

WashingtonTechnology

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10/06/08; Vol. 23 No. 15

Welcome back

ACS prepares for federal market as noncompete ends

By [Nick Wakeman](#)

Affiliated Computer Systems Inc., of Dallas, is about to fully embrace the federal market again when a noncompete agreement it signed with Lockheed Martin Corp. expires Nov. 24.

Compared to the businesses it sold to Lockheed in 2003, ACS is bringing a new approach and new solutions under Tim Conway, its federal leader. Conway spoke recently to Editor-in-Chief Nick Wakeman about the strategy behind ACS' return to the federal market.

Q: Why get back into the federal market?

CONWAY: If you look at the business we sold in 2003, it was predominately a staff-augmentation business. As we go back into the market, we are going back much more aligned with the heritage of ACS, which is results-based business process outsourcing and information technology outsourcing.

A lot of the solutions we are bringing are mature solutions we already offer in the state and local, health care, transportation and other segments.

Q: What solutions will ACS bring to market?

CONWAY: What I call our four aces: mailroom and administrative services, customer care, finance and accounting, and intelligent transaction processing. If you go to a thirdparty analyst, they recognize these solutions, so we have immediate credibility, and it lets us jump-start our business.

Q: How have you been preparing to return to the market?

CONWAY: When I was hired in March 2007, the federal business was federated, so we've centralized it. A year ago, we didn't have a central sales team; now we have a sales leader in Ann Will. We've added sales people in key agencies. We have Gino LaMarca as our chief operations officer.

We have been focused on the pipeline and understanding what the opportunities are in the marketplace, and building a pipeline that could sustain the growth of the business over time. We look at the federal market as a double-digit growth market for us for the foreseeable future.

Q: What are your challenges?

CONWAY: Limited past-performance contracts, limited resources, limited contract vehicles and limited customer relationships. When I look at what we sold to Lockheed, the two things I covet most are the relationships we sold and the contract vehicles. You just can't create those; you have to earn those. We have been looking at acquisitions that could bring us those.

Because of our size, every client has to be a successful client. We cannot afford to have one contract that is not referenceable.