

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: **The Precisionists Inc.** BY MATT AMIS

»» For Ernest Dianastasis, a big-time career move boiled down to a simple equation.

“There is a huge divide in our country between the number of people living with disabilities, and their ability to gain meaningful and sustainable employment that allows them to perform to their strengths,” he says.

So, for Dianastasis—a longtime fixture in the local business world as head of Computer Aid Inc. (CAI) and a prodigious community presence through his work on the Delaware Business Roundtable, the DSCC, Vision Coalition of Delaware and others—the time arrived to balance that equation.

This past summer, Dianastasis cashed out his control of CAI and used the proceeds to launch The Precisionists, Inc.

A national B-Corporation (a for-profit entity that is also equally driven by a social mission; think Ben & Jerry’s or Patagonia), The Precisionists Inc. delivers administrative and technology services via specially built personnel teams which include individuals with disabilities.

The organization’s mission is to “... bridge the divide between millions of job openings in the U.S. with the untapped talent pool of people with disabilities.” Its lofty goal: to employ 10,000 people with disabilities by 2025.

“People are defined by their ability, not by their disability. Creating jobs means creating jobs for people of all abilities,” said Governor Jack Markell in a press release. “Now, more than ever, our state and our nation’s competitiveness rely on using our full potential—everyone’s full potential. I



Ernie Dianastasis with Thorkil Sonne (center), Director and President of Specialisterne Foundation, Inc., and Governor Jack Markell.

am thrilled that The Precisionists will be a Delaware-based company, yet it will have a global vision and mission. Ernie

Dianastasis has demonstrated an ability to bring together major corporations and the disability world to create meaningful jobs through best practices. I am confident that with his leadership, The Precisionists will transform thousands of lives for the better.”

During his tenure as head of the National Governor’s Association, Markell focused his platform on employing people with disabilities. He introduced Dianastasis to a likeminded Danish organization called Specialisterne, and arranged for a meeting. “So we started working on how to do this in the U.S.,” Dianastasis says, “and we ran a successful pilot program at CAI that created

over 40 jobs for people with autism.

“I thought: Just Imagine what would happen if I started a company that was fully focused on this.”

The Precisionists Inc. focuses on individuals who have autism, visual or hearing impairments, and disabled veterans—subgroups that Dianastasis calls “a huge untapped labor market.” Research shows that these groups are vastly underemployed or unemployed, and often struggle to adapt to the expectations of an existing job position or environment.

Precisionists staffers perform outreach to major companies across the country, offering services that range from scanning documents or data entry work, to something as complex as software development of software testing, and

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everything in between. Once a contract is landed, they assemble blended teams of people with and without disabilities to execute on the work. While The Precisionists, Inc. is headquartered in Delaware, the plan is to establish operation centers across the country to meet demand.

“At the end of the day, even though companies have an interest in helping people with disabilities—most of them don’t know how,” Dianastasis says. “Precisionists is taking the risk out of the equation. Not only in being good at what we do in terms of the work, but also understanding how to assess, train, and nurture people in the workforce doing this kind of work.”

Businesses or individuals can connect to The Precisionists Inc. through its website (www.theprecisionists.com), and the organization has allies in Easter Seals and Delaware Health and Social Services, among others, to assist with outreach.

For Dianastasis, the career sea-change was as much about a savvy business choice as it was crafting a legacy and helping thousands of marginalized Americans.

“I have a younger brother that has a disability,” he says. “There are about 45 million people in the U.S. with a disability. That’s about 1 in 6. That means practically everybody has a family member or friend who faces these challenges. It hits home with just about everybody.

“I’ve been very fortunate in 30 years to be part of two very good companies (CAI, and previously, IBM) and I really wanted to—in the final segment of my career—be able to look back on and be proud of all the previous stuff.”