

Honoring Pittsburgh's top CEOs and company presidents

# DIAMOND AWARDS

APRIL 18, 2008

## Large Company Winners

**RAYMOND BUEHLER JR.**  
president and CEO,  
Schneider Downs & Co. 19



**SUSAN MCGALLA**  
president and chief merchandising  
officer, American Eagle Outfitters 20



**D. RAJA**  
CEO, Computer Enterprises Inc. 21



**JACK SCALO**  
president,  
Burns & Scalo Roofing Co. 21



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PITTSBURGH  
**BUSINESSTIMES**

# For Raja, problems aren't challenges; they're opportunities

BY TRACY CARBASHO

**A**mong the items that adorn the walls in D. Raja's office is a sign that reads: "There are no barriers in life, only challenges."

Raja, CEO of Computer Enterprises Inc. in the South Hills, believes challenges are not insurmountable obstacles, but rather opportunities to learn.

"I believe in setting realistic short-term and long-term goals and then making them happen," he said. "If there is a problem, there is always a way to work with all parties involved to come up with an equitable solution."

Raja's philosophy about facing challenges and achieving goals has played a primary role in helping him become a successful, hands-on business leader.

He was actively involved with the company from the start, co-founding it in 1992 while working from the spare bedroom of his South Hills home, and working closely with CEI's first customer, H.B. Maynard Co., which has since been acquired by Accenture.

Today, CEI, which provides information technology staffing and software development solutions, has more than 400 U.S. employees with an additional 70 working in Raja's hometown of Chennai, India.

Ken Smith, senior executive of the Maynard unit for Accenture, is not surprised that Raja's company has become



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so successful.

"Whatever he touches becomes a success," Smith said. "He is a good model of servant leadership because he is not only hard-working and extremely driven, but he also has compassion for his employees."

Raja clearly demonstrated this leadership style and work ethic five years ago by going above and beyond the call of duty to simultaneously get four sidetracked technology projects moving in the right direction. In addition to performing his regular duties as CEO during the day, he

spent many hours talking to clients in the evening to ensure they fully understood the software products provided by CEI.

These projects, which involved the application of new software products, encountered difficulty because it marked the beginning of CEI using what Raja calls agile development methodologies, consisting of a high level of competency and resource depth in cutting-edge technologies such as MicrosoftSharePoint and Microsoft.NET.

"It was a learning process, and leaders

## D. Raja

CEO, Computer Enterprises Inc.

**AGE:** 42

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's degree in electrical engineering, Anna University in India, 1986; master's degree in computer science, University of Pittsburgh, 1990; MBA, Carnegie Mellon University, 2003

**LEADERSHIP STYLE:** "I'm very hands-on and will give up some of my duties if I need to work on creating a solution to a problem."

must continually keep evolving," Raja said. "You can't let leadership go to your head by thinking you know it all and that you're above everybody else. That type of attitude can cost you."

Raja's evolution as a leader included attending classes in the evenings for three years to obtain his MBA from Carnegie Mellon University. He also has learned from his own employees, letting his managers critique his work as CEO.

"My managers rank me from one to five with five being the best," he said. "They tell me what areas I might need to work on, and I use this information to help improve myself as a leader. I usually receive fours and fives. It's important to have an open mind and to take suggestions."

TRACY CARBASHO is a freelance writer.