

Washington Technology

AUGUST 2010 THE MAGAZINE FOR GOVERNMENT CONTRACTORS

FIVE DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

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Volume 25, Number 7



New Wyle Team Launches Growth Strategy

Company puts focus on five key technologies

BY NICK WAKEMAN

If Tom Anderson were a celebrity chef, he might use expressions such as, “Kick it up a notch!” or “Bam!”

Instead, Anderson uses the more common business terms of “leverage” and “synergy.” But those aren’t clichés to him. They are at the heart of his goals for Wyle Information Systems Group, the division of Wyle that he took over as president in March.

In his first 45 days, Anderson restructured his management team by bringing on three new executives to lead business development and the defense and civilian units. He also put a Wyle veteran in charge of a new unit named New Solutions.

“Everybody in this organization is pulling toward a common goal,” said Anderson, who came to Wyle after having been president of Computer Sciences Corp.’s civil and health services group.

Wyle Information Systems Group represents about a quarter of Wyle’s \$800 million in annual revenue. It is one of three operating groups of the company based in El Segundo, Calif. The other two are the Aerospace Group and Integrated Science and Engineering Group.

Wyle was founded in 1949 and was acquired in June 2009 by Court Square Capital, a private equity group.

BUILDING THE TEAM

Part of what drew Anderson and his team to Wyle was the financial stability that Court Square brings to the company, he said. When that is coupled with the three business units’ capabilities, Anderson said he saw opportunities for growth.

“You look at the Integrated Science and Engineering business and the work they do in the medical and health side,” he said. “We can leverage that to help us grow our health IT business.”

Health information technology is one of five growth areas for Wyle Information Systems Group. The others are cybersecurity, earth sciences, data management and cloud computing.

The new executives he brought on board are leading those growth efforts.

■ Mark Abel is vice president of business development and strategy. He joined Wyle from ManTech International and earlier had worked with Anderson at CSC.

■ Paul Thomas is vice president and general manager of defense and intelligence programs. He came from L-3 Communications Inc. and earlier had also worked with Anderson at CSC.

■ Rocky Thurston is vice president and general manager of civilian agency programs. He had worked at Lockheed Martin Corp. and MSD Inc.

■ Rick White had been running Wyle’s defense business, and Anderson made him a vice president of the new solutions business unit.

“The upside is that people have been energized,” White said.

Anderson’s charge is to apply the company’s core capabilities to differentiate it in the market. He also will identify opportunities that Wyle can craft specific solutions for, and he’ll explore the market’s likely next direction, so “we can be a first mover,” he said.

Wyle already is working in those five core areas that it sees driving growth in the market. For example, in the earth sciences arena, Wyle has contracts with the National Weather Service. The company manages the Climate Prediction Center and handles data visualization work and hurricane predictions and analysis.

“Wyle has the ability to combine domain expertise with technology in some very specialized areas,” Abel said.

TEAM WYLE

Tom Anderson, president

Mark Abel, vice president, business development and strategy

Paul Thomas, vice president and general manager, defense and intelligence programs

Rocky Thurston, vice president and general manager, civilian agency programs

Rick White, vice president, new solutions



TEAM OF ENTREPRENEURS

Anderson said his senior team has an entrepreneurial spirit and shares ideas and tips about growing the business.

The new structure will let the different operating units inside Wyle Information Systems work together to pursue new contracts.

“Our goal is to be quick to respond and very adaptable,” Anderson said. “We’re together as a team and we’ve found some significant capabilities to take to market.”

Cybersecurity is one example. The company has an information assurance academy in the Aerospace Group that it hopes to expand into other customer sets across Wyle.

“All the leadership teams are very interested in finding ways to leverage one another and tell Wyle’s story,” Anderson said.

Acquisitions are also part of the company’s strategy. Wyle acquired RS Information Systems in 2008 to create the Information Systems Group. Anderson said his acquisition strategy is focused on adding capabilities to those five growth areas.

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“We are identifying certain types of capabilities that align with those five areas and would strengthen our portfolio,” he said.

TOUGH MARKET

The current market has its problems for growth. Anderson cited government budgetary pressures and slow procurement process as some of the major impediments to growth.

“Many procurements are getting drawn out for one reason or another,” Anderson said. “It would be wonderful to see some improvements, and I know a lot of work is

being done in that area.”

Part of Wyle’s strategy is to increase customer awareness about the company and what it can do. “We have limited resources, so we want to develop intimacy with our customers,” he said.

Another goal is to make Wyle an employer of choice. “I want to develop an environment where people want to come to work and really like what they do,” Anderson said. ●

Nick Wakeman is the editor of Washington Technology.