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Engineering firm uses business logistics to compete in wireless

By Kelly Pate

Wireless industry growth has created new opportunities for engineering firms like V-Comm, which boasts a staff of experienced telecommunications engineers. V-Comm said its approach to business combines bottom-line operations logistics with the company's core engineering strengths.

To date, one-year-old V-Comm has garnered engineering contracts from Omnipoint Corp. and PCS One Inc.

To succeed, engineering work must follow a business plan, explained Dominic Villecco, V-Comm's founder and president. Big or small, a carrier has to make money. To compete and grow, infrastructure and per-subscriber costs need to be minimized. "We focus closely on cost," said Villecco. "When a carrier says 'we need to manage costs,' we can jump in and design a business plan."

Villecco and company Vice President David Stern left senior level positions at Comcast Cellular Communications Inc. to create a venture that would execute the kinds of projects that Comcast used to bid out. Among V-Comm's staff of two dozen people, career experience averages 10 to 12 years. Villecco has brought on board a few entry-level engineers as well as a 25-year industry veteran. When part of a project requires knowledge outside of V-Comm's expertise, Villecco outsources that job.

"We capitalize on what we know and get as much experience as we can," commented Villecco. He intends for V-Comm to compete among the nation's top wireless engineering firms within the next few years.

For the next several years, V-Comm plans to focus primarily on personal communications services, which is a big opportunity because there are so many operators

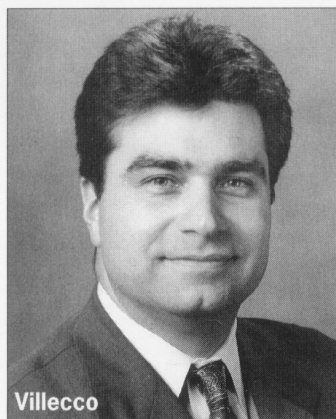
building networks and so few people to do it well, Villecco said. V-Comm also works in the cellular, specialized mobile radio, enhanced SMR, paging, wireless data, microwave and fiber optic cable fields. Business will grow on the wireline side as well, said Villecco, because the Telecommunications Act of 1996 opens markets for wireless, wireline and long-distance communications.

V-Comm is engaged in radio frequency and network engineering projects with Omni-

point. But for PCS One, it's "basically soup to nuts," said Villecco. PCS One won a C-block license for the Lancaster, Pa., basic trading area and also is bidding in the current PCS auctions. For the start-up venture, V-Comm has been involved in establishing operations, budgeting, writing vendor request for proposals, network and RF engineering and real estate issues.

V-Comm also works in the areas of vendor analysis, operations performance analysis, systems growth engineering, integrating vertical systems like voice mail, budgeting and forecasting. The company works on private network projects, including communications for local municipalities.

V-Comm also has helped a new operator in South America secure financing, form an organizational structure and recommend the types of training and business tools it needs to succeed.



Villecco

