



TECHNOLOGY

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Cell phone USB company chooses Ithaca as global headquarters

By Katie Hudy

Special to the Ithaca Business Journal

When you think of technological advancement and development, do you think about Ithaca, NY? Maybe you should.

MCCI Interconnect Solutions is one of the world's leaders in cell phone software development. Started in 1995 by CEO Terry Moore, the company has grown to include sales and development offices around the world — China, Japan, and Germany — but global headquarters for the corporation remain here in Ithaca.

Moore chose Ithaca because he had worked here for more than 15 years prior to the startup. He began by recruiting his co-workers from the relocating Data Book Company.

"I just decided to grab people who already worked with me," Moore said.



MOORE

"They made up the core team."

More recently, the company has found employees in the Cornell University campus community. Many professors and students who have chosen Cornell have spouses who apply at MCCI, Moore said.

"Upstate New York has a good work ethic," he said. "Ithaca provides a low cost of living and a good quality of life for people that are working hard."

Staying and growing

From the beginning, MCCI was a self-funded business venture. "There was 0 percent interest from the finance community," Moore said.

Instead of reaching for fast success, the company believed that it would take time to develop, Moore continued. Software development is a difficult industry, especially in the beginning of the company. Through the years, MCCI has "developed a real position of trust" in the industry, Moore said.

A lot has changed since the company's beginning.

"Some of my decisions were made by how things were in 1995," Moore said. At the time, flying to the important Asian Pacific market was more convenient, he said. With the decreasing number of connecting flights from the Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport, both domestic and international travel have become more difficult, Moore said. He added that many companies had their start in Ithaca, but "once they hit it big, they left."

Still, many of the problems that usually come to businesses starting out in Ithaca "haven't been that big of a problem for us," Moore said. Because the business was self-funded, they did not have to worry about venture capitalist investors who would not want to travel to non-urban Ithaca.

Revamped offices

Recently, MCCI has opened its renovated headquarters on Krums Corners Road in Ithaca. The rural setting does not seem the most obvious location for an average software development business. The building, a renovated 1860's farmhouse, retains its antique-home quality with local art hung throughout, fish tanks, and even an office cat.

"We wanted a nice place to work," said Judith Cone, Vice President of Operations. "We wanted to make it more safe and comfortable for our employees."

The new headquarters does this through a variety of advancements, Cone said.

- ▶ The floor is linoleum that is static-free and unable to burn.

- ▶ The improved insulation and steel roof make the building safer from fire.

- ▶ The materials used in the building process were required to give off little or no toxic fumes.

- ▶ The heating and cooling system is controlled on a room-by-room basis, helping to conserve energy.

Also, the grounds of the building are filled with plants and organic fruit trees, so employees can "pick their lunch," Cone said. Benches and picnic tables on the grounds are also used for outdoor meetings.

The company hopes to continue its success by adding 15 to 20 new team members within a year.

They are keeping up with the new advancements in USB and wireless technology, Moore said.

"For me technology is strategic," Moore said. "I think we can grow a lot if we provide a good product."

Overall, Moore is proud of the success of MCCI.

"A lot of things worked out," he said. "It was a surprise, but definitely not an accident."

TOMPKINS BUSINESS PROFILE

- ▶ **Business Name:** MCCI Corporation
- ▶ **Location:** 3520 Krums Corners Road, Ithaca, NY 14850

- ▶ **Year the company was founded:** 1995

- ▶ **Number of employees:** around 90

- ▶ **What does your company do?** We develop drivers and software, which we sell to top-tier cellphone manufacturers and their platform suppliers.

- ▶ **Where did the idea to start your company come from?** We spun off from PCMCIA chip company when we realized that the world needed a USB-based driver solution

- ▶ **What benefits does your company have doing business in Tompkins County?** We benefit from the proximity to Cornell University. We are listed in the Small Business Development Guide issued annually by the Office of the Vice Provost for Research. Our state-of-the-art, "green" facility in its nonurban surroundings provides an atmosphere that is highly conducive to productivity for the creation of our world-class engineering products, without sacrificing connectivity to our offices in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Europe.

- ▶ **What disadvantages does your company have doing business in Tompkins County? How do you overcome them?** We don't have a highly concentrated pool of engineering applicants locally. We advertise very widely. Also, Ithaca is not an easy-to-reach location for our customers.

- ▶ **What products and services make your business special?** MCCI's expertise lies in the deep understanding of the end-to-end chain around the USB subsystem. This knowledge brings our customers the best user experience and the best performance. We are system engineering specialists, and we take system-level responsibility for USB solutions.

- ▶ **How can people contact you?** Send questions to JB Swann, jbswann@mcci.com, 607-277-1029, ext. 126, fax 607-277-6844. Visit www.mcci.com for general information.



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MCCI Headquarters on Krums Corners Road in Ithaca.

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