



Joe Campolo, the president of Expedite Video Conferencing Services, makes sure he and his staff share the same vision.

Riding the videoconferencing wave

By ADINA GENN

Joe Campolo joined Westbury-based Expedite Video Conferencing Services in 2002 to help grow the company. His timing couldn't have been better.

As prices of videoconferencing systems dropped, technology vastly improved.

"I saw the industry growing tremendously," said Campolo, who in February stepped up to the president's role.

Campolo took the industry's momentum to propel Expedite into a national and interna-

tional provider. By closely following forecasts, he pinpoints new office locations, loading them up with certified specialists. To stay ahead of the curve, Campolo constantly updates Expedite's business plan, communicating it to staff so that "everybody has the same vision," he said.

Since 2002, the Internet has replaced costly high-speed phone lines, making videoconferencing user-friendlier, according to a June 2005 study by Forrester Research.

Systems costing as much as \$40,000 when the company started in 1996 are around

\$5,000 today, Campolo said. Other improvements include high-definition capabilities. By 2010, videoconferencing will be a standard part of an information worker's desktop, and of everyday life, according to Forrester.

Recognizing the potential, Campolo spurred the company beyond the radius of its primarily New York-based clientele, mostly state and local agencies.

On a global scale, the company now provides distant learning services to the United Nations International School, and the Freedom Calls

Videoconferencing catches on

Foundation, which enables U.S. troops in Iraq to visit with families via videoconference.

Nationally, clients include the University of Vermont College of Medicine and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The company puts deals together for state university systems that band together for greater purchasing power.

Additionally, "we did a major push westward to the Midwest," Campolo said. "It's the hottest spot in North America right now."

Rural areas in the Midwest had less access to resources, Campolo noted, and were awarded Federal grants for videoconferencing in the fields of education and medicine as well as in courthouses.

Since Campolo came on board, Expedite opened offices in St Louis, Kansas City, Albany and Raleigh. It also established an international presence with a new office in the Netherlands.

To staff offices, Campolo worked with industry consultants to hire "the best talent we

could." Ideal hires were those with contacts and expertise. Each office includes specialists certified in Cisco Systems and Nortel to maintain equipment so that companies can outsource managed services to Expedite.

The company also partnered with other providers, including satellite companies and international installers to provide additional services for clients. "Not every job is simple," Campolo said. "Some incorporate other technologies." The hunt for complementary resources is on going. "I spend a lot of time meeting with people" so the company has a full arsenal of resources ready.

The technology today can save lives. The University of Vermont, for instance, installed a "teletrauma video network" to connect 10 hospitals, doctors offices and ambulances to speed up treatment and provide expertise from remote locations, said Michael Caputo, the university's director of information systems and telemedicine operations.

Courthouses use the technol-

ogy to eliminate prisoner in-court appearances. With contracts in New York, Expedite next won contracts in courthouses in other states, Campolo said.

To help spread the word of Expedite's credentials, the company hired Melville-based DCP Marketing Services. Expedite holds lunch-and-learn seminars, educating state and local decision-makers about "what other state and local agencies are up to," Campolo said.

Currently the company is 40 percent managed services, 60 percent videoconferencing system sales. By 2007, "I hope to flip that," Campolo said. "The services industry is more profitable."

But as the technology evolves, Campolo expects the ratio to switch to 100 percent services. "Videoconferencing will be like the cell phone market, which gives phones away as long as customers sign up for service," he said. He'll give systems away, too, "as long as clients sign up for service."

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