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### HR firm sees potential due to corporate cutting

By Janice B. Pieterse

When Vanteon Corp. cut its human resources department during a sales slump in 2001, then-chief financial officer Joe Burke took on HR duties.

That was a big job, Burke recalled, in a business that relies on its technical personnel to provide companies with embedded-software products. The company soon decided to reinvest in human resources services — and Burke met Patrick DiLaura, then providing HR consulting services through Insero & Co. CPAs P.C.

He hired DiLaura for employee surveys and training.

DiLaura now has struck out on his own, creating a new firm with two other local HR executives. Providium Human Resource Group LLC, a sister company of Providium Consulting Group LLC, offers a full range of human resource services, DiLaura said.

Burke, now chief operating officer at Pittsford-based Vanteon, said he would use Providium Human Resource Group to continue surveys and training, and he is considering expanding programs with the new agency to offer coaching services to employees.

Providium Human Resource Group formed in Perinton in August with the acquisition of Weterrings & Agnew Inc., a longtime local recruiting agency. Weterrings & Agnew owner Elaine McKenna is vice president of the new group. Marylane Bianchi, formerly of HR Works Inc. and Manpower Inc., is the third partner in the firm and is also a vice president.



"Our business model is to offer a full range of HR-related services through a single relationship," said Providium Human Resource Group partner Patrick DiLaura, right, with partners Marylane Bianchi and Elaine McKenna.

DiLaura, who has held senior roles in companies such as Paychex Inc. and Hallmark Cards Inc., said it became apparent to him that HR resources within corporations were becoming thin.

"It became more and more difficult to get everything done that needed to be done," he said. "Our business model is to offer a full range of HR-related services through a single relationship."

He estimates Providium Human Resource Group will post annual revenue of \$4 million by 2010. Providium did not provide information on current revenues. The firm employs 16, including seven employees in the Weterrings & Agnew division who had been employed in the 44-year-old recruiting firm.

"One trend, which is well noted in the profession, is the trend toward more and more outsourcing of HR functions, especially in transactional aspects such as recruiting, payroll, handbooks, a number of different things," DiLaura said. "The role of the in-house HR director is becoming more and more of a strategic advisor and manager of vendors. We can provide specialized expertise when they need it, so they're only paying for it when they need it."

Many area HR services firms offer some combination of services, but DiLaura said he not aware of any that cover the "full employment cycle" — recruiting and compensation practices, benefits consulting and brokerage, training, and niche areas such as global services and international employee transfers.

McKenna said Weterrings & Agnew clients have asked in the past for services beyond recruiting. When the opportunity came up to join DiLaura and Bianchi in the new group, she felt she could not pass it up.

"Companies are just continuing to become leaner and leaner, and they are increasingly interested in outsourcing any functions that they can and that makes sense for them to outsource," said McKenna, a partner in Weterrings & Agnew since 1992.

Current clients of Providium Human Resource Group include Ameriprise Financial Inc. and Thomsom Corp. DiLaura said clients range from 11 employees to a few hundred thousand.