



Credit: CARLOS ORTIZ staff photographer

CAPTION: Jim Kegelmeyer, right, of Pittsford, president and co-founder of ServerWare Corp., answers questions from sales trainees at the information technology company's headquarters in Pittsford.

ServerWare offers IT solutions

Behind the Top 100

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ServerWare Corp. is an IT (information technology) service provider. The company implements, supports and manages computer systems.

Jim Kegelmeyer, president, founded the company in 1997 with his wife Sandra.

In addition to its Pittsford office, the company has an office in Albany that opened in 2003.

ServerWare has 20 employees.

The company ranks sixth on the Rochester Top 100 list, as compiled by the Rochester Business Alliance and KPMG.

What made you decide to start your own business?

My wife Sandra and I began ServerWare in 1997. I had a background in IT sales and Sandra's background in accounting and human resources lent itself well to our startup. We wanted to remain in Rochester, where we love the quality school systems, the academic community, the friendly people, great restaurants, short commutes and affordable housing. There was a strong demand and few local sources for the kind of products and services that ServerWare offers. I had always enjoyed building sales territories and establishing customer relationships for the manufacturers and distributors that I represented, so we decided to give it a try.

Why did you choose this particular industry?

I joined an IT startup after graduating from college and have since been in the industry for 24 years. It's a gigantic industry with unlimited opportunity for anyone. It's fascinating and ever-changing. I think I made a good choice.

Can you define for us what your company does?

ServerWare provides IT infrastructure solutions to Fortune 2000 companies, higher education and government throughout the upstate and western New York region. We provide many of the back-end computer systems and databases that institutions use to run their business applications. We also help companies manage and protect massive amounts of data and enable them to operate uninterrupted in the event of a catastrophic disaster or system failure.

What are some key factors that are contributing to ServerWare's success?

Most IT management today is challenged with trying to do more with flat or reduced budgets while maintaining and growing their competitive advantage. They're constantly tasked with optimizing and restructuring operations. ServerWare uses their expertise in enabling technologies to create solutions that complement our client's IT objectives by offering vision, advisement and implementation services. There are few local sources for the kind of products and services that we offer. At the same time, makers of software and hardware are increasingly opting to deliver their products and services to customers by way of IT solution providers like ServerWare. Customers are demanding multi-vendor IT solutions. That's what we offer. Our management team believes that these industry trends are presenting us with a great deal of opportunity.

What sort of staff development programs is your company engaged in?

Well, we provide the necessary training to keep up with software and new product releases to both our technical and sales staff. All ServerWare employees have the ability to further their personal development. A good example is an employee who has been with us for four or five years who started as a project manager and technical coordinator (and) who through study and mentoring has become one of

our promising sales representatives. We are expecting big things from him. We encourage all our employees to stay fresh and support their education and development plans.

How often do you train, in what areas, and how do you determine which areas your employees need to develop?

The process of architecting and implementing multi-vendor IT solutions has become increasingly complex. Information technology service organizations like ServerWare's need to keep pace with constantly changing product lines and market opportunities. We have advanced certifications with their manufacturing partners, enabling us to be an adviser and consultant to our customers. We look at the emerging technologies as they relate to solving pain points of our customers. If we need additional certifications, we go for it.

What lessons have you learned this year as far as business is concerned?

One of the biggest and most unexpected rewards has been our ability to support many local charities. That's another benefit that our customers get from dealing with a local company. We give back to the Rochester community. We're hopeful that we can maintain our growth, but do it in a quality way while we maintain our company culture. We're family-oriented, we all have common goals and a strong work ethic. We work hard but have fun, too. Sandra and I think that we've surrounded ourselves with people who truly care about our customers' success. We think it's a winning formula.

Other companies in the area provide similar services to ServerWare. How do you keep things competitive?

We're very focused. We specialize in solutions that few companies offer and we do these things extremely well. We think that we have the best technical staff and the most committed bunch of sales and support persons of anyone. We have great customer references, too. They know that we will deliver the solution as specified on time.

What interesting things are going on with ServerWare and what should we be looking forward to from you?

We are expanding to New York City and New England. We will continue to expand our product and solutions offerings. We will continue a steady controlled growth and pursue additional talent. I hope to employ more and more and make your front page one day.