

“Gremlins? Seriously?” How A Tech-Savvy CPA Launched One Of Fort Worth’s Most Successful IT Solutions Firms By Focusing On Teamwork, Learning, And Planning.

“Gremlins.”

They said it so matter-of-factly – the “IT experts” brought in to fix the network, who of course had to “dumb it down” for their tech-challenged clients.

But Gary Tonniges Jr, CPA, didn’t accept “Gremlins” as an answer.

Because whenever there was a computer issue, “Frick and Frack” (the outsourced tech team his company had hired) would always say the same thing:

“Oh, the computer gremlins gotcha.”

This was NOT how a CPA treats its clients. And Gary had seen enough, watching them hold his firm’s productivity captive.

Now, he hadn’t planned on going into IT. In fact, after graduating from Texas A&M with a degree in accounting, Gary joined a Fort Worth firm with the dream of a career as a CPA.

But because he had some computer expertise, he jumped at this chance to go after these “gremlins.”

“I had read about computers while trying to get my new home PC to play a game called Wing Commander and I discovered how much I loved learning about technology. I decided to become an expert in systems and networks. Before long, the partners replaced Frick and Frack, telling me to get rid of the gremlins once and for all.”

With that, Gary left accounting behind. He’d reached his goal of becoming a CPA, but now discovered a dream to integrate the business acumen and integrity of the CPA profession with technology management. He was reassigned to oversee his firm’s computers and network. Realizing their clients needed help too, the partners put him in charge of their technology services group, with full P&L responsibilities.

But after five years, he felt a new calling:

“I wanted my own company but wasn’t sure how to make the transition. My wife and I were backpacking the Maroon Bells 26-mile loop outside Aspen, Colorado. After a very steep ascension on the first day, we awoke alongside a crystal-clear lake... That’s when I told my wife I’d decided to start my own business. She was totally on board. And after getting the partners’ blessing to leave, the adventure began.”

Gary left to form TriQuest Technologies with the goal of creating a professional services firm that would consistently deliver reliable IT and high-quality technical services within an environment of trust and support – so, even if it came time to separate, both employees and clients would be better off than before TriQuest.



IT's More Than Just Fixing "Gremlins"

Launched in 1997 from the back of a pickup, over the next two decades TriQuest grew to become Fort Worth's IT Solutions leader for business customers in every industry – nonprofit, legal, arts and culture, education, construction, finance, and religious organizations.

But the early days were lean...

"Our total start-up costs were \$107.50 – \$7.50 to get the DBA and \$100 to open a bank account. I had my first customer on the first day of business and 90 days later we rented an 800-square-foot office. Three of us worked there for a couple years, and it's been a steady climb since then."

From its beginning, TriQuest has been committed to building and maintaining reliable IT systems that keep critical systems and data – safe and secure. This doesn't just happen. Reliability requires planning, preparation, and a committed team-approach where every technician is fully qualified for the job assigned.

The goal is worth it – customers can utilize technology to be more effective in their work, without the helplessness many feel regarding IT. And increasing everyone's ability to protect their data and their clients' data matters even more with the rise in cybersecurity threats.

Gary's background as a CPA provides a unique perspective on how to leverage and even think about technology. CPAs understand business processes and fiduciary duties, recognizing that the value in IT is more than just keeping everything up and running – it's using technology to its fullest potential on behalf of the business.

*"I strongly believe a company shouldn't buy technology for technology's sake. Instead, they should always have an end goal in mind crafted to achieve a specific business objective. And TriQuest is there making certain **every small business has reliable access to the processing power and information they need.**"*

Doing the right thing, the right way, time-after-time, is how TriQuest earns the trust of its customers.


Success Boils Down To 3 Factors

TriQuest's success is based on its dedication to **three daily standards of operational excellence**, which influence all aspects of their business:

- Teamwork
- Learning
- Planning

There's a reason TriQuest calls its home office the Clubhouse – it was designed to foster an environment of **TEAMWORK**, where the best idea wins, enabling customers to experience optimal solutions built upon reliable technology.

To keep pace with the ever-changing IT industry, TriQuest prioritizes **LEARNING** – every team member invests over 200 working hours annually on learning and skills development. Their in-house learning center hosts regular



educational events and includes a fully developed IT training lab and workroom to ensure technical skills are kept leading edge. This enables them to deliver up-to-date technical support to every customer.

And finally, **PLANNING** makes all the difference, but it must be done consistently and across the board. Each team member is responsible for planning and managing every detail – resolving tickets, customer meetings – every project, every task, every day. Teams review outcomes, both good and not-so-good, to see how they can better plan next time. This meticulous approach to planning reduces risk, saves money, and makes the entire operation more enjoyable.

The Goal: Technology You Can Rely Upon Every Day

When TriQuest started in 1997, computers barely supported multimedia, files sat on isolated machines or on primitive local area networks, and the Internet barely existed.

Today everything's connected – security systems to telephones to HVAC controls to electronic data and all things in between. Ensuring everything works together – reliably, effectively, and securely – requires careful planning and expertise.

For example, Performing Arts Fort Worth/Bass Performance Hall is a TriQuest customer; if you go to see a Broadway show and you're hearing-impaired, you can get a special color-coded teleprompter feed through the wireless network, enabling you to read the audio on your phone but invisible to nearby patrons.

Establishing the infrastructure necessary to support those capabilities, as well as e-mail, websites, networking and more, requires a comprehensive step-by-step approach that goes beyond simply being there to install a software patch when something goes wrong.

Gary and his TriQuest team can accomplish this, thanks to their commitment to constantly improving the necessary professional and technical skills. By working together closely, using processes refined over the last 24 years, they're able to deliver a service greater than the sum of its parts. They meticulously plan and review everything they do to consistently provide reliable technology: IT that just works – when, where, and how you want it.

“This idea of learning, mentorship, comradery, teamwork, and adherence to high standards has all been part of what TriQuest has been doing for a long time, which is why our employee retention and customer retention is so high. When you combine these three things together – teamwork, learning, planning – you get ‘The TriQuest Way’ to provide reliable IT that you can count on.”

Making IT work the way it's supposed to doesn't have to be a mystery anymore.

With the right team at your side, you can banish the chaos once and for all.

Gremlins beware.

For more information, visit TriQuest at <https://triquesttech.com/>.