

EORM offers one-stop shop for regulatory, risk, green advice

Friday, September 16, 2011, 3:00am PDT

By Jon Xavier. Researcher/Reporter - *Silicon Valley / San Jose Business Journal*

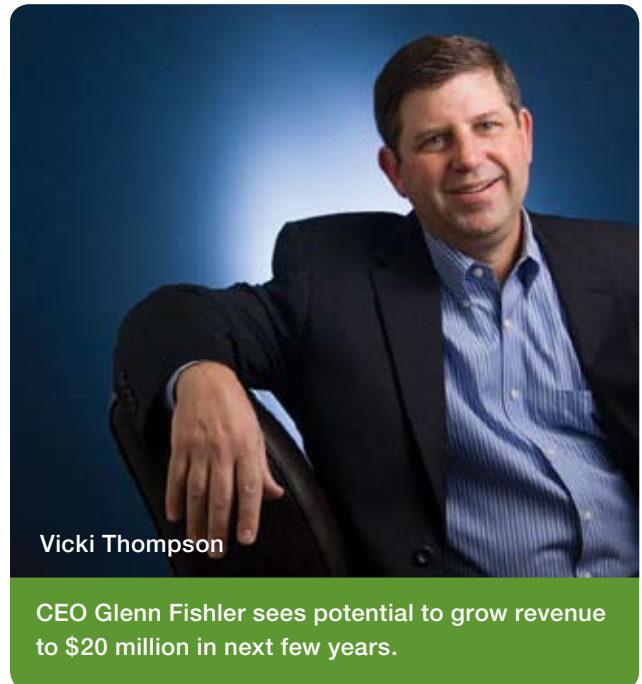
Safety, health, environment and sustainability have become important issues for business, and a San Jose consulting firm is building its company on those issues.

EORM Inc. CEO Glenn Fishler said recent trends in the regulations and best practices mean that many businesses need help keeping up with a rapidly changing environment. And EORM is looking to provide a one-stop shop for that assistance.

EORM, which stands for Environmental & Occupational Risk Management, is a full-service consulting firm that helps its clients ensure they comply with regulations and minimize risk to their employees, the public and the environment. This can include everything from testing indoor air quality and identifying sources of dangerous emissions, to redesigning industrial machinery to make it safer for workers to use and training employees on the latest containment measures for hazardous materials.

EORM's revenue has been a steady \$13 million to \$15 million annually, but Fishler said he wants to grow that to more than \$20 million in the next few years. Part of that growth is going to be organic, he said, but the company is also looking to grow through acquisitions.

Fishler thinks that environmental, health and safety is well suited to this sort of growth. Rather than working with multiple, small, specialized consultants, companies today benefit from consolidating this work with a larger, full-service firm like EORM.



Vicki Thompson

CEO Glenn Fishler sees potential to grow revenue to \$20 million in next few years.

A good example of this strategy was the company's acquisition of Oxnard-based Sigma Engineering Inc., which was completed in August. The deal, which Fishler declined to put a price on, added 20 employees to bring the company to 130, and gave EORM access to a deeper well of talent around environmental sustainability and broadening its reach in Southern California. A lot of Sigma's existing customers are in the public sector, opening new opportunities for EORM to market its services. It also adds about \$2 million to EORM'S top line.

“It’s actually a very interesting business that I hope to learn a lot from,” Fishler said. “We hope that there’ll be some organic growth there. Part of what you look for when you acquire a consultancy is that there’ll be synergy between each others’ clients. The firm has services we’ve not been able to offer before. And they’re like a kid in a candy store with us because they’ve not had people that can do what we do.”

On the organic growth side, Fishler sees three main industries as opportunities for growth for EORM: cleantech, biotech and health care.

With cleantech, the environmental sustainability pitch obviously resonates. It also makes good use of experience EORM already has, given that the company started by serving the semiconductor industry and there’s a lot of overlap between that and technologies like solar.

Biotech companies generally understand the need for risk management, given that they are working with sensitive materials that often are very hard to recover if something goes wrong. And the health care industry is experiencing huge growth as the demographics in America start to run older and people need more treatment, while at the same time new regulations are causing it to pay more attention to workplace and patient safety.

Steve Weirauch, safety management specialist for **El Camino Hospital**, an EORM customer, agreed with that assessment of the health care industry. Weirauch said the way things are done has changed considerably just in the six years he’s been there, so it’s important that hospitals like his have support to keep up with the change.

“We’re learning more and more to do things better and safer, and requirements are getting stricter. There’s no way I could do it here by myself. I’m starting to rely more on having outside experts to come in and assist,” he said.

Isaac Young, senior director of supply chain operations for Novato-based **BioMarin Pharmaceutical Inc.**, said he has been working with EORM to help develop recovery plans for dealing with major disasters. Events like the recent Japanese earthquakes have demonstrated to business in general the importance of having such plans in place to limit the disruption of such crises, but Young said they’re becoming particularly important for the biotech industry. Not only are they mandated by law in some cases, but also biotech has to deal with an unusually fragile supply chain since many of the biological components it relies upon are only available from a single source, and research is so costly that starting over is often not an option.

“The foremost advantage to working with EORM is expertise,” he said. “They can bring in the someone who’s an expert in whatever problem we have in front of us.”

Jon Xavier can be reached at 408.299.1826 or jxavier@bizjournals.com.

EORM Inc.

Headquarters: San Jose

CEO: Glenn Fishler

Revenue: \$15+ million

Founded: 1990

Employees: 130

Web: www.eorm.com

Phone: 800.648.1506