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Dayton

Advice for business leaders

By Dave Larsen
Staff Writer

Al Wofford is president and chief executive of CDO Technologies, an automatic identification systems integration company headquartered in Riverside. The company, which serves both the federal and private sectors, works with an array of technologies that include radio frequency identification, real-time locating systems, global positioning systems, biometrics, sensors and barcodes.

Denver is licensing the CDO RoadTag to track and manage street repairs, and more than 20 other municipalities are poised to follow suit. Wofford, who founded the company in 1995, spoke to Dayton B2B about CDO Technologies and offered insights that area business leaders might find useful.

Q: How do you see technologies improving in your field and what will it look like in 10 years?

A: I think you are going to continue to see evolution and growth in the sensors, materials, RF, GPS and the solar areas. ... Some of the things we are involved in now, ourselves. But I think you are going to continue to see a lot of changes.

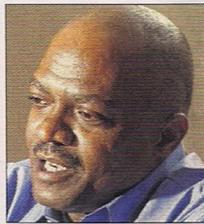
If you go back years ago and look at how much space you could put on a chip and how much space you could put on a disk drive, and you look at PCs now, the memory that you had on an IBM 360 years ago probably sits on an iPhone.

Technology is going to continue to revolutionize our lives. There are huge things that we see coming out of the Air Force Research Laboratory, coming out of Silicon Valley. I think it is going to continue to grow and expand.

Q: How do you get creative work out of your employees?

A: Our people are very talented. CDO stands for "can-do." My goal and what I try to do is challenge all of us from the standpoint that "we can." If there's a problem, then there is a solution. Now the question is, how do we create something that has the value? Coming out of the field myself, I was a software developer. I understand how they think. I'm not going to stand over their shoulders and help them code. Not my job.

What I need to do is make sure that I have the business environment, tools and the management oversight that will allow them



Al Wofford

to do their jobs.

Q: What advice do you have for people considering becoming a manager?

A: Establish goals and objectives. Get input on plans and tactics. Monitor progress and let the

people do what they do best.

Q: What is your company doing to bring young people into the field of technology?

A: We are very involved. I am on the board of several organizations. One is called the STEM Collaborative. It's an industry-led initiative. I participate heavily in STEM, so that is one thing that we are very involved in, getting kids interested in STEM. ... We've actually brought interns in from Dayton Public Schools to do technology work.

I'm part of the Omega Community

Development Corp. We were awarded one of the Community Connectors grants, along with the STEM Collaborative. We are working with kids from different sections of the community ... and with the Boys and Girls Club of Dayton. With this state grant we are working with them on life skills and STEM skills.

The last thing I'm going to mention is something that is near and dear to me, that we've sponsored for probably five years now, is an organization called Air Camp. We've offered scholarships to kids for the last four or five years, and I'm part of the leadership committee. It's sort of like Space Camp. We live it, we love it, we believe in it.

Q: What's your favorite piece of technology when you're not at work and why?

A: The most favorite one is probably my iPhone. I play solitaire, man.

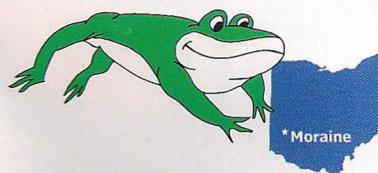
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