

# BusinessMonday

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Suzette Wenger / Intelligencer Journal

Taking a break from creating business Web sites for their firm are WebXtreme founders, from left, Steve Young, Dave Conklin and Rory Wilfong. Conklin and Wilfong have backgrounds in real estate. Young was a mortgage broker.

## A playful workplace

*Creators of online businesses value time spent offline*

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With backgrounds in real estate and mortgage banking, David Conklin, Rory Wilfong and Steve Young are unlikely road crew workers.

Nevertheless, the partners in WebXtreme, 1830 Colonial Village Lane, are developing the information superhighway for their own group of enterprises and other area businesses. WebXtreme was founded

three years ago with the goal of creating online businesses. The trio built and traveled the highway at high speed, and by 2004 WebXtreme had become a \$1 million business with 20 employees. Now WebXtreme employs about 60 people, and the firm may gross \$6 million in 2006.

The tools Conklin, Wilfong

and Young are using are high energy, positive attitudes and solid customer service.

"We hire energetic people," said Conklin. "We don't allow bad customer service. Bad attitudes don't fly here."

Energy, positive attitudes and a commitment to customer service come from the top down in this young firm, where

employees balance hours glued to telephones and computer screens with play time around the pingpong table and video-game competition.

"No way can an employee sit in front of a computer all day and not have a little break," said Wilfong.

Employees include sales representatives, customer

support, a technical department, programmers, Web site designers and a controller. Conklin's father, Dave Sr., also works for the company.

Workweeks sometimes end with a softball game or at venues like the Marion Court Room in Lancaster, and employees pat each other on the back for extraordinary service with "Xtreme bucks": credits for purchasing items on a com-

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## Workplace: Playful

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pany reward Web site.

"It's been two years since we hired our first employee, and she's still here," said Young. "People we hire tend to stay."

"There are a lot of individuals who make this company successful," said Wilfong. "We owe a lot to every single individual who comes in here."

Most employees joining WebXtreme are associated with the company's first venture, which is one of its six main Web sites, Getmyhomesvalue.com.

The partners began the Web site while Conklin and Wilfong were working as Realtors with Coldwell Banker and Young was a mortgage broker.

"We came up with the idea in December of 2003," Conklin said. "We wanted to generate leads for people who wanted to sell houses."

The site connects homeowners who want to sell their homes with real estate agents in their area. Realtors purchase the rights to leads generated within a zip code in their area. WebXtreme charges Realtors from \$150 to \$900 monthly for the zip codes.

They currently operate the site in nine states: Florida, New Jersey, Virginia, Georgia, California, Nevada, Arizona, Texas, Maryland and Washington D.C. — all high-dollar real estate markets. Eventually, the company would like to generate leads throughout the nation.

The firm operates five other main Web sites:

**Nationalagentdirectory.com** helps people find real estate agents. WebXtreme hopes by the end of this year the site will be the most comprehensive listing of real estate agents available online.

**Zipcodeguy.com** provides digital zip code maps and zip code data bases to mortgage companies, real estate offices and other businesses that might need them.

### Cargas Systems wins award

Cargas Systems recently received the Microsoft Business Solutions Consistent Performance Award from Microsoft Corp., an accomplishment that honors Microsoft's most consistently performing global partner.

*"It's not unlikely we would have 100 to 200 employees within the next year or two."*

Dave Conklin  
WebXtreme exec

**Flooglebinder.com** is a site focused on creating a large database of articles, opinions and tips on a wide range of subjects. It's filled with largely freelance copy and supported by advertising. The company anticipates Flooglebinder will have a database of 16,000 articles by the end of the year.

**QuiltsbyAmish.com** will be providing a place for Lancaster County shops to offer products online, from inexpensive self-published cookbooks to pricey quilts. The site is still being developed.

**Socialmarks.com** is a new site founded by Matt Kaufman in conjunction with WebXtreme. Wilfong said it will allow subscribers to organize all the e-mail, news and bookmarks they would like from the Internet on one home page, with revenue generated by advertising. Conklin said it's being restructured and is currently "on the back burner."

Other sites are in development, and as the trio was being interviewed the company was preparing to launch Getthelowestrates.com, a password-protected site for debt consolidation and refinancing.

Another new venture in development is a technical consulting service which will allow WebXtreme to help other companies launch revenue-generating Web sites. WebXtreme likes to identify fast-growing concepts on the Internet and come up with business models.

"We've grown without any investment capital from anyone," said Conklin. "We were able to grow the business on our own funds, with a minimal investment of a few grand each. Now we're interested in being investors," Conklin said.

Wilfong said his wife, Kirsten, Conklin's wife, Jodi, and Steve's wife, Jennifer, were skeptical at first but are quite proud to watch the company grow along with their families.

"We're not afraid to fail," said Wilfong.

Wilfong, Conklin and Young are banking on growth, not failure. "It's not unlikely we would have 100 to 200 employees within the next year or two," Conklin said.