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Oakland Business Review

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INNOVATION

Rochester firm writes new chapter in efficiency

BY MIKE SCOTT

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More productivity, lower cost and less paperwork – mantras heard daily in manufacturing and healthcare – may be coming to a school district near you.

Rochester-based Lindner Technology Group Inc. helps schools reach those efficiency goals with software that simplifies the process of communicating with parents, delivers timely and accurate grades and other information, and streamlines human resources functions.

Berkley, Troy, West Bloomfield, Northville, Fraser, Center Line and Romeo school districts have signed on for the products.



Lindner

CEO Troy Lindner expects revenue to increase by 20 percent or more this year and projects to double current revenue by 2010. He would not disclose actual sales figures.

Unlike other software programs aimed at educators, all LTGI programs are installed locally and software licenses are purchased, not rented.

"It's difficult to rent forever and, in most cases, the conversion to a new product – rental or other – can be difficult and expensive," Lindner said. "Unlike rental products, LTGI products are installed on school district servers and require no ongoing fees."

Jeff Mozdziej, director of educational technology and information services for Rochester Community Schools, said school administrators and IT staff have more duties, and that is forcing districts to find ways to be more efficient.

Rochester uses LTGI's MailOut software, Mozdziej said, and that allows the district to distribute information to parents without the challenge of maintaining multiple distribution lists.

"Parents simply subscribe to the mailings they want," he said.

But the field is competitive. Lindner bids against the likes of Pearson Education, PeopleSoft Corp. and Blackboard Inc.

Plus, working with schools can entail a significant waiting period during the bidding process. "The lead time of a sale varies with each product sale and customer," said Lindner. "It can range from two weeks to two years, so that is a constant challenge."

Besides MailOut, LTGI products include UpGrade, a report card system that allows teachers

to enter report card and progress grades seamlessly via a secured Internet browser; Applicant Central which helps streamline the posting, application and interview functions of human resources; and Calendar K-12, an online calendar of events accessible online by par-

ents and community members.

The majority of Lindner's leads come from customer referrals.

Still, where one set of pressures on school districts brings LTGI more work, schools' financial stresses carry a risk. "The shrinking budgets certainly dictate a shift in our offer-



ings," Lindner said, "but they have not reduced our ability to grow."

He also doesn't believe that focusing on just school districts limits his growth.

"We share our experience and knowledge with our customers and can tell them what we've seen

work well, and what has not," said Lindner. "That knowledge helps our customers to avoid pitfalls and helps speeds them through the paperless process."

■ Mike Scott is a freelance writer.





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