

WHY THE OLD LADY HAD TO DIE

Falkirk-based Campbell Lee is Scotland's longest-established IT consultancy. With over twenty five years' experience in enterprise software, business process applications, infrastructure and technology, "we have a reputation for delivering value-added, technology-led business solutions", says Campbell Lee group managing director **Jim Lee**.

Lee also admits to having a bit of a reputation for being controversial. "Within the industry, our current "old lady" advertising campaign has raised a number of eyebrows and received a flurry of media attention because it features an elderly woman in her coffin.

"The deliberately hard-hitting, confrontational shock tactics are in contrast to our very conservative approach to the serious aspects of business process. There are two phases to the campaign that challenges business executives as to whether their current IT investment is strategic in the longer term. The first ad challenges "Are you dressing up the old lady?" and the second - which is receiving all the attention - asks "What are you going to do when she finally dies?"

"The reasoning is simple," claims Lee. "Business executives since Y2K have been treading a careful path. Return on investment and risk assessment have become the cornerstones of IT decision making. They have cautiously undertaken piecemeal upgrades rather than execute a bold plan to bring together all parts of the business as a cohesive whole. We're pointing out that, while this is understandable, it may be false economy and could have a profound effect on a business, and we know of examples where this has been the case.

"Make no mistake: today, the loss of data and function that results from a terminal failure of the main computer system is absolutely devastating to a business. It may even spell the death of that company. But in both situations, there is so



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much that can be done before the event to reduce sadness, sorrow and retribution.

"So the point underpinning our advertising is a terribly serious one: your computer system, and its core applications, may be failing to give you maximum business and competitive advantage. It may have a new shiny face. It may appear fit and fast. But it is the heart that is at risk. No amount of clothing, make-up or jewellery can actually prolong life.

"I think that's a crucially important message to put in front of corporate Scotland.

"The ad campaign is working. We're being talked about. Companies are responding to this reality by getting in touch for expert advice, so the message is getting through.

"We could keep running the analogy. In IT, reincarnation and cloning are a reality but pushing adverts like that becomes boring. We end up coming full circle and putting technology first. Business is not about technology per se but about how it is used for competitive advantage.

"Competitive advantage is gained by integrating the knowledge that you have of your business and the skills that we can bring to deliver seamless business processes. People and technology working together. At Campbell Lee we have the ability and detailed know-how to manage complex technology seamlessly. The operating system, the middleware and the applications must all be considered. Open standards means one size doesn't fit all. It means no matter what the operating systems are, you have to be able to navigate them. We call this being "technology-transparent"."

Added Lee: "At Campbell Lee, we don't just understand IT. What differentiates us is that we understand the whole crucial role of IT in helping businesses, especially small to medium businesses, prosper and grow.



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"And sometimes, no matter how distressing it may be, that can mean getting rid of the old lady and bringing in a newer, sleeker model!"

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