

Illinois Success Story



George Burciaga
smarTECHS.net
Chicago, Illinois

Adversity, Diversity, and Generosity Equals smarTECHS.net Success

It wasn't easy growing up in Pilsen, a small underserved Latino community nestled on the near southwest side of Chicago, just ask George Burciaga.

This 32 year old entrepreneur refused to settle for what the neighborhood had in store for him. Instead of following the misguided leadership of neighborhood gangs like many of his friends, this youngster began selling gum on the streets of Pilsen at the age of seven kindling that entrepreneurial spirit that drives him today.

It was the lack of funding, the lack of guidance, sleepless nights, and the cruel reality of lessons learned from the school of "hard knocks" that motivated George into the success he is today. It was this endless threat that motivated this 23 year old to start his one-man information technology (IT) company out of his two bedroom apartment. This IT firm that was founded in 1998 that has been recognized as one of the fastest growing companies in the nation is Mr. Burciaga's very own *smarTECHS.net*.

smarTECHS.net is a world-class IT Firm offering full technology life-cycle solutions to the market place. This Chicago based company started out as a private IT consulting firm focusing on the investment banking and beverage industries. However, through the years, the firm has earned an excellent reputation for putting together a team of professionals that tailor solutions to meet clients' needs in the following fields: Web Development, Application Development, Field Service, and Project Management which increase clients' overall value proposition while meeting and exceeding their respective expectations. However, business was not always that great.

In its earlier years, *smarTECHS.net* aligned itself with a reputable beverage distribution company located in Long Island, New York. This distribution company was so impressed by George that it sought to be *smarTECHS.net* sole customer. By offering George a hefty salary and an ownership position in the distribution company, George took on the demands of migrating this company from a manual operation of notepads and typewriters to a fully automated operations system using state-of-the-art technology. Although this was a very cozy arrangement, the Terrorist Attacks of 911 left the distribution company beleaguered, bewildered, and out of business as the demand for its services dwindled. Nonetheless, it was Mr. Burciaga's tenacity and fortitude that brought him through what appeared to be the end of his business. By repositioning his company into new markets and hiring three additional employees, George was able to diversify his customer base as well as his products and services. By 2002, the business expanded its focus from the private sector financial and

beverage industries to include all public and private sector industries that needed to have their respective IT issues resolved.

With revenues of \$2.6 million FYE 2006 and approximately \$8.8 million based upon recently awarded contracts for 2008, this company is poised for further growth as its 13 man operation prepares to move into its new 8,500 square foot facility located in the historical Prairie District on the near south-side of Chicago. Currently *smarTECHS.net* operates in Illinois, New York, Nevada, and Indiana. With recently awarded contracts, the firm will be moving into Florida, California and Louisiana. *smarTECHS.net* also shares the distinction of earning its largest contract ever when it was awarded a \$5.9 million contract from the City of New Orleans breaking down any barriers as it became the only Hispanic IT firm to hold a contract of this size with the city.

George challenges himself in his profession and he is a dedicated supporter of the communities in which he lives and works. Mr. Burciaga is an active member of the civic and business communities, and he serves on the board of directors of several non-profit and professional organizations. George is a member of Mayor Daley's Advisory Council on Closing the Digital Divide, the Latino Technology Association, Near South Planning Board of Chicago, the Chicago Minority Development Council, and the Chicago Entrepreneur Center Advisory Council for Empresario (Chicaogland Chamber of Commerce).

Always wanting to share his good fortune with others in his community, George Burciaga sponsors a host of programs for children - ranging from Pre-K to High School – and adults. His Winter Wonderland Program brings the magic of Christmas to Pre-K and second graders by sponsoring a field trip to Navy Pier IMAX to view a Christmas movie and lunch at McDonalds. The Follow Me program is a series of lectures and field trips to area colleges to motivate high-schoolers to follow in George's footsteps and attend college. This is in addition to publicly addressing students at neighboring universities and colleges in hopes of helping them distinguish themselves as potential entrepreneurs and business men. The Be Thankful Program to be launched in 2008 is designed to feed over a 1000 families at Thanksgiving.

With customers ranging from large corporations such as Harris Bank, Bank of Montreal, Comcast, and MB Financial to public agencies such as the City of Chicago to local businesses such as UNO, the Otis Wilson Foundation, and El Valor Corporation, George and his company continue to create advance technology to help entrepreneurs develop and realize their ideas to benefit mankind.

"We are committed to delivering and designing innovative IT solutions incorporating Field Service, Application Development, Web Development and Product Sales. Our Customers come first; we will identify their needs and deliver beyond their expectations while at the same time positively impacting the communities they live in."

George Burciaga, CEO
smarTECHS.net