

## Focusing on Growth

### Perspective from the Top



What an exciting year Epitec had in 2008! We started out celebrating our 30th anniversary and ended it by being named one of *Metro Detroit's 101 Best and Brightest Companies to Work For* by the Michigan Business and Professional Association.

We could not have accomplished any of this without a true team effort, and I would like to thank all of our wonderful employees at The Epitec Group for a great 2008.

Over the past year, we met our objective of sustaining high performance and exceeding client expectations. This is evident by the fact that we remain a Tier 1 vendor with Blue Cross Blue Shield, Comerica Bank and Ford Motor Company, despite the downsizing of their vendor lists.

We positioned ourselves for growth in 2008, with the addition of several new clients including Valassis Communications Inc., Team Detroit and a new partnership with Google Enterprise (see article inside).

Many companies have been forced to cut staff in these tough economic times, but our head count has remained the same, even though our business at Chrysler has slowed down tremendously. We continued to expand our recruiting staff and added four additional account representatives. Our strong relationships and increased business with other clients have sustained us.

Looking forward to 2009, we are focusing on growth as our main objective. Our strategy includes: expanding our client base; increasing our business with current clients; and remaining a top three supplier, as ranked by each of our clients. With that in mind, I'd like to remind all of us of Epitec's mission and vision.

**Our Mission:** To be a valued resource to our customers. To build a company that will last by being a healthy and profitable organization that continues to grow and is committed to enhancing shareholder equity.

**Our Vision:** To be a premier information technology organization that people want to work for and companies want to do business with. A company that is employee-focused, customer-driven and process-oriented.

We remain focused on these areas while adopting a theme for 2009: "Never Give Up."

As you know, Michigan has been hit very hard with the loss of so many manufacturing and white collar jobs. At Epitec, we are making a concerted effort to do business with suppliers who are based in Michigan. I encourage all Epitec employees to be mindful of local businesses and purchase from them whenever possible, as I have decided to do.

In addition, we are reinstating our Epitec Client Alliance Program **ecap** to support our customer Ford Motor Company. Epitec employees who purchase or lease a new Ford vehicle during the first three months of 2009 will receive a \$600 tax-free reimbursement credit.

As we enter what promises to be another challenging year, remember that in Michigan, we are no strangers to tough times. And, out of challenge often comes innovation and inspiration.

So bring on 2009!



### Epitec is Once Again Proud to Offer the Epitec Client Alliance Program.

There is a lot of talk about supporting Michigan's economy and Epitec is taking action! We are committed to selling more of our client's vehicles by tipping the scales in favor of Ford Motor Company.

Now through March 31, 2009, all Epitec employees who purchase or lease a new vehicle from Ford will receive a \$25 auto reimbursement credit in the 1st paycheck of each month for the next 24 months. That's a total savings of \$600 toward your purchase or lease cost.

In addition to **ecap**, each Epitec employee is eligible for additional discounts by utilizing the Ford X-Plan Program. For details on the Ford X-Plan, navigate to [www.fordpartner.com](http://www.fordpartner.com) and enter our company code A6WYF to obtain your PIN. You can also contact Ford at 1-877-975-2600 in the U.S. or 1-877-294-7554 in Canada.

To take advantage of **ecap**, please contact support via e-mail at [support@epitecgroup.com](mailto:support@epitecgroup.com) or by phone at (248) 353-6800.

#### Rules and Guidelines:

- One vehicle per employee.
- Employee must be named on the purchase or lease agreement.
- Active employees only are eligible to participate.
- Reimbursement credit of \$25 will begin on the 1st paycheck of the month following 30 days from purchase/lease date.
- Epitec reserves the right to cancel this program at any time, for any reason.

## Content

Epitec and Google Team Up in Michigan .....	pg 2
Best and Brightest! .....	pg 2
Industry Insight .....	pg 3
iSpots .....	pg 4
Project iSpot .....	pg 4
Milestones .....	pg 4

# Epitec and Google Team Up in Michigan

Epitec has entered into an exciting new partnership with Google by becoming the only Michigan company certified to sell and install a search tool for a company's internal data called Google Search Appliance.

The appliance works by indexing all the company's shared information, including databases, file servers, secure content, portals and enterprise applications, making it easy for employees and customers to find what they are looking for in a single search box.

It essentially acts as a Google search engine for information inside a company's firewall, improving the speed and relevancy of search results and creating efficiencies for companies whose employees often spend hours trying to find internal information each day.

