Claudio Lopez Silva

Asignet

“ “I saw an opportunity to support companies by making employees more efficient.” ”

COUNTRY	Argentina
INDUSTRY	Technology
YEAR SELECTED	2001
WEBSITE	www.asignet.com

COMPANY SNAPSHOT

Asignet (formerly Service Bureau Intetel) successfully helps companies stay on their competitive edge through employee productivity monitoring software and services. Asignet offers complete reporting of telephone traffic, Internet/email monitoring, and employee access to premises. Claudio's ability to adapt to the needs of his clients has enabled him to keep partners such as Visa, MasterCard, PepsiCo and Nabisco. Most recently, Asignet completed its expansion to Mexico and Colombia. Asignet currently services more than 250 customers and conducts business in Argentina, Venezuela, Chile, Mexico and Uruguay. Today Asignet employs more than 80 people.

In 1997 Claudio recognized that the deregulation of the telecommunications market in Argentina would lead to decreased telephone rates and as a result might negatively impact the demand for Asignet's services. He re-positioned Asignet as a service to maximize employee time and productivity, rather than simply a cost-cutting device. Furthermore, in 1997 when Claudio became concerned that Asignet could not succeed given the new industry dynamics, he decided to develop a new company: an advanced call center that allows retail firms to outsource their customer support, using the most advanced communications technology available. In 1999, the rapid increase in the number of employees who had access to the Internet also introduced the need to implement systems and services to prevent the misuse of this tool.

Claudio began developing the idea for Asignet in 1990 as a result of a 2600% increase in telephone rates following the privatization of Empresa Nacional de Telecomunicaciones (Entel). Telephone rates had previously been subsidized and the dramatic increase represented a significant cost for companies. Sensing a market opportunity, Claudio designed a device to help companies monitor telephone usage. Claudio's market sense proved to be right as large corporations such as Siemens, Northern Telecom, and Alcatel began distributing Asignet's product together with their own equipment. Claudio then decided to expand his company's offering, incorporating services in addition to products, and allowing clients to outsource their call accounting and information processing and interpretation.

Claudio became fascinated by computer technology in 1982 while studying industrial engineering at the Universidad Católica in Argentina, where he taught himself programming. Forward-thinking for his time, he decided in this early stage of the industry that PCs needed software to protect company data from users, since all PCs operated in an open access environment. Claudio's first product success was a PC-based security and access control system that he sold to Argentina's two largest banks, Banco Río and Banco de Galicia. His love of invention led him to leave college to found a software development company, where he initially developed telephone data recording software for Dow Chemical that enabled computers to multi-task in DOS.

ENDEAVOR AND ASIGNET

Claudio redesigned his operations according to Endeavor's advice, and particularly values Endeavor's role in helping him set up business processes and advising him on corporate governance.

Global services have included an eMBA from HBS (who created a strategic growth plan), workshops, Immersion Tours, and Entrepreneur Summit. Claudio also received local mentorship from a fellow Entrepreneur, and support building a Board of Directors.

Claudio has served as an Argentina board member and mentor, as well as an ISP panelist. He is additionally leading Endeavor Entrepreneurs' give-back program in Argentina and has personally pledged $10,000 in support.