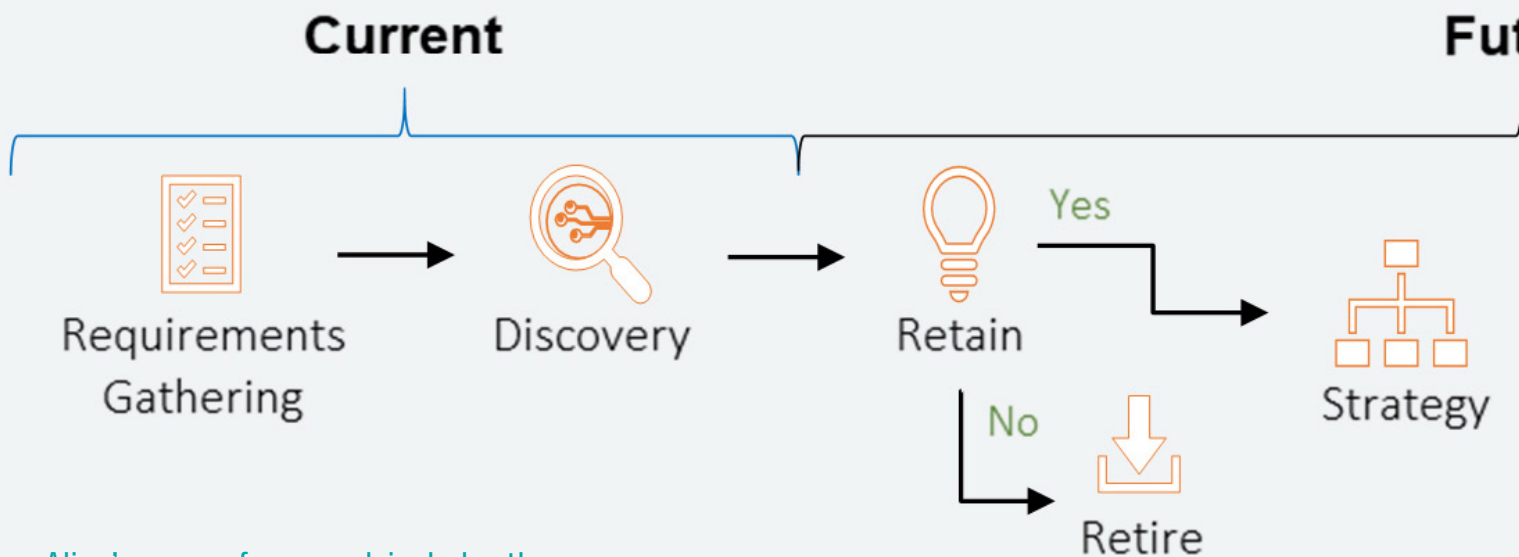
your team. But our differentiator is to provide top customer service. The customer needs to feel like they are your biggest and only priority. That is what Align offers.”

Key for Align is understanding exactly how and where the market is shifting and this is achieved by its close collaboration with clients and partners across the globe. Align works with major customers across all market sectors and Dooling believes that each client and each relationship provides

Align with a unique insight into what clients are asking for and how well Align is adapting and exceeding those expectations.

“Our greatest advantage is the diversity of clients that we have, and what they’re trying to do in various industries, whether it’s health, whether it’s financial, whether it’s pharmaceutical, retail, media, you name it,” says Dooling. “Our customers have world-class engineers and technologists of their own to support their business. Align strives to partner with these teams, understand their business model, its pain points and to use this knowledge to introduce new technologies and smart solutions that improve efficiency and eliminate their IT challenges.”

Integral to this knowledge exchange is people – and Weber firmly believes that Align employs some of the smartest and most innovative people in the industry today, when a number of companies in the data center industry look to third parties for the skillsets and talented and knowledgeable workforce completely in-house. This is crucial in delivering the best possible service to the most important component of



Align's proven framework includes the governance, process and tools to collect, store and analyze application and infrastructure technology to support future state transformations

Align's entire value chain, the client.

