

# ORLANDO BUSINESS JOURNAL

## Central Florida IT companies' merger to create more jobs



A Mount Dora IT solutions firm merged with its sister company this month and now plans to grow even bigger.

Across Borders Management Consulting Group LLC plans to hire 15 workers this year and is seeking a second location after bringing its sister company, Fobess, into its fold. The firms finalized an agreement to merge on March 23 and it became effective on April 3. Fobess now operates as Across Borders' product division.

The two entities already have combined its operations into Across Borders' Mount Dora building and combined both company websites.

"Fobess was renting space from the same building; we had enough space to accommodate everybody in the building," said Vijay Krishnan, managing partner for Across Borders, noting that some companies may experience a loss of workers due to having redundant positions. "We're seeing how we can now streamline. We haven't dropped any employees, we are actually looking for more."

The combined entity now has a total of about 42 workers, with 10 coming from Fobess. The firm will hire two additional employees per month for this year, which will create between 10-15 positions including software engineers, business analysts, project managers, business development, and sales and marketing, Krishnan said.

Average salaries will range from \$65,000 to \$90,000, depending on the individual's experience.

Across Borders — a woman- and minority-owned firm founded in 2011 — was one of *Orlando Business Journal's* fastest-growing companies last year, when the company reported 2015 revenue of \$3.3 million.

The company's reported 2016 revenue of \$4.2 million and this year's revenue is expected to be roughly \$6 million with the merger, Krishnan said.

"We saw more and more that the market was looking for open-source solutions and we were finally able to [merge] this year, it took us about eight months from starting in our third quarter," Krishnan said.

Krishnan said the merger will benefit its clientele due to Across Borders providing customized IT solutions for industries including health care and financing, while Fobess develops web-based applications for companies to manage operations. "We work with companies like Microsoft and IBM and now we can provide open-source solutions to those clients," Krishnan said.

Meanwhile, the company expects to grow and is planning to open a second office in the Altamonte Springs/Maitland area in the next six months. "But we will keep the Mount Dora office because we own it and we have employees that live in the area," Krishnan said.

The merger appears to be well-time to help boost the firm's growth, as local firms are more often seeking services from IT companies, according to Tim Platt, vice president of Winter Park-based Virtual Operations LLC, who has worked in the past with Across Borders.

"It's one of those things where we have room to improve in Central Florida you can see it where companies are leveraging more cloud services, it's driving explosions with a need for data and to some degree it's growing all over the place, including Central Florida," Platt said.

Additionally, Across Borders should benefit from having both operations under one roof, Platt added.

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