

Baltimore-based Logical Consulting Group survives and thrives by

Special to The Daily Record

Tom Lang always knew that someday, he'd own his own business.

During every vacation and even on weekends, Lang worked in his father's West Cleveland, Ohio pizza shop, waiting tables, washing dishes, but always working.

Working in a family business was all he knew. Lang also starred on his high school football team. He fully expected to go on to a state university, play football and study engineering. However, his football coach convinced him to try for Cornell.

Lang excelled at Cornell, majoring in electrical engineering with a minor in computer engineering, and the summer of his junior year, he interned at Procter & Gamble in Northeastern Pennsylvania. He was challenged by the work, and when they made him an offer shortly after his senior year began, he accepted.

Financially, the offer wasn't particularly good, Lang recalls, but I knew this was the right place for me to learn about business.

Lang was hired as an engineering manager. However, his computer expertise enabled him to work on the company's computers and software applications.

P&G was a great company to work for, says Lang. I received excellent management training, which has helped me run my business.

After a couple of years, P&G transferred Lang to Baltimore. He wasn't sure at first. He missed Cleveland, but now he is sure the move was a good one.

Baltimore has been a perfect fit for me and my family, he says. There are many similarities between Baltimore and my hometown of Cleveland. Both are on the water. Both cities are viewed as blue-collar, and yet both cities had become white-collar towns.

Both have made stunning improvements to their waterfronts. Cleveland fans love their Indians, as much as Baltimore fans love their Orioles. As far as I was concerned, Baltimore was Cleveland on the East Coast!

To be free

As happy as he was at P&G, Lang yearned to run his own company. He approached his boss and told her he was thinking of resigning.

She didn't want to hear it, so he stayed on, and started doing computer work at home. A year later, in 1994, he founded his company, Logical Consulting Group in the basement of his Perry Hall townhouse.

I made sure my boss at P&G knew that I was starting up a business, explains Lang, and I wanted her to know that I was still giving 100 percent to P&G. The new business was on my own time. I had too much respect for my employer to sneak out on

them.

When Lang left P&G, it was on such good terms. P&G is still one of his company's major customers.

LCG Technologies grew slowly and steadily. As the number of new clients grew, so did the number of employees needed to serve them. By 1997, LCG had 20 employees. By 2000, there were 74.

Lang grew his business from a number of sources. While at P&G, he became close friends with a fellow employee, Scott Ferber. Ferber went on to become one of the owners of Advertising.com, another major client of LCG.

I first met Tom at P&G where he implemented totally new systems for the Baltimore plant with such speed and precision that P&G asked Tom to travel all over the country to do this work on behalf of others, Ferber recalls.

At that point, I knew Tom was a rare breed. Tom Lang and LCG have been instrumental in helping Advertising.com achieve its technology and business objectives since its inception. Tom's advice, knowledge and tremendously skilled team have been critical to our success.

Another loyal client is Frank Kelly III, president of Kelly & Associates, the Hunt Valley health insurance brokerage and third-party administration firm. Tom and Frank played football together at Cornell and were fraternity brothers.

We have outsourced our computer systems design and support services through LCG since 1994, says Kelly of the relationship. LCG's ability to translate our insurance knowledge and vision into a custom designed application with full Internet capabilities has resulted in explosive growth in both business and insurance carrier credibility. Our relationship has helped us to grow significantly with an ever-decreasing proportionate number of employees. LCG has truly proven itself.

Lang also credits the Baltimore County Chamber of Commerce, of which he is a board member, as being a great source for his impressive list of clients. Lang feels that many entrepreneurs tend to sell the chamber short.

A lot of people go to chamber networking events and hang out with the people they know, he comments. Whenever someone from LCG goes, we try to look for someone that we don't know to expand our network of relationships.

LCG also has done pro-bono work for the chamber, and helped to develop its Web site.

From the very beginning, Lang positioned LCG as a provider of diversified services to a diversified clientele. LCG delivers applications and networking services to a very large number of industries and sectors. Also, in 1999, LCG spun off LCG Computers, manufacturing Intel-certified computers for clients.

Today, LCG targets two markets: providing networking services to companies with 50 employees or less, and application services to companies with custom application or systems integration needs. More specifically within the applications services division, LCG has also specialized in delivering solutions for niche businesses.

The bursting of the technology bubble in 2000 has had a very minor impact upon LCG. Lang has carefully surrounded himself with key leaders who support every aspect of the company's steady growth.

We are in the people business, explains Lang. And as such, our employees are our most valuable asset. Without each and every one of our key leaders and technical personnel, we would not be LCG. Our clients rely on us to deliver excellent services with top-quality people, and that is what we have tried to create.

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