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Fast 50

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Smart hiring, clear focus fuel tech firm's growth

■ BY JOE COGLIANO II
DBJ CONTRIBUTOR

Hire the best people, and stick to your core business. Those two philosophies may seem simple enough, but they have helped propel Web Yoga Inc. into the spotlight as the fastest-growing business in the Dayton area.

The company, which started just four years ago, provides information technology personnel and project development services to businesses in Ohio, Indiana and Michigan. According to President and Owner Vijay Vallabhaneni, the services Web Yoga provides require people with superior technical skills, so he personally oversees hiring and tries to bring in the top 5 percent of people in the field.

"We have a very strict recruiting process," Vallabhaneni said. "We hire the best of the best of the best. Our main focus is people. Of course, sales and marketing can only do so much by placing a person or getting a project to develop. But who delivers it? The people we have."

Web Yoga has found many of its employees through recommendations from its staff.

"A smart, trusted and diligent employee gives us a reference of somebody to hire, and he is putting his reputation on the line," he said. "We take those leads before looking at anybody else. Birds of a feather really do flock together."

One of the biggest challenges for a company experiencing rapid growth can be managing the growth. So Vallabhaneni made the decision to stick strictly with the fields of staffing and project development. He plans to stay on that course for at least several more years and has even dropped some of the initiatives the company thought it could launch.

"When companies are growing they can lose their focus by reaching out into too many areas," he said. "We stuck to our core business all the way through our growth. And we kept improving because we saw a clear need for more improvement even while we were growing to make our core business as solid as it could get."

"We want to be a solid and steady player in the market we are in."

Web Yoga's huge growth came at a time when the information technology field and the economy were on the decline. So how did the company manage to weather a storm on two fronts?

To help grow market share, the company automated



most of its in-house functions, such as tracking for sales and recruitment. Vallabhaneni said the move helped reduce costs and gave Web Yoga more resources to focus outside the company.

A little luck didn't hurt either. He said many of Web Yoga's clients did well in spite of the economic conditions.

Looking to the future, Web Yoga has hired a person to work in Houston providing the same services to the government market that the company provides to the commercial sector in the Midwest. Plans also are in the works to launch an IT product under a separate company. But for the time being, Vallabhaneni is determined to stay the course.

"Our concentration is to focus on our business, focus on our people, and we'll do alright."

Web Yoga's effort to get government work is not something a lot of information technology companies have been doing, said Dan Lohmeyer, president of Ohio's IT Alliance.

"That's another indication of their aggressiveness and willingness to look at other markets to expand their business as opposed to trying to change the business model," Lohmeyer said. "You have to applaud them for being as focused and disciplined as they're apparently being in pursuing their business model. They know what they are good at and they know how to be

NO. 1 WEB YOGA INC.

Address: 2621 Dryden Road, Suite 107, Dayton

Phone: 298-8000

Average annual revenue growth: 3,774 percent

Business: Provides information technology personnel and project development

Total employees: 45

Owner: Vijay Vallabhaneni

Year founded: 1998

good at it. They know that trying to be good at something else ... can distract you and fracture resources."

LexisNexis has been impressed with the quality of personnel at Web Yoga.

When senior product development director Chuck Backus needed some experienced software testers, he requested several resumes from Web Yoga.

"I also retrieved resumes from other firms," Backus said. "(Web Yoga's) candidates were stellar. To date Web Yoga's employees have been exemplary."

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