

Testing New Territory

James Cliame

When Intuit launched a new reselling program for QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions last May, James Cliame was one of the first to jump into the uncharted waters.

Cliame, a ProAdvisor since 1999, wanted to provide a product for customers who had outgrown QuickBooks, but weren't ready for the complexities or cost of Sage MAS 90 or Microsoft Dynamics GP (formerly Great Plains). He was so in favor of the idea that he became a member of the program's steering committee before Intuit opened it up to potential partners. Intuit

Customer trust helps increase sales.

capped participants at around 75 for the first-year pilot program, but likely will extend eligibility to the 40,000 accountants who are QuickBooks certified following this month's user conference.

Cliame implemented about 30 systems in the past year. In August, he opened an office in Mesa, Ariz., making him the only QBES provider in that state and winning him 10 customers in about six months. His revenue grew by 35 percent to \$475,000 and he expects to hit \$1 million this year because he started focusing on third-party implementations and selling Dell hardware.

"At least 50 percent of the time, I'm having to give them new hardware requirements. So as part of being customer-centric I'm going ahead and getting that equipment for them," Cliame says.

When he founded San Diego-based Net Result in 1995, he started as an MAS 90 shop but found the sales cycle was too difficult for his five-man firm.

"When you go into these companies, you have to go through a lot of red tape before you make the sale," he says of larger Sage customers. "QuickBooks is pertained to a smaller client so within a week you can close a sale and start getting it going."

One of only six members of the QuickBooks Advisory Council working with developers to beta test products, he also belongs to the Intuit Developer Network and has served as an "expert" on QuickBooks Pro 2006 for Mac on Intuit's online community.

While a bulk of his business comes from Intuit's Web site, he also gets help

from CPAs who work as outsourced controllers or CFOs and aren't looking to enter the VAR market.

Increasingly, he sees the need for customers to integrate with CRM and other applications, giving him more opportunities for growth in the East Coast.

"Because my service entails doing custom programming, I'm not restricted by a physical presence. It's easy for me to travel to any location to develop this complete solution for a company," Cliame says. "I don't compete in price but the customers see the value of the services I'm providing."

Up until two years ago, Cliame worked part time as a controller, but decided to concentrate on his consultancy full time. In the past year, he became certified in Microsoft Office Accounting Professional 2007, MYOB and Peachtree Quantum to give growing companies more of a selection, and has picked up a couple of customers in each application so far. Offering multiple product lines creates an image of integrity that Cliame believes is helping him succeed.

"As far as being an expert on QuickBooks, I'm at the same technology advanced level (as other resellers) What helps me create these additional sales is the factor of customer trust," he says. "(VARs) need to really show the customer they have their best interest at heart and that they're not just limited to one product, and not trying to bend over backward just to try to make that product work. That's what I see a lot of people do and that will not produce a happy customer." ■

Alexandra DeFelice

James Cliame

Net Result

San Diego

Founded: 1995

Offices: 2

Employees: 5

Revenue: \$475,000

Products: QuickBooks Enterprise Solutions, Microsoft Office Accounting Professional 2007, MYOB, Peachtree Quantum

Tips for Success: Show customers you have their best interests at heart.

