

He clicked with computers

Now federal contracts help Alan Castillo's company grow

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The Arizona Republic

Jun. 14, 2004 12:00 AM

For Alan Castillo, 2004 is turning into a pretty good year.

Just this month, Castillo found out his Phoenix-based company, Castillo Technologies LLC, is in line for some big bucks through a three-year federal information technology contract that has two additional two-year options, worth as much as \$15 billion. He's one of about 400 8(a) certified companies nationally - and only three in Arizona - approved by the U.S. General Services Administration to receive work from this mega-contract.

Information on the other two Arizona companies wasn't immediately available.

Federal contract work, which makes up about half of Castillo's revenues, has become a key component to the company's growth. Last year, he pulled in \$1.2 million, and he expects revenues to grow 20 percent this year. He employs five people.

"This is a monster (contract) compared to last year," Castillo said with a smile.

He expects to pick up work in the computer system design services part of this GSA contract.

Chances are good that Castillo will see some big dollars from the contract as federal spending in Arizona increases. In fiscal 2003, Arizona received \$8.3 billion in federal contracts, up from \$7 billion in fiscal 2002.

Castillo's interest in computers started in 1993, while he was in the U.S. Marines. He had a 486 computer he used to e-mail family and friends; and when he had a computing problem, no one could help.

"I was forced to fix it myself."

After serving in the Marines, he returned to Arizona and found work at Motorola Semiconductors, where he honed his computer skills.

Eventually, he earned Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer certification and graduated from Western International University with a master's degree in business administration.

But deep down, he wanted to go into business on his own.

He points to his father, Eduardo, as his inspiration.

Eduardo Castillo has founded two companies. The first was the Castillo Company Inc., a commercial real estate consulting and development company, which he later sold. Then he started a second company, Entrada International Wood Products Inc.

"He's a hard act to follow, but I think I'm catching up," Alan Castillo joked.

Castillo Technologies started out of Alan's home in Chandler in August 2000. It remained that way for about a year, but eventually he had to hire some help.

"I was in high demand and worked eight months every day including weekends," he said. "Finally, I realized . . . I needed some help."

Castillo looked into federal contracting because he realized the government spent a lot on technology and computing services.

He also sought 8(a) certification to help him break into the highly competitive federal contracting arena. The 8(a) program focuses on business development and creates contracting opportunities for socially and economically disadvantaged businesses. The majority of businesses that take part in the program are minority-owned.

Castillo is into the second year of the 8(a) program.

Meanwhile, he is excited by the GSA information technology contract. He's even looking into opening an East Coast office to be closer to some of the contracts out that way.

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