



Eric Rongley, CEO

S T A T S

Skill set: Strong in Java, C++, Oracle, Tibco, and .NET

Verticals: Financial services and independent software vendors

Delivery: HQ in Shanghai, 1 in Wuhan and 1 in Chengdu, China

Number of Employees: approaching 300

CEO: Eric Rongley

Accreditations: CMM Level 5, ISO 27001, All project managers are PMP certified

Year founded: 2001

"Bleum's work has been a significant factor in our company's success, helping it to become more efficient and disciplined in software delivery. I can confidently recommend Bleum as a solid and reliable vendor, and an expert in the field."

— CTO, Top 30 US Credit Card Issuer

Bleum

This offshore development center specialist is building on China's strengths while transforming issues to its advantage

Eric Rongley is not a person who will take the oft-beaten track. If he were, he might have just taken the Indian road to offshore development centers. He chose China instead. It's a move he is proud of. And he has reason to be too. The software development outsourcing company he founded in 2001, Bleum, based in Shanghai, now has almost 300 employees, and is CMM Level 5 and ISO 27001 certified. That is no mean achievement in a country which is known to have many challenges. But Rongley chose to focus on China's strengths instead. There were three reasons to opt for China, he says. "It is easier to hire high-caliber engineers than in India. Secondly, I found Chinese engineers to be more stable resulting in much lower attrition rates. Finally, I chose China over India because it has better infrastructure and government support."

Even within the software development domain, Rongley has chosen a different direction for Bleum. The company specializes in providing offshore development centers to clients in the US and UK. Rongley says, "We have large teams dedicated to a single client that generate higher levels of quality and productivity. Within our ODCs, we provide a mix of ADM, testing, and data warehousing services tailored to the needs of a customer."

The company has worked out a three-pronged approach to overcome challenges. The main issue in China is that of capability, which is being addressed through CMM certifications. Rongley calls process orientation as being core to the company's DNA. The company has expertise in .NET, Java/J2EE, automated testing, SAP and various other technologies, and domain specializations in banking, credit card, CRM/marketing, telecom, etc. As the VP Engineering of a US logistics software vendor says, "[We have] been engaged in business with Bleum since 2003, during which time Bleum has provided our business with excellent support in the areas of Product Development, Product Maintenance and Product Testing."

The second issue is that of IP and data protection. Bleum is ISO 27001 certified. This is the highest security certification available. And what about the language barrier? Bleum approaches it by being an 'English only' company and putting in place a CMM-like English program. This objectively measures the proficiency in English of all employees. "Our English program is winning us praise from our clients," says Rongley. All project managers of Bleum are PMP certified. And as the company is American owned and managed, it is easy for the company to understand the culture and the business pressures their clients in the West have.

With such a sound strategy in place, the company is now looking ahead. "The rising demand for outsourcing combined with China's strengths build a huge opportunity to create a world-class company that will someday rival India's best," says Rongley. The company's strategy has been specially designed to create the market leader in China.

Bleum is expanding its US sales office to include onshore delivery capabilities and is in the process of setting up a large software campus in a second tier city in China. This will serve as a long-term hedge against rising costs in Shanghai. Again, sound thinking there. ■