

REPORT SAYS

Global outsourcing to grow amid recession

by ALEXANDER VILLAFANIA
Inquirer.net

MANILA – Demand for business process outsourcing services in Western Europe and North America will continue, a recent report from research firm Ovum said.

Companies cutting down on costs to focus on core skills amid economic pressures brought about by the global recession were among the major drivers for global outsourcing, the report said.

Uncertainties in the economy are also driving retailers in these two markets to protect margins by way of cutting operational costs, the report said.

Datamonitor Retail Technology analyst Christine Bardwell said retail firms are looking to generate revenues efficiently while continuing to manage demands of customers.

“Many are looking to technology and services to help cut the cost of managing inventory, non-critical business processes and store operations. Although retailers are outsourcing in a recession, the types of contracts have changed; large scale infrastructure overhauls are less common. Instead retailers are requesting a mixture of services on lower value contracts, or transformational deals over longer periods of time,” Bardwell said.

Despite the need to outsource, companies are still affected by cost.

Bardwell said capital expenditures (capex) were among the hurdles to outsourcing.

Because capex increases over time companies are looking for more flexible payment terms, outsourcing brings down a company’s capex to more manageable operational expenditures.

Bardwell also stressed on problems experienced by clients with their contractors, which could put to question any plans for outsourcing.

Other barriers include local unrest due to off-shore jobs, language barriers, and higher expertise requirements from the retail sector.

Bardwell suggested that outsourcers should know the demands of the retail industry and the challenges of the retail sector.

The Ovum report bolsters growth forecasts by business process outsourcing firms in the Philippines.

Over 200 companies in the Philippines are engaged in outsource services, with most of these catering to the US market.

Last year, the Business Process Association of the Philippines (BPAP) said that it expected “cautious optimism” in its growth forecast in the coming months. It expected overall revenues in the outsource industry to reach at least US\$12 billion by 2010.

Ovum is owned by the Datamonitor Group. ■



1st interactive TV proudly Pinoy-made

by RAINIER ALLAN RONDA
Philstar.com

MANILA—A group of young Filipino engineers and designers bidding to make the world’s first interactive television unveiled the improved prototype of their dream computer-TV.

Brian Quebengco, founder of Inovent Electronics Inc., launched the “beta” version of their Illumina LCD Interactive Television (iTV).

Quebengco presented a 32-inch LCD television enhanced with the functions of a personal computer with interactive Internet capability.

With their production of the beta unit, Quebengco said they are coming close to finishing a final prototype that will be mass-produced in the country and sent on a path toward attempting to be the first Filipino electronic product that can challenge the consumer market dominated by products from Japan, South Korea and the United States.

Calling themselves as “inventors,” Quebengco said their group is attempting to merge the regular LCD TV and personal computer.

He said their group is now in talks with various manufacturers interested in mass-producing the Illumina.

According to Quebengco, they have already signed non-disclosure agreements with the US’ leading chip maker Intel, and local electronics companies Integrated Microelectronics Inc. (IMI) of the Ayala group and EMS Inc. to discuss possible mass production.

The Inovent Electronics team is composed of Quebengco as its founder and leader; chief marketing “inventor” Mark Ruiz; senior design “inventors” Peter Can, Jonas Peralta, and Jaed del Mundo; junior program “inventor” Ryan Bitanga; and junior “inventors” Victor Yu and Nikko Garcia, who are undergraduates at the De La Salle University (DLSU) taking up electrical engineering and electronics and communications engineering (ECE), respectively.

Quebengco is a professor of industrial design at the DLSU, aside from being an entrepreneur.

The group had produced the Illumina literally from scratch in the garage and different dorm units of the team members.

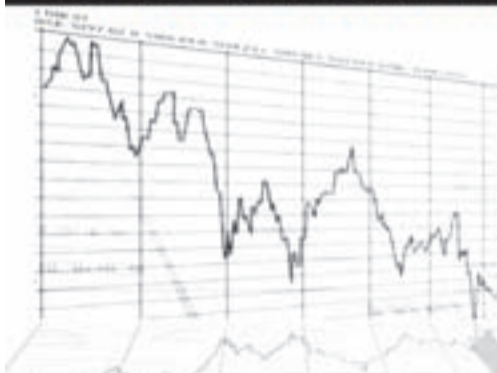
The Inovent team had presented an “alpha” unit or rough prototype of the Illumina last Nov. 30.

“We have made it sexier,” Ruiz said in the presentation yesterday at the Magnet Café in Bonifacio High Street mall at the Bonifacio Global City in Taguig City.

The Illumina boasts of a complete multimedia device with access to Google Gadgets, Plasma Widgets, and Mac OS X dock Widgets.

It is said to be the first convergence product made in the Philippines that synthesizes the functions of an LCD television and a personal computer. ■

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