

Magnificent Seven

Temisoft started off eleven years ago by an Armenian emigrant computer programmer and his wife.

Kevork and Denise Temisgian still run the show. But they now have five more geeks to help them develop and drive their thriving service orientated business.

From day one, Temisoft (the Temi from Temisgian and soft from software) set itself apart from other software developers, through Kevork's insistence on working in partnership with his clients.

"From my background in call centre management and helpdesk software, I knew how to write software. But what good is software that fails to meet a business need? Our clients have a relationship with us based on confidence. They tell us about their business, and their goals and aspirations. And we set out to help them make their dreams come true," Kevork said.

Kevork says his team is "nothing short of fantastic" but also "often a bit whacky".

Leigh Denmeade is in charge of training and support. For Leigh, a job isn't done until she feels the customer is 100% happy. She has written all the Temisoft training manuals and developed the unique online training program which allows her to work with clients remotely on their own screens.

"Every business needs a Geli Nicholas" Kevork said. "Someone who not only knows enough but is gutsy enough to take over when the boss is unavailable."

Geli, whose background is in service management, is Temisoft's senior analyst and programmer.

Pat Recabarren, well known to pest management industry conference attendees, handles bar coding development and also the front end look and feel of ServicePRO.Connect on hand held devices. He also works on the ongoing development of ServicePRO Report Writer.

In his role, Pat works closely with Brian Su who does the writing, development and testing of all core hand held programming.

A more recent addition to the team, specifically to work on program writing for ServicePRO.Connect, is programmer, Glen Thomas who joined Temisoft in March.

"And then, of course, there's Denise, who not only makes sure everyone gets paid but also keeps us on our toes ... the boss behind the boss."



Service personified (L to R):
Temisoft's Kevork Temisgian with the rest of the Temisoft team – Leigh Denmeade, Brian Su, Geli Nicholas, Denise Temisgian, Glen Thomas and Pat Recabarren.

"Neither did they want to have to return to base to check on what jobs were coming up; or to fire off an invoice or quote to a satisfied customer; or even to print out or email an inspection report.

"They knew they had all the information in their database. They also knew that, providing they could get in front of their office computer, they were just a mouse click away from adding to or adjusting their job schedules, or checking on a customer's inspection or treatment records.

"But why couldn't this be done remotely?

"And for the owners of larger and expanding businesses – especially those with multiple offices or franchised operations – the challenge was accessing every part of their business as and when they wanted and needed it, without having to wait for reports to be emailed or downloaded," Kevork said.

"One business owner told me, 'I want my mob out there making money, for themselves and me. I don't want them having to spend time in the office to give me their latest updates.'"

Other pest managers have also told Kevork they have plans to expand and they need a system they can easily adjust to meet their evolving needs.

They want to be masters of, not slaves to, their computer and communication systems. And they don't want to hear, "Oh, sorry". You're going to have to invest in a whole new upgraded system."

◁ Thanks largely to pest manager involvement and feedback, ServicePRO has continued to evolve and expand.

Making the connection

"What people in the pest management industry really want now is to drive and manage their business and access information from wherever they are at any time," Kevork Temisgian said.

"We've seen fantastic improvements in the power and performance of communication technology, especially wireless technology, making it possible to be in touch with staff and customers from virtually anywhere.

"We've also seen improved Internet or web based technologies

giving people access to information of all types at the click of a mouse or enter key.

"On top of that, the capacity and functionality of hand-held devices, laptops and mobile telephones, has also expanded, to the point where everyone can virtually walk around with a PC in their pocket."

Two years ago, Kevork and his team realised their big challenge was to harness all these advances and match them up with ServicePRO's functionality.

"More and more pest managers were telling us they no longer wanted to have to keep returning to their offices to download and process data," he said.

Doable? Done!

"We knew all these requests were not just reasonable but doable", Kevork said.

"But to provide full functionality we knew we would have to move away from the traditional closed network or closed office approach – the way software has traditionally been written and developed – and really open things up."

"This is why Temisoft decided two years ago to bite the bullet and lead the way in embracing and exploiting the new age 'Service Oriented Architecture' (SOA)."

The big news is that ServicePRO Version 6, which will become better known as ServicePRO.Connect, is about to launch as the first of its type using the new SOA (see separate story page 22).

