

SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL



Robert Half International Inc.

and

Worldwide Leader in Specialized Consulting & Staffing Services Since 1948

present:

SAN DIEGO'S

FASTEST

GROWING
PRIVATELY
HELD COMPANIES

2006



CO-SPONSORS:



We listen. We understand. We make it work.®



RSM! McGladrey



VISTAGE™
better leaders • decisions • results

SAN DIEGO AREA'S FASTEST-GROWING PRIVATE COMPANIES

The 100 Fastest



Armon Mills
President & Publisher
San Diego Business Journal

LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

Fastest-Growing 100 Winners Represent San Diego's Diverse Economy Entrepreneurial Spirit, Determination Drive Them Forward

San Diego is populated with relatively small, but rapidly expanding businesses that well represent a cross section of the regional economy. The same can be said for the *San Diego Business Journal's* 2006 List of 100 Fastest-Growing Private Companies, which are featured in this supplemental publication. These winners represent the best of show in our fast moving and always challenging economy.

For example, more than 50 percent of the first 25 companies on the list are involved in different aspects of the information technology sector, ranging from computer networks to software to Web development. But we also find companies from the biotechnology arena, as well as the various sub-sectors of finance.

One company that made the top 25 is a general contractor, while another generates student loans. The No. 1 business on the list is a financial planner, which helps individuals with their investment decisions.

As diverse as they might be, what's common to all 100 is the entrepreneurial spirit that compels each to succeed.

Some readers might say these businesses are lucky to be so honored. But we say that these busi-

nesses and their founders make their own luck because they have the focus to move forward.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the editorial and production staff who put this publication together.

They include Senior Researcher Liz Wiedemann, whose efforts were vital in compiling the list. She was ably aided by Supplements & Events Manager Taylor Peterson and Events Administrator Patty Concepcion.

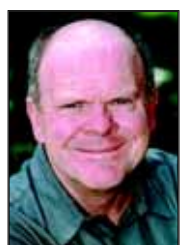
I would also like to thank our sponsors for their support and participation in bringing this list to your attention.

These include co-presenter Robert Half International Inc., as well as Barney & Barney, Cash1700 AM, Comerica Bank, Cox Business Services, ESET, Kaiser Permanente, RSM McGladrey, the San Diego Regional EDC and Vistage.

I would also like to congratulate the 100 companies that qualified for the list. It's not easy to qualify as one of the fastest-growing businesses in the region. Determination and drive are key, along with verve and vision.

We wish all of our winners the best of luck in the year ahead, and who knows, maybe more than a few will qualify for the list in 2007.

Congratulations to the winners!



Thomas York
Editor
San Diego Business Journal

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

List Features Best of Show From San Diego's Business Community

Let me say just a few words about this important editorial research project ... and the months of effort behind it.

We start the process early in the summer, asking for completed questionnaires and documentation from companies eager to participate. We receive hundreds of responses from those owners who think their businesses might qualify.

To be considered, the businesses must be based in San Diego County, a vast swath of territory that runs from the U.S.-Mexico border to the Riverside and Orange county lines, and all of the coastal and inland communities in between.

The businesses must be private — and independent — they can't be units or divisions owned by other companies. They must have generated at least \$200,000 in sales in 2003.

We then verify the financial information supplied to us. For example, the participants are required to provide documentation from their own accounting firms verifying the financial details of their business operations during the years 2003, 2004 and 2005.

Then the Business Journal's senior researcher, Liz Wiedemann, spends many weeks tabulating the data, which is then used to rank the companies that make the list.

This is a project that entails no small amount of scrutiny and attention to detail, but it is well worth the effort. It's a resource of great importance in terms of reflecting the depth and breadth of our economy.

Indeed, the 100 companies that make the list represent the best of show when it comes to representing the region's entrepreneurial spirit.

By the way, the Business Journal is now making many of its lists available at our Web site, www.sdbj.com.

If you'd like an electronic copy, it is available in the Microsoft Excel format.

And if you think your business might qualify, we urge you to send us a note, and let us know. We've already opened the work folder for the 2007 list.

We trust you'll find the List of 100 Fastest-Growing Private Companies informative, and worthy of your time and attention.

CONTENTS



Return to Advising 4
Sales are tied to client needs, not company products.



