CPSI, Ltd.

Interview

Interview with Michelle Elia, President, CPSI, Ltd.

www.cpsiltd.com, call 800-659-8240 or email sales@cpsiltd.com

Booth #1424 at FETC

What would you say makes your company unique?

We started out as a family-run business selling computers to local schools over 20 years ago when computer networks were a "new frontier". We immediately saw the need to manage computers; our first piece of software blossomed and we became a software company. We collect student data for use in other systems so students can logon and do their work and teachers can look at data to improve instruction.

What was the most significant event or series of events affecting your company in the past year?

We work with District 87 in Bloomington who recommended our expertise as part of a pilot with the Shared Learning Collaborative (SLC), which is led by the Council of Chief State School Officers and is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Carnegie Corporation. The pilot program includes IlliniCloud, six districts, Illinois Interactive Report Card (IIRC), Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), and the SLC. The project's goal is to transition to a data-centric culture that improves student, teacher, and school performance.

Are you introducing any new products?

Yes, little did we know that this project would take us in an exciting direction! We have been collecting data for states and districts with our xDStudio product, which pulls data into data marts. As our pilot progressed, we saw a need to provide tools for teachers and administrators, so we created three products to help fill the gap:

- The Early Warning System (EWS) includes the identification of risk factors for students, tracking of strategies to help students stay students on track.
- A Balanced Scorecard, provides teachers with a holistic view of their students and a history of "what works" to help students achieve academic and personal success.
- The Observations and Strategies Journal was developed for classroom teachers to track daily observations and help them develop intervention strategies for their class.

What distinguishes your product(s) from the competition?

We try to gauge what our teachers, technology coordinators and IT directors want in the way of collecting data and we deliver it in a timely manner. For example, we are working with a district who wanted a reporting feature in our Visual CASEL network management product. They were having trouble figuring out where in the process something went wrong. We collected their help desk tickets, pinpointed issues in data collection, and developed a tool that reports network account creation error occurs. We added a "self-healing" process so errors are corrected before the IT department even gets a call from the school. These features were added as part of their support.

To what do you attribute your company's success?

We listen to our customers and give them what they need. Vendors sometimes think that they know better or assume that the IT staff has time to work with them exclusively. We try to make the most of their time by deploying our products quickly and without a lot of "fluff".