

Alumni Achievers:

Success Stories

from 14 ALUMNI UNDER 40



David Marco

President of *EWSolutions* and World's Foremost Authority on Meta Data Management

Quite simply, David Marco loves metadata management consulting—creating “data about data” to enable large businesses and government entities to organize mountains of data into useful information.

One of the world's foremost authorities on metadata management, Marco has created a company around metadata management, data warehousing and enterprise information management consulting.

He and his company, *EWSolutions*, do not shirk gargantuan tasks—they embrace them. For instance, when the FBI urgently needed to reform its data management systems after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, *EWSolutions* was chosen for the task, which is ongoing and has met each milestone “on time and on budget,” says Marco.

“Our company succeeds every time,” Marco says. “We have 100 percent project success.” Its extensive client list includes other multiyear clients such as Mayo Clinic; BP; Healthcare Services Corp. (BlueCross BlueShield); and The Defense Logistics Agency, a central support agency for all branches of the U.S. military.

Marco, a self-described “lifetime consultant,” began consulting when he was still a junior at DePaul working on his computer science degree. Later, out in the workplace, he ran into a data management project that no one knew how to do and developed a solution. “People knew that metadata existed and they knew it had power and they knew it had value, but they didn't know how to harness it. It isn't mystical, it isn't a black box, it's standard systems development,” he says.

Standard or not, Marco has a way of looking at metadata management that is creative and original. Soon after creating his first solution, he wrote some articles on metadata for an industry magazine; the pieces generated such large responses that the magazine offered him a monthly column. Since then, he has written two well-known books and hundreds of articles and speaks frequently at conferences around the world, including his company's annual educational series.

Early on in his career, Marco added to his skills by returning to DePaul to earn an MBA. “I always knew I wanted to own my own company. I also knew that I didn't have any understanding of how to do that, so I wanted to get a graduate degree in marketing instead of computer science,” he explains.

“There are not a lot of hard and fast rules in running a company. What you really want to do is build culture, creativity and decision-making processes.”

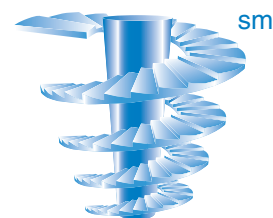
David Marco: President of *EWSolutions*

Marco values the kind of instruction he gained from his MBA program, especially the opportunity to create his own solutions to actual business challenges in the case studies his professors provided. “There are not a lot of hard and fast rules in running a company. What you really want to do is build culture, creativity and decision-making processes,” he says.

He always has been able to see the big picture. “In the '90s, lots of people told me we should change focus to e-business. We didn't. It does not replace data warehousing or metadata management. It's just another distribution channel,” he says.

“We sell the fundamentals that make every major corporation work. It's not glamorous, but it's the difference between success and failure. No matter what happens in the market, you never get away from understanding your data and managing it correctly,” says Marco.

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DAVID MARCO

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President
EWSolutions Inc.

When the Federal Bureau of Investigation urgently needed to create an easy-to-use database of all the information it had on terrorist activity, it tapped David Marco.

Not to get metaphysical about it, but think of Mr. Marco as Melvil Dewey, rein-

carnated. The 19th century librarian who invented the well-known system for keeping track of books has a lot in common with Mr. Marco, a Chicago native considered by many to be the nation's leading expert in helping corporations and governments make sense out of huge amounts of computer data. His specialty is metadata, or data about data.

Mr. Marco founded and owns EWSolutions Inc., a Hinsdale-based consulting firm with 33 employees and estimated 2004 revenue of \$8 million to \$10 million.

Three years ago, the FBI hired him to design and build the Investigative Data Warehouse, a mammoth job that's still under way.

Any counterterrorism successes so far are classified. But, says FBI project manager Jeff Scudder, "Let's say management has been very, very happy with what's been accomplished and excited about what we can do with it in the future."

He's doing similar work for the U.S. Department of Defense's worldwide procurement system, reorganizing

and creating a unified database for the world's largest and longest supply chain.

He has written two top-sellers in the field: "Universal Meta Data Models" and "Building and Managing the Meta Data Repository."

"I could always look at something and say, 'This is what we need to do,'" says Mr. Marco, who started consulting while enrolled at DePaul University, where he's still a courtside season ticket holder and frequent guest lecturer.

Paul Merrion

Intelligent Business IntelligenceSM



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