It's estimated that knowledge workers spend an average of two hours per day trying to find information, so improving internal search functions is a critical issue facing many businesses.

Four Epitec staff members traveled to California for training and have spent the past year becoming certified to both sell and install the appliance through a rigorous certification process. Epitec will provide installation, customization and integration services for the Google Search Appliance.

"We're excited. This will help us grow and position ourselves in a different way. No other company in Michigan has been chosen to work with Google and we are proud to have been selected for a relationship with such a highly-regarded IT company," said Epitec President Josie Sheppard. "We were chosen because of the strong relationships we have, and we look forward to helping our clients improve their internal search functions by offering this service as a solution to their search challenges."

"Google is excited to have The Epitec Group as a partner in the Google Enterprise Professional program. We're looking forward to the involvement of The Epitec Group as they provide the technical expertise to install and integrate the Google Search Appliance for customers," said Kevin Smith, Head of Enterprise Partnerships at Google.

Google Search Appliance includes hardware, software and support for two years and comes in three packages based on the volume of information to be searched. The appliance allows companies to search up to 10 million documents in one search box, with high-end models allowing search results for up to 30 million documents.

## How It Works

Google Search Appliance results are ranked based on an algorithm designed for relevancy, much like Google.com does for search results from the World Wide Web.

Users can personalize their own searches and subscribe to e-mail alerts for topics and documents of interest. For example, an engineer

will not typically seek the same information as someone in the marketing department on a day-to-day basis, so the system has the ability to be customized to the individual.

Through the OneBox feature, the appliance provides real-time access to business applications such as enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems or customer relationship management (CRM) systems, when indexed results don't make sense. The feature can be used, for example, when searching for information that changes regularly such as a contact person through a company's CRM system.

It can be customized for search results in 27 languages and more than 220 file types including HTML, PDF, MS Office and IBM Office Suites.

By integrating hardware and software into the appliance, it can be up and running quickly and is easily maintained by a single administrator. The appliance will work in virtually any network environment and there is no restriction on the number of servers or domains that can be crawled with the Google Search Appliance.



The Google Search Appliance is based on the same software that is used in Google's data

centers. The operating system is a hardened version of Linux that is optimized for search, sometimes referred to as Google Linux.

Another feature of the appliance is the Content Connector tool, which allows connection to any Content Management System. There are native connectors for Documentum, FileNet, SharePoint and Livelink and the Google Enterprise Partner network has built connectors for many other systems.

Google Search Appliance does not add any additional security protocols, but functions with existing protocols. So, users will only see search results if they have access to the source content. The appliance supports numerous authentication and single sign-on mechanisms.

It can integrate search results of internal documents with results from the Web or a user's desktop. It is designed to have minimal impact on a company's network.

In addition to making searches easier for the end user, the system also provides the administrator with data about what types of information employees and customers search for most. The Google Search Appliance enables companies to see what visitors are searching for most by providing reports on the top 100 searches being conducted on its Web site. It also provides administrators with detailed logs of everything that users have searched.

For more information about Google Appliance, go to <http://www.google.com/enterprise/gsa/index.html>

Or call Rebecca Csatori at Epitec at (248) 353-2013.



## Best and Brightest!

Congratulations are in order! Epitec has been named one of the 101 Best and Brightest Companies To Work For in 2008 by the Michigan Business and Professional Association. The Michigan Business and Professional Association is a business trade association that represents over 20,000 medium to smaller businesses throughout Michigan. It provides ongoing education, advocacy and business solutions to small businesses.

This award honors companies that recognize employees as their greatest asset. These companies work with imagination and conviction to create organizational value and business results through policies and best practices.

Once a company is nominated, the human resources department and employees, selected at random, are asked to complete an extensive and confidential survey about their work environment. Epitec is thankful to everyone who provided positive feedback on the survey and is thrilled to be named one of the 101 Best and Brightest Companies To Work For.

# Industry Insight

## Bob Fish, aka Biggby Bob, BIGGBY COFFEE

Bob Fish is the CEO and co-founder of BIGGBY COFFEE, a privately-owned coffee franchise headquartered in Michigan. Fish grew up in Michigan and graduated from Michigan State University with a degree in hospitality management. He began his career as a general manager at a Big Boy Restaurant and then worked as the owner and general manager of Flap Jack restaurants.

From there, Fish opened his first café in East Lansing in March of 1995 under the name Beaner's Coffee. In 1999, he began franchising and his business has grown from a single café to over 100 cafes located in nine states. The name was changed in late 2007 to BIGGBY COFFEE.