Through SOA, all users can access their databases through their normal PCs or handhelds or through the web.

And, using SOA, they can access or enable access to other third party SOA compliant products.

"Providing you meet the rules of engagement, an SOA based system will give you exactly what you want, no more and no less, when you want it, and how you want it," Kevork said.

"Within ServicePRO.Connect, we provide those rules of engagement (computer-speak for 'Do I know you and trust you? Where are you from? Where are you now? What are you working on? OK, prove it. Good. Thank you. Now, what do you want? How would you like that? With fries? OK, here it is')," he said.

These device-to-device discussions and rules checking, which only take milliseconds, can take place within an office, between desktops or laptops and the master database, or out on the road using a wireless or plug-in connection.

The power to do all this and deliver what the pest manager wants and needs comes from the way the Temisoft team has designed and built what Kevork describes as a "web service" which acts as a gate keeper and interpreter.

The web service checks off the bona fides of each operator, confirms what is allowed to be transmitted and accessed, and makes sense of what is being asked for or sent. It then works in with the central computer's database and application services (functional programs) to select what's required, makes necessary changes or additions, and then relays it all back,

in a twinkling, to the operator's computer or hand-held device.

"The beauty of how we managed this is that each of our clients can tell us how much connectivity and functionality they require, so they only buy what they really need at the time," Kevork said.

"If their needs change, for instance: if they put on another two technicians or start taking on pest management which requires a lot of bait station monitoring, or decide they want to be able to download inspection reports and photos from the field, or they establish another branch office, or want to centralise and automate all their backups, we simply make the adjustments, on the spot, in a matter of minutes ... that simple."

Security paramount

Many people wonder if they are using a system which relies on the internet, used by and open to millions of people every minute of the day, how secure will my data be from access by those I don't trust?

"Importantly, we have systems, much the same as banks using internet banking, which only allow those with explicit permissions to log on and get in. With safeguards such as encryption and password protection, using ServicePRO.Connect is at least as safe as internet banking," Kevork said.

"For those authorised to get in, we have, of course built in levels of access, depending on what different team members require to do their job. This not only further boosts security but also means people don't and can't get bogged down with information they don't need or aren't entitled to.

"And as we continue to fine tune ServicePRO.Connect updates are handled and installed automatically. There is no more waiting for an update CD to arrive in the mail and then having to install on each machine."

Kevork said the new ServicePRO.Connect carries substantial benefits over and above its "from anywhere to anywhere" connectivity.

Go for growth

"For all our existing customers the look and feel and all the functionality they have come to expect is still there. It is just that we can now take them to new heights, if they want or need to," he said.

"If they want to expand we have made it exceptionally easy. There are

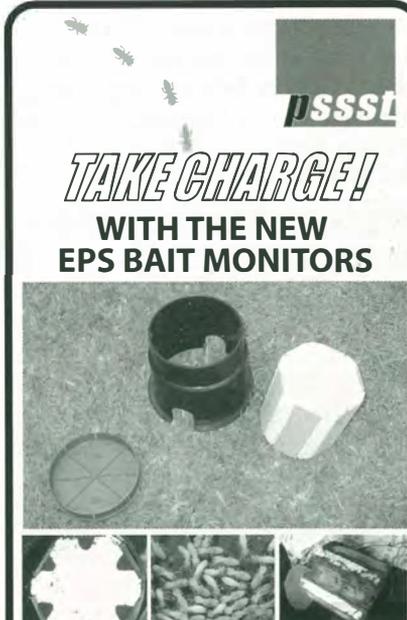
no limits on what they can do with their information. And there are no limits on where they can go with it. But if they are happy where they are that's fine too. We will continue to provide the same levels of personal support and input into their business. That's the way we are."

Another important element supporting ServicePRO.Connect is training.

"There is no point in a pest management business taking on our software and then just sitting and looking at it and wondering what to do next," Kevork said.

"We have invested heavily in training and developing a whole new set of training manuals and tutorials to complement our on-site and online (hand holding) one-on-one training programs. In fact, you cannot buy our software without all the initial training," he said.

"After all, ServicePRO.Connect is all about making business management easier, faster and more efficient. Our clients only make money if they are out there doing or selling treatments and inspections. Our business is about helping them maximise the value of that time." ■



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