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CCSI Celebrates 10 Years of “Creating Clients for Life”

A decade ago, Scott Huotari made a commitment to bring his vision to life: offer technology previously reserved for enterprise level companies to small and medium businesses (SMB) while also delivering an unprecedented level of service. Ten years, hundreds of satisfied clients and 10 employees later, the result of his vision, Creative Computer Solutions, Inc. (CCSI) is celebrating its 10th anniversary.

To celebrate the occasion, CCSI decided to host for their clients monthly seminars ranging on topics from human resources to implementing marketing strategies that build real success. “We took a look at the resources that have assisted CCSI over the years to be successful and decided to share those resources with our clients,” says Huotari. “Our relationships are not just based on

“Our relationships are not just based on technology, but assisting our clients in any way necessary to be successful.”

technology, but assisting our clients in any way necessary to be successful.” The company is also once again hosting the Microsoft Across America truck to showcase for clients and the local business community the latest in technologies from Microsoft and other leading vendors. CCSI hosted the truck last year, which was the first time a Microsoft partner ever brought the truck to Vancouver, Washington. The event was so successful, Microsoft placed it as the lead feature in a magazine distributed to more than 50,000 Microsoft partners throughout North America. Clients were not only “WOW’d” by the technologies presented but were treated to a BBQ lunch, massages, and gourmet coffee.

In a business climate where companies come and go like the weather, what are the secrets behind

CCSI’s success? They’re pretty simple, according to Huotari, founder of CCSI and company president. First, make every decision based on the client’s needs. Focus on what you’re good at – and if you’re not good at it, take the opportunity to collaborate with a resource that is. Make a meaningful contribution to the community in which you live, work and conduct business. And finally, always strive to be the best.

Huotari, who has had a long career in technology consulting, founded CCSI back in 1998 because he felt the SMB market was in need of attention. “I believed I could take enterprise strategies and scale them down to meet the needs of small business client,” he says. “A lot of the people who own smaller companies we work with came from an enterprise background, so my goal was to make it possible for them to enjoy the same benefits of technology even though they were running smaller companies.”

Following his guiding principles for doing business, CCSI today is a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner that specializes in networking solutions. The Microsoft certification requires CCSI to achieve and maintain a certain level of client satisfaction and competencies each year. Huotari adds, “CCSI scored in the top five percent in a recent survey of more than 300 Microsoft Partners across the country on customer satisfaction. We were honored. That says a lot about our relationships with our clients.” The gold status also requires implementing an established number of projects and having engineers on who maintain stringent certification requirements. “All of our engineers are certified by Microsoft,” Huotari says. “This provides our clients with access to a higher level of knowledge delivered with unparalleled service and support. It allows us the ability to contact Microsoft for support on a higher level when it’s necessary.” And that, he says, adds up to big savings for clients on small budgets.



Growing Wisely, Fixing Trauma

Huotari says that a key component of CCSI's evolution is getting it right the first time. "I believe a lot of IT support companies do a marginal job due to diversifying too broadly in multiple different areas, but we've stayed true to our core. It's what sets us apart" he says. "We don't dabble just because we can make money. If we cannot do

to basically train their engineers. CCSI, on the other hand, came in and fixed all the trauma we were experiencing. They know what they're doing."

Clayton says that CCSI's approach to hiring is a key differentiator. "They're very picky about who they bring on," she says. "That means I don't waste my time going through the same thing over and over again."

"If we cannot do the job with 100 percent satisfaction, we will collaborate with a company that can."

the job with 100 percent satisfaction, we will collaborate with a company that can. We don't consider it a threat to our client base but an honest, proactive approach to take care of our client completely. We've done a good job at aligning ourselves with the technologies we focus on today."

Nobody appreciates that philosophy more than customers. Suzy Clayton, operations manager with Coldwell Banker Commercial - Jenkins | Bernhardt Associates in downtown Vancouver, was CCSI's second client. And - true to the company's motto of "Creating Clients for Life" - she still is one. "They're just simply better than their competition," she says. "With the company I was dealing with previously, I felt like I had

While Huotari says that the CCSI standard is to respond to clients within an hour, Clayton disagrees. "They're usually here in 15 minutes," she says. "To me it's important that they're local. If I have an urgent need they can get here quickly. I also appreciate that there's consistency in the engineers I work with because they know our systems and the issues we've experienced in the past."

The partner status with Microsoft, Clayton says, is a bonus for clients. "It lets me know they're up to speed on the technologies we use," she says. "They do a great job at investigating what's new and determining if it's a good fit for our business or not. They are not just out to make a quick buck."

Finally, Clayton attributes CCSI's

success to an ingredient that cannot be taught or learned - personality. "They're all very professional but at the same time I consider them friends," she says. "They genuinely care and they're fun. They have a great business and I'm very proud of them."

More Than a Business

One of the core values that has characterized CCSI over the past decade has nothing to do with business: it's making a meaningful contribution to the community. At CCSI, the notion of 'giving back' is far more than a slogan - it's a call to action. "We feel very strongly about social responsibility" say Huotari.

Just ask Susan Enfield, the deputy superintendent of the Evergreen Public School District, which, with more than 25,000 students, is the largest in Clark County and the fifth largest in the state of Washington. "My appreciation for them is rooted in being a resident of this community," she says. "They're not only great business people but they really believe it contributing. They're good at what they do, obviously, but above and beyond that they take very good care of the people around them. I think that's great."

Enfield's association with CCSI is based on serving on the board of directors of a local non-profit organization that provides supplies for local school districts free of charge. And that, she says, is where she became acutely aware of the level of dedication that CCSI has for the community. One of the board members who works for CCSI, she says, rolled up his sleeves to help her district with fundraising efforts. "He was incredibly generous with offering ideas and helping us out," she says. "They provide a real and meaningful example of how you can be a role model and a good person within your own community. They have what it takes to inspire future generations."

But, most tellingly, when asked to sum up what she likes best about CCSI, she simply says, "I just wish there were more companies like them."