"As a firm we are technology agnostic and we present ideas and recommendations based on client needs," says Weber. "So what we have done is we have ensured that in every area of our business we have people who know their specialty and are true leaders in that field."

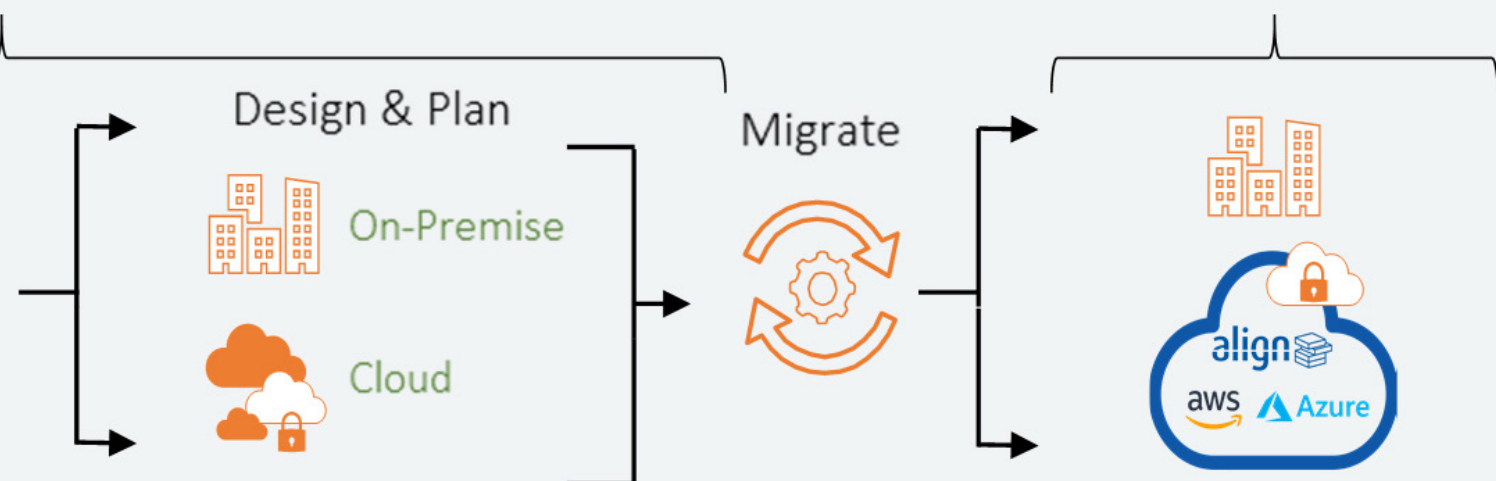
"Our professionals are so knowledgeable, in all the leading solutions, that I can lean back and ask a question or ask for an opinion from any one of our Subject Matter Experts (SME),

whether it's a networking architecture question or a simple cable plant item. My SME colleague can give me the right insight or multiple options to solve our customer's challenge. That's real value for our customers."

Naturally, as a technology company that has been in business for over three decades, Align has established and fostered key strategic partners to help the company to continue to grow and remain a leader in the field. But what is it that makes a key partner? How does Align not only select the

ture

Managed Operations



“right” partner but continue to work with that partner both today and in the future? For Align, it’s a combination of working with leaders in the field, but also leaders who are willing to grow with Align.

“We try to look first at the leaders in the field, but also ask: who is innovating? Who is sticking with their product and selling it year in, year out? And who is actually seeing issues out in the field and making manufacturing changes to solve these issues?” says Weber.

