

SOUTHERN

Pride

Quick customer response key to '96 market share

Southern Pride interviewed Southern Area General Manager Tom Smith in late December on a wide range of subjects, including a look at performance by the area team in 1995 and what lies ahead for the New Year. Following are highlights of the interview.

Q. How was the Southern Area's business performance in 1995? What were the highlights and what do you think should have been better?

A. We made our business plan ... that's Job No. 1. As in any year, there are highlights as well as things we wish we had done better. We made excellent progress in the *evolution of client/server* and, in general, have gotten our energies aligned with our customers' buying behavior. This is despite the fact we don't always have off-the-shelf products which respond to a customer need, so packaging has been much improved—pulling the right resources together and being able to deliver more quickly than we had in the past.

An area where we need to do some work is in networking. We missed our plan in networking hardware and software, and we're working hard to organize our dependencies, including PC dealers for adapter cards, services teams for skills and sales teams for a clear picture of exactly what our customers need to solve their business problems. Much like client/server, our success in networking offerings will depend on our ability to package multiple IBM offerings to produce a customized fit for a customer project.

We also need to improve our AS/400 performance. Last year was our weakest in years and reflects our inefficiency in dealing with Business Partners and in clothing AS/400s with everything necessary to provide a customized AS/400 solution for a given customer. By clothing, I mean services, software, maintenance offerings, availability services, etc. We're getting better and will get much better by working more closely with our Business Partners in 1996 as we more tightly embrace their skills and talents into CRM.

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Q. What were our strengths in 1995? What was our biggest success?

A. We've been very successful in capitalizing on the value of the IBM logo in our marketplace. This is reflected in the strength of our individual relationships with our customers. Where we seize the opportunity to compete, our customers want us to win. We strengthened our *customer relationships* in 1995. As we turn our attention to 1996, the major work to be done is to improve our ability to *respond quickly* to customer needs with competitive solutions. It's all about speed ... We don't always win, because sometimes we're too

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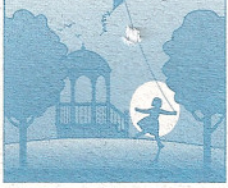
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Tom Smith

HOME TOWN

partnerships



Ullman family fights personal war against juvenile diabetes

■ Jeffery Ullman has a very personal interest in the work of the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation (JDF) and the Diabetes Research Institute (DRI). His eight-year-old son Zachary was diagnosed with diabetes when he was 15 months old.

Through grants over several years from the IBM Fund for Community Service, Ullman and his wife Ellen have obtained \$5,000 in grants, an IBM Personal Computer and a laser printer for these organizations dedicated to fighting diabetes. And, the Ullmans are active in local diabetes support groups in South Florida, involving parents of children with diabetes who assist each other through regular meetings to share their experiences.

Ullman, an Internet sales specialist with IBM US Sales and Service (see *PGA customer story Page 15*), also succeeded in having the JDF and DRI listed in the 1995 IBM Employee Charitable Contributions Campaign as two of the organizations for which employees may earmark their donations—a status that will continue in 1996.

Zachary is now a strapping eight-year-old second grader and has become a partner with his parents in helping control his diabetes. He is one of 27,000 patients in the U.S. who use an insulin pump to provide a steady flow of insulin during his school day, avoiding the more painful and laborious insulin injections.

The insulin pump is an electronic device about the size of a beeper and contains a vial of insulin that is delivered as needed through a "soft needle" inserted into Zachary's stomach. Even with the pump, the second grader must check his blood glucose four times a day and ensure that the pump is regulated to deliver the correct amount of insulin.

Zachary gets help in calculating his insulin requirements from his mother, who works in the library at the school he attends in Boca Raton.

The insulin pump has been used mostly by adults, but Ellen Ullman highly recommends that more children be given the option: "The flexibility it's brought to our lives is incredible ... it's so liberating."

The Ullmans highly recommend support groups for parents and children with diabetes. "Being part of an organized group is very helpful," says Ullman. "It's important for the children to see that they are not the only kids in the world fighting this terrible disease ... but it's equally important for them—and their parents—to know that new weapons are being made available all the time to fight the battle, thanks to the work of such groups as the JDF and DRI."

An estimated 14 million Americans have diabetes, half of them undiagnosed. And, the cost of treating diabetics in 1994 was estimated at \$107 billion—about 14 percent of the nation's healthcare costs.

Area team upholds tradition of helping those less fortunate

■ Southern Area General Manager Tom Smith says the 1995 Employee Charitable Contributions Campaign (ECCC) in the Southern Area was a success, as the area team again demonstrated its tradition for giving to help improve the quality of life for others in their hometowns.

"Helping others who are not as fortunate as we are has been a longstanding tradition across the Southern Area," says Smith. "And, once again our team ranked at or near the top of the ECCC scoreboard in IBM United States."

The Southern Area participation rate was down at 65.9 percent, but the area led the country in average gift per employee at \$319, up 10.8 percent from 1994. And, the area team also was tops in total gifts at \$1.5 million. Including retiree pledges, Southern Area gifts totaled \$1.7 million or 102 percent of the campaign goal.

"These results are remarkable during a year marked by considerable change and uncertainty," says Smith. "I believe the stability we are now seeing inside our company will be reflected in improved participation in 1996."

Smith added: "I want to thank the entire team for maintaining our tradition of generosity toward those in need, along with a special thanks to the many people who volunteered as canvassers to help conduct the campaign across the area."

Jeffery Ullman helps son Zachary check out insulin pump before starting a school day.

