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Tech CEO works for Enlightened culture amid change

BY ANDREW DIETDERICH
CRAIN'S DETROIT BUSINESS

Clad in an olive shirt, a purplish cardigan, black jeans and a pair of Doc Martens, Steve Glauberman doesn't look like your typical tech CEO.

If you ran into the young-looking 47-year-old CEO of Ann Arbor's **Enlighten Inc.** at one of the city's restaurants or bookstores, chances are you wouldn't be able to tell him apart from many of the students.



Glauberman

But that's just the way he is — not much different than he was in 1983 when he was an idealistic, ambitious, 26-year-old college grad who wrote a software program for two months straight, mostly in a bathrobe, to meet an important deadline.

Except now he runs an \$8 million Web-development company that creates sites that help sell million-dollar homes and fancy sports cars, among other things.

He also has a fatter wallet. "I never had any real desire to become the next Microsoft," Glauberman said. "I didn't mind getting rich, but really I just like having fun and enjoy creating the culture we have at Enlighten. A culture where hip, fun and smart people want to work, you know,

just wanting to be a little different than your standard companies."

Culture is what it's all about at Enlighten, and Glauberman said the reason is simple: Get the right culture, and the rest will fall into place.

Need proof?

Enlighten survived the dot-com crash and continues to thrive: Revenue is expected to be up about 10 percent this year to about \$8 million, and the company likely will add 15 people to its 50-person staff.

And though sluggish tech spending has limited how fast Enlighten could have grown, he said, things have gone well. The company has posted a profit every year and has no outside investors.

Around 1995, Glauberman led Enlighten from a company that produced electronic brochures and educational materials largely on disk to a major player in Web-site development.

Glauberman said he expects the company to double in size in the next two to three years through additional business. The likely fate of the company, he said, is eventually to be acquired by a larger company.

However, that isn't about to happen anytime soon, especially because the company is focused on more important matters. Two of its biggest customers, **Pulte Corp.** (NYSE: PHM) and the state of **Michigan**, launched new Web sites within the past month. Another of its most active clients, **Audi of America**, is continually launching products and Web sites to go along with them. More projects are in the works.

So if the right culture equates to success, how does Glauberman go about creating the right one?

For one, the office has fun. There's a big-screen TV in the kitchen area complete with a video game hookup, and a portable basketball hoop in the parking lot.

Also, employees have the freedom to express new ideas and thoughts — good and bad — to anyone else and, especially, Glauberman.

It's an approach that works.

"They're absolutely fantastic," said Jim Lesinski, vice president of sales and marketing at Pulte. "I tend to be a bit critical when it comes to dealing with any supplier, but they are truly one of the best we work with."

Lesinski said he appreciates the fact that senior managers work hands-on with the project.

He said Pulte, which launched its new Web site about a month ago, has seen results from more than a year of working with Enlighten: Registration is up by 200 percent, and the length of the average user session has increased 16 percent.

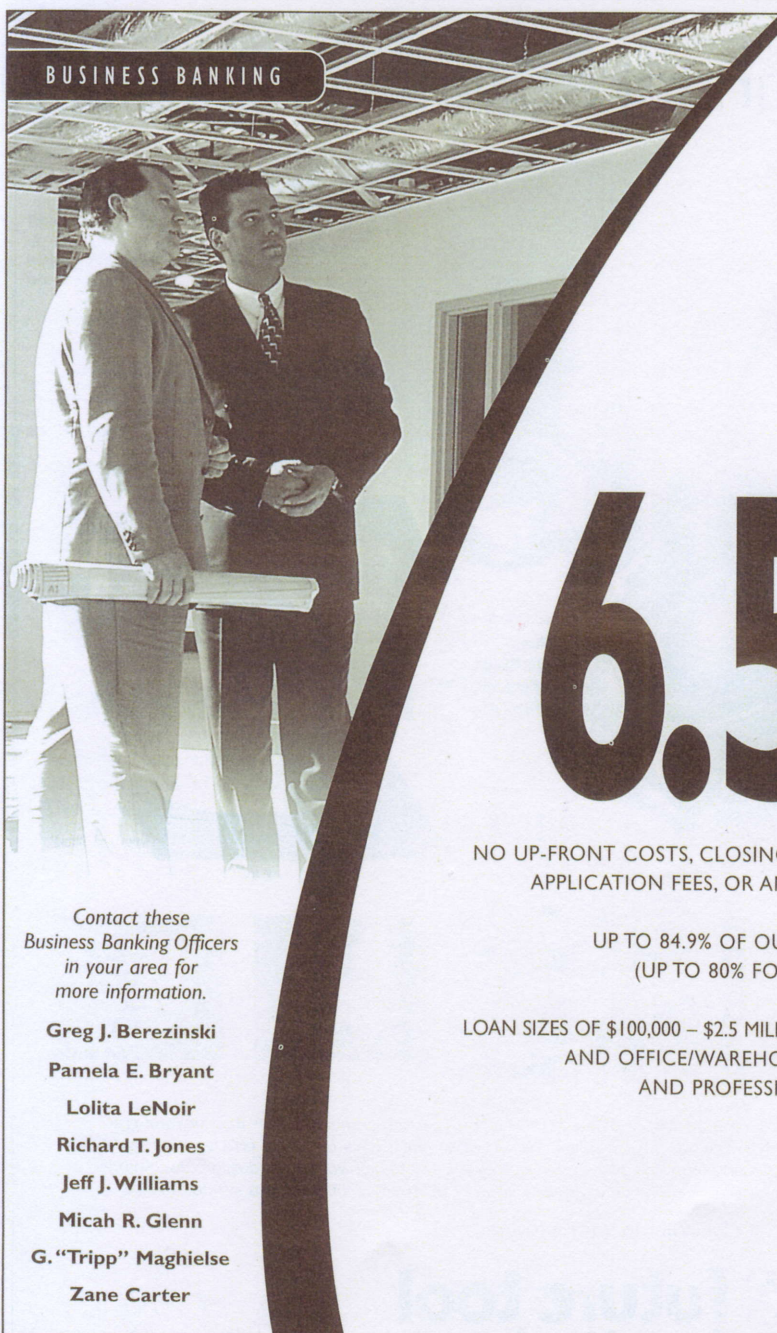
The site allows potential home buyers to browse Pulte communities and design a home and helps with financing.