Spypware Protection 12
Coronado software firm combats online threats.



Expanding Defense 18
Employee training boosts growing business.

INDEX

By The Numbers	2
Good People, Good Business.....	2
Independent Financial Group LLC.....	4
3 Blind Mice Window Coverings Inc.....	6
Ambit Biosciences	8
Stinson Financial Group Inc.....	10
Eset LLC	12
Fastest-Growing Private Companies 1-25.....	15
Fastest-Growing Private Companies 26-50.....	16
SkillStorm Inc.....	18
Advanced Planning Services Inc.....	19
Fastest-Growing Private Companies 51-75.....	21
Fastest-Growing Private Companies 76-100.....	22
Highest Revenues	26
DefenseWeb Technologies Inc	27
Largest Employers.....	28
Five Point Capital Inc.....	29
Silicon Space Inc	30

By the NUMBERS

Some stats on the 2006 honorees

Total revenue generated by the Top 100 firms:
\$12.1 BILLION

Total people employed by the Top 100 firms:
13,625

Average growth rate among the listed companies:
165 PERCENT

Average 2005 revenue of listed companies:
\$121.1 MILLION

Industry most frequently seen on the list:
TECHNOLOGY

Top revenue-maker:
No. 63 SAIC, with
\$7.19 BILLION

Largest employer: No. 63 SAIC, employing
4,352

Good People, Good Business

Staff Autonomy and Executive Flexibility Are Keys to Growth

BY LIZ WIEDEMANN

They are aggressive, they are competitive and obviously they are risk takers.

While many entrepreneurs exemplify these qualities, flexibility is perhaps the key secret ingredient in this year's recipe for business growth.

The *San Diego Business Journal's* 2006 List of Fastest-Growing Private Companies ranked 100 companies based on percent growth in revenues from 2003 to 2005.

Within the top 25 businesses, the software development and financial services industries are represented by roughly 50 percent of those companies.

No. 2 on the list, **3 Blind Mice Window Coverings Inc.**, breaks this mold as a customer-based window treatment firm, as do businesses such as No. 3 **Ambit Biosciences**, representing the biotech industry, that remain particularly important to San Diego.

"Anybody can build anything, but what's the right thing to build?" asked Curt Nelson, chief executive officer of the No. 10 business, **Silicon Space Inc.**

Awareness of the missing link in a market proved profitable for Nelson as he tapped into the Web software industry, providing information specifically targeting executives.

"The right thing to build" can come in any shape, size or niche, and in Anton Zajac's case, it is anti-threat software.

Big-Picture Vision

As CEO of **ESET LLC**, ranked fifth on the list, Zajac credits his company's growth to vision and foresight in operating the business, as well as the flexibility to address security changes before they even hit the industry.

Also benefiting from flexibility and attention to market demands is Hany Girgis, founder and chief executive officer of **SkillStorm Inc.**, coming in at No. 6 on the list.

SkillStorm provides technical solutions to organizations at the federal, state and local levels, with the U.S. Department of Defense as a top client.

What began as a commercial staffing company expanded into an information technology services provider for government agencies, after the Sept. 11, 2001, tragedy spurred a boom in defense spending.

As timing is everything, Girgis

SAN DIEGO'S

FASTEST

GROWING
PRIVATELY
HELD COMPANIES

2006

remained open to the change and capitalized on this new demand, said Eve Howser, director of operations for SkillStorm.

Following Trends

Attention to industry changes and up-to-the-minute needs are other common threads among entrepreneurs behind companies ranked on the list.

"I think what helps is that we've created a service that everybody seems to want to use; there was a void that needed to be filled and we filled it," said Michael Rodman, founder, chief executive officer and chief financial officer of **Advanced Planning Services Inc.**, which is No. 7.

The void Rodman recognized and capitalized on was a business that helps financial advisers find and create financial problem solving for their clients.

While business-to-business firms dominate the list for the fourth year in a row, six companies in the top 25 are consumer-based. Last year, fewer than 10 of the 100 were consumer-based, though all placed in the first 50.

One such company this year in the 19th spot, **Away With Clutter Inc.**, has seen revenue growth of 180 percent, with 2005 revenues reaching \$980,000, with only two employees locally.

