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40 Under 40: Adam Wills

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Donna Abbott-Vlahos

Holding his magic 8-ball, Wills says you can break down any business or life decision to the basics: Yes, No, and Ask Again Later.

Adam Wills
CEO
TurnKey Internet, Latham
Age: 38
Residence: Catskill

Adam Wills changed his life by walking out of a job interview.

He had just completed his freshman year at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy and was looking for a job to allow him to remain in the area for the summer. He answered an ad for a sales position, only to discover he would be peddling knives door to door.

“I didn’t even last 60 seconds in the waiting room before I realized this wasn’t going to be for me,” he said. “I walked out to the parking lot, got in my car and opened up the paper again to look at the job postings. The next job I went after was computer programmer.”

That position introduced him to his future business partners, with whom he would start Global 2000 Inc., the area’s first Internet company, in 1994. In 1998, Global 2000, became part of BiznessOnline.com. He became chief technology officer at the new company, and was part of the team that took it public in May 1999.

It was in 1999 that Wills formed TurnKey Internet as an IT consulting firm. It is now a web hosting and Internet services firm with more than 13,000 clients in 100 countries.

“To this day I still wonder ‘what if I had just stayed in that interview room and decided to sell knives door to door?’ ” he said.


Education: Bachelor’s in computer systems engineering,
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

First job: Washing dishes in a restaurant at age 13; he worked his way up to being a chef

What he drives: A nine-year-old Jeep with 170,000 miles

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