

OBJECTIFY

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Hard slog pays off *Local software company going strong*

By TAMARA GLUMAC

What began as a business dream in a loungeroom in Bendigo has been transformed into one of Australia's top software companies.

In what may be a first for Bendigo, local company Objectify has been ranked in Business Review Weekly's top 40 start-up companies.

Objectify, which ranked at 20, develops and sells software systems that allow non-technical staff to update website and intranet content.

The company's clients include Federal and State Government agencies, universities, banks and national corporations.

And for the young masterminds behind Objectify who have worked "ridiculous hours" to build the company, the sky is the limit. Objectify's annual turnover has jumped from \$200,000 in 2001 to \$1.3 million in the last financial year.

The company was founded by local young guns Daniel Beaty, Craig Hunter and Katrina Keikkila and employs several Bendigo university and TAFE graduates.

Former secondary school teacher turned Objectify director, Mr Hunter said the road to success has been challenging and has included many 100 hour working weeks.

"We started the company in Daniel's loungeroom, we were right in the middle of renovating his house," Mr Hunter said.



"In those early days I remember being totally cash-strapped and sitting there with no idea of how we were going to pay the bills.

"But we make a rule that regardless of what happened, we would see it through to the end of each year.

"I think if we had given in to our emotions during those early years, we would have quit a hundred times," he said.

Mr Beaty, Objectify's chief technical officer, is the brains behind the company's software development.

Having worked various jobs, including at a piggery, cleaning business and on a cruise ship in Northern Queensland, Mr Beaty found his niche in information technology.

He worked in network administration before creating Objectify's Web Content Management System – the company's first triumph.

"I don't think there are any particular secrets but all successful companies, do have certain attributes," Mr Beaty said yesterday.

"The people who are operating them are passionate about what they do and work extremely hard.

"We've done the blind, hard slog in the past few years and now we have something significant we would like to maximise its potential."

Mr Hunter said the next step was to capture the Sydney market and also look at the overseas market."

"One of the unique aspects to our company is that we are regionally based, ye all our clients are in metropolitan centres. It's also a great experience to be able to compete with and beat NASDAQ-listed industry giants," he said.

"We aim for Objectify to show other young professionals within the region they do not have to work in a metropolitan centre to achieve their business dreams."

Objectify recently won the Federal Government AusIndustry Research & Development Start Grant, enabling the development of its latest product – Objectify Enterprise.

Mr Hunter said support from the Bendigo community was instrumental in Objectify's success.