

Newsday's Long Island BUSINESS REPORT

Monday, May 8, 2000



Newfound E-dentities

Dressed to herald mydocuments.com are Natalie Pego, from left, Wall Quasam, Michael Gencarelli, Nicholas Chimera and Patricia Hussey.

Companies are shedding old corporate monikers for catchier Internet titles. By Paul Schreiber / Page C8

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She helps prepare girls for leadership. Page C5



Gladys Harrington

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The doctor is in — via an Internet e-mail, that is. Page C6

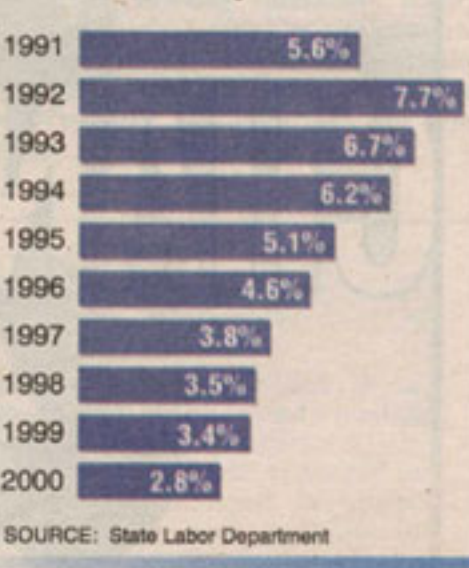
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A few months makes a big difference in price tag of Melville property. Page C10

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Unemployment

The steady improvement in Long Island's economy since 1992 is evident in the unemployment rate for March of each year.



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millennium:OMS™ Integrated Document Management System



Newsday Photo / Michael I. Schultz
Michael Gencarelli



Name Game

With creativity and perseverance, firms struggle to establish perfect Web e-dentity

IN THE PAST YEAR, Michael Gencarelli has held his breath and been silly, and not without reason, even for the head of a successful company. Gencarelli is under the gun to sharpen the company's name and style and make the leap to a new corporate strategy and position of strength on the Internet.

"Thinking out of the box is of ultimate importance," says Gencarelli, who spent a few days in a King Tut costume last month to help the buzz around his company's trade show booth. "If you think the same as everybody else, you're going to be right behind a whole line of people."

Before this new line of thinking kicked in, Gencarelli's company was ARvee Systems Inc., about as puzzling a name as there is for a software company, but one that wasn't much of a problem while Gencarelli and partner James Laurice were in the business of developing custom software. It became an obstacle once they decided to sell their own document-management software products and hitch themselves to the Net, where identity is imperative.

The Bohemia-based mydocuments.com, a name that has made a world of difference in just five months. Since the change, investors put up \$1 million in a snap, the Web site came out of a deep sleep, and an executive at Computer Associates International signed on as president and chief executive.

"It's not a simple story, but it illustrates the linkage between strategy, persistence, luck and a little foolishness in the highly charged world of information technology and e-commerce.

"It's a competitive world and if you have lots of money, you don't have to stretch so much," Gencarelli says, "but when you don't have a lot of money you've got to do whatever you can do."

Gencarelli, 40, is stepping up to become chairman of mydocuments.com now that Ronald G. Corriveau, 44, has agreed to leave CA, where he was a vice president of marketing, to take over the two other top spots. It is a move that both men say would not have meant much at ARvee, but will be crucial to the positioning of mydocuments.com in the months ahead.

"I wasn't looking for this opportunity, but all kinds of possibilities came to mind," says Corriveau, an entrepreneur whose second company, CapaCity Software, was acquired by CA three years ago. "I said, 'Gee, what could I do with that technology and a URL called mydocuments.com?'"

That kind of leverage didn't exist for ARvee Systems, founded by Gencarelli and Laurice in 1990 to



Bohemia-based mydocuments.com, known as ARvee Systems Inc. In a previous life, now boasts a new chief executive, a \$1 million infusion from investors and a reinvigorated Web site. The name change was made in time to make a showing at the April trade show of the Association for Information and Image Management at the Javits Center, above.

produce custom software. Gencarelli had been in charge of a systems and automation group at Symbol Technologies, but suspected his future there would be limited by his lack of a college degree. Laurice designed defense-systems software.

While at Symbol, Gencarelli had gotten permission to work on his own time on a computer-interface software project for a large Japanese manufacturer, which 11 months later paid Gencarelli and Laurice \$75,000 for the rights to the software. Preparing to make out the check, the manufacturer's representative asked the question that would shape their future for the next decade: "What's the name of your company?"

This was a detail that Gencarelli had not considered. As he glanced around for inspiration, Gencarelli's eyes settled on a flier from his late father's trailer-rental business in the Catskills. "I went... 'uhhhh... ARvee... Systems.'"

