



COVER STORY

Fighting Crime Faster

A young company develops a program that collects and analyzes data instantly

By Thomas Gaudio - 11/6/2006

ROSELAND - Software made by Enforsys of Roseland is helping to keep two New Jersey counties safe by speeding up the exchange of information among officers in the field and the police stations to which they report.

The system speeds up the exchange of information between police departments.

Less than 13 months ago, police detectives across Morris County were meeting monthly to compare notes on criminal activity that had occurred within county lines. After the powwows, the detectives would go back to their respective home bases and share what they had learned with fellow officers.

But details like the possible whereabouts of a suspect often grow stale in 30 days, says Ed Katona, chief of the Mount Olive Township Police Department in Budd Lake. Not to mention that the process "relied heavily on relationships and phone calls," he says. "It was labor intensive and time consuming."

To quicken the pace of information swaps, all 38 police stations in Morris County began using a database-sharing system called I-3 Exchange in October 2005, the official launch of the system. I-3 Exchange is software that allows multiple police stations using different hardware devices to store and analyze information—and share it with officers across many jurisdictions—as it comes in from officers and the public.

"With this system, we've been able to place information into the hands of every police officer in the county immediately," says Katona. "It provides the power of an entire network to an officer while he is on the job." There are between 500 and 600 police officers in Morris County that can update the database from mobile devices in real time and communicate with each other and their respective departments, he says.

In terms of effectively linking up different computers and servers used by Morris County police stations, I-3 Exchange is "head and shoulders above anything that's out there," says Katona, who serves as chairman on the technology committee of the Morris County Police Chiefs Association. A second local territory, Middlesex County, began using I-3 Exchange in August.

Enforsys is also getting attention for its products and services from other sources. The private company has been named as a finalist in the "Early-Stage Company of the Year" category as part of the New Jersey Technology Council's 2006 Awards Gala next month. Battling Enforsys for the title at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark will be EKR Therapeutics, a pharmaceutical company in Cedar Knolls, and Transave, a Monmouth Junction-based biotechnology firm.

Last month, Enforsys and Israeli-based Svivot were awarded a \$500,000 grant from the Israel-U.S. Binational Industrial Research and Development Foundation that funds collaborations between early-stage technology companies in Israel and the United States. The Musculoskeletal Transplant Foundation in Edison, partnering with Israeli firm Core Dynamics, has also been approved for such a grant. The foundation handed out a total of \$10 million for 11 projects this year.

George Lieberman, CEO and co-founder of Enforsys, says the terrorist attacks on 9/11 have fueled the use of data-sharing technology in law enforcement. "I think that the [U.S.] Department of Homeland Security has been directed to focus on information sharing because trends over time show that criminals and terrorists really don't follow the political jurisdictions that we live under," he says.

Lieberman and Vincent Tortoriello, the company's president and a retired chief of Roseland's police department, founded Enforsys in 2000. The company's 55 employees design, sell and support two products: I-3 Exchange and PoliSys, a software package that combines a communications platform with a records management system. PoliSys, which can be upgraded with different features, launched in 2001. It is marketed to smaller municipal agencies including police, fire and EMS departments.

Most of Enforsys' customers are based in New Jersey. Either I-3 Exchange or PoliSys, or both, is being used by 30 percent of the state's approximately 400 to 500 police departments, says Lieberman. The Mount Olive Township Police Department has been using PoliSys for about four years.

Costs range from \$500,000 to install a basic PoliSys system to \$3 million for I-3 Exchange, says Lieberman. The Mount Olive police department pays Enforsys \$12,000 per year for 24-hour tech support, Katona says.

Revenue for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2006, were between \$4 million and \$6 million, a six-fold increase from fiscal 2004, says Lieberman. The company is not yet profitable but expects to be next year, he says. Private investors have floated the company about \$16 million.

Even so, Enforsys faces its share of obstacles. The company spends a significant amount of money on training, customizing software for individual customers and keeping workers on hand to provide around-the-clock support, says Lieberman. And the launch of I-3 Exchange was needed to help Enforsys get beyond the "relatively mature industry" that PoliSys competes in, he says. Competitors include Salt Lake City-based Spillman Technologies and New World Systems in Troy, Mich.

But what worries Lieberman most is the process of getting government work. "Small companies have a difficult time selling into the larger public arena," he says. "For us, the challenge is to build relationships with larger prime-contractors such as Unisys or Computer Sciences or CACI so that when they potentially get awarded larger projects, we participate."

Companies looking to sell information-sharing software to law enforcement agencies should focus on marrying great technology with an understanding of how customers need it to work, says Don Sebastian, vice president for research and development at the New Jersey Institute of Technology in Newark. Since 9/11, there has been a "fundamental need for cross-agency sharing of information," he says. "But the cream of the crop will be those who understand what can and cannot be done out in the field."

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