



BridgeCo

Bridging the Product Development Gap for BridgeCo



When looking at the physical operations of a company like BridgeCo, a pioneer in digital entertainment networking, one of the first things that comes to mind is globalization. The leading developer of highly integrated processor and software platforms for embedded audio applications is headquartered in the United States, maintains design and development operations in Switzerland, and produces chips in China.

But that's not all. Since 2003, BridgeCo has outsourced software development to a firm in Russia. So it was only natural that when BridgeCo decided to extend its high-level product development activities at the end of 2004, it considered establishing a full-fledged offshore facility. And it was only natural that when BridgeCo looked for just the right firm to run such an extended development center (EDC), it chose Ness Technologies.

BridgeCo, a pioneer of digital entertainment networking solutions, provides the world's most comprehensive, cost-effective and highly integrated silicon and software platforms for connecting Internet media sources and PCs to consumer electronics throughout the home. BridgeCo is an ISO 9001-certified company with principal operations in Zurich, Switzerland.

"Given our already successful engagement in Russia, we knew we wanted to offshore some of our firmware development," says Pietro Malusardi, VP Product Marketing at BridgeCo. "After looking at a number of options, we decided to go with Ness due to its global experience both here in Switzerland and at the company's managed lab facility in Bangalore."

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Providing Flexibility and Control

That facility, located in India's high-tech capital, is home to Ness' flagship offshore product development center, which hosts more than 20 EDCs for world-leading independent software vendors (ISVs) and high-tech firms. Manned by a dedicated team of Ness professionals, each fully independent EDC provides high-level expertise to clients through all stages of the software development lifecycle.

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"The Ness model is a perfect fit for a small- to medium-sized company like BridgeCo," Malusardi says. "First, the EDC gives us complete flexibility and control over scaling up or down according to our needs at the time. In addition, we don't incur any fixed costs or the typical technical problems involved in establishing a development center abroad, while still being able to keep our headcount down."



Add to that Ness' experience and proven methodology in running EDCs for global giants like Business Objects, the Chordiant Group and Portal Software, and it's easy to understand BridgeCo's decision to go with Ness. "We felt we could rely on Ness due to its proven track record and methodology," Malusardi says. "Ness has shown that it has the ability to effectively organize and coordinate its EDC network. In addition, the sound policies Ness has in place gave us the confidence that things would proceed according to plan."

Protecting Classified Information

Given the sensitive nature of software development, however, BridgeCo's decision to offshore with Ness involved much more than just hiring quality programmers, of which there is no shortage in Bangalore. The EDC model must ensure that all classified information stays within the company. "We have been very pleased with Ness' procedures to safeguard our proprietary information and not disperse it outside the firm," Malusardi says. "For example, Ness' policy not to operate an EDC for more than one company in a given business area shows that it takes the issue of security very seriously. The company is doing things the right way."

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Once the EDC was up and running, Ness was charged with carrying out high-level, customized embedded programming for BridgeCo's chips, which support the streaming and processing of digital media content, digital rights management processing, and other cutting-edge technologies. To meet this need, Ness, with BridgeCo approval, hired 20 programmers from the Bangalore area. While these professionals officially work for Ness, in every other way they are integral members of the BridgeCo team, working closely together, and maintaining daily communication, with their Swiss counterparts. "Effective communication is the most essential factor for success," Malusardi says. "While most of the interaction is at the operative and technical level, there also is regular contact at the managerial level. We conduct a biweekly conference call, and several employees from each company have visited their respective operations since the EDC launch."

Overseeing CMMI Certification

Ness' contribution to BridgeCo, however, is not limited to high-level programming. Given that some of BridgeCo's clients demand CMMI software certification, the company turned to Ness for assistance. "Before establishing the EDC, we were considering the issue of CMMI certification, but didn't have a plan," Malusardi says. "To gain certification, you bring in one person fully dedicated to the project for a year, and then the individual moves on. As such, it's perfectly suited for subcontracting. Since Ness maintains software development capabilities and was familiar with our operations, we thought it made sense for Ness also to take responsibility for the certification process, which now is under way."

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Despite the growing pains always encountered when embarking on new, highly-complex ventures, BridgeCo is extremely buoyant about the EDC as its first anniversary nears. "I've been satisfied with the performance of the EDC until now. And after having worked out some issues that one normally expects at the outset of this type of relationship, I'm fully confident that we will make great progress in the next few months," Malusardi says. "Ness is a first-class, professional operation that is a pleasure to work with. The firm's management, both at headquarters and here in Switzerland, is very competent, and I would most definitely consider Ness for additional work in the future if the need arises."

About Ness Technologies

Ness Technologies (NASDAQ: NSTC) is a global provider of end-to-end IT services and solutions designed to help clients improve competitiveness and efficiency. Specializing in outsourcing and offshore, systems integration and application development, software and consulting, and quality assurance and training, Ness serves a blue-chip client base of over 500 public- and private-sector customers. With 6,000 employees, Ness maintains operations in 16 countries across North America, Europe and Asia Pacific, and more than 100 alliances and partnerships around the world.