Though roughly 30 more are contracted employees, growth in staff has not accounted for the meat of its increased revenues, said the company's CEO, Dana Korey.

Away With Clutter specializes in organizing a mess. From clearing out an individual's garage to streamlining a sales department's paper flow, the company searches for long-term solutions.

"Though we're a service com-

pany, we've recognized the need for other sources of revenue and found the answer in our corporate business clients," Korey said.

She sees future business heading in the corporate direction because those clients value the bottom line more.

"When employees are organized, departments become more organized," Korey said. "Ultimately, these companies can see the worth in our product because of the impact it can have on business."

Allowing Autonomy

Taking a closer look at the top 10 companies on this year's list, whose growth averages 918.4 percent, an underlying trend is employee independence.

"This way our people are equipped to go out independently, go the extra mile to find their own business," said SkillStorm's Howser, in reference to the company's extensive recruiting and training programs.

SkillStorm employees are given a minimum of 100 hours of personal training before taking on full job responsibility.

Scott Salka, CEO of the third highest-ranking company on the list, **Ambit Biosciences**, said he had not planned on taking off in the biotechnology industry.

After many bumps, lab space funding ultimately came through via a real estate investor, and from there, Salka gives credit to the hard work of his employees.

"No CEO can do it alone," Salka said. "At the end of the day, you are the orchestra leader, at best."

In fact, handing over latitude to employees is the only way a business can grow, according to Scot Dietz, 3 Blind Mice CEO.

"Unlike a plumber who opens

Please turn to INTRODUCTION on Page 30

Veterans Return to Old School Of Investment Advising

Sales Are Tied to Client Needs, Not Company Products

BY MIKE ALLEN

Two investment industry veterans knew there was a better way of operating an investment brokerage than the models that dominated the local landscape when they started their own business several years ago.

The partners, Joe Miller, 51, and Scott Heising, 46, started **Independent Financial Group LLC** in San Diego in 2003 and gave its representatives the latitude to deal with their customers the way they decided was best, rather than dictating how customers should be served.

Last year, thanks to an expanding network of independent representatives that reached 155 as of last month, the company doubled its revenues to \$16.5 million.

Since 2003, the year IFG opened, the pace of revenue gain was 3,561 percent, garnering first place on the *San Diego Business Journal's* List of Fastest-Growing Private Companies.

The partners are the first to admit their success has been due in large part to the quality of their independent representatives.

"We grow our business by attracting talented, independent representatives," Miller said. "In 2004, we went from having 17 reps to 85 reps, and our revenues went from about \$400,000 to \$8 million."

Independent Strategy

The concept Miller and Heising champion allows representatives to help their clients the best way they know how, without having to sell products that are part of a particular parent corporation.

The representatives are not direct employees of IFG, but contracted workers, who earn between 80 percent and 90 percent of the fees paid for their services. The balance is retained by IFG, which provides all the back-office support services and affiliations required of a registered broker-dealer.

IFG was launched in reaction to a spate of consolidation in the brokerage/investment industry, Miller said.

"A large wave of consolidations started in the late 1990s and into 2005 where you had large insurance companies and large banks purchasing independent brokerages," he said.

Along with the ownership shift came a change in philosophy. Representatives were expected to sell products belonging to the parent company rather than sell what was most suitable for a client.



Michael S. Domine

From left, Independent Financial Group LLC Managing Directors Joe Miller, Scott Heising and David Fischer grow the business by attracting talented and independent representatives.

Independent Financial Group LLC

CEO: Joe Miller

Address: 12636 High Bluff Drive, Suite 100, San Diego 92130

2005 revenues: \$16.5 million

2003-2005 growth: 3,561 percent

No. of local full-time employees: 18

Web site: www.ifgsd.com

CEO's secret to success: "We have fun, but we also work tremendously hard. The key to our success has been our fantastic group of employees, and the great group of reps who like how independent we are."

Heising, a former chief financial officer for Sentra Securities, Spelman & Co., and SunAmerica Securities Corp., saw firsthand what happened when an independent brokerage was acquired by a much larger entity, and said the results weren't pretty.

The emphasis on selling products belonging to the owning corporation turned

off a large number of talented representatives, and the friendly working relationships between management and representatives deteriorated, Heising said.

