Education is key

The Institute of Computer Education can help you achieve your full potential, says **James Abela**, ICE director.

James Abela and Matthew Sammut

MONEY When was your company set up and what was your intended market?

JAMES ABELA The Institute of Computer Education (ICE) was set up in the first quarter of 2011. The company is an offspring of another local IT company, NIU, which we set up over six years ago, focusing exclusively on website design and development. Using our knowledge and experience within the IT industry as well as our love for technology, we decided to invest and set up a dedicated IT training centre with a special focus on quality. The intended market for ICE is anyone who would like to learn something new or explore a subject they already know in more depth while obtaining a recognised qualification in the process. We felt that while there are plenty of highly knowledgeable people, they are not achieving their full potential. This state of affairs can only be rectified by following syllabi provided by well-established foreign IT vendors.

M What growth has your company enjoyed since then?

JA Since inception, we have successfully held over 35 different specialised IT courses and helped hundreds of students achieve an IT qualification. Each course runs a number of times during the year, allowing students to attend the sessions which best suit their availability. The company has also achieved a number of official partnerships with international IT brands including ECDL, CISCO and Autodesk. ICE's latest feather in the cap was becoming a Microsoft Silver Partner a few weeks ago. As a company, we invest heavily in equipment and strive to create the perfect learning environment for our students. Additionally, since parking is a major issue, we made sure that there is ample parking space around our premises available for our students.

M What products and services do you offer?

JA ICE offers a large number of specialised short IT courses. Every student has the opportunity to practise during each lesson and sit for the official exam at the end of the course. Exams are carried out online using direct connection with the vendor from our premises. Once done, students will receive an official certificate directly from the respective vendor.

ICE also offers custom training to companies who would like to train their employees in IT. We place huge emphasis on quality control, and this is why lecturers who are chosen to lecture at ICE undergo rigorous vetting. Selected lecturers are also sent to the UK for specialised training. Other quality control procedures include surveys and discussions with students following each course. All the courses offered by ICE can be found at our website on www.icemalta.com

M In which areas does your company specialise?

JA We specialise in providing high quality, results focused and internationally recognised certifications in all areas of information technology. Our courses range from beginner to expert level. These include multimedia courses in areas such as graphic design and video editing; Microsoft courses which include programming and server support; CISCO courses including Computer Technician and CCNA networking. ICE provides all the equipment and software necessary throughout the course for the student to practice.

M Why would you consider Malta to be an ideal launch pad for IT products?

JA Our nation holds an extremely high level of awareness of the importance of technology. This is an advantage in and of itself, but furthermore, we are blessed with talented and skilled people who are willing to share their knowledge with others. This has helped us at ICE to choose from among the very best tutors, thus piling on even more value to our students.

M Do you think that Malta is nurturing enough talent to provide IT companies with the required human resources and skills?

JA There has been heavy investment from the public and private sector in the training of employees – especially in the IT sector, this investment has to be ongoing. Technology advances and employees need to keep up with the latest changes in order to be more efficient and compete both with local and foreign companies. The key to success in today's competitive markets is efficiency – doing more with less. Technology plays a very important role in this and in enabling one's employees to get familiar with and comfortable using the latest technology will make a company more efficient.

M What services are you currently developing?

JA We are working on new training programmes based on new software which will be released in 2012/2013 from various vendors. Our idea is to have a course available for all of the latest software in the market. We are also improving some of our existing courses - this is an ongoing process.

M Where do you see ICE in the next two years?

JA Our aim is for ICE to be the top IT training centre in Malta and the natural choice for all manner of IT training and courses. Unfortunately, too many companies offer poor training which does not fully instruct the student, thus reflecting badly on the student and other training companies. ICE will not be tarred by the same brush. We place huge emphasis on making sure that our students not only enjoy their learning experience but graduate from ICE with a set of new skills.

Institute of Computer Education Ltd., Central Business Centre, Level 2, Suite 2, Imdina Road, Zebbug. Tel: 2146 7787 Email: info@icemalta.com www.icemalta.com