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How To:

Research each electrical contractors' credentials before you hire.

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Big Ideas

Greg Fornelli has his motorsports businesses revved up for growth.

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Washington Watch

SBA told to devise a program to assist women-owned firms.

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CALENDAR

October 18

Embracing the Right Technology:

5:30-7:30 p.m.; Byron South End, 101 W. Worthington Ave.; members free; nonmembers \$25; for information, go to www.runmyclub.com/MEC/eventcalendar.asp

October 19

Joyful Living:

Metropolitan Business and Professional Women; speaker Sharon Decker of The Tapestry Group; 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.; Bentley's on 27 Restaurant, 201 S. College St.; members \$21; guests \$28; for reservations, call (866) 851-9446



photo NANCY PIERCE

SMOOTH SAILING: Dan Wilson, whose Waypoint Solutions Group takes its name from a nautical term, has learned to navigate the challenges of serving a major client nearly half a world away.

Crossing boundaries

Waypoint adapts to serving a key client overseas

FRED TANNENBAUM
STAFF WRITER

QUICKINFO

WAYPOINT SOLUTIONS GROUP

Business: Provides information technology consulting, including e-mail management and Web hosting to Fortune 1,000 companies

Founded: 2003

HQ: 10612-D Providence Road, Suite 317, Charlotte, 28277

Principal: Dan Wilson

Employees: 5

Phone: (704) 965-3880

Web: www.waypointsg.com

Call it offshoring in reverse.

After a Middle Eastern company acquired one of Waypoint Solutions Group's biggest clients, Waypoint founder Dan Wilson and his staff embarked on a business adventure that crossed vast cultural and geographic differences.

Waypoint provides information-technology consulting for Fortune 1,000 companies. Among its clients, the local firm managed e-mail systems, wireless communication and Web sites for Charlotte-based CSX World Terminals, an operator of container-shipping ports worldwide.

In January, Dubai Ports International, based in the United Arab Emirates, bought CSX World Terminals. Five months later, DPI hired Waypoint to combine, manage and upgrade the computer networks of the merged operations.

Waypoint remains engaged in the DPI project, which involves an estimated 1,000 tasks and is expected to take 2,400 man-hours.

Along the way, Wilson and his company's four employees have had to deal with a 7,300-mile, eight-hour time-zone difference. And they've also had to make scheduling adjustments. Muslim employees at DPI facilities do not work on Fridays; most U.S. employees do not work Saturdays and Sundays. This month, during the Islamic observance of Ramadan, the Muslim employees are working only six hours a day.

No problem, Wilson says.

"It's very interesting to go over there," says Wilson, who is working in Dubai until November. "The majority of the United States has certain images of the Middle East. The average Muslim person is very kind, gentle, generous and extremely family-oriented."

Soon after DPI hired Waypoint, it closed the former CSX World Terminals office here and moved its computer servers to Jacksonville, Fla. Suhail Al Banna, DPI chief technology officer, says Waypoint took responsibility for all the tasks involved in that change — from transporting the equipment to Jacksonville to reinstalling it.

What makes Waypoint successful, he says, is its ability "to communicate and cooperate with a multi-cultured team, their promptness and

willingness to be challenged, their depth of knowledge and domain specialization in various fields, teamwork and willingness to help the business in any way they could."

Wilson would like to expand Waypoint to 25 employees within five years and eventually have a staff of 100 spread around the world. He also wants to hire full-time salespeople in the near future to seek business from companies in other sectors.

"My goal for the company is to grow it to the point where I can pull completely out of the technical part of it to focus completely on management and entrepreneurship," Wilson says. "Every month, I withdraw from the technology little by little."

LESSON LEARNED:

When one of Waypoint Solution Group's biggest clients was bought by a Middle Eastern company, Dan Wilson and his staff had to learn how to work across cultural boundaries — and eight time zones.

Here's best pathway to true wealth

The entrepreneurial revolution is in full swing. If you don't think so, check out the cover of this month's *Inc.* magazine: "75 Reasons to Own a Business Now."

To make the most of this revolution, we must understand how our choices affect our ability to build wealth.



BUSINESS WEALTH

Sam Frowine

A Lifestyler views the business as the vehicle for getting more of what he wants in life. More freedom. More family time. More opportunity for expressing a gift or talent. More material comfort for his family. There is nothing wrong with those motives, as long as

the owner understands that those choices come with trade-offs.

Choosing the pursuit of more freedom, more time or more self-expression typically means an entrepreneur wants to keep it simple instead of growing an enterprise. A simple entrepreneurial pursuit centers around the owner. It becomes solely dependent on the owner. Earning potential hits a ceiling. The true market value of the business is compromised because only the owner can run the machine. If the owner isn't running the money machine, there isn't any money.

Another type of Lifestyler chooses material comfort. That choice sounds reasonable, but there's a danger when goals center on material things. The financial health of the business is easily compromised when personal material needs come at the expense of the needs of the business.

Ironically, the Lifestyler often gets stuck on the treadmill. Building wealth is rarely a byproduct.

By contrast, a Business Wealth Builder views herself as the steward of a valuable asset. She makes choices and decisions that increase the asset's market value. She's willing to defer while the business finds its legs because she takes the long view. She knows the day will come when she will earn the right to reap the rewards and provide generously for her family's creature comforts. She clearly sees the day when her asset will run without her, when it will provide her with income whether she is working or not.

Ironically, placing the needs of the business first ultimately creates a more abundant harvest.

Sam Frowine is founder and president of The Performance Group, which builds, sells and invests in private enterprise. He can be reached at (704) 597-5156 or Sam@ThePerformanceGroupUSA.com.