As in recreational vehicle, with an "A" in front that Frank Gencarelli added so his listing would be first in the phone book. As soon as his son incorporated in order to cash the check, ARvee System's die was cast.

So was Gencarelli's. Intrigued by the prospect of working for himself, Gencarelli took two weeks off from work, went to two trade shows, secured orders from DuPont, AT&T and Cincinnati Microwave, came home and



Newsday / Michael I. Schultz
Ronald G. Corriveau

quit Symbol. Gencarelli was the sales force, Laurice did the development. As they did the custom work, they noticed that the projects, starting with DuPont's test systems for blood-analysis equipment, all involved the management of supporting information, such as reports and photographs, which they digitized and stored with the test results. The software loaded almost every form of information that can be put into a computer—text, graphics, audio, video, spreadsheets—managed it, indexed it and made searchable.

By 1997, sales had reached what Gencarelli calls a "very profitable" \$2 million, earning ARvee its third citation in three years as one of Long Island's 50 fastest-growing private companies.

Sweet as that was, he recalls, the company had two flaws. One was that the market for off-the-shelf document-management software was growing at a much faster rate than ARvee ever could do custom work. The other was that ARvee's value was dependent on the presence of Gencarelli and Laurice, which limited their options.

It was time for a leap, Gencarelli says. As they scaled back ARvee's custom development, they created document-management software scaled to the requirements of a variety of end-users. These include a

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New Identity For ARvee

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free version that holds up to 1,000 documents, a \$99 upgrade for those who exceed that limit, a \$299 small-business version, a mid-size package for \$6,500 and a large-enterprise product for \$8,500. In two years, he says, the company has sold about 60 units, supporting 1,500 users.

The company named this product Millennium:OMS, another hard-to-remember attempt at cleverness. The double colon, for example, is meaningful only if you know the C++ programming language.

"We couldn't think of a name and we were getting to the point where we had to print materials," Gencarelli concedes, "so we took Millennium." Like the company name, that one also is going to change.

The need to change the corporate handle began to rumble around ARvee a year ago as it prepared for an April trade show put on by the Association for Information and Image Management.

Given Gencarelli's initial strength with its software products, Gencarelli had secured \$1.1 million from private investors. Part of it was to go for a major showing at the AIIM show, the premiere showcase for the document-management industry, at the Javits center. Gencarelli was prepared to spend \$180,000 and hoped to make a splash as something other than ARvee Systems.

The theme would be Egyptian, in keeping with Gencarelli's fascination with ancient history and with ARvee's slogan, "After Thousands of Years, the Paper Trail Ends Here." King Tutankhamen, Cleopatra, Ramses, Nefertiti, Mark Antony and others would stir the pot around the booth.

But the name was a liability. "It was good for dad and it was good for cashing that check," Gencarelli says, "but other than that it was confusing."

"So staring at his monitor and mulling the advice of 'success coach' Nancy Powers that he 'think out of the box,'" Gencarelli spotted the My Documents default folder that appears on Microsoft products and exclaimed something on the order of "Eureka!"

That was a year-long search for the person who had registered the domain name mydocuments.com in 1994. "We couldn't get to the guy and we couldn't get to the company that registered it," Gencarelli says. "I'm like, 'Could it be possible that it's been lost over time, like an old Elvis record or something?'"

Roundabout, ARvee staffers found the owner in Florida. He agreed to discuss the sale, but after he would post its availability on GreatDomains.com, an auction site for Internet names. Panicked at the prospect of losing a bidding war after coming so close to securing the name he considered ideal, Gencarelli offered equity in the company or \$50,000. On Jan. 3, the owner took the cash.

Gencarelli has since been offered \$2 million for the mydocuments.com name, but that is not where Gencarelli or Corriveau, his new president and CEO, see its value. Corriveau, in fact, wouldn't have left Computer Associates without it.

"That was a real key because that is a corporate asset that is central to our ongoing strategy," says Corriveau, whose total compensation will include what he calls significant equity. "We see creating services around the mydocuments.com brand as being a significant point of leverage, not only for our technology but also for the kind of partnerships we are looking to establish. ARvee wasn't that interesting."

The key to the future is the Internet, which the mydocuments.com hopes to use not only to afford wide access to the document files but also as a value-added strategy for service providers who would offer document management to companies or departments unable to manage their own.

Gencarelli's sales projection for 2000 is \$5 million. The year after, he's projecting six times that. In the next few weeks, he hopes that mydocuments.com will have moved its 35 employees and new president and CEO from a 4,300-square-foot office to something five times as large.

There is one more thing that the name, and that is his own exit. Within two years, he says, the company will be ready to go public or be acquired. "I've been working since I was 12," says Gencarelli, whose father was killed when he was a youngster. "I've done everything the hard way. I would be happy."

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