

CHALONG: Tucked down Soi Sainamyem in Chalong is a small IT startup that is quintessentially Phuket: the key players have decades of experience in their chosen fields and their new company, BitSiren, is set to have a global reach.

The company's directive is simple: take advertising, software development, e-commerce, event marketing and public relations and roll them all into an integrated package.

It sounds like common sense, but even in the West just harmonizing these aspects of business can be a managerial nightmare, mainly because they are usually segregated into separate departments that compete for internal resources.

But BitSiren is looking to do more than just harmonize these critical business functions. "The greatest strength of BitSiren lies in our team's ability to seamlessly combine all of these varied disciplines to drive creation of custom-tailored, integrated business solutions," said Fred Muenger, BitSiren's Managing Director and Head of Business Development.

"There are many graphic design, web design, advertising agencies and so on who are only able to provide a limited range of services. We specifically conceived BitSiren to take advantage of the management team's wide range of professional experience and valuable expertise. This broad skill base allows BitSiren to offer

Startup targets global market

By Chris Husted

a one-stop shop for integrated business solutions," he added.

"BitSiren develops solutions in multiple programming environments, such as Java, PHP, Flash and Microsoft ASP and .Net. Many IT companies are proficient in one or the other, rarely all."

The key to delivering the integrated package is having the right team: qualified people with a common perspective and the right combination of skills and experience, said Mr Muenger.

Mr Muenger has more than 20 years of experience in advertising and marketing communications and more than a decade of experience in e-commerce, e-business and e-marketing.

Before moving ahead with the BitSiren project, he was CIO for leading e-commerce site HotelTravel.com from 2003 to 2007, when the travel portal grew from a small company to a leading international brand with an exponential increase in revenues: from 35 staff in one office to more than 200 staff in three offices in Asia.

BitSiren's Head of Technology is fellow Swiss national Kilian Bohnenblust, who has more than 10 years' experience developing dynamically-driven web applica-



BitSiren: Quetta Locchi (seated), Kilian Bohnenblust (kneeling) and Fredy Muenger.

tions (CMS, intranets and so on) and object-oriented design at Aseantic, a major player in Switzerland's IT industry.

Head of Marketing & Sales is American Quetta Locchi, whose experience includes event marketing for Lehman Brothers, which required co-ordinating senior-executive level client-focused events, and being Event Manager for the Gen Art Film

Festival in New York.

"BitSiren has consciously focused on hiring experienced specialists in IT and Marketing so that each team member is able to apply a higher level of expertise to each project.

This is essential as BitSiren must compete with other professional IT/Marketing firms worldwide," Mr Muenger said.

"With our extensive profes-

sional network in Europe, USA and Asia, we expect a diverse client portfolio. In general, we target small- to medium-sized companies who are looking for solutions to streamline internal operations and who want take advantage of new sales distribution platforms, advanced technologies and integrated marketing techniques," he explained.

"BitSiren especially excels at providing consultation, strategy and comprehensive services to startup companies," he added.

Although BitSiren launched in May, it already has a staff of 12: seven in IT/web and software development; three in marketing consulting and graphical design; and two in administration.

"Fortunately we are in the unique position of launching BitSiren with a full roster of major projects.

Our conservative projections are that our initial investment will be recouped in the first year," said Mr Muenger.

"It has been a challenge to launch a company while working on major projects parallel.

Because of this, our company marketing took a back seat. We have just finished the conception phase of our website and it should be launched within the next month," he added.