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NEC America, Inc. (NEC) Corporate Networks Group Newsletter

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Florida-based ACS Stresses Integrity on the Way to Rapid Growth

Integrity before profit. That's one of several company principles followed by ACS, an NEC Associate based in Deerfield Beach, Florida. "We pride ourselves on doing the right thing," said ACS President Steve Battista, "and that is one of the keys to our success."

Battista explained how ACS recently put that motto into action. "We closed a deal worth \$250,000 in which we received a 50% deposit of \$125,000. During the implementation process we uncovered an application that we could not meet for the customer. It turned into a very sticky situation since the customer did not reveal the need during the pre-sale process and our agreements are non-cancelable and binding. ACS refunded this customer 100% of the deposit and wished them well in the spirit of 'integrity before profit.'"

"The right technology at the right time"

Battista started ACS in 1998 with three other colleagues; John Burns, VP of operations; Tim West, VP of service; and Jay Marzullo, VP of sales. In the past three years, the company has grown 133%, prompting the *South Florida Business Journal* to list ACS as the sixth fastest growing privately-held company based in South Florida. ACS has grown to 50 employees

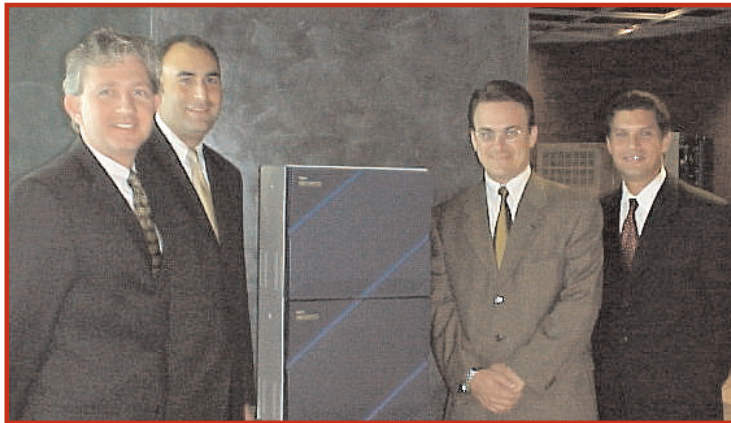
and has branched out across Florida with offices in Miami, West Palm Beach, Orlando, Bradenton and Fort Myers.

Sales in 2002 are expected to exceed \$7 million, according to Marzullo, largely because of the popularity of the NEAX® 2000 IPS. "We have been selling the IPS faster than we can get them in largely due to the fact that NEC developed the right technology at the right time. Prospects love the NEON (NEC's Enterprise Open Net-work) story and

feel comfortable that the IPS will migrate with them and take advantage of future technology. The NEON story is especially popular with Nortel and Avaya customers who have felt

abandoned by those manufacturers."

NEC contact center products have also contributed to ACS' success. "Contact center sales have increased 150% over the past 18 months, and we've noticed an upturn in demand for Integrated Voice Response (IVR) systems," remarked Marzullo. "Florida has an aging ACD infrastructure, and many contact centers are now migrating to web-based applications that integrate voice, e-mail, chat, fax and IVR. Contact centers are also reducing overhead with NEC IP solutions that support home-based



ACS executives, John Burns, VP of operations; Steve Battista, president; Tim West, VP of service; and Jay Marzullo, VP of sales, credit the NEAX 2000 IPS with a recent surge in sales.

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Florida-based ACS Stresses Integrity on the Way to Rapid Growth (continued from front)

agents over DSL and broadband cable services.”

ACS sells the complete line of NEC telecommunication solutions for the enterprise market including the NEAX family of PBX systems, Key Telephone systems, fax products and Dterm® phone sets. Recently, BlueFire® routing and switching products were added to ACS’ product lineup, enabling ACS to provide a converged end-to-end solution to its customers.

While it has sold to numerous vertical markets, ACS has been especially successful in selling to auto dealers and the financial, healthcare and hospitality markets.

“Whoever hires the best wins”

“Our growth is due to our ability to hire the best candidates for the position. Our employees love the business a little more than the competition and all of us rally behind a theme that says we must outwork and outthink the competition. But most importantly, we must make sacrifices that they are unwilling to make. This philosophy has served us well,” explained Battista.

ACS sponsors continuing education for its employees. Throughout the year, ACS invests in outside sales training for its staff along with a library of sales books, tapes, DVDs and videos that reps are allowed to check out. Advanced sales training is held throughout the year. ACS hosts an annual National Sales Meeting that is held in a Florida resort (last year in Orlando). Highlighting the event is the announcement of ACS’ President’s Club trip winners. Technicians update their certificates throughout the year, and topics (VoIP, CTI, CCIS) are reviewed at weekly service meetings to keep them consistent with what the sales staff is selling in the field.

The motto of “integrity before profits” permeates ACS’ employment policy as well. “A person will rarely have a job security problem with ACS if they are a hard worker even if they are not reaching the goals we set for them. However,” said Battista, “if anyone ever misrepresents ACS or NEC, they will quickly be shown the door regardless how much they have achieved over their quota.”

“We bleed blue”

“We have been extremely loyal to NEC by carrying multiple NEC product lines and not representing competing manufacturers,” added Battista. “This philosophy has allowed us to

become extremely proficient on NEC products, and we have been able to leverage all of our purchases to take advantage of better discounts and co-op credit. From an inventory standpoint, we are able to stock a much more comprehensive amount than we would if we represented three or four manufacturers.”

“We have a saying in our company that we bleed blue (NEC blue). Whenever you see the ACS logo (on vans, shirts, our website, letterhead or corporate brochures, etc.) you’ll see the NEC logo as well,” explained Battista. “Our philosophy for success is threefold: integrity before profits, top notch sales people and an extremely loyal relationship with NEC.” ①

ACS Business Principles

- Anything worth doing is worth doing right
- Always provide dependable and reliable products and services for our clients
- Integrity before profits
- Being part of a time sensitive industry, we must support our clients accordingly
- Maintain a positive mental attitude at all times
- Keep your sleeves rolled up to guard against losing your shirt