



## CHRIS KLITGAARD

Founder and CEO

MediRevv, Coralville

Age: 41

Hometown: Harlan, Iowa

Education: B.S., Finance, UI, 1996;

MBA, UI, 1998; MHA, UI, 1999

# Smoothing the cycle

## Chris Klitgaard, MediRevv

**I**t was Chris Klitgaard's experience as a young University of Iowa Health Care executive that gave him the insight to create one of the fastest-growing companies in Iowa's Creative Corridor.

Mr. Klitgaard was in charge of patient access, patient accounting and health information management functions for both the UI's hospital and its physician group when he led a major IT project to replace an old patient accounting system with a new, third-party system capable of billing and collecting payments.

One of the aspects of the project was to outsource the old accounts receivable that weren't on the new payment system, so the hospital wouldn't have to use two systems to track and collect them.

"We basically found out there was a huge opportunity for improvement in the service providers," Mr. Klitgaard said.

That need led him to form MediRevv in 2007 in Coralville.

The company's market focus is in revenue cycle management, which includes educating customers about their bills and payment options, working with insurance companies to maximize insurance-covered payments and communicating with patients to keep them aware of their payment status.

MediRevv quickly became one of the Corridor's fastest-growing companies, with revenues growing 292 percent between 2008 and 2010. In 2015, it was ranked No. 5 on the Corridor Business Journal's annual list of Fastest Growing

CYCLE ON PAGE 34

Companies with two-year revenue growth of 114 percent. Employment has grown to 267 in eight years, with another 60 jobs needing to be filled.

Hiring and supporting the right people has made a huge difference in his company's success in the complex and sensitive arena of settling medical accounts. Of MediRevv's 267 employees, 90.3 percent have bachelor's degrees, many of them from the UI.

"This does tell us they've had more analytical training, may be more articulate and dedicated enough to complete their degree," Mr. Klitgaard said of graduates.

The UI influence is even stronger on the leadership team, where most of the company's leaders have some educational or career connection to the school. Chief Technology Officer Terry Reinsager spent 17 years in revenue cycle management at UI Hospitals and Clinics, including running the daily operations of accounts receivable management.

Mr. Klitgaard's own UI roots go deep. In 1992, he began undergraduate studies that led to a bachelor's degree in finance with a minor in accounting. In 1996, he began the MBA program at the UI Tippie College of Business, and in 1998, did something many MBAs would not have done after already having spent six years at the UI.

At the urging of R. Edward Howell, a former CEO of UI Health Care, Mr. Klitgaard pursued the school's Master of Healthcare Administration program, which in turn opened the door to an internship at UI Hospitals and Clinics.

"The amount of exposure that gave us as young careerists was amazing," Mr. Klitgaard said of the internship. He found that he liked the administrative complexity and challenges of the large teaching hospital.

Graduating from the program, Mr. Klitgaard became a project implementation manager at UI Health Care for two and a half years before moving into the position of director of revenue cycle management.

Completion of the IT project that implemented the new third-party payor system at UI Health Care was a key milestone in Mr. Klitgaard's career. The project's success had a big impact on the hospital's accounts, and "every metric got better," he said.

The positive results got Mr. Klitgaard noticed, and soon job opportunities were coming his way. He wanted to remain in the area, but it seemed that he had risen about as far as he could go at the age of 32.

Mr. Reinsager and others supported the decision to start MediRevv.

"Naiveté was maybe a good thing for me," Mr. Klitgaard said. "I didn't know how hard it [starting and growing a business] was going to be. I had owned a couple of businesses before, but it wasn't like this!"

Coming from a family of entrepreneurs in small town Iowa probably helped, Mr. Klitgaard said. His father owned the local lumberyard and did construction in Harlan, a city of about 5,500. He recalled helping his mother stuff dolls that she made at home and sold in craft fairs when the family sat down to watch television as a child.

"Mom and I talked all the time about leading by example," Mr. Klitgaard said, adding his UI experience helped him become that leader by opening him up to new ideas and people. "UI was six times the size of my hometown," he noted.

The future for MediRevv remains bright. The company introduced coding services in 2014, driven by ICD-10, a new international coding system for insurance reimbursement of medical services. Learning the new system will reduce the productivity of providers' existing coding staffs, and many are seeking outside services, Mr. Klitgaard said. Thirty-five employees at the company are already employed in coding.

Amid all of the changes, Mr. Klitgaard remains the highly visible face of MediRevv. Mr. Reinsager, who worked for Mr. Klitgaard both at UI and MediRevv, describes him as "genuine," adding "When he says he's going to do something, he does it."

Naiveté was maybe a good thing for me. I didn't know how hard it [starting and growing a business] was going to be. I had owned a couple of businesses before, but it wasn't like this!

## ADVICE to prospective entrepreneurs:

Know what your revenue strategy is going to be, and be a little fearless – not irrational, but get out of your comfort zone.

- Dave DeWitte