



**Praj Patel, executive vice-president of Richmond-based Talent Technology, which has been listed in the 2009 Deloitte Technology Fast 500.**

# This firm's got Talent

*Recruiting/hiring software design company Talent Technology busts into Deloitte's Top 500 growth firms in North America*

**by Martin van den Hemel**

*Staff Reporter*

What started in modest fashion as four guys designing software in a Downtown Vancouver condo has transformed into an 80-employee Richmond firm with an impressive and growing list of accolades.

This week, Talent Technology was one of just 50 Canadian firms to be named to the 2009 Deloitte Technology Fast 500, which ranks the fastest growing technology, media, telecommunications and life-sciences companies in North America.

The Shellbridge Way software firm ranked 370, and company executive vice-president Praj Patel said making the list is both a validation and vote of confidence of the employees' hard work.

It was a decade ago when company co-founder and chief executive officer Jade Bourelle assembled a team of talent and began designing the software, which helps small- and medium-sized firms with the hiring process by ranking applicants based on search criteria such as job description.

Talent Technology registered a five-year revenue growth rate of

329 per cent.

Today, the company's two types of software offerings, HireDesk and Resume Mirror, are utilized by more than 700 customers who subscribe online.

In a data centre in Vancouver, Talent Technology hosts the service on its servers, but users from all over the world can log-in via their web browser and access the recruiting software and manage the hiring process.

Companies pay a monthly subscription to use the continually evolving hiring tool.

"We're...certainly in the top 10 recruiting software companies in North America," Patel said.

At some point, every company hires, and it can be a daunting task perusing hundreds of resumes sent in for a single position, he said.

And with the worldwide economy still struggling along, there are more people than ever looking for work.

With companies always seeking out the most talented employees, that's where Talent Technology's offerings speed up and streamline the process.

"Increasingly, that hiring is done online and it's done through the internet...Applicants then come to your website, they apply online, the HR department, the recruiters then get that application and they may have hundreds."

Facing a flood of applications, there simply isn't time for a human resources manager to wade through it all.

Using intelligent software employing mathematical and statistical modelling that ranks the applicants based on the content of their resumes, a company can narrow

the list to a relatively manageable 10 or 20 prospective hires.

HireDesk is a complete recruiting application service, allowing a recruiter to create a job description, post that description on their website or job boards like workopolis.com or monster.ca.

The HireDesk software provides tools to the recruiters, enabling them to search and sort the information, and then manage the hiring process, including arranging interviews and allowing applicants to take tests.

The target market for HireDesk is the more than 200,000 North American firms and organizations with between 100 and 5,000 employees, including health authorities and police forces, Patel said.

Though it originally had an office in Vancouver, Patel said Talent Technology made a conscious decision to move to Richmond in order to tap into the pool of software writing talent. Its central location in the Lower Mainland means it draws employees from throughout the Lower Mainland.

So what does the future hold for Talent Technology?

Patel said the company plans to continue to acquire other companies with interesting offerings, so that Talent's software designers don't have to come up with all of the products. Over the past five years, the company has acquired five firms.

It will also look to improve its existing products, and then consider international expansion as well in other English-speaking countries.

And in case you're wondering, Talent Technology currently has six or seven open positions, and uses its own software behind the scenes to manage the hiring process.

## Interchange 'entirely for port,' says councillor

*MLA urges city to offer cash as highway project deadline looms*

**by Matthew Hoekstra**

*Staff Reporter*

A proposed Highway 91 interchange will do little but serve a port that no longer pays taxes to the city, a veteran councillor charged this week.

"This is entirely for the port, it has nothing to do with the City of Richmond," said Coun. Harold Steves.

Richmond East MLA Linda Reid last week urged the city to ante up cash for a new interchange at Nelson Road. The \$26.9-million project, largely funded by senior governments, is \$3 million short, and Richmond council has already turned down a request to pay the difference.

Steves said the design proposed by the province is for a level crossing at Westminster Highway, instead of the city's preference of a raised roadway.

That, he said, would continue to give the expected truck volume of 3,100 easy access to East Richmond farmland.

"We don't want a level crossing. A level crossing opens up the entire frontage of the Gilmore farm and any other land that they want to access when they develop."

The port now owns the 200-acre (81-hectare) Gilmore farm, but has said it has yet to make plans to use it.

Steves maintains the province wants to build a new bridge over the South Arm of the Fraser at No. 8 Road, and the new interchange is needed to facilitate it.

"Everything to build this new crossing is falling into place," he said. "It would destroy East Richmond farmland."

Steves also said Port Metro Vancouver owes Richmond \$2 million in back taxes. Although the federal agency isn't required to pay tax, the previous port entity used to pay a grant to the city in lieu of taxes.

"Why would we accept \$2 million in federal downloading and then give them \$3 million for a level crossing we don't want?"

A call to Port Metro Vancouver was not returned by press time.

Last week Linda Reid told the Review the project would be a boost for the B.C. economy and is important for the safety of residents who live along Westminster Highway.

The project must be completed by March 31, 2011 to qualify for federal infrastructure stimulus money. Reid said that means \$3 million must be found before Christmas for it to be built under the program.

## Asian students boost graduation rates

Students of Asian origin have driven up B.C.'s high school graduation rates to the highest in the country, according to a report released Thursday.

"Most Asian-origin communities attach great importance to formal education, leading to higher rates of high school completion than the national average," said John Richards in his report for the C.D. Howe Institute.

In B.C., over one-quarter of people ages 15 to 24 report an Asian origin. Of those young people, the drop-out rate is one-quarter below the overall national average.

In recent years, the Richmond School District has boasted one of the highest graduation rates in the province.

In Richmond, 60 per cent of the population is of Chinese or South Asian ancestry, and two in five are of Chinese origin.

Richards found in B.C., only 10.5 per cent of those ages 20 to 24 did not complete high school, compared with 13.8 per cent across Canada.

—by Matthew Hoekstra