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## Profiting by serving the non-profits; Executive summary

**GARY NYP**  
SPECIAL TO THE RECORD

### KITCHENER

The third floor of the century-old Duke Street West building formerly known as the Number Two firehall once served as the sleeping quarters for the firefighters who protected the surrounding Kitchener neighbourhoods.

These days, it's a bright, airy loft with hardwood floors, a small but well-equipped kitchen and a handful of computer stations where its occupants continue to contribute to society's well-being, although in a profoundly different and considerably more global way.

They can install software for a non-profit agency in Hawaii in two hours without leaving the building. Greg Stanley-Horn and Kevin Stanley, co-founders of six-year-old Athena Software, are providing long-sought case-management software solutions to non-profits and counselling agencies around the world. A growing number of agencies sign on to utilize the company's Penelope Case Management Software, a comprehensive, secure and easy-to-use program specifically designed for non-profits.

Until recently, such software was largely unavailable in the non-profit field, says Stanley-Horn, Athena's director of deployment who handles installations and support with clientele. Many non-profits waged an often-futile struggle to find programs to track data, manage caseloads, report to benefactors and stakeholders, and clearly document what they accomplish in an effective, persuasive way.

Their frustration became clear to Stanley-Horn while he was employed with the Catholic Family Counselling Centre in Kitchener in the 1990s. As overseer of special projects, he was asked to review the software it used and compare it to that used by other organizations.

It was an eye-opening experience.

What he found was a lack of software geared to the needs of non-profits and their often limited resources. What was available, he recalls, seemed to be more medically oriented and catered mainly to hospitals and larger organizations boasting the massive infrastructures most non-profits lack. Nothing was integrated to capture every facet of a non-profit's business.

So he and his wife, Diane, a partner in Athena, began talking to people, seeking opinions and gauging the software needs of agencies around the world. The more they listened, the more they began to envision the kind of all-in-one system that would address most of the needs these agency representatives expressed. After a 16-month research process, Athena was born in Guelph in 2001. Two years later, the company moved to Kitchener.

The move was a strategic one, says Dana Fox, Athena's director of business development. By moving its operations to Kitchener, the company was able to gain access to the intellectual capital of the area's two universities. Five of the company's six full-time staff are Wilfrid Laurier graduates.

But there's another component to the region that attracted Athena -- its well-documented support of entrepreneurially minded, high-tech endeavours.

While investors in major cities tend to be drawn to asset-based enterprises, Fox says Waterloo Region is known as a community that is eager to support businesses like Athena as they launch fresh ideas and endure the inevitable growing pains.

"Entrepreneurial companies are embraced here," Fox says. "There is a different level of understanding here."

The Penelope software is an idea that has helped Athena withstand its growing pains while creating what Fox calls "exponential growth." Its already impressive worldwide sales have been further boosted by the recent addition of a number of prestigious contracts.

In February, for example, Waterloo Region's social services department chose Athena to provide a web-based, integrated case-management program to improve its planning, research and evaluation, as well as the effective implementation of its goals. The region's move added to Athena's almost total penetration of this area's counselling agency market.

Meanwhile, its reputation is growing worldwide.

The company recently landed the United Kingdom's largest provider of relationship counselling -- Relate -- as a client. Expected to be deployed this fall, Athena's software will help the organization manage about 150,000 clients in 600 locations.



PETER LEE, RECORD STAFF

Athena Software employees (from left) Pat Chan, Dana Fox, Kevin Stanley, Greg Stanley-Horn and Diane Stanley-Horn have a global reach from the former firehall on Duke Street West in Kitchener.

Among the software's main selling points is its adaptability to a wide range of sectors. Stanley-Horn says that was a strategic decision from the outset. While its competitors tend to be more regional and focused, Athena's founders recognized the need to come up with a program that was able to cater to a wide range of users in diverse regions. That operating model has allowed the Penelope software to be employed in the U.S., the U.K., Greece and the Caribbean.

An additional selling point is the software's web platform, which means users can access it by clicking on a link, regardless of their location. The web platform is particularly attractive to non-profit agencies with limited resources, who lack the infrastructure and sophistication to manage their own system.

"Unlike our competitors, who require you to download a CD and install, there is nothing to install here," Fox points out. "It's just a click on the link, your name and password and you're in. In other words, we can deliver comprehensive, integrated software instantly no matter where you are."

The company believes the sky's the limit for its products.

As Fox puts it, "We've enjoyed triple-digit growth the last three years and there is nothing to suggest that things are going to slow down."

Executive Summary

Athena Software, 318 Duke St. W., Kitchener.

Launched in 2001.

Produces web-based case-management software for non-profit agencies.

Clients include Waterloo Region's social services department and Relate, the largest relationship-counselling agency in the United Kingdom.

[www.athenasoftware.net](http://www.athenasoftware.net)

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