IN THEIR OWN WORDS

TURNING VISION INTO ACTION
Ashley W. Chen, President and CEO, ActioNet

When Ashley W. Chen started ActioNet in 1998, she found her inspiration in the words of a Japanese philosopher: "...action without vision is a nightmare, vision without action is only a daydream." Proving she is no daydreamer, Chen turned ActioNet into one of Virginia's fastest-growing IT firms, earning multiple awards along the way, like being named the 2004 Asian Entrepreneur of the Year by Asian Enterprise Magazine. In this conversation with Doing Business, Chen talks about her company and her own philosophy.

What kind of company is ActioNet

ActioNet is a dynamic Information Technology Services company with approximately 70 percent Federal and 30 percent commercial customers. Our job is to help customers improve their business processes in support of their missions and to maximize their return on investments in both people and technology.

ActioNet has strong qualifications and expertise in Project Management, Business Process Reengineering, Enterprise Software Development, Systems Integration, IT Security and Training. Our "Exceeds Customer Expectations" Perfect Past Performance Rating from Dun & Bradstreet is evidence of our commitment to excellence.

We are also ranked #11 in the 2004 Virginia's Fantastic 50 and #5 in the 2003 Deloitte Technology Fast 50 for Virginia. ActioNet's success is the result of our efforts to attract the best and brightest employees and put them on the fast track for success by providing them opportunities to enhance their skills and advance within the company.

ActioNet has also developed two of its own signature products: A iMakeSurveys (www.actionet.com) and Change Tracker, a software change management tool.

What distinguishes ActioNet from its competitors

The spirit of ActioNet is represented by creative thinking, aggressive decision-making and innovation. We are always looking for ways to do things better.

ActioNet is a people-oriented company with a strong focus on developing its employees for future opportunities. In addition to providing an excellent benefits package, ActioNet also provides training and has established an internal mentor protégé program to help our employees maximize their potential.

We are relentless in the pursuit of excellence and process improvement having achieved the Software Engineering Institute's (SEI) Capability Maturity Model (CMM) Level 3 Certification in only nine months. ActioNet is currently pursuing both the CMMI and ISO 9001 certifications as we plan for the future.

Key elements in ActioNet's success

ActioNet's success has been the result of focusing on the following three areas:

1) Our customers - It is ActioNet's philosophy to establish win-win strategic partnerships with our customers. By focusing on our customers' missions and aligning their IT strategies with their business goals, we have stood out in the crowd. We are proud of the fact that our first customers are still customers today.

2) Our employees - ActioNet's growth has been made possible by our dedicated employees. Our growth as a company is a function of the growth of our employees. Through training and promotion from within, we have built a strong team ready to take on new challenges.

3) The bottom line - ActioNet has

aggressively marketed new opportunities and we have also expanded our existing efforts based on excellent past performance. This approach has resulted in our strong revenue growth since the company was formed.

Certification by SBA as 8(a) and SDB

ActioNet obtained its CMM Level 3 certification before being accepted into the 8(a) Business Development (BD) Program.

The 8(a) Program provides our federal customers with a convenient contract vehicle to access ActioNet's services and products. It provides a streamlined approach which is especially important when the customer requires a quick turnaround time to acquire the required level of support.

ActioNet established itself as being able to compete and thrive in the competitive world of IT before being certified by SBA as an 8(a) company. This foundation has been the catalyst for our growth."

Why ActioNet chose Fairfax County as Headquarters

Fairfax County is extremely progressive in terms of leveraging technology and provides an active role in engaging the business community. As a technology company, this strategy fits perfectly with ActioNet's business model.

The Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce provides numerous networking opportunities, professional training courses and many other forums to assess and promote the needs of the business community.