

An IT Consulting Firm Specializing in Custom Application Development Solutions, Leading EDJE Strives to Unite Outstanding, Local IT Talent into One Organization to Provide Clients with True Value Services

**Business Services
IT Consulting**

**Leading EDJE
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**Joelle Brock
CEO**

BIO: Joelle Brock

Joelle Brock is the Founder, President & CEO of Leading EDJE. Leading EDJE is a privately held Information Technology consulting firm headquartered in Columbus, Ohio. Leading EDJE provides a comprehensive approach to integrated IT consulting services designed to solve technology and business issues. Joelle founded the company in May of 2007 after having been in the industry for 17 years. In her time leading up to Leading EDJE, Ms. Brock spent 14 years with Software Architects (SARK), building a

local practice while supporting 11 other offices nationally. Joelle is an alumnus of Accenture (formerly Andersen Consulting) and began her IT consulting career in 1990 with AGS Information Services, A NYNEX Company. Prior to the IT industry, Ms. Brock exercised her Journalism career as an ABC field reporter and on-air radio personality.

Ms. Brock has many interest outside of work including, Golf, Travel, Philanthropy, Fitness and Wine. Joelle is currently on the board of the New Directions Career Center where she chairs the IT Committee. Ms. Brock is also an active member of Entrepreneur's Organization (EO) where she consistently holds various board positions. Joelle is a student athlete graduate of Kent State University where she earned a B.A. degree in Communications/Journalism. She resides in Galena, Ohio with her husband Jeff and sons Carter, Nathan and Michael.

About Leading EDJE

Our vision is to unite the top local IT talent into one organization giving clients a place to go for true "value" services verses "volume" of services. Columbus is home to outstanding IT talent and Leading EDJE's vision is to bring these elite individuals together to add to our unique, boutique team and keep ourselves available exclusively to the Columbus community. This strategy provides:

- Our clients with valuable, local IT experts
- Our consultants with a quality balance between career and personal lives

Continual IT growth in the Columbus community

**Interview conducted by:
Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor
CEOCFO Magazine**

CEOCFO: Ms. Brock, what is the concept of Leading EDJE?

Ms. Brock: We are an IT consulting firm specializing in custom application development solutions particularly using leading edge development tools.

CEOCFO: Would you give us an example of how your service works?

Ms. Brock: We build custom software for our clients. We will do it predominantly in the Microsoft and IBM suite of technologies including .Net and Java stacks. We pride ourselves on being the super computer geeks that love to architect systems, write code, and build software.

CEOCFO: What is something that might not be readily available that you are able to put together?

Ms. Brock: Because our services are strictly custom, we have all different types of clients that need all different types of solutions ASAP. Our clients comprise of many different industries including retail, software, financial, healthcare, insurance, manufacturing, distribution, transportation, non-profit and state, local and federal government industries. In today's world of mobile computing, we are being asked by many companies to provide them with custom mobile solutions some of which involve systems being built in the cloud.

CEOCFO: Is there a common thread or a time when a company decides that off-the-shelf just is not going to be adequate?

Ms. Brock: Constantly. Typically our clients have a long list of projects that they cannot get to which is one of the reasons why they engage with us. These projects are critical in nature and often times our clients will not have the people with the right technical knowledge or simply don't have enough people with the technical aptitudes needed to complete these initiatives.

CEOCFO: What is the key to making the system easy to use?

Ms. Brock: Effective and efficient communication throughout the entire lifecycle of the project (requirements gathering phase through implementation). We work very closely with our clients to determine what it is that they need (and want) in their solution. Often times our users may think they know what they need when in fact they need something different. We will help our clients determine for themselves what they need and what they want. We work with our clients intimately throughout the entire lifecycle in order for our clients to have a seamless integration upon completion. The key that is different about us is that we have a true "trusted advisor" relationship with our clients meaning we are not interested in being everyone's answer to everything; we are happy being the absolute best we can be staying in our "sweet spot". We understand our clients' business and what their needs are and provide custom technical solutions to help solve their business problems.

CEOCFO: Do you see a trend back towards custom?

