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November 18

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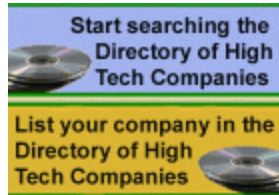
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OAOT seeks a firm to enter government sector

8/12/2002 8:00:00 AM

By [Taylor Lincoln](#)

OAOT Technologies, a Greenbelt, Md., firm that was spun off from OAO Corp. in 1996, is shopping for an established contractor to accelerate its recent foray into the public sector.

"We are actively seeking an acquisition of a platform company that could help us get into the government sector," said Charlie Leader, who took over as chief executive officer of OAOT in April.

OAOT was prohibited from pursuing public-sector work until December of last year under a five-year, noncompete clause with OAO, a systems integrator catering to the federal government that was acquired by Bethesda, Md.-based Lockheed Martin late last year.

OAOT's planned move into government contracting parallels the strategies of many Potomac area firms that are pursuing federal work at a time when government spending is rising and the commercial economy is crawling.

In a survey of Northern Virginia Technology Council firms published last week in Potomac Tech Journal, 65 percent of respondents that are not currently working with the government said they planned to pursue such business.

OAOT currently is participating in one contract with an intelligence client and is wrapping up terms on another federal contract, Leader said, adding "an acquisition would accelerate our move into the federal market."

OAOT, which last week reported \$375,000 in earnings on revenue of \$43 million for the quarter ending June 30, is looking to buy a firm with annual revenue of about \$75 million, Leader said.

Though OAOT was relegated to commercial work until late last year, it has roots in the public sector. The firm's chairman, John F. Lehman, was secretary of the Navy for six years during the Reagan administration. Lehman is a founding member of J.F. Lehman and Co., a private equity firm that controls about 50 percent of the shares of OAOT.

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Larry Davis, president of Aronson Capital Partners, a Rockville, Md., firm that specializes in mergers and acquisitions, agreed with OAOT's planned move into the public sector and its strategy to get there.

"If you look at what's going on out there, it makes perfect sense," Davis said. "I think [an acquisition] is the intelligent way to go about it. They recognize that they're a little late to the party. A \$75 million acquisition will give them the size to become a player."

OAOT recently hired Howard Myers as vice president of its public sector division. Myers comes from Siemens AG, where he was general manager of the firm's federal division.

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