

# Avidian Technologies Inc. nearly triples revenues

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With more than 12,000 customers worldwide, Avidian Technologies doesn't have plans to slow down anytime soon.

The Redmond-based software company has seen its revenue nearly triple from \$920,000 in 2005 to \$2.48 million in 2007.

It looks like 2008 will also be a solid year growth-wise for Avidian Technologies Inc.

According to James Wong, CEO, president and co-founder, Avidian — employing a staff of 25 — is expected to increase its revenue again and rake in about \$4 million in revenue this year.

"Am I surprised by the success?" Wong asks, "No, I'm not. I'm grateful."

Wong, 36, who immigrated to Seattle from China with his family when he was just 10 years old, said the inspiration behind Avidian for him and co-founder Tim Nguyen was to build a great company where they both enjoyed going to work every day.

Wong is no stranger to running companies. Prior to Avidian, he founded Foci Technologies, an e-business consulting firm, which was acquired in January 2001 by Ohio-based Meritage Technologies. There, Nguyen served as principal technical architect.

When it came time for Wong and

Nguyen to start their own business, they made a conscious effort to differentiate themselves from more common businesses.

"We didn't want to be a me-too kind of company ... there are lots of florists and dry cleaners. We wanted to own the space and be the gorilla in the marketplace," said Wong.

Their efforts culminated in Avidian Technologies, maker of Prophet, a customer relationship management (CRM) software that integrates exclusively with Microsoft's Outlook application.

"We create software that helps sales teams and sales professionals manage their contacts and sales activities to be more organized and close more sales," said Wong.

In other words, Prophet aims to compensate where Outlook falls short, specifically in the area of sales force automation or SFA.

"We added the sales features that are missing in Outlook, and we've turned Outlook into a full-featured CRM software," said Wong. Some of those features include: date-stamped, time-stamped notes; inner-office sharing capabilities; and an opportunity management component that allows employees to track where they are in the sales process.

Avidian's key competitors include ACT, Goldmine and Salesforce.com. Unlike Prophet, which works entirely inside Outlook, these programs retain separate e-mail, calendaring,

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JAMES WONG  
AVIDIAN TECHNOLOGIES

task management and contact databases, according to company literature.

Wong, speaking with the enthusiasm of a motivational guru, said, "I often remind our team that we don't sell software, we sell a solution."

"The goal," he said, "is to be the 'QuickBooks of CRM' — to make CRM easy, simple and affordable."

Avidian counts giant companies such as Alcoa, Canon, Hewlett-Packard and Vodafone among its clients.

Avidian's target audience, however, is small to mid-sized businesses. Avidian also counts manufacturers, banks, financial services, insurance and professional services among its stable of clients.

"Our sweet spot is anywhere from three to four and up to 20 users," said

Wong. "We are a horizontal company, so we service all types of industries, and our software is highly customizable."

Since its inception in the mid-1990s, the CRM industry has grown to about \$8 billion, said Wong, a certified Microsoft engineer. He estimates that Avidian's market share is less than 1 percent of that.

"We're a blip," he said.

And while the financial crisis on Wall Street has many business owners on shaky ground, Wong appears unfazed.

"For us it's not a problem, because we're profitable, we're growing and we're making money," he said.

Wong, however, notes a challenge of a different nature: "We always have to innovate. That's one of the annoying things. Sometimes there's a part of me — I just want to sell a widget or a screw. They don't change. They stay the same for 60 years," he said.

The majority of Avidian's innovations come directly from customer surveys.

Currently, the company has a list of some 2,000 requests from clients suggesting how to make Prophet a better product. So far, this growth strategy — listening to what customers want — has served Avidian well. Despite investment offers from venture capitalists, all of Avidian's growth to date has been organic.

"We never have the need to go and raise outside capital," said Wong.

Wong attributes Avidian's success to a great product, great people and following good principles. He said the best part of going to work every day is watching his employees excel. The company, meanwhile, expects to hire another three to four full-time employees in the upcoming year.

Having had his share of ups and downs, Wong offers fledgling entrepreneurs some golden nuggets.

"You will have scars, you will have tough times, but you have to endure," he said. "Don't listen to the naysayers in Armani suits. If you believe in something, keep doing it, it will work out."

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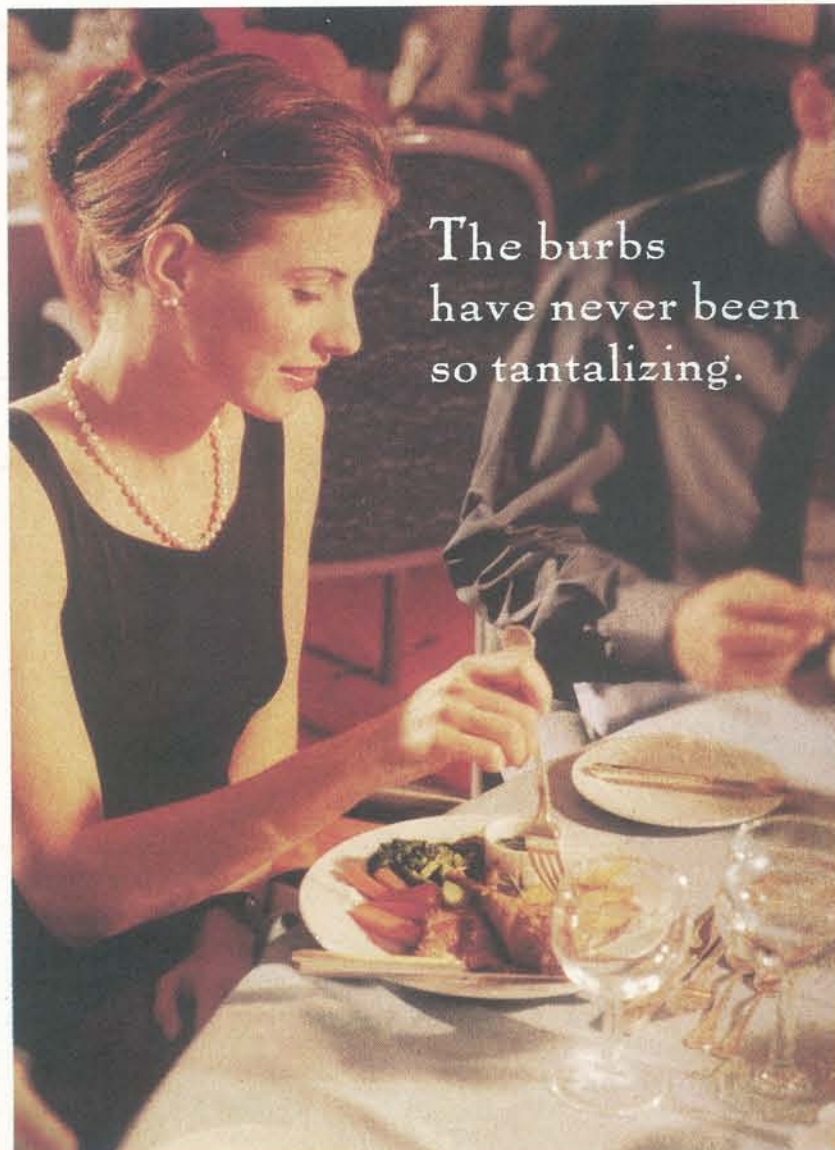


AVIDIAN  
TECHNOLOGIES INC. **34**

Redmond

Sales and contact management software  
for small businesses and sales professionals

Fiscal year	Total operating revenue	No. of employees
2005	\$0.92M	20
2006	\$2.74M	21
2007	\$2.48M	23



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