Ms. Brock: Without question! Building custom solutions gives businesses a competitive advantage custom to their business. With the inconsistency of the economic conditions over the past several years, there are quite a few "band-aided" systems out there. Listen, do not get me wrong, I understand that there are times when a "band-aid"

approach is the only option. However, I will tell you that in my 23 years of IT consulting experience the need for custom application development has remained relatively consistent. The Y2K (unnecessary) scare put somewhat of a slow down in our industry but outside of that the IT industry has been solid. In today's competitive market, a successful business (of any size) needs to find a unique way to make themselves stand out. This means developing a better product/service, getting that product/service to market quicker, and having reliable systems to support the sales and distribution of the product/service. Investing in custom IT solutions can play a major role in doing this.

CEOCFO: How do you find people to add to your team?

Ms. Brock: Originally word of mouth. We started out by hiring our IT

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buddies but our growth needs (due to client requests) quickly surpassed that plan. We have internal members of our team dedicated to finding technically talented (and driven) people, and our technical people help with qualifying how talented the candidates really are. However our bottleneck right now finding the talent. Our interest is finding the right people (not the right now people) and because of that we are very selective with who we choose to add to the team. We have an outstanding, unique team and culture and we want to make sure that anyone we add will only enhance that unique dynamic. Investing in a long-term relationship with our team members is very important to us. We do this in a wide variety of ways including continuing technical education and certification. Our commitment to our team members along with our unique culture is what makes us different.

CEOCFO: When you speak with a new client, do they understand the concept immediately and understand the difference?

Ms. Brock: We have been fortunate in that most of our clients are referred by other clients. There is nothing more gratifying in business when you have a CEO or CIO that is so thrilled with what we have done for them that they are excited to share with their peers. Because we are looking for the right client and not the biggest client, we have a very different approach to doing business and quite frankly it's a refreshing change to many. Our team brings a high positive energy to our client's environment which is a welcome change to many. We also make it very comfortable for a new client by investing in the "dating" phase often times offering prototypes and/or free analysis to show our clients where we feel we can be of most benefit to them. Because we are smaller and are looking for more intimate trusting relationships with our clients, it makes it much easier to get creative.

CEOCFO: Are there particular types of projects that you enjoy more than others or particular challenges you like?

Ms. Brock: Because our work is custom, every project is unique and we genuinely enjoy what we do! Whether we are delivering a full scale project to a client or simply partnering by bringing top technical talent to their team for a particular amount of time, we thrive on having fun! Think about it, we are geeks...true problem solvers at heart and when we find a new challenge that's where the fun begins!

CEOCFO: How do you keep up with all the new technology?

Ms. Brock: Our team members are true technologists and "live to learn the latest and greatest" of technologies. Technology is truly our passion and is what we do for fun. We get together on a regular basis and simply learn from one another. We have "coffee talks", technical presentations, internal technology challenges, and technical education series venues to keep us up to speed on the latest trends. We have strategic partnerships in place with

Microsoft and IBM. We are also very involved with technical conferences, user groups and sponsoring various technical events. Currently mobile solutions, is particularly hot as we have a considerable amount of clients requesting our help in this area.

CEO CFO: You are on the INC list so we know business is good. How do you continue particularly since it is a challenge to get the right staff?

Ms. Brock: Our culture is what defines us. It is who we are and what makes us different. When you concentrate on having fun doing what you love to do it makes it so much easier and people want to be a part of that. People see that we are not interested in being just the biggest but we are interested in having fun being the best. Quite frankly when starting the company we chose to take the approach of building a

culture rich environment where people feel good about going to work because they like the people they work with and trust them. We truly are a close knit group (we even baby sit each other's kids). When you feel like you are putting all this effort and energy in and you are doing it with other people who have the same high positive energy, it is not work. Our team is proud to be a group of elite brilliantly technically talented individuals who demonstrate a sense of humility which makes them even more impressive.

CEO CFO: Why should the business and investment community pay attention to Leading EDJE?

Ms. Brock: People should pay attention to Leading EDJE because not only are we both in the forefront of technology and the brightest but we also are grounded and our goal as a business

mirror our goals as people and that is do the right thing for the right reason, have a ton of fun doing it and create a lot of positive energy around you. Our clients love engaging with us because we just have fun doing what we love to do and have really happy positive people doing it. This is exactly why our clients prefer to come back to us. Once our clients experience a project with us we become their either exclusive custom app dev firm of choice or at minimal their preferred firm. This is because they experience the difference in our people from a technical, communicative, integrity and work ethic perspective. That is why our clients gravitate to us first because it is just a different pleasant positive experience. I feel fortunate to be a part of this team!



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