

Open Skies Ahead

BlueBridge Digital Continues Growth

By Matt Ottinger



BlueBridge Digital CEO Santiago Jaramillo (far right) meets with his team weekly to review new ideas and progress with existing clients.

After a year flourishing in the Launch Fishers workspace, mobile app developer BlueBridge Digital moved into its own 4,600-square-foot space within the Forum Credit Union building in Fishers last fall. CEO Santiago Jaramillo (profiled in the July-August 2013 *BizVoice*®) credits the co-working space for helping his company grow from a seedling operation to 15 employees before moving out.

“Launch Fishers was massively instrumental from a cost perspective (compared to renting office space in a traditional setting),” he explains. “The Internet connection was also critical. Before that, (partner) Adam Weber and I were sitting at Starbucks working. Every 10 minutes, you’d hit refresh, or an email would take two minutes to send. Imagine spending your day like that and trying to get work done.”

Furthermore, he adds that working in close proximity to other entrepreneurs and the “cross pollination” it begot was educational and inspiring.

App-etite for construction

As BlueBridge has grown to 25 employees (with plans to reach 30-plus by the end of 2014), Jaramillo reveals he’s been able to fill vacancies largely with Hoosier talent.

“We’ve had great success finding talent here so far, from a combination of universities,” he states.

He adds that Central Indiana’s other tech success stories have helped his company grow, with organizations maturing and some of their employees pursuing new challenges with earlier stage opportunities.

“It’s a nice feeding ground for us and it

speaks to the growth and maturation of the technology ecosystem here in Indiana,” Jaramillo offers. “We now have the big successes from a capital perspective in funding start-ups, and from a people perspective in seeding those start-ups.”

Individuals from other Indiana companies are also playing a role in BlueBridge’s progress. Not only does Jaramillo credit seasoned pros like John Wechsler of Launch Fishers and Tim Kopp (former chief marketing officer at ExactTarget) for their generous mentoring efforts, he says the company’s funding is on target with the backing of some industry experts.

“We’ve successfully closed a round of funding, and we’re more than 50% oversubscribed, meaning we had more investors with interest than we could stomach so we had to turn some away,” he notes. “That’s excellent for us to be in that position. There were executives from ExactTarget, Aprimo and other Indy tech companies involved in the round.”

Loading ...

BlueBridge’s prominence was also validated in December, when Gov. Mike Pence welcomed Jaramillo and representatives from six other companies to a jobs announcement held at the Indiana Statehouse. During the event, it was revealed that BlueBridge plans to add up to 199 jobs by 2022.

“Announcing our growth plans was exciting, and to chat about it with the governor was too,” Jaramillo contends. “We have a plan of how we’re going to grow the company and it was an honor to discuss that (at the event), and it was good to speak to representatives

from other local high-growth businesses and have some valuable conversations.”

As the company ventures out beyond its original app development niches of universities, churches and visitors bureaus, Jaramillo lays out the company’s goal of servicing over 1,000 customers.

“The more customers we have, the better we can make our platform,” he points out. “To add value for our clients, we need to keep investing in our product and (research and development). We want the top-of-the-line mobile engagement solution to add the most value.”

He relishes the satisfaction of helping customers engage with their students, congregations and customers.

“A year ago, a lot of it was dreaming what we were going to do to help these organizations,” he recalls. “So now it’s exciting after these apps have been launched for six to nine months – to see the actual impact they’re having on those businesses.”

He cites an Illinois client – Olivet Nazarene University.

“They launched their app and over 50% of the campus had the app downloaded within a month,” Jaramillo notes. “That means all these students were super hungry for this mobile resource.”

Swiping ahead

When asked about the future, he sees the fragmentation of mobile devices as a trend he hopes to capitalize on. He points to in-car dashboard engagement with technologies like Apple CarPlay as an example of how brands will need to be ubiquitous through various devices.

“You’ll want to engage and communicate through mobile, but now it’s not just a smartphone – it’s also your tablet, Apple CarPlay, dashboard, the thing in your living room that plays entertainment, a watch, contact lenses or Google Glass,” he elaborates.

He conveys mobile devices now trump television as the dominant consumption tool.

“Now brands are saying, ‘My goodness, my consumers are engaging here more than anywhere else and we have nothing for them,’” Jaramillo concludes. “That’s why we’re helping them bridge that gap.”

To view the July-August 2013 *BizVoice*® story on Santiago Jaramillo and BlueBridge Digital, visit the archives section of www.bizvoicemagazine.com.

RESOURCE: Santiago Jaramillo, BlueBridge Digital, at www.bluebridgedigital.com