Part of the dream

Steven Golding propels the expansion of SSG Consulting

Never give up, never back down, never lose faith”, are the words uttered by Steven Golding as the interview commences. As a Christian-based organisation, ethics and values lay the foundation at SSG Consulting, says the chief executive officer.

It becomes increasingly evident as the interview progresses that there is a different kind of energy and passion that is exerted by Golding. As a husband to a remarkable woman and a father to three lovely daughters, this man of many talents encapsulates his life motto in one single sentence: “When one day your life flashes before you, make sure it is worth watching.”

He continues, “Each and every day is filled with awesome experiences and I try to live life to the fullest. This includes a comprehensive ‘bucket list’ which seems to grow as fast as it is completed!”

Armed with a sense of humour and a great outlook on life, Golding is adamant that apart from delivering exceptional service and innovative solutions, SSG Consulting has the ability to develop businesses in small balanced steps according to models that will ensure success.

Founded in 2005, the core focus of this organisation continues to span a board spectrum of activities that include project and engineering management and execution, software and business systems development, and maturity development of processes, technology and people. “As a company, we have developed a strong foundation in project controls and life cycle management. Although at the start of SSG, we facilitated project management services to petrochemical and mining industries, it is important to recognise that our services have expanded across the engineering management frontier,” says Golding.

Due to their specialist knowledge in project management, Golding and his team quickly developed a passion for databases and systems. This unique combination of skills created a synergy to develop an integrated project management system, set to take the market by storm.

Although challenges and obstacles are considered a plague in most environments, SSG Consulting has faced and taken on the challenge of two giants. “We have embarked upon a journey of developing a consulting framework for project management of mega projects, which has become our passion and our very own art form,” says Golding.

“In conjunction with this, we have spent the past few years developing a Business Management Software Suite known as Key360. And by taking on the global powerhouses in this arena, it is not only our challenge but our opportunity to make the dream a reality.”

Key360 is a project management and software system. This innovative solution was developed as the market was not able to supply an integrated business and project management system. Says Golding, “Constraints and exorbitant
costs paved the way for the development of an integrated system. This web-based system will elevate SSG Consulting to being the preferred supplier of services and systems for mega projects in South Africa and globally.

Martin Schletchter, a software architect at SSG, is quick to add that, “SSG allows me the freedom of creativity, which has enabled us as a software team to design Key360 as a cutting edge software solution, ahead of its time.”

Most businesses are aware of the frustrations experienced daily as a result of either system failure or non-delivery. The shortcomings or problems are infinite as one begins to explore and investigate the realities. To name a few: system access, data integrity, reporting, only the core functions utilised, increased costs in configuration and limited functions – all result in poor value for money.

As experts in the field of project management, SSG realised there was a gap in the market and took the opportunity to rectify the problem. Key360 offers:

- Unlimited access;
- No data duplication;
- Fifteen modules that cater for all business requirements;
- Reporting – data is fed into key performance indicators and dashboards;
- Data captured in real time;
- Input at source, as it is Web enabled;
- Basic process; and
- Can be aligned with any other system.

Built on a modified Project Management Book of Knowledge® structure, the framework capabilities include workflow, dashboards etc. As the units begin to take shape, any business process can be mapped and managed in the system.

Golding explains, “Some of the units available are time management, cost management, communication management, engineering management, scope management and quality management. The system is designed to capture the business process and to enable the user.

“Facilitating the process is the learning arm of SSG. Our clients are trained to get the most out of the system. We have also initialised an e-Learning tool to assist with the transition.”

Currently, SSG Consulting has embarked upon a number of projects. The two-pronged approach of continuous focus on exceptional service delivery and innovative solutions has provided SSG with an impeccable reputation in the marketplace. Driven by strong client relationships and the desire to succeed, SSG has been able to become a force to be reckoned with.

The Grootegeluk Medupi Expansion Project entails the supply of technical procurement, project controls and doc control staff to Exxaro. As a catalyst for change, SSG is well positioned to take advantage of the market in this ever changing economic environment. Forensic planning and claims management continue to play an important role in its portfolio.

Currently, SSG provides project planning services to a local co-generation project, and is supplying project control staff for pre-feasibility studies for a new mine in Mozambique. “These are exciting times as we embark upon our dream and make it a reality,” says Golding.

As the project trail continues, SSG will be commencing with consulting work for government agencies in Lesotho, which will include project management consulting, implementation of Key360, and the development of financial and business models.

Another exciting project is the setting up of a construction company in Lesotho called SSG Mabote (Pty) Ltd. “This strategic collaboration with local businessmen is focused on empowering and developing local staff utilising SSG Consulting business models,” says Golding. Current initiatives include potential feasibility studies and building projects.

The vision of this dynamic organisation is deeply entrenched in the employees
working at SSG Consulting. Golding explains, “The vision is based on a dream of being able to work for a company that consistently exceeds the expectations of our clients, while enabling a working environment where employees can live out their Christian and family responsibilities. The employees all share in this dream, and this has created an extremely relaxed yet effective work environment based on delivery and trust.”

Born out of faith, this unique organisation continues to provide its employees with an environment that is not only conducive to learning, but also enables collaborative mentorship and coaching. Emphasis is continuously placed on the unique contribution of each individual, whether it is his or her skills set or character.

Empowerment and self-management are the backbone of SSG Consulting, and allow for learning and development, increased experience and exposure to a variety of situations.

This vibrant company places significant emphasis on level-five leadership, which is reflected in the flat management structure.

As one begins to delve into the inner workings of SSG Consulting, one can only be inspired as it strives to deliver enhanced service and innovative solutions. By engaging with the employees of SSG Consulting, it is evident that the “dream” is strongly entrenched within them. This is depicted in the comments below:

“I enjoy working for SSG Consulting because I am constantly being challenged to learn, and improve my approach to work by utilising a new and refreshed mindset. Being part of a work team and environment that is fun yet professional creates a synergy that provides superior service to our clients.” – Reynier Rautenbach

“Since joining the family of SSG, I have noticed that the working environment is one that promotes growth and development. Working with ethical and vibrant colleagues also allows me to grow and be comfortable with myself.” – Anton Eggers

“A young and vibrant atmosphere is present within the SSG family! We are exposed to and have gained valuable experience with regard to project management ideals, across the entire mega project spectrum.” – Gavin Smith

“Working for SSG Consulting is like eating a bowl of chocolate-coated sugar...”
SSG Consulting has grown exponentially from a company employing two people to a current staff headcount of 25. This remarkable achievement highlights the growing client base and it is certain that in the future, the organisational structure will need to facilitate the increased requirements required for supporting the Key360 initiative.

It is evident that the forging of strong business partnerships has lifted the company to new heights. Says Golding, “We are extremely proud and excited about the prospects of Key360, and we have no doubt about the huge successes that we expect from the system.”

The successful streamlining of processes and the implementation of an integrated project management software system will continue to assist clients in dramatically improving performance and return on investment.

“As we continue to add to our list of achievements, we are excited about forming new relationships with government and private stakeholders in Lesotho, and look forward to assisting them with the development of a vibrant and growing country,” says the CEO.

As the interview draws to a close, I ask Golding what he foresees for the remainder of 2010 in terms of business in the current economic climate. He responds, “After a thoroughly enjoyable World Cup, I expect a continued but slow recovery from the recession for both local and international economies. Business opportunities for companies with sound service delivery, however, remain very positive and we look forward to the improving environment.”

SSG will face new challenges of managing the next phase of development and growth as local industry business and prospects in Lesotho are realised.

In terms of Key360, Golding concludes: “The release of Key360 will result in a significant buzz in the industry. Just wait and see.”