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IT and security company offers owner stability, too

Claudia Vargas
Staff writer

(January 6, 2008) — After being laid off from several companies, John Romero was tired of the instability he was finding at all companies, large and small.

"The employment world has become very toxic toward its employees," said Romero, 40, of Greece.

From banks to big companies to a small IT firm, Romero said he encountered the same problem: employers not taking care of their employees.

In the fall of 2006 he decided to start his own information technology and security company, Reboot Technologies of Western New York Inc.

Romero said the first year was successful despite the fact that he operates the business by himself and out of his Greece home. He said he currently has about 30 clients across western New York but hopes to expand his services statewide and someday nationwide.

Reboot Technologies offers IT and security services, from basic desktop support to full security systems with alarms and surveillance cameras that can be monitored from anywhere with an Internet browser.

"The one thing I focus on is customer service," he said, adding that he provides 24-hour support service.

Romero said his work experience at other companies helped him build a business that is a mix of both fields he worked in before — information technology and security.

Even the experience of being laid off was worth it, he said. "When you work at one company your whole life, you get stale, you get comfortable. ... My experience with different types of technology has helped me a lot in my business now."

One of Romero's first jobs was with a local security company. He then moved to New England, where he worked for a financial services company before returning to Rochester. From 1998 to 1999, he worked at First National Bank of Rochester but was laid off, he said, when First National merged with M&T Bank. He then worked at Eastman Kodak Co. in the worldwide information system department, but when he realized his job would probably be eliminated, he resigned, although an illness was a contributing factor.

After being diagnosed with thyroid cancer in 2001, Romero had to go through intensive radioactive iodine treatments. The treatments caused him to miss several days of work because he couldn't be in contact with people.

"I decided to take the bull by the horns and I left Kodak," Romero said, adding that he then went to work for a small IT company but was fired after the company owner found out Romero was looking for another job.

"(The company) promised me the world, a company car and all that, but I never saw any of it," he said. "That was my motivating factor to start my own business."

Though he is currently a one-man band at his company, he hopes Reboot will grow by 50 percent in sales this year and that his wife, Brenda, can join the company as vice president of marketing.

"I'm not just a laborer anymore, I'm a business owner and I take a lot of pride in that," Romero said.

Reboot Technologies is a Certified New York State Minority Business Enterprise.

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John Romero: Technology entrepreneur

Age: 40.
Residence: Greece.
Family: Wife, Brenda, 34; daughter Mackenzie, 2.
Education: Greece Athena High School, 1985; studied electrical engineering at Monroe Community College.
Favorite activities: Fitness, reading and spending time with his family.

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