Weber recognises that it’s not a one-

“We really take every project personally and if we’re taking on a project for you... it’s going to get done better than anyone else could do it”

—
Art Dooling,
Managing Director



EXPERT KNOWLEDGE



MARKET ACCESS



FLEXIBILITY & CREATIVITY




PERSONAL ATTENTION

Metro Sales Solutions is a manufacturer representative firm that helps its clients understand and leverage market dynamics in order to create better business results. *Metro Sales Solutions* is one of the most recognized and respected manufacturer representatives servicing the technology, data, security and telecommunications industries.

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way relationship and that Align must allow itself to be held to the same standards that it expects of its partner network.

“I think they look at it the same way. There are leaders in the field, and then there are innovators. If you can get both in one company, that’s tremendous. We are committed to finding partners who employ the leading innovators and the strongest leaders in the field.”

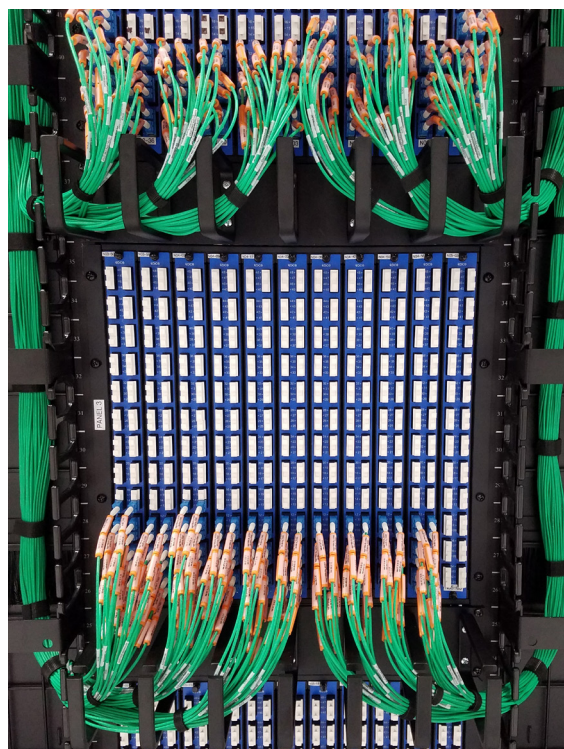
Dooling feels that this is best represented in the company’s approach to Managed IT Services. For him it is imperative that the company understands what “Day-Two” looks like, not only for the partners, but also for the client.

“Sure, it’s great we sold a solution and are working together, but then what?” asks Dooling. “What happens in 12 months or five years’ time and they’re looking to expand or grow? Where will this technology take them? I think that’s what we’re smart about, asking those questions to understand where these technologies are going and how we can grow together.”

Having been with Align from the very beginning, Weber has seen first-hand just how much the company strives to be the very best. For him this isn’t just talking the talk, as he says Align truly “walks it” and he can point

