

[ENTREPRENEUR PROFILE]

A conversation with Keith Davis of Application Factory



Keith Davis, president,
Application Factory.

For entrepreneurs, the question isn't if you will face trials during your journey but instead how will you handle those challenges. But entrepreneurs are, in a word, thinkers, and instead of having one possible solution to a problem, they come equipped with 10. Keith Davis, founder and president of Application Factory is no exception. For more than 20 years, Davis and his team have worked to build the company together. The result is a lot of pride in Application Factory and its products.

BIC recently visited with Davis and experienced his enthusiasm firsthand.

Q: What led you to start your company?

A: I was still in college and wanted to get a job in the computer programming market so I could start getting experience. When I looked in the phone book for software development firms, there weren't any to be found. I knew very little about custom programming and even less about business, but I was at least able to recognize the opportunity.

Q: When did you know your company would make it?

A: There was one day when my wife and I realized that we had paid all the bills and there was money left over. At that point, I realized that we were going to make it. Little did I know the burst of the Internet bubble and my own battle with cancer would occur simultaneously in 2000 driving us back to near ruin. But, since then we have come back stronger and bigger than ever before.

Through the tough times, my wife and I discussed giving up, moving away, starting over, even bankruptcy. But, we always mutually agreed to stick it out. A good friend of mine recently told me of a tough time in his career when the only way out was to fix it and succeed. I realized that is my attitude also, I just didn't have such eloquent words for it. The reality is there is much to be said for determination.

Q: What is the biggest news in your company right now?

A: We are very excited about our new safety product, DangerTags. It will revolutionize the way the industry handles lock out/tag out (LOTO). The product reduces expenses associated with LOTO while increasing employee's safety. It's a one-two punch that makes it a no-brainer. It is not often that a product comes along that so effectively sells itself.

Hurricane Ike was also a pretty big topic. Our business continuity plan came off flawlessly, and we didn't lose a single day's business despite the fact that we were in one of the worst hit areas. Since we were here and fully operational, it allowed us to concentrate on helping other businesses in Southeast Texas get back up and running. We helped everyone from small mom and pops to corporations in the Fortune 100. By providing remote voice and data communications via satellite, remote command center facilities and accommodations and emergency data center relocation services, we forged relationships that will last long after the effects of the storm fade. The down side is that I am sick of barbecue and Pop-Tarts.

Q: Why is your company successful?

A: We observe the needs of the market and react quickly. That behavior was responsible for the addition of many of our advanced services such as SAP Integration and regulatory consulting for issues like Sarbanes-Oxley and ultra-low sulphur diesel. Our proactive development of DangerTags was also a direct result of our intense observation of and reaction to changing industrial environments and requirements.

Also, we have a team of employees who love their jobs. When the company does well, we pass it along to the troops. Therefore everyone has a vested interest. Our work environment can be fun and exciting, while at other times, difficult and scary. We all have a blast, but everyone also knows when to shut up and get to work. I'm extremely lucky to have a group of sharp, dedicated, mature people who recognize the value of what we have. □

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DangerTags is another advanced technology developed by Application Factory, Inc., a software developer for petrochemical and heavy industrial companies.
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[NEWS UPDATE]

Off-limits U.S. oil, gas worth \$1.7 trillion to government

WASHINGTON — The development of America's vast domestic oil and natural gas resources that had been kept off-limits by Congress for decades could generate more than \$1.7 trillion in government revenue, create thousands of new jobs and enhance the nation's energy security by significantly boosting domestic production, a study shows.

The ICF International study, commissioned by the American Petroleum Institute (API), shows that developing the offshore areas that had been subject to congressional moratoria until recently, as well as the resources in Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) and a small portion of currently unavailable federal lands in the Rockies, would lift U.S. crude oil production by as much as 2 million barrels per day in 2030, offsetting nearly a fifth of the nation's imports. Natural gas production could increase by 5.34 Bcf per day, or the equivalent of 61 percent of the expected natural gas imports in 2030.

The study also estimates that the development of all U.S. oil and natural

gas resources on federal lands could exceed \$4 trillion over the life of the resources.

"This study underscores how the oil and natural gas industry can enhance America's energy security and help solve our economic problems by increasing production of our nation's vast oil and natural gas resources," said API President and CEO Jack N. Gerard. "The U.S. oil and natural gas industry supports more than 6 million jobs, and more drilling for oil and natural gas will mean more energy for America, more well-paying jobs and trillions of dollars of much-needed revenues that will help federal, state and local governments pay for critical services."

According to the ICF study, U.S. crude oil production would rise by 36 percent by 2030 if development is permitted in the studied areas of the Outer Continental Shelf, ANWR and the Rockies and domestic natural gas production would rise by 10 percent. By 2030, this activity would create 160,000 jobs.

For more information, visit www.icfi.com or call (800) 532-4783. □