

CCS finds success as high-technology audio, video supplier

BY PATRICK O'GRADY

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Consumer electronics may be in the tank, but CCS Presentation Systems has found a profitable niche as an audio and video supplier to businesses and governments.

Since its modest beginnings in 1991, the Scottsdale-based company has grown into one of the country's largest suppliers of audio and video equipment. It lists school districts, cities and *Fortune* 500 companies among its clients, and its offerings can be as high-tech as it gets.

"Our mantra is we're not participating in the recession," said John Godbout, the company's founder and CEO.

Despite business and government cutbacks, Godbout believes CCS will post about 20 percent growth this year. The



company built a demonstration suite at its headquarters, featuring a place for manufacturing partners to display their wares to attract more business.

Staying Ahead of the Downturn

Godbout attributes the company's success to its client relationships.

"You can buy an NEC flat-panel monitor from 20 people in town," he said. "(We offer) a 15-minute training video that you can put on your Web site to train your employees how to use it."

Education has been one of the hallmark fields for CCS, and through its offices nationwide it has installed equipment in about 10,000 classrooms in the past two years.

The company has worked with suppliers such as Smart Technologies on implementing the latest in classrooms. While there is a cost, Godbout said it's inexpensive compared with what it can offer teachers and students.

The company also has a mobile training center in a semi-trailer for schools in rural areas and those that can't afford to send large groups of teachers to the Valley for training.

Earlier this year, CCS opened offices in Kansas City, Mo., and Atlanta, bringing the total to 26 in 12 states. The company now makes about \$160,000 per work day. That's a long way from when Godbout started the company with his wife: They earned \$59,000 that first year.



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John Godbout started CCS Presentation Systems in 1991 and has built it into a \$155 million-a-year enterprise.

Businesses tap CCS for the cutting-edge technology the company provides, which keeps clients from having to upgrade their software and equipment every few years. Rich Wilson, president and CEO of Services Group of America, said his company was looking for technology that wouldn't be relegated to obsolescence.

"We wanted something that would work with whatever we had and that wouldn't require infrastructure upgrades," said

Wilson, whose Seattle-based company has set up shop in Phoenix. "We're still working quite well."

CCS is expanding its services this year to include online training on various topics. It is partnering with a firm that develops the courses and uses CCS' technology to make it available for a fee.

"We're investing in our business," Godbout said. "We're being sensitive, but we're investing in the businesses that we think are doing well."

CCS PRESENTATION SYSTEMS

DESCRIPTION: Specializes in public and private installations of audio and video equipment

FOUNDED: 1991

FOUNDER AND CEO: John Godbout

ADDRESS: 17350 N. Hartford Drive, Scottsdale

EMPLOYEES: 110

2007 REVENUE: \$145 million

2008 REVENUE: \$155 million

WEB: www.ccsprojects.com