

STRONG TEAMS, GROWING COMPANIES

AKUMINA

A VESTED FOR GROWTH Business Champion

Ed Rogers and Steven Sherkanowski founded Akumina in 2011 with one thought in mind: They wanted their business to drive their clients' success. Indeed, Rogers said the Latin "acumina" translates loosely to "driving a successful business outcome."

Akumina provides website implementation services for the Ektron content-management software platform, as well as content-authoring tools for non-technical managers of Microsoft SharePoint 2013 websites. Using SharePoint or Ektron, Akumina creates software and builds web applications based on their clients' needs.

"A person working in a company's PR department is only going to update a small section of its website," Rogers said. "The person managing the front page of the website might be a more-sophisticated user, so we deliver a more-sophisticated app that gives them much more control."

In just 2 1/2 years, Akumina has amassed more than 125 clients. It reached \$4 million in sales in 2013, said Rogers, and is on track to eclipse those sales this year.

As its portfolio has grown, so has Akumina. Its workforce leapt from just four people in 2011 to 37 employees today, and Rogers expects to have 45 by year's end. The company also expanded its headquarters on Temple Street in Nashua.

Rogers said experience and collaboration set Akumina apart from others. Its success, he said, "is all about my employees, their experience and the ability to work together."

"We do a better job of collaborating to get to the right solution," he said. "Our

goal is to slow down, do the blueprint right, before we write a line of code. That's a little bit different than what a lot of software companies do today."

Rogers also said product development and content management experience run deep in the company, quipping, "This is not our first trip to the rodeo." He, Sherkanowski, and many others at Akumina



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previously worked together at Ektron, a global Web technology company Rogers co-founded with his brother in Nashua in 1999.

Akumina's distinctive "collaborate-then-code" culture is one the company has worked hard to build, said Rogers.

"We're very deliberate about our culture and keeping it in a way that helps us build the business and maintain our differentiation within the space," he said.



FROM LEFT: EDWARD ROGERS, CEO AND STEVEN SHERKANOWSKI, COO

Rogers said Akumina's culture ensures that employees are vested in its success and is a key reason the company has hit all of its targets.

"As we looked for investment partners we wanted to maintain this culture. Vested for Growth has allowed us to be aggressive in seizing the opportunity while it exists, without sacrificing on our culture," he said.

For example, the company presented to as many as 10,000 attendees at the worldwide Microsoft SharePoint Conference in Las Vegas in March. "Without the investment from Vested for Growth, our attendance at this show would not have been possible," according to Rogers.

Rogers acknowledges marquee clients like Walmart, Dolby Laboratories, and National Oilwell Varco. "Those are good clients to have and good milestones to hit," he said.

A personal lesson, Rogers said, has come from his transition from idea-driven entrepreneur to metrics-driven CEO.

"It's always important to work on the business, not just in the business," said Rogers. "If you put the right people in place who allow you to work on the business, you'll eventually find a whole different approach to how you grow the business. If you work in the business, you can sometimes get bogged down with all the individual tasks." 🌱