

# OfficeCare touts IT changes as a way to make money



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Tom Salzarulo is a desktop computer technician at OfficeCare. The firm is an IT company that specializes in network design, support, setup and maintenance.

## Blackbird-owned tech firm hunting for acquisitions

BY JAMES RITCHIE  
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It's easy for companies to view information technology as a cost center.

But they should be thinking of it as a way to make money instead, said John DiMauro, CEO of downtown-based IT firm OfficeCare.

"People don't talk enough about ROI," said DiMauro, who took the top executive position in March. "They see technology spending as something you do when, for

example, your employees are complaining about their e-mail being too slow."

He's trying to grow OfficeCare by keeping the focus on clients' business processes, not their technology footprints. IT changes, he said, should always lead to greater efficiency or savings on labor or other costs.

Companies across the region are increasingly looking to outsource IT functions, said Jim Cunningham, president of The Circuit, a Cincinnati group for IT professionals. As employers look to save expenses and increase staffing flexibility, firms such as OfficeCare will grow more rapidly than will in-house IT departments. Small and midsize companies are more likely to outsource to domestic firms to avoid the cultural barriers of working with overseas vendors, he said.

"The technologies are changing so fast," he said, "companies need cutting-edge expertise that they don't have in-house and may not need permanently."

In the down economy, clients are responding. OfficeCare, which focuses on network design, setup and support, has seen compounded annual sales growth of 10 percent over the last year and compounded profit growth of 15 percent as companies look to outsource IT rather than employ full-time staff.

Company officials would not release revenue figures.

The 13-employee OfficeCare, which leases space in Longworth Hall, belongs to an affiliate of downtown-based Blackbird Capital Group, a private equity firm that bought the company in 2005. John Vota, Blackbird's managing partner, figured OfficeCare could be useful in the turn-around projects Blackbird undertakes.

"I have worked with small and medium-sized companies all over the country, and most don't understand technology and don't apply it consistently or properly to their businesses," Vota said.

### TURNING THINGS AROUND

DiMauro replaced David Warren, who, Vota said, left "by mutual agreement." DiMauro, who spent years in small banking in Greater Cincinnati, had been focusing on his own business, the 30-seat Lead Source Call Center in Columbia Township. He still runs that company with a partner.

DiMauro has been working to turn around OfficeCare itself, following a contract loss. Vota said the company is now back on track: It serves about 300 clients, many of them in health care, finance and education. Organizations that OfficeCare has worked with include Touchstone Group Associates, a marketing firm on Hunt Road; Immaculate Heart of Mary school on Beechmont Avenue; and the Cincinnati Ballet.

Clients, which are concentrated in the Tri-State, range from those that want to outsource their IT support completely to those that just need hardware fixed.

The firm, whose roots date to the late 1980s, is also a hardware reseller.

Next on the horizon, DiMauro said, is acquisition activity. The firm is looking at "both competing and complementary" firms.



DiMauro



Cunningham

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