



“WOW-ing” THE LOCAL IT INDUSTRY

BY TIM HAYES, CONTRIBUTING WRITER

“There’s no prize for second place in this business.”

You can’t get much more direct than that, according to James Stokes, President of WOW Global Corporation. Keeping that mantra in mind has enabled WOW – a locally-based Provider of IT staff augmentation and project services to clients worldwide – to continue on a path of steady growth since its launch in 2002.

With branch offices in the United Arab Emirates, Austria and India, WOW has so far worked in roughly 250 IT projects with customers and has placed more than 700 professionals. The differentiator for WOW, though, is its focus on finding local talent, wherever the client considers to be “local.”

“The basic idea was that we come with a strong IT background,” explains Subhash Chander, WOW Vice President. “In today’s market, finding quality people is a challenge. We knew that if we are good at delivering quality people, we could win. Keeping a low-margin model, starting in 2002, our strategy has been to always go to local markets to find resources. That keeps our overhead low, while offering clients good quality resources at hand.

“We targeted domestic markets, finding people around the corner who could start tomorrow morning,” says Chander. “Our clients like this approach because it means no relocation costs, no travel expenses that they have to cover. This has been very effective, because we can provide 24/7, anywhere, anytime service.”

WOW employs highly experienced professionals from different domains of the IT field. Consultants work on both turnkey projects (with clearly

defined goals and firm start/end date) and on a time/materials basis, (with multiple ongoing objectives). Engagements are typically delivered by a global team with 20 to 30 percent of the team members located at the client site and the remaining 70 to 80 percent located at WOW’s global delivery center in India. Onsite teams interact daily with clients to define requirements, review prototypes and manage scope changes, while offshore teams ensure quality execution at a low cost.

“Many competitors have operated in this space, because after the Internet bubble burst, people saw opportunities and founded their own shops,” says Stokes. “It was the basic laws of supply and demand – when the Internet was at its height, no one was there to do all the work, so prices went way up. After the bubble, supply far outpaced demand but inflated margins were still expected by people in this market.

“We came into that market with lower rates and quality people at the local level,” he explains. “That is what made us different. Our goals are the same as they have always been, to help small- to medium-sized business compete better with large organizations. We’re bringing global resources to Pittsburgh, and we feel we’re bringing Pittsburgh to the globe to truly help companies remain competitive.”

WOW is one of the fastest growing privately held companies in Pittsburgh, with projected growth of around \$28 million this year – suggesting that its emphasis on local IT professional placements is a winning formula. ○