"We're a fully independent firm so we're not tied to any insurance company or banks or large investment groups who are pushing their branded products," Miller said. "We don't offer

our products so there's no favoritism of one product over another."

Without that pressure, representatives can provide clients with the best product mix that helps them achieve their financial goals, Miller said.

Most IFG branch offices are staffed by two to three representatives. The company operates 73 branch offices, mainly in the western United States.

New Direction

When mega-insurance company American International Group assumed control of his firm, Heising decided he'd had enough, and would launch a new, independent brokerage.

He enlisted the help of Miller, whom he had met several years earlier, and two other investors, David Fischer, IFG's managing director; and Art Molloy, who owns the San Diego IFG branch. Altogether, the investors pooled about \$850,000 to get the business started, Heising said.

The company originally set up shop in Mission Valley with three employees. It wasn't hard finding qualified and talented representatives due to the wave of consolidations of independent brokerages, Miller said.

Most of the representatives have more than 10 years of experience in the investment advisory industry.

While most of the offices are in the West, Miller said he's not opposed to looking at the possibility of expanding to other parts of the country.

"We want to be selective about our reps," Miller said. "We want to work with the best, but we also want to continue to maintain our high service levels."

This year, IFG should add about 60 new reps, but there's no specific goal the company is targeting.

As for IFG's revenues, it's on track to easily break \$25 million this year.

The company that now maintains its main office in Carmel Valley has 18 direct employees working in marketing, operations, registration, compliance, finance, accounting and recruiting.

Looking back at how fast IFG has grown, Miller said he's a bit surprised with its success.

"Scott had an excellent business plan laid out and it was amazingly accurate," Miller said. "I knew it would work, but I figured we'd have to slug it out one rep at a time."

"I guess that's what they mean when preparation and opportunity comes together."



Melissa Jacobs

Scot Dietz, owner of 3 Blind Mice Window Coverings Inc., quickly built a sales force and optimized customer service to achieve a 1,407 percent revenue growth rate within three years.

3 Blind Mice Looks To Bright Future in Window Coverings

Sales Staff Encourages Firm's Rapid Expansion With Personal Service

BY CONNIE LEWIS

Scot Dietz attributes much of the growth of his firm, **3 Blind Mice Window Coverings Inc.**, to his earlier involvement in network marketing.

With a degree in business from Southwest Missouri State University — now Missouri State — Dietz also held managerial positions at Office Depot Inc. and Wal-Mart Stores Inc.

But he says it was his experience with Primerica and Pre-Paid Legal Services — network-marketing firms — that helped him develop the entrepreneurial mind-set, ability to recruit people, and aggressive marketing techniques necessary to start and grow a business.

Thus, when he launched his compa-

Please turn to BLIND MICE on Page 26

3 Blind Mice Window Coverings

2

CEO: Scot Dietz

Location: 8969 Kenamar Drive, Suite 106, San Diego 92121

2005 revenues: \$4.56 million

2003-05 growth: 1,407 percent

No. of local full-time employees: 13

Web site: www.3blindmiceusa.com

CEO's secret to success: "Doing things right, morally and ethically. Having respect for customers and employees alike and making each day fun."

Partnerships Help Propel Ambit to the Top-Tier Bio Track

CEO Has No Regrets Even After Close Call With Financial Crash

BY KATIE WEEKS

Scott Salka didn't get into biotechnology thinking he would stay there.

With no science degree and considering the risky nature of the industry, the chief executive officer of San Diego-based **Ambit Biosciences** said he sometimes wondered why he didn't head for a safer entrepreneurial environment — like **Qualcomm Inc.**, where many of his former co-workers from a previous job went when the tech-giant was a simple startup.

But Salka has no regrets.

Thanks to partnerships with some of the biggest pharmaceutical companies in the world, the 74-employee drug development firm saw revenue grow 817 percent since 2003 — good for No. 3 on the *San Diego Business Journal's* List of Fastest-Growing Private Companies.

Ambit focuses on developing cancer drugs, and also services large pharma firms by screening their compounds to see how they interact with certain proteins.

There was a time — 2004 — when Salka and his then-30 employees were at such a loss for funding that they



Melissa Jacobs

Ambit Biosciences CEO Scott Salka has ridden the biotech roller coaster from an eviction low-point in 2004 to multimillion-dollar deals that contributed to a three-year revenue growth of 817 percent.

were evicted from their laboratories and couldn't make payroll.