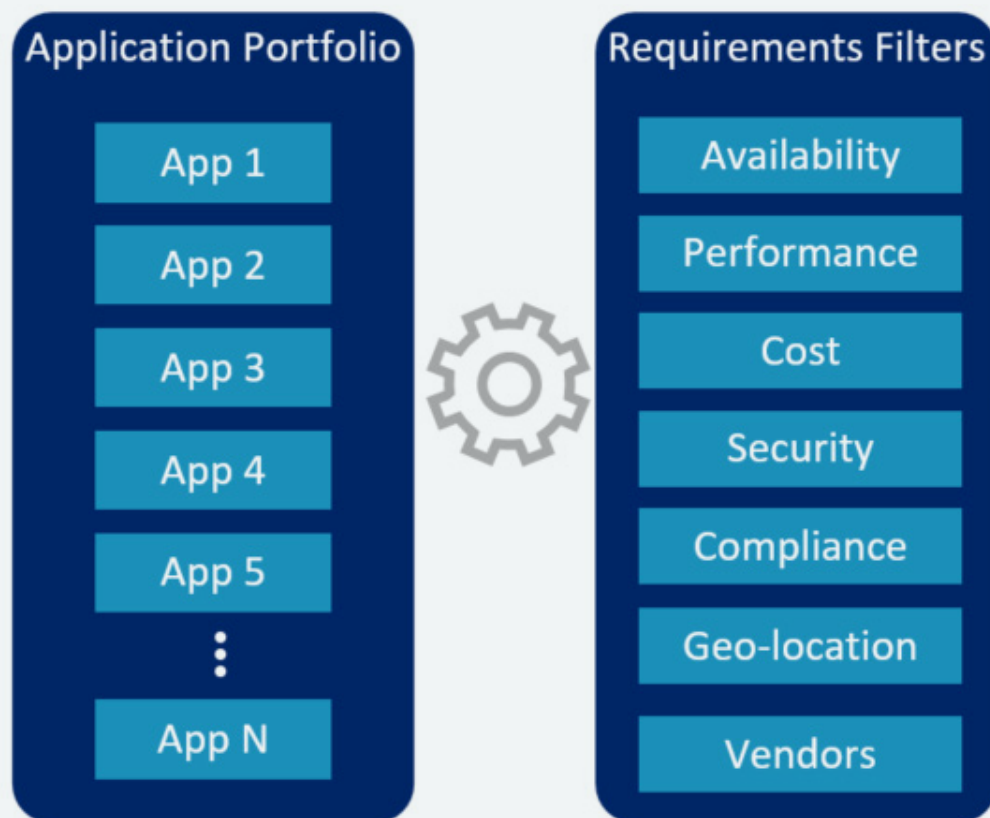
“There are leaders in the field, and then there are innovators. If you can get both in one company, that’s tremendous”

Tom Weber,
Director of Data Center and Design



Patching from switch port
replication panels

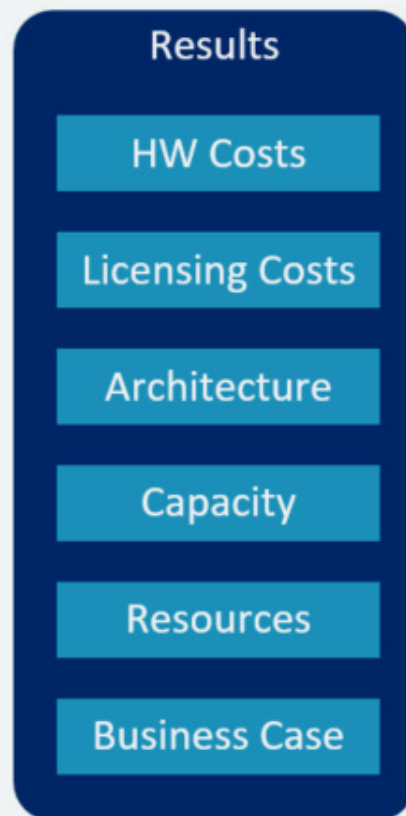
Leveraging data captured during the current state, Align will work with your team to determine the future state(s) and costs for each app based on business requirements and technical standards



to a number of successful engagements as proof. But it's not just about the size of a client or the profit margins that Align has amassed and achieved over the years, Weber believes the success can be measured by one simple metric. "We have been incredibly successful over the years and for me it's down to our communication and our honesty," says Weber. "We aren't the cheapest firm out there, but we strive to be the

premier firm for our clients, and we are delivering on that. In my time here I can honestly say we have never lost a client due to not meeting expectations. We have always met and exceeded them because of our people, our process and our tools." And a measure of that is that over 90% of Align's customers are repeat clients.

As the company looks to the future – with Dooling readily admitting that he



and the business has to have an eye well and truly on tomorrow – it is those three elements that he identifies as the key to the longevity of Align both now and in the future.

“For me our value comes from the processes that we have in place, the expertise that we have, and the tools that we use,” he says.

“We really take every project personally, and if we’re taking on

a project for you, it’s going to get done and it’s going to get done better than anyone else could do it.” ■

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