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## **Moore Solutions rides cutting edge of software education**

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Terrance and Jayne Moore have ridden the dot-com roller coaster and been wounded by the dot-com bomb, but that's all in the past now. The Port St. Lucie couple has recovered nicely, thank you, and their information technology training company, Moore Solutions, has been racking up 20 percent revenue growth each year since 2004.

The firm is a state licensed private school and a Microsoft-certified partner. Terrance estimates that half of their work comes from corporate clients providing training for employees, many of whom are either in danger of losing a job because of a lack of computer skills or will get an upgrade with new skills and higher pay.

"We do productive training," said Jayne. "We teach hands on, not theory. We know the latest software, the latest trends."

As a Microsoft partner, Moore Solutions gets trial, or "beta," versions of software far in advance of the retail market. Moore instructors can train on that software and be ready for the changeover when it comes. All of this costs money.

"We put lots of resources into research and development," Terrance said. "We take a smaller profit to do this."

Moore Solutions offers day, evening and weekend classes, using a staff of five full time employees and three contractors. Class size is capped at 10, and Moore leaders are careful to place students on the right level.

From day one, they've had a money-back guarantee which promises a free repeat of the course or a refund check to any student dissatisfied with a course. The company has issued only three refunds in 11 years of operation.

Moore Solutions' client list includes the city of Port St. Lucie, St. Lucie County, the City of Stuart, Martin Memorial Hospital, and Riverside Bank.

"Education is a great area," Jayne said. "Students who come to us are happy. They're saving their jobs or they're getting a raise with the training."

Students can take an individual course for just a few days or follow an entire Microsoft program of six months. They earn a Moore Solutions certificate that is valuable where the company is well known, or they can take the tough Microsoft test. A passing grade grants certification useful in finding work around the world.

Moore Solutions is also a major partner of the Workforce Development Board of the Treasure Coast, where it won the 2004 Training Provider of the Year award and the 2006 Community Partner of the Year honor.

The Workforce Development Board is a private non-profit organization whose mission is to provide a productive workforce and match up employers and potential employees.

Providing information technology training for this organization supplies about a quarter of Moore Solution's revenues.

Terrance and Jayne expect the final fourth of their revenues will soon come from a new program of information technology academies in high schools. Moore Solutions will supply a turnkey operation using a Moore instructor. The company will set up the program, recruit students, hold open houses and form an advisory council of school administrators who provide local input.

Terrance and Jayne have been working on it for three years. The program is in line with a Florida Senate bill calling for more partnerships between schools and business. The full program will be four years, including an internship with a business. Students will qualify for jobs following high school graduation or can enter college with advanced placement credits.

All instructors will work full time at the schools. In the summer, they will come back to Moore Solutions' office for education and training, and to get re-certified by Moore's master instructors, who are trained at Microsoft facilities.

Moore's first IT academy is opening as a pilot program this fall at Martin County High School. Freshman, sophomores and juniors will be eligible to enroll

Terrance is hoping to take the program statewide over the next few years. He foresees hiring upwards of 10 new instructors each year for the next five years.

That's another ramp-up for a company that started small, grew quickly and had to scale back during the dot-com bust.

Long Island native Terrance and Jayne from the English Midlands met in 1990 when she visited a friend at the State

University of New York campus in Brockport. Terrance was also a student there, majoring in business and communications.

When the cleaning business they worked for in nearby Rochester suddenly folded, Terrance dropped out of school. With Jayne, they started a cleaning business with the out-of-work employees.

Terrance did the sales and marketing while Jayne used her honors degree in humanities from Wolverhampton University in England to land a full-time job with a computer training school. Starting as a hostess, she took classes, became a teacher, and learned the business. They married in 1991.

Seeking the warmth of Florida, the young couple sold the cleaning business and moved to the Treasure Coast in 1995 to buy a bingo hall on U.S. 1 in northern St. Lucie County.

A repairman fixing their computer suggested they get involved with the Internet and thus was born Moore Solutions.

Terrance tried selling Web site design services but struggled to find customers who understood the product at that time. Jayne stepped in with training classes for potential computer buyers. Her first class for 10 real estate agents produced three Web site sales.

From 1996 to 2000, they built the business up to about 40 employees in two divisions, Web sites and training. The Moores were on the verge of taking the company public when the high-tech market cratered.

From 2001 to 2003, the company struggled. Terrance and Jayne slashed expenses, including their own salaries. They cut back staff to the current level. With new software coming on the market, clients could design their own Web sites, so the Moores shut down that part of the business to concentrate on training.

Their tough fiscal restraint and strategic moves paid off. The company is again on the rise. Family and friends who invested in the firm also benefited.

"We're proud to say not one person lost a dime," Terrance said.

With the usual long hours and hard work that comes with running a small business, Terrance and Jayne have found time to raise four children who are now ages 5 to 12. Jayne remembers the hours she has taught computer classes with one or more children in swings at the office.

Jayne said they've had offers to buy the business, but the couple is not interested in retiring. "I really don't know what else I would do."

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