

ADVERTORIAL



THE EXECUTIVE Profile

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Claus Schwanitz from Act Computers: the best service, affordable prices and good friends

1. Where are you from?

Germany, moved to Florida in 1988.

2. How long have you been in business?

I've been doing computer work for a long time and owning computer stores since 1984. ACT COMPUTERS was founded here in Florida in 1995 - this year we celebrate our 10 years! Our head technician Juergen started computing when he was 5 years old and has now 22 years of experience. Today, we have 8 technician working full time.

3. What inspired you to start ACT Computers?

The despaired need from some business friends and others to provide quality computer care. I was looking for a small town with friendly people.

4. Describe some of the obstacles you faced along the course of building your company. How were these overcome?

There were really no obstacles. We are very honest to our customers and treat everybody with respect. We do not over charge and love what we do. Our customers appreciate that in coming back and recommending our services. We have almost 10,000 customers in our list right now.

5. What are some of the best experiences you had with ACT Computers?

People coming back to us bringing in chocolate chip cookies and telling us

how much they like our services. Being able to pay the bills in time and having no debts at all, feels great, too.

6. How important are computers in business today?

Today, it's unthinkable to be in business without a computer. Data is more and more important. We need to have fast access to all possible information that is available at a fingertip on the internet. We can't turn around anymore and try to do our jobs without these "monster machines".

7. What are the "hottest" trends in computing today?

Wireless networking, the internet, fast hand held game machines, more and more communication and entertainment.

8. What's the most important aspect a business owner should consider when purchasing a computer?

THEIR NEEDS, many customers are over or under buying systems today and getting badly punished by their decisions. Wrong decisions based on insufficient information on what their specific needs are and what is available to accommodate them. The necessary upgrades could be very expensive. We get a lot of unhappy customers in our store who complain about not being well informed by the sales people in super stores who care more for their commission than the customers satisfaction. We don't pay commissions to any of our technicians.

And our customer's needs are the most important factor for us.

9. What are the services ACT Computers offers?

We do it all: build computers in house, repairs, upgrades, networking from 2 to 200 computers, quality products, training, web-page design, service calls at your house and most important of all - the service of educated technicians who are willing to help and understand all aspects of your problems. Very important too: Be careful to walk into our store: you may find friends for life!

10. What is ACT Computers greatest competitive advantage?

- * 24 hours return policy on most repairs,
- * absolute reliable technicians,
- * 280,000 products from 1,700 manufacturers overnight or in stock
- * Indian River County's largest computer store
- * 10 years in business at the same location
- * thousands of happy customers can not be wrong
- * local customer support - we answer our phones in person here in Vero where we live and not in India or Pakistan

11. In your opinion what makes a terrific entrepreneur?

An honest person

12. What memorable mistakes, if any, have you made in business?

What did you learn from them and how can they be avoided?

Being upset with customers that even thou they've known us for years and trusted us with all their computer work in the past, when they needed new systems, they forgot good service and went elsewhere to save a couple dollars and get the reaaaall deal. They got punished badly and came back to us. My mistake is to accept that as part of their personnel experience and not feel upset as a business owner about it - I promise to work on that.

13. Do you have any advice for business owners?

Make sure you are supporting local businesses or you'll may not have many customers in the near future. Don't treat people arrogantly because you make your living from your customers, they can go wherever they feel comfortable, if your place is not the right one - they will leave you and you will be by yourself. When we need something, we always look in our customer list and find what we need. Don't always go looking for the best deals, we all know how that ends, but we tend to forget that when we face a monetary decision. If I have no local support - I can't hire your son and give him a job he needs. If you buy mail-order you support India, China or Pakistan. That maybe nice, but doesn't create the jobs we need here so badly. Think about it.