Antoine Dubeauclard, a partner and co-founder of Troy-based **Media Genesis Inc.**, a company that also offers Web-based services, said Enlighten is one of the Southeast Michigan companies that sets the standard.

"Enlighten is one of the few companies that we look at and say, 'Gosh, these are really good players,'" Dubeauclard said.

He said he feels that way because Enlighten appeared never to buy into any Web fads, opting instead to go with good old-fashioned business values and stress quality over quantity.

"And the good companies in this business are the ones that tend to stick to one area and have leader-



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MAKING THE FIRST SALE

Steve Glauberman, a 1979 computer-science graduate of the **University of Michigan**, started Enlighten in 1983. He founded the company to produce digital brochures, manuals and training. He spent two months in 1983 working out of his house to create a prototype of his digital brochure.

Glauberman, 26 at the time, took the product to the **Comdex** computer trade show in November 1983 after buying his first suit — and briefcase, which he still uses today. On the first day of the show, he tried to interest potential clients, to no avail, until nearly 5 p.m., just before the show closed.

Exhausted and questioning whether he should even be at the event because of his lack of success, he forced himself to approach the booth of a company called **Software Publishing Corp.**

"They looked at it and said, 'This is exactly what we want to do for marketing,'" Glauberman said. "They were like, 'We're going to have a group product manager fly to Ann Arbor next Monday, and we have seven different products we want these for.'"

Digital brochures and training became the bread and butter of Enlighten until 1995, when the Internet exploded in popularity.

— Andrew Dietderich

Enlighten: Creative growth continues

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ship that's been in place for a long time," Dubeauclard said. "That's Enlighten."

Although Enlighten is predominantly a Web service company today, Glauberman didn't rush to the Web when everyone else did. He said the quality of Enlighten's original products were far superior to anything they could do on the Web, because of smaller bandwidths that competitors had to wrestle with.

"It would have been like going back and starting all over because

the bandwidths were so low," he said. "You just couldn't do as much technically."

Instead, Glauberman said, the company continued to produce electronic brochures and training materials until the mid-1990s, opting to take advantage of improving technology — such as CDs with more storage space and faster computers to process them.

Enlighten, however, migrated to the Internet with its customers as they asked for it and as technology allowed it to do many of the things

on the Web that it had perfected on removable media such as CDs.

Whereas only 10 percent of the company's business was Web-based in 1995, more than 90 percent is today, with the rest from CD and kiosk products.

Enlighten has about 25 main customers, including big names such as **DaimlerChrysler AG**, **IBM Corp.** (NYSE: IBM), **Xerox Corp.** (NYSE: XRX), **Microsoft Corp.** (Nasdaq: MSFT) and Pulte.

It's a far cry from the early days when Glauberman and his small staff worked tirelessly for just a handful of mostly software companies to come up with creative approaches to otherwise stale products: software demos and electronic brochures (See box, this page).

For example, Enlighten once created a virtual press-event kit that sent the demo software, along with mini bottles of champagne and champagne glasses in a basket, to reporters.

Glauberman said it's the same kind of creativity — only with more complex projects — that will foster Enlighten's continued growth.

The key, he said, will be to make sure people continue to want to work there. For that reason, he plans to continue work on his most important project these days: the culture of Enlighten.

"People look at Enlighten as a creative company," Glauberman said. "They don't necessarily look at us as building serious, technical Web applications, when in fact we do lots of that."

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Employee pleads guilty to computer intrusion

BY ANDREW DIETDERICH
CRAIN'S DETROIT BUSINESS

A Rochester Hills man pleaded guilty earlier this month to computer intrusion of his former employer, **PC Treasures Inc.**

According to a statement released by Oxford-based PC Treasures, Gregg Wysocki pleaded guilty as part of a plea agreement. Sentencing is set for Jan. 13 in 40th Circuit Court in Lapeer.

According to a complaint filed in Lapeer's 40th Circuit Court by the High-Tech Unit of the Criminal Division of the **Michigan Attorney General's Office**, Wysocki, 40, allegedly copied company documents classified as sensitive and valuable in restricted areas that required passwords. PC Treasures has filed a civil suit against Wysocki in **Oakland County Circuit Court**.

PC Treasures bundles software for builders and sellers of non-branded personal computers.

The complaint alleges Wysocki used the information to market himself to **Microgistix Inc.**, a Minneapolis-based competitor of PC Treasures, promising 80,000 prospective customers.

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