"We had experiments going on and owed data to pharma partners," he said. "I came to work on a Thursday and my receptionist gave me a notice that said the police were going to be there if we didn't vacate the building."

Rescued On A Handshake

But the roller coaster of biotech

3

Ambit Biosciences

CEO: Scott Salka
Location: 4215 Sorrento Valley Blvd., San Diego 92121
2005 revenues: \$4.7 million
2003-2005 growth: 817 percent
No. of local full-time employees: 74
Web site: www.ambitbio.com
CEO's secret to success: "Lots of hard work and the fortune to be surrounded by great people. No CEO can do it alone. At the end of the day, you are the orchestra leader, at best."

inevitably took a sharp turn: A real estate investor named Lee Chestnut, who Salka calls "Ambit's angel," offered lab space on a handshake, and the firm was able to turn temporary deals with GlaxoSmithKline Inc., Merck & Co. Inc., and Bristol-Myers Squibb Co. into multiyear, multimillion-dollar deals. Two are worth \$5 million each, plus ongoing payment for Ambit's services, but Salka declined to disclose more specific financial details.

Today, Ambit is largely funded by big pharma and local venture capital firm **Forward Ventures**. But Ambit says it has enough cash to last at least into 2008.

Ambit's drug candidates include two cancer drugs. One of them will begin phase I human clinical trials before the end of the year and could treat acute myeloid leukemia as well as

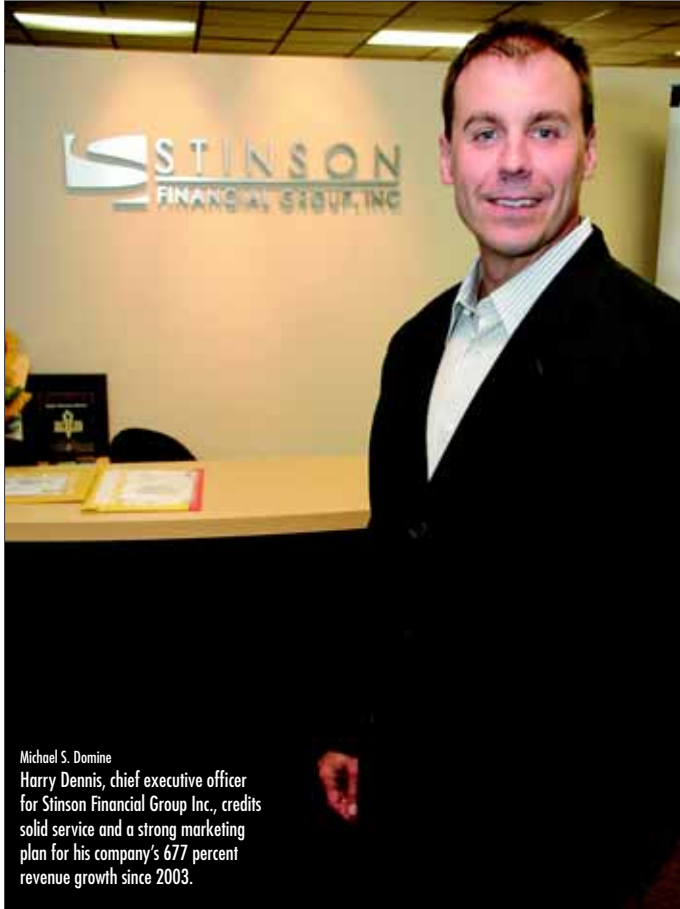
gastrointestinal stromal tumors. The second, which could begin phase I in late 2007, will be tested for its ability to treat solid tumors.

Approximately 13,000 new cases of AML are diagnosed annually in the United States, Salka said. Estimates vary for GIST, but one Swedish study estimates that 129 people in every 1 million have the intestinal tumors. Salka calls both markets "poorly served" and "patients are treated with a handful of standard, old-line chemotherapeutic agents."

Savvy About Startups

Ambit is the fourth startup for Salka. He was CEO of 454 Corp., a DNA-sequencing company now based in Connecticut, and Arcaris, a Salt Lake City-