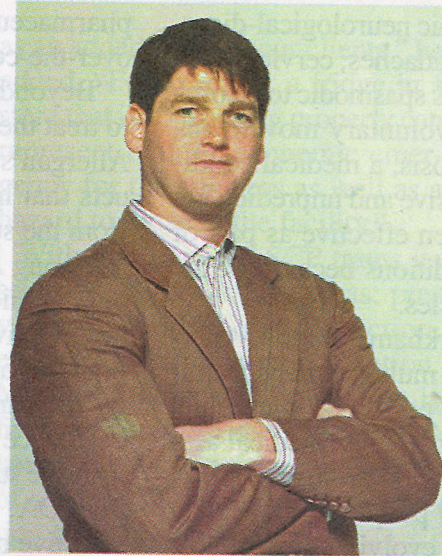


## The Cervantes Group: Staying positive and keeping the bar high

BY B.G. DOYLE

Over the past few years, the local economic outlook has caused both businesses and job seekers to develop a kind of “sky is falling” mentality without losing hope that things will ever improve. However, Tim Mullen, managing partner at the Cervantes Group, believes the keys to success revolve around a positive attitude and a focus on working smart—despite the market’s ups and downs. “Most companies realize machines are just tools and it is people who make business work,” he said. “So, if you can consistently hire top professionals in their areas, no matter what the local economic outlook might be, you win.”

Specializing in information-technology (IT) project-based services, Cervantes Group has been serving Puerto Rico since 2004 by helping companies find the most qualified management and high-end technology professionals available. With offices in San Juan, Chicago and Boston, the company’s services include project-based software-development services and IT-managed service programs. “Over the past three years, we have grown in three different cities by more than 240% because we follow the markets, focus positively



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—Tim Mullen, managing partner at Cervantes Group

on what is working and consistently aim high,” Mullen said. “Rather than wait for business to fall in our laps, we go forward 110% and know that it starts with taking ownership of our responsibilities, holding each

other accountable, and always asking ourselves, ‘Que vamos hacer hoy?’ [What are we going to do today?]”

For the firm to achieve its high-performance goals, he noted it was just a matter of returning to basics in terms of how customers should be treated. “You can never take any client for granted,” he said. “If you are doing \$1 million worth of business with a client today, that doesn’t mean it will be the same later on.” He also believes it starts with setting high standards and promoting a positive attitude within his own organization. “Just because the unemployment rate is high doesn’t mean you can treat people like indentured servants and make them a really low offer,” he said. “We make a concerted effort to hire great people, treat them like gold and never take them for granted.”

Cervantes Group was recently recognized by the Puerto Rico Chamber of Commerce (PRCC) with the 2011 Zenit Award and “Premio Teodoro Moscoso,” which was presented at the PRCC convention by Gov. Luis Fortuño. The firm has also been recognized as among the Fastest-Growing Companies in 2011 (at No. 1465) in Inc. magazine’s top 500/5000.

“Because of our high standards and willingness to take calculated

risks, we are not only reinvesting the money we are making in hiring more people and creating more jobs in Puerto Rico, but we are also giving back to the local community in other ways as well,” Mullen said. This includes donating generously to juvenile-diabetes research efforts, sponsoring golf outings to help disadvantaged children and becoming involved in other charitable community activities. “We recognize that we have a social responsibility to the communities we serve, and we take that seriously,” he added.

Mullen said that while his firm has worked with local pharmaceutical operations in the areas of project management and software development, this coming year will involve a keener focus on this sector.

“One of our biggest goals for 2012 is to meet with top management from every pharmaceutical on the island,” he said. “This sector beginning to grow and invest back into the local economy, just like other businesses, needs project-management leaders and other highly qualified technical teams experienced in business-process engineering and custom-application development.”

He added that because labor excellence in Puerto Rico is still very strong, pharmaceuticals continue to be attracted to the island. ■