Fish spends much of his year on the road visiting café owners, employees and customers. He chronicles his visits on various social networking sites. Additionally, he blogs about his visits at least four or five times a week on his personal blog, called Where is Bob? ([www.biggbybob.com](http://www.biggbybob.com)).

Fish uses social media to interact with people on a personal level, while promoting the BIGGBY brand. He uses Twitter to invite people to join him on his visits and posts updates on his whereabouts. On Flickr, he asks people to submit pictures of themselves with a BIGGBY cup in various places all over the world. He also uses Youtube to spotlight BIGGBY supporters he meets. All of these sites are linked to the B-Happy Lounge ([www.bhappylounge.com](http://www.bhappylounge.com)), the one-stop shop for all of his social media activities and some basic company information.

**Q: Why did you pick Michigan to start your business?**

**A:** Michigan was always my home base. My father worked for Ford Motor Company and between living in Germany, France and England, we lived in Sterling Heights, Southfield, West Bloomfield and Birmingham. I graduated from high school in 1981 and came to MSU to study hospitality management. I loved East Lansing, so I stayed upon graduation and opened my own restaurant and eventually in 1995, I started BIGGBY COFFEE. Michigan is an awesome state with great people and I wouldn't have it any other way.

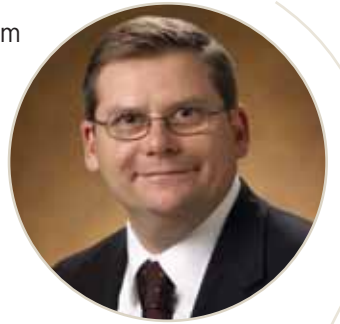
**Q: Why do you think your business has continued to grow in this tough economic time?**

**A:** Our business model was not founded on whether the economy was good or bad, it was founded on whether people like being treated well or not. I don't think there are very many great retail experiences out there, but I think BIGGBY COFFEE delivers a great retail experience because we treat people well.

**Q: What advice would you give to other businesses in Southeast Michigan?**

**A:** Turn off the news and listen to your customers! Customers will always tell you exactly what they want. Although people are facing tough economic times, they are still out there spending money, just a little less than before. Ask yourself what it is you can do to get more than your fair share of the marketplace. I think this difficult moment in time distinguishes

the good from the bad. During great times, there is enough to go around, but when there is a downshift, only the strong will survive. The strong are those who focus on people and relationships. Those who have been taking 'people' for granted during good times, are now suffering the most during the bad; the total experience has to be true and real.



**Q: How have you used technology to improve your business?**

**A:** Technology is an equalizer for small businesses. In the past, large businesses had the edge because they had access to information gathering that small businesses could not afford. Today a small business with a laptop has the same capacity as the old big businesses did using mainframes. The only point of differentiation today is decision making. At times, small businesses are closer to the consumer and are more nimble, giving them a competitive edge. We have used technology to make better decisions, but more importantly to be nimble and quick.

**Q: Why did you start utilizing social media?**

**A:** Social media is the newest leg of all media delivery systems, like TV and radio, and is the most dynamic. Previously, media allowed for a relatively passive method of delivery. You would send something and hope your message intersected with the consumer, and that the consumer desired to hear or see it. Social media is a very specific dialogue. It is an engagement with people who have a desire to be engaged and not a blanket idea of a consumer that represents a body of potential consumers. It just doesn't get any better than that. Social media is a dialogue with people. I talk with them and they provide feedback to me. This two-way communication creates true real-time information exchange both positive and negative. I like social media because it gives me the opportunity to communicate the culture of our organization to real people who are willing to help spread that to others.

**Q: How do you plan to use social media to grow your business in the future?**

**A:** My mantra – make friends, have fun, B-Happy, love people, make great coffee. Social media is the perfect fit for me. I get to make friends, love people, have fun, B-happy, and share my passion for coffee. I will continue to use the most relevant delivery mechanisms to share my thoughts, ideas, outrages and excitement with what is going on in the BIGGBY world. There is no other media delivery mechanism that would allow me to have this level of output to the people who love BIGGBY COFFEE. The more people understand who we are, the more we believe our business will grow!

## Epitec Gives Back

Epitec employees gave to several deserving charities this holiday season.

On Dec. 13, Epitec sponsored a holiday party for Boys Hope Girls Hope, a not-for-profit organization that helps young scholars meet their full potential by providing value-centered homes, opportunities and education through college. Epitec's field and administrative staffs donated \$1,434 and Epitec matched that amount. The scholars received gift cards, new coats, shoes, school supplies as well as personal items.



In addition, Epitec's corporate staff adopted 17 girls from Vista Maria, a residential facility in Dearborn Heights. Epitec purchased everything on the girls' wish lists (see photos below), including new coats, shoes and other articles of clothing. Vista Maria is Michigan's largest private not-for-profit child agency for girls and their families, and is celebrating its 125-year legacy of hope and recovery.



And lastly, the Southeast Michigan Women's Center was able to feed more than 30 women and their families over the Thanksgiving holiday thanks to Epitec employees. The center is a not-for-profit organization based in Ann Arbor and provides affordable counseling and financial, legal and job-related services to women in need.



Please send any questions or comments to [support@epitecgroup.com](mailto:support@epitecgroup.com). Your input may become a topic in future issues of *Epitalk*.

## Consultant



### Harshet Patel

#### STATS

**Title:** Network Operations Customer Engineer Manager at Ford Motor Co.

**Hire Date:** September 2004

**Responsibilities:** Harshet manages a group of customer engineers who oversee network related outages in SEMI sites and in data centers. He provides technical direction to customer engineers for software and hardware operations issues, making sure the appropriate technical support is engaged for managing and resolving network outages. He also trains customer engineers on new technologies.

**Education:** Bachelor of Science in information technology from University Of Phoenix.

**iSpot Exclusive:** Harshet has two boys, Manit, 6 years old, and Rohan, 18 months old.

## Corporate Employee



### Tony Hollamon

#### STATS

**Title:** Executive Vice President

**Hire Date:** August 1990

**Responsibilities:** The job is multifaceted and includes new client development, existing client account management; new employee training and development; sales staff management and development; and human resource management for the field staff.

**Successes:** Creation of our sales department. This is important to me because we are the face of the organization to the outside world; customers and candidates alike.

**Education:** Bachelor of Science in business administration from Central Michigan University.

**iSpot Exclusive:** Tony chose this industry because it embraces entrepreneurship and the ability to work with people in every facet of the job.



(L-R) Kelley Paul (PeopleSoft Technical Infrastructure Analyst), Sheryl Clancy-Maenza (Project Manager), Sherry Johnson (Payroll SME), Ganesh Krishnamurthy (Epitec - PeopleSoft Technical Lead), Ed Dallwein (CFO/Project Sponsor), Robyn Glasser (Project Champion), Aimee Ryan (PeopleSoft Application Administrator)

Epitec, led by Ganesh Krishnamurthy, is working with CareTech Solutions' financial and human resources teams to implement a new system for managing time, labor and project costing. The organization has outgrown its current enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, which provides timekeeping and project tracking.

The previous ERP system will be replaced with a system called PeopleSoft. Compared to other ERP solutions, the PeopleSoft project costing module is best suited for CareTech Solutions because its applications allow for one program to be used in place of multiple legacy systems. This switch will better equip CareTech Solutions to capture, organize and analyze financial data and conduct strategic planning.

Krishnamurthy assists CareTech Solutions by installing and configuring PeopleSoft and the related hardware and software for multiple financial applications. He also provides analysis and documentation related to environment management and support, while sharing his knowledge with CareTech Solutions staff.

"During the past four months, Ganesh has served as an invaluable member of the PeopleSoft implementation team and has made major contributions to our effort to implement timekeeping and project costing functionality," said Sheryl Clancy-Maenza, project manager at CareTech Solutions.

The project is in the testing phase and is tentatively planned to go live on Feb. 1.

## Milestones

### October

- Chung-Jian Huang (9 years)
- Diane Madigan (11 years)
- Jeffrey Bonarek (13 years)

### November

- Otis Glenn (3 years)
- Andrew Eliachevsky (3 years)
- Srinivas Bodhanampati (4 years)
- Russell Carlson (4 years)
- Raju Chitraju (6 years)
- Brad Brucker (7 years)
- David Kirunchyk (9 years)
- Wynett Summers (9 years)
- Michael Gardiner (10 years)
- Mark Ruma (11 years)
- Kathy Muntz (14 years)
- Daniel Wiest (15 years)

### December

- Vathsala BalaseeniAyyalu (3 years)
- Tariq Naseem (8 years)
- Rickey Gibson (16 years)



From Start To Finish, We're There For You.

24700 Northwestern Hwy.  
Suite 250  
Southfield, MI 48075