

Last modified Monday, August 3, 2009 7:14 PM PDT



*Ken Hamilton, president of CMIT Solutions of Inland North County, advises Scott Peck about his computer systems last week in Peck's Escondido office. Hamilton's company provides computer information technology services to businesses.*

EMPLOYMENT: Working harder, but enjoying it more

By BRADLEY J. FIKES - [bfikes@nctimes.com](mailto:bfikes@nctimes.com)

ESCONDIDO ---- Ken Hamilton used to fly around the country as the technological Mr. Fix-it for big corporate clients. But since he bought his own franchise, he gets to stay within driving distance of home.

Hamilton's specialty is computer technology. He helps companies buy the right computers, install security and meet the other tasks needed to keep corporate systems running.

Now president of CMIT Solutions of Inland North County, Hamilton says staying local lets him participate in the community while still doing his job. That's something he said was hard while working for 18 years as part of a Hewlett Packard business-to-business sales team.

"There was a sales person, and I was the technical guy who validated what we were selling them would work, and I also determined, working with the customer, what they needed," Hamilton said.

While he enjoyed the problem-solving, Hamilton was unhappy at not being in control of his schedule.

"Working in the corporate world, you are not your own timekeeper," Hamilton said. "If someone says be in Las Vegas on Thursday, you're in Las Vegas on Thursday."

So Hamilton decided to go into business for himself. He bought the CMIT franchise in February. The base cost was \$60,000, but as a tech veteran, Hamilton said he got a 20 percent discount.

Hamilton pays CMIT a monthly royalty of about 8 percent of gross revenues, and also pays for marketing, handling calls and other services. Hamilton says he expects to become profitable sometime after his first

year in business.

Based in Austin, Texas, CMIT has about 100 franchises around the country, Hamilton said. CMIT offers established relationships with large companies nationwide and other services that Hamilton said "take the legwork out of it for me."

That backing leaves Hamilton more time to concentrate on serving customers.

Doug Clements, administrator of the CPA firm Dunlap, Dunlap & Peck, says he's happy with Hamilton's service, providing secure data backup. The firm had been a CMIT client with the previous franchise owner.

"The thing about Ken is he's readily available. I can contact him in 60 seconds," Clements said. "I've got his cell, I've got his e-mail; he responds to e-mails, he's very customer-oriented. Anything we need, he's on it."

Hamilton said being that responsive takes a lot of effort, but it's worth it.

"As a business owner, you have to wear multiple hats," Hamilton said. "I'm not only that technical person, I'm also the guy doing marketing and managing. So from that perspective I'm working harder, but when I get up in the morning, everything I'm doing, I'm doing for me and my family."