

Folsom software developer flush with projects, ready for growth

Kiefer Consulting plans to add staff, bring in \$800K more in revenue

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Software company Kiefer Consulting Inc. of Folsom is projecting to add \$800,000 in revenue this year by helping government agencies and private companies manage their internal information more efficiently.

The 20-person company plans to add five to 10 employees by the end of the year, Kiefer Consulting president and chief executive officer Greg Kiefer said. Kiefer is hiring a project manager and a business

analyst.

The company develops intranet sites, or private computer networks used to securely share information. Kiefer also creates Web sites and some extranet sites, which securely share part of an organization's operations with other businesses, customers or vendors. Kiefer expects revenue of \$2.3 million this year, compared to \$1.5 million in 2007.

Kiefer Consulting, which is 20 years old, had focused on building custom Internet applications until about two years ago, when Kiefer said he realized there was a need to help businesses collaborate better on internal projects. For example, when a company is developing a request for

proposals, many people might help write it and e-mail back and forth to get the job done. A team site on an intranet can be used to manage the entire process.

Compared to what was available five years ago, today's intranet technology tools are easier to use, more robust and cheaper, Kiefer said. The latest tools allow companies to structure their digital information so they can more easily find it, he said. A business can have a résumé file, for instance, where it stores and sorts all résumés and shares them internally.

Companies often don't take full advantage of their technology, so Kiefer launched a series of free Friday events at which agencies and companies can learn

how to leverage their technology. He also gives free two-hour seminars to state agencies twice a month. This week's seminar was titled "The Future of Software Development."

It's his way, he said, of getting exposure and reinvesting in customers.

"If you stop letting people know who you are, there are 50 other companies who want our contracts," he said.

'COOL' CONTACT SYSTEM

Eighty percent of Kiefer's customers are state agencies, such as the Employment Development Department and the Office of the State Chief Information Officer.

But Kiefer said one of the "coolest" projects his company completed this year was for a private company. Kiefer Consulting built a visitor information tracking system for the Expo Daily Home Improvement Resource Center of Roseville, a 28,000-square-foot exhibit hall featuring stained concrete, hardwood floors and other home-improvement ideas in a showroom format.

With the system Kiefer Consulting created, visitors walk through the showroom with a bar code scanner and scan codes on any of the 250 booths they're interested in. The software system automatically generates a list of vendor phone numbers and, if the visitor would like to be contacted, it e-mails vendors.

"They've been very good to work with, very efficient and effective," said Lynn Egen, president and CEO for Expo Daily. "They took an idea and developed it into a program that works."

She said no one has been able to duplicate the copyrighted technology so far, though several have tried. Nine similar expo centers have opened across the country since Expo Daily launched in November, and many hand visitors clipboards but not scanners, she said.

Christy Quinlan, chief deputy director for the Office of the State Chief Information Officer, said Kiefer Consulting is working to build a repository for documents where people can see what technology systems the state has implemented and requested, and what its architectural standards and technology-related policies are.

SPEEDY DELIVERY

Kiefer also worked for the California Department of Health Care Services on the award-winning California State On-Line Query, which pulled all medical records together in one place and sped up Medi-Cal eligibility verification from weeks to seconds.

Natoma Technologies Inc. built the software, and Kiefer helped with the architecture and design.

"It was really a great thing, and they did it in a very short time," said Quinlan, who was CIO for the department at the time. "We were very happy."

Kiefer Consulting has plenty of competitors, but Kiefer said most, including Microsoft Corp., Unisys and Deloitte Consulting LLP, also are the company's partners.

Gopan Madathil, president of the technology education and networking group TechCoire, said during the tech boom years, there was a plethora of tech services companies. In good times consultants do very well because talent is in short supply.

Many have since folded, but even during the dot-com bust government agencies kept on spending, he said.

"The good news is that Kiefer has been staying afloat," Madathil said. "How they do will depend on what type of projects they are dealing with (in the future)."

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