

# HARTFORD BUSINESS JOURNAL

JANUARY 24, 2000

## ROOKIES

### Quality service still tops

By Judith A. Roman

**A**fter working in the information technology field for more than 10 years, Nancy Waterman, 33, realized she was a talented computer technician. As network manager for EGS Electrical Group in Farmington she was responsible for 13 networks, including 600 personal computers. But when changes in management caused her job description to include more paperwork rather than "hands on" equipment operation, frustration set in. "I knew it was time to leave when I dreaded going into work each morning," Waterman recalls.

A member of Network Users International — which meets monthly at New Horizons training facility in Windsor — Waterman discussed starting her own business with fellow members and other colleagues. She was quickly convinced there were sufficient new business clients available who needed her services. She called her company Network-IT — the IT an acronym for information technology, her field of expertise.

"Our niche," she explained, "is providing full service PC and network installation and support for small businesses. If I can get into a company and talk to them, I know I can help them. During the initial free consultation, I give them ideas of how they can be more efficient and effective."

Those services include support of multi-site locations and connections to the Internet; custom design of local or wide area networks; establishing standards and appropriate security; support of existing networks; system administration; patches; upgrades; and troubleshooting.

Network-IT can administer the user's network remotely and will configure the

### Vital statistics

**Business name:** Network-IT LLC  
**Principal owners:** Nancy AF Waterman  
**Address:** 208 Freeman Rd., Middletown 06457  
**Telephone:** Local (860) 345-7440; Toll Free (877) 345-7440  
**Fax:** (860) 345-8191  
**Started doing business:** March 15, 1999  
**Start-up costs:** \$4,000  
**Financing:** Personal  
**Number of employees:** Two full-time; one part-time  
**Type of business:** A full service PC/network company, installing and supporting PCs and networks  
**Web site:** [www.network-it.net](http://www.network-it.net)



Diane Lagasse, top, Derik Waterman and Nancy Waterman

network so employees can access it from home or on the road. The company will assist with printers, scanners, CD-ROMS, modems and all other computer peripherals.

"We're available 24/7 to provide support. We make an extra effort to give users the answers they need. It's this high level of service that sets us apart," Waterman said.

Assisting her are Diana Lagasse, 26, a computer technician who builds and provides support for PCs, and Derik Waterman, Nancy's 17-year-old son, who works part-time maintaining the office, installing software and making deliveries, a service offered at no charge. Diana, who resides in Bristol, worked at EGS for 5 years in PC desktop support. She came on board last November. Derik started in December.

The conference room, office area and workshop/storage space for Network-IT occupies some 450 square feet of the spacious downstairs level of the Waterman home. "We currently meet all zoning requirements, she pointed out, "but with the addition of another employee, which may happen within six months, we'll probably be looking for office space in Middletown. The only special equipment on site, other than the typical computer systems and peripherals, is a CD Writer, which allows Network-IT to store all the data from a user's PC on a CD."

Network-IT services are charged at the

rate of \$80 per hour for businesses and \$70 per hour for individuals and non-profit groups. The lower rate is charged if the work is desktop rather than network related. Travel is charged at one-half the regular rate and is only charged to clients more than 20 minutes away. "We also charge for telephone consultations," Waterman added, "but the clock isn't ticking as soon as they call; we charge if it takes half an hour on the phone to solve their problem. We're here to help and don't want users to be afraid to pick up the phone and call us."

Waterman estimates she has a roster of 20 clients in towns spanning from Cranston, RI, to Boston, MA, including individuals who rarely require more than one visit to small businesses which may require ongoing attention. Network-IT does not yet provide service contracts.

Waterman hopes to grow the company, but wants the growth to be transparent to her customers. "I always want to provide a good solid level of customer service — and this may mean not growing too fast," she added. "Basically I enjoy the positive interaction with my customers. I can communicate very well with small companies and I get a feeling of accomplishment, like I've made a difference when I help them with their computer systems." ■

Judith A. Roman can be reached at [JARoman@aol.com](mailto:JARoman@aol.com)