

Creative Tech hires one of Silicon Valley's top guns

By Joseph Rajendran

SINGAPORE — Homegrown Creative Technology, a small player in California's Silicon Valley, has hired top gun Edward Esber as the president and chief operating officer of its US subsidiary.

Mr. Esber, a computer industry stalwart, was the former chairman and CEO of one of the leading software companies in the world, Ashton-Tate. Under his tenure; Ashton-Tate grew tenfold to a US\$307 million. (about S\$500 million) worldwide software organization before it was acquired, in 1991 by Borland.

Known to be extremely aggressive and perceived as arrogant in some quarters, he nurtured Ashton-Tate from a single-product company to a market-driven, multiple-platform software firm with more than a dozen products.

Creative is a world leader in the multimedia sound 'card market. Its Sound Blaster family is a leading global product and also an industry standard product.

The company also became the first Singapore company to be listed on, Nasdaq.

Commenting on his new position, Mr. Esber said: "We are now starting to recognize the full potential of multimedia and I relish the opportunity to be part of a company that is rich in products and technology and sets the standards for the industry.

"I look forward to helping reinforce Creative's position as a market leader and contributing to the continued success of this dynamic and fast growth company."

Until recently, the 41-yearold Mr. Esber was the president of The Esber Group, which acted as a strategic and marketing consultant to several technology companies. He also serves on the board of directors of two publicly-listed technology, companies, one university and six private companies.

Meanwhile, Creative has continued its technology licensing spree, this time with Massachusetts-based Voice Processing Corp. The agreement will enable Creative to tap the American company's speech recognition technology.

Creative has been extremely aggressive lately. It has just completed buying California's E-Mu Systems for US\$30 million. Last week, it acquired another Californian company, Share Vision Technology, for US\$11 million.

Before the ink on the recent agreements dried, Creative announced a licensing agreement with Calgary-based Archer Communications for an undisclosed lump sum fee over a three-year period.

In the latest arrangement, the firm will license Voice Processing Corp's VProCommand technology. This technology is the engine behind the VoiceAssist speech recognition system. Because the system is dependent on a speaker and supports a large vocabulary, the computer can be activated by voice:

One industry observer said that this new technology had tremendous potential in business, education and entertainment when combined with Creative's Sound Blaster.

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