InstallShield Software

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BY FRANCINE KNOWLES BUSINESS REPORTER

Schaumburg-based InstallShield Software Corp. makes software installation and deployment products. More than 100,000 corporate and commercial software developers and digital content providers worldwide rely on its technology, which has been used on more than 200 million Microsoft Windows-based computers. Customers include Microsoft, Sun Microsystems and IBM. Here are the views of Chairman and Chief Executive Viresh Bhatia, 35:

Values: "One of the key principles is to have an entrepreneurial spirit, an entrepreneurial drive at the company. That has allowed us to make decisions faster and recognize paradigm shifts."

Challenges: "One fundamental change that's impacting companies is the economic climate. That is making companies rethink how they do business. They have to make some very basic changes to improve efficiency, and deal with the slower economic climate.

"Some of the larger challenges that exist in our industry are to basically recognize changes, the big paradigm shifts, and to be able to take advantage of them profitably."

Response: "[We focus on] what we need to do to enhance and upgrade our products to ensure that they play a role in the industry as the industry changes. That is something that we continuously do to ensure that we can ride those paradigm shifts.

"Another thing we do is focus on technical excellence, [creating]

products which are technically strong, which have the right features."

On dealing with the economy: "We're spending wisely. We are focusing on key projects, instead of focusing on a lot of projects, focusing on the big ones and basically managing the company in a fiscally responsible manner. We are a financially very strong company, a very profitable company. We have a lot of money in the bank, which we haven't touched. In fact, the whole history of the company has been such that it has been funded from within the company. We grew the company for seven, eight years without obtaining outside funding, and when we did obtain funding, we didn't really need the money. As they say, you should get the money when you don't need it--a very wise thing. A lot of people in newer companies are discovering that today, that it's so much more difficult. So from our perspective, all we need to do is just be more vigilant."

Project focus: "The InstallShield product is a piece of software, which is used by other software vendors to create what's known as the installation and setup program. Before you can use a piece of software, you have to properly install it on the computer. That's basically what our software does, and it is recognized as one of the leading products in the industry. One big project is to ensure that InstallShield continues to be the leading product.

"The second project that we're working on is extending the InstallShield concept to apply to the next generation of products, namely digital content, which includes software, music, documents, reports, electronically published news, anything that comes to you in a digital format. We are developing software and services which will help consume [and manage] digital content. We expect those to come on line [in the] second half of the year."

Uniqueness: "One unique thing is the technical excellence and the technical depth of our product. It's something that customers can use from start to finish. The largest software company in the universe can use it. A startup with two people working at home can

use it also."

Milestones: "One major one was in 1990, the shipment of Microsoft Windows 3.0, which created a huge new community and opportunity for us."

Lessons learned: "Even when we were a small 10-person company, we constantly looked at what we were doing to make sure that we were profitable, because the moment you are not generating profits, you lose control of your destiny. Then you essentially have put somebody else in control. So one key lesson [is] to ensure that you create new products and enter new markets in a way such that it's sustainable over a longer period of time."

Stress reliever: "Spending time with family, because the family is a constant in one's life. Products can change. Business conditions can change. A lot of other things can change, but the family stays with you."

Advice: "Persistently change. Don't give up. Keep improving."