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Syrinx catches Microsoft wave to fuel torrid growth

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SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

In 2003, Syrinx Consulting of Waltham had three employees.

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Today, it has 35 people and ranks among the fastest-growing IT consulting- and software-development firms in the region.

The company's success stems largely from its decision to embrace Microsoft Corp.'s .NET technology, which has become a widely used standard for building Web applications. The product has proven to be a big slice of Syrinx's booming consulting business, as more companies seek to boost their Internet offerings.

"We've had good timing — just as the industry was lifting out of the tough tech years, we were starting to help people build the next-generation of Web applications," said CEO Andrew Gelina. "It really started taking off in 2004 and 2005 as .NET got bigger and bigger."

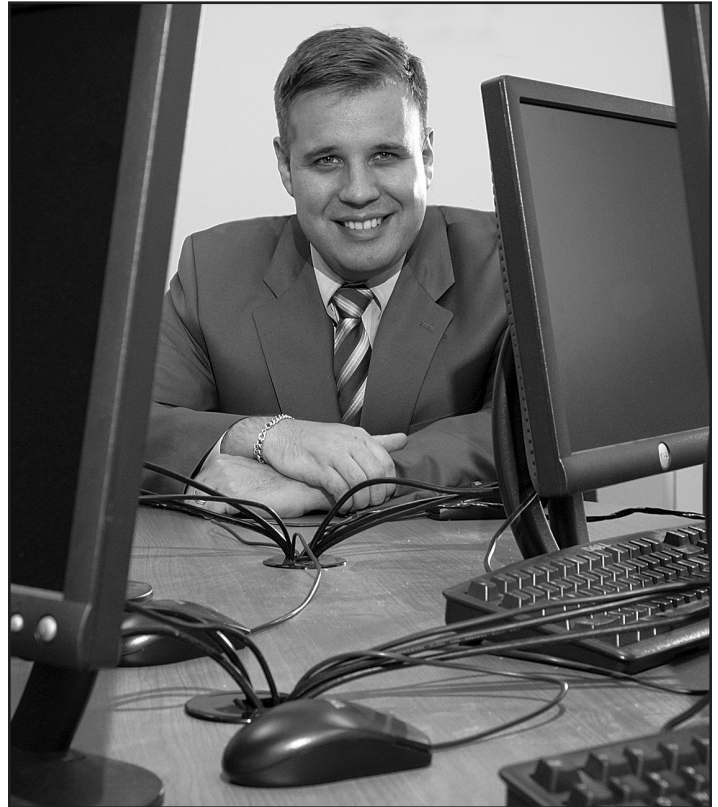
Gelina, a serial entrepreneur who sold his previous startup, Web Technology Partners, to Monster.com in 2000, has worked many of his old contacts to win major customers his way.

'Almost everyone still has Microsoft on the desktop and most larger companies have it on the server side as well. There's a lot of room for growth there and we hope to benefit from that.'

Andrew Gelina
CEO, Syrinx Consulting

In fact, he's even managed to lure Monster his way, as the online job board was an early adopter of .NET technology and has used it to make scores of customized and co-branded Web sites.

Syrinx added big clients such as Staples and EBSCO Pub-



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CEO Andrew Gelina credits "good timing" and a solid business plan for Syrinx Consulting's rapid growth. Last year, the Waltham firm booked \$5.2 million in revenue, most of which was attributed to the firm's expertise in working with Microsoft's .NET Web software.

lishing last year, wins that enabled it to grow its revenue by more than 400 percent since 2002.

Last year's revenue was just over \$5.2 million.

Gelina believes the company's sharp focus on Microsoft platforms and its expertise in developing large-scale and highly interactive Web applications have given it a competitive edge since its inception.

In addition to specializing in .NET, Syrinx was an early believer in the Microsoft SharePoint collaboration platform.

Late in 2006, when Microsoft launched a significant upgrade to SharePoint, Syrinx was ready to immediately advise clients on ways to best use the software to build Web applications.

That power was demonstrated on a recent deployment when Syrinx helped a financial services client set up an on-



SYRINX: Consulting firm boosted by Microsoft's popular Web tool

line portal that enabled a group of investors to meet virtually to share strategies and edit each other's charts and spreadsheets.

That collaborative power shaved months of product-development time for the client in question. Similar anecdotes abound.

Mike Roppolo, manager of software development at Boston-based investment firm Eaton Vance Corp., said he tapped Syrinx after receiving a pricey proposal from another consulting group.

The original proposal "had a six-figure price tag and was very vague," he said.

He was also drawn to Syrinx' knowledge of SharePoint.

"A lot of people say they can work with it," he said. "But the latest version had only been out a few months and there were a lot of consultants out there looking to get their feet wet so they could say they've been successful. Syrinx was one of the few firms that had actually been using it from the start."

With several successful collaboration efforts under its belt, Eaton Vance plans to roll out additional SharePoint projects. "The user community wants real collaboration tools to help them be more productive," he said.

According to technology research firm Forrester Research of Cambridge, companies will begin to embrace more Web 2.0-style collaboration tools in earnest this year.

Forrester said Microsoft's product suite is well positioned to catch that wave — another sign that Syrinx has more growth ahead.

"Almost everyone still has Microsoft on the desktop and most larger companies have it on the server side as well," said Gelina.

"There's a lot of room for growth there," he continued. "We hope to benefit from that."