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## Naples software company to add 40 jobs

Neighborhood America's clients include Scripps Networks, Fox News and Adidas

By LAURA LAYDEN

Tuesday, December 4, 2007

Naples-based software developer Neighborhood America has "launched" a new expansion.

Using the theme "Go for Launch," the company has unveiled plans to add 40 jobs this year.

In an announcement to staff, executives wore NASA space suits and showed a video of a rocket launch. The idea was to convey the immediate need for more employees and the start of a new initiative meant to improve customer service and make tailored software solutions more readily available.

"The search is on. Put it that way," said Kristi Grigsby, marketing director.

David Bankston, executive vice president and chief technology officer, came up with the space theme after a recent visit to the Kennedy Space Center.

"We wanted a way to really get people excited about the new organization, and really understand how this is new. It's a new approach. It's not the same old, same old," he said.

Neighborhood America develops Web-based software and builds online communities that make it easier for companies to communicate with the public and get feedback. The company's clients include Scripps Networks, Fox News and Adidas.

The company takes up the third floor of its headquarters building off Vanderbilt Beach Road. And it has now expanded to the first floor, to give it room for dozens of new employees.

A "Customer First" group, made up of staff from virtually all divisions, will move into a new command center designed to make sure customers receive "an excellent experience at every touch point within the company." The group will include employees in customer service, project management and technical services.

"It's about delighting our customers," Bankston said.

The company has adopted a new strategy for offering tailored software solutions, reflecting the needs of different clients. Pieces of software are now developed individually, so that parts can be updated or changed easily.

More customers are making special requests for software. For example, Men's Health magazine recently asked to add a weight calculator to its Web site that visitors could use to generate a tailored diet and exercise plan.

In the last year, Neighborhood America's staff has grown by 43 percent. The company now has about 70 employees, which doesn't include the 40 new employees being hired, Grigsby said.

Although Neighborhood America has several offices outside Naples, most of the new employees will work at its local headquarters.

The company expects to add more jobs next year.

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