

2007 HOTTEST COMPANIES



2007 **Technology Group International**

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TGI: An Impressive Track Record

When a company is able to turn down business and still increase its revenues each year, it validates it's a company that knows what it's doing in the markets it serves. Many might not believe such a software company exists in today's manufacturing climate, but there is at least one supplier that continues to forge this unique approach.

The company is Technology Group International (TGI), www.tgilt.com, Toledo, Ohio, a provider of enterprise business solutions such as ERP (enterprise resource planning), WMS (warehouse management system), ecommerce, and much more.

TGI is a relatively unknown company compared to some of the larger, and perhaps more well-known, enterprise software companies. Although TGI has proven to be somewhat stealth in its attack on the manufacturing marketplace, it has proven to be very successful competing against many of the large enterprise companies nonetheless. For instance, when a potential manufacturer client is looking at both the highest and lowest ends of the ERP software market, it's a pretty fair bet the manufacturer isn't quite sure what it is looking for in an enterprise vendor.

"If they haven't narrowed their search down to a reasonable tier level of software, we know they do not understand their requirements. If they do not understand their own requirements, it is difficult for us to help them evaluate TGI as a possible solution."

"If, for example, the client is focused on all Microsoft products due to the Microsoft name, they are looking more at product branding and image, not at their specific requirements. In this situation we will quickly walk away because we know they most likely will not be happy with their ultimate software choice."

"At TGI we want to sell solutions. If we do not feel we can be a great solution for a company, then we will voluntarily remove ourselves from the selection process. Some prospects feel we are being arrogant in this decision. In actuality we are doing our best to make sure they purchase the best package, even if this selection isn't a TGI product."

TGI's "walk-away" approach may be somewhat unheard of in software circles where there are plenty of implementation horror stories where the software didn't match up with the expectations or business processes of the company. In their drive to sell software licenses, some software companies would rather take the risk of selling a customer something that they know may not work quite right, or even at all for that matter, rather than lose the sale. But this is not the case with TGI. TGI is looking for long-term partners and that is exactly one of the reasons why the editors of *START-IT* magazine find TGI so refreshing and have named it as one of its 2007 Hottest Companies.

It's important, Gill says, when selecting a solution, that manufacturers define their requirements first and then determine which software provider fits those requirements.

It's understandable that some manufacturers don't do their due diligence when selecting software, especially those companies that have small or no IT staff at all, but it's vital that they use some type of software-selection process.

TGI's honesty with its customers and prospects is quickly inspiring an industry that is looking to grow and prosper despite increased competition. From the editors' perspectives, it's a wonderful way for a software company to form lasting relationships and partnerships with its customers. In addition, *START-IT* editors find this approach extremely noteworthy and one that makes TGI stand out among all the noise in the enterprise arena. An example of TGI's integrity can be found during its work with DCI Cheese Co., www.dcicheeseco.com, Richfield, Wis., where it installed TGI's Enterprise 21 ERP system at two facilities in two states in early 2007. Tim Preuninger, CFO, DCI Cheese Co., says he wanted to go live with the system at a certain point, but TGI's President Scott Smith suggested the manufacturer wait. In the end, it has turned out to be the right move.

"What I liked is [Smith's] honesty about the business situation," says Preuninger. "He will give an honest opinion on whether or not you are ready for go live. I find that refreshing. I've been in other go-live conversations before where they won't bring their own business perspective and try to go for a [go-live] date..."

Preuninger is not the only one impressed with TGI's staff. The *START-IT* editors are equally intrigued with how TGI is serving small and midmarket manufacturers with the type of functionality that is just as good—if not better in some cases—than the tier-one technology providers that like to toss their hat into the same competitive ring as TGI. Some of the things that impressed the editors about TGI include:

- All products are written in Delphi—meaning there is no proprietary technology.
- Source code is provided to customers with each sale.
- Availability of unlimited licenses.
- First-year maintenance is free.
- Money-back guarantee.
- Free software selection toolkit.

START-IT editors also applaud TGI for providing a solution that is the right fit for the right company.

Robert Dant, CIO of the O'Gara Group, www.ogara.com, Cincinnati, Ohio, concurs. Dant says putting software vendors through a selection process is the only way he can fully know if its product will mesh with O'Gara's business processes. He comments that he would never purchase software based on name recognition alone. After a rigid selection process, Dant elected to go with TGI's Enterprise 21 ERP system.

"After you go through the software selection, there is then the culture fit. You have to make sure your culture

fits with that of the software company. A lot of times during that process, manufacturers will want to go with a bigger name and that's their choice to do. I see that all the time," explains Dant.

He says TGI was easy to work with in incorporating its culture and addressing the technology-side of business. In fact, adoption proved so successful, O'Gara Group installed the software system in five sites in five states in 70 days.

Dant raved about how the Enterprise 21 system was able to quickly help one of O'Gara's business units, Sensor Technology Systems (STS) Inc., www.sts-eo.com, Beavercreek, Ohio, track some of its more expensive inventory items more efficiently. STS designs and manufactures night vision goggles and wanted to automate how it tracked inventory as well as raw materials that would go into the goggles. There were two particular items that needed to be tracked more efficiently because these products made up 70% of the company's total costs.

"We wanted to track our expensive items—how many were we using, when do we need them, and which goggles did they go into," explains Dant.

Because its night vision goggles are used by military personnel all over the world as well as by law-enforcement agencies, STS is also mandated by the U.S. government to report which tubes are installed on which goggles. It also must report which countries the goggles are shipped to, says Dant. STS needed an automated system to efficiently and accurately give an account of where everything went.

Previously, STS was using spreadsheets to track the components, but it was difficult to know exactly where they were in the production process. It wasn't until the end of the month when reports were run, that a clear picture emerged. However, Dant wanted the ability to conduct weekly and even daily checks of the company's inventory.

Now, with Enterprise 21, rather than manually entering in serial numbers multiple times during the entire process—when components arrive from the supplier, when they are installed on the goggle, and then again when it is shipped to the customer—each component's serial number is only entered once when it first arrives to the plant.

When a work order is received, production employees can take advantage of a drop-down menu on their Enterprise 21 system and click on the serial number as well as the finished good product it will be installed on.

And to ensure that its inventory matches up with what is in Enterprise 21, Dant now performs cycle counts every two weeks instead of waiting once a month.

TGI is not only hot in the eyes of its customers, but it has shown *START-IT* editors that knowing your partner's business ultimately means more business for everyone involved.