

By Tieu Nha

**F**rank Schellberg, CEO of Germany-based GHP Far East, says that the economic turmoil may prompt companies to start thinking how to lower cost and that one of the options they would consider is outsourcing. "We've learnt that those economic fluctuations are not a disaster, it is another opportunity for outsourcing companies to improve business, re-build processes and so achieve a new balance," Schellberg said. The current economic woes have made GHP Far East focus more on making its production processes efficient.

"In our case, it is a combination of European standards and Vietnamese prices. We even set up a slogan for our company, following our competencies: German Quality – Made in Vietnam," he said. According to Schellberg, improving speed, increasing automatization, emphasizing on software development and motivating people to improve operations are what the company has done to make customers tolerate increases in service fees.

#### Opportunities in difficulties

Europe is GHP Far East's main market. A member of the Swiss Post Solutions Group since 2008, the company has constantly expanded its market topography. At the moment, GHP Far East's major end-customers come from Germany, Switzerland, France, Belgium, Russia and Japan.

Another European market's partner, Luxoft, has also worked very hard and has spent a lot of extra efforts during the economic turbulence. According to La Manh Cuong, CEO of Luxoft, the Russian-based company has carried out several initiatives and measures, from exercising a new engagement model with clients to widening the range of offerings and reaching to a higher level of customers' satisfaction, aiming to help customers "get more for less." "Those measures have helped Luxoft maintain, and even expand, business relationship with major clients, which in turn has allowed us to sustain operations at a time of economic hardship," Cuong said.

Aside from Europe, the U.S. is a large market for Vietnamese software companies, especially in the current difficult time, when IT giants require more benefits with less spending and



Programmers are working at a software company in Quang Trung Software City

Courtesy of QTSC

## Opportunities In Hard Times

An economic slowdown definitely creates tremendous challenges for companies. There are exceptions, however. Companies in Quang Trung Software City (QTSC) have seen tough times as a chance to demonstrate their flexible adaptation that fits clients' needs and offer low-cost outsourcing solutions.

they seek firms in Asia, including those in Vietnam. Do Thanh Nhon, BTM Vietnam's operation director, said that his company has neat and streamlined management systems, and agile and effective methodologies so it can provide clients with a wide range of options to fit their business needs. "We have invested our resources to complete the work at any cost and those clients have become our invaluable references," Nhon said. "Because of those established relationships and commitments, clients see the benefit of investing in BTM, and some of them set long-term plans with us, even in this difficult period."

#### People are the key

Nhon added that to assure commitments to clients, BTM has mapped out a strategy for investing in and developing the talent pool. A reasonable compensation model is built around management by work and objectives. Moreover, BTM has invested in internship programs to prepare human resources in the early stages.

Meanwhile, at GHP Far East, business process outsourcing (BPO) is a new and potential industry for the Vietnamese

workforce. Among its staff, there are several ones who have not obtained a high level of education, said Frank Schellberg. But after joining GHP Far East, employees would be given specific training courses on computer and language skills besides advanced training or communication classes.

To Luxoft's La Manh Cuong, the company's business strategies for years are to get deep into a few specific industries and to diversify services. Yet all have relied on one critical factor: people. "We must have the people who have real outstanding capability and are always able to deliver on promises with clients," Cuong said. "Attracting talents are always interesting yet challenging tasks of any organization, while keeping talents is even a more demanding task and no single measure would be sufficient."

GHP Far East, Luxoft and BTM as well as other members in QTSC have realistic plans for 2013 and the years to come. Some want to focus on BPO contracts from the two giants, the U.S. and the EU. Others seek new strategic markets. They share the same thought, however: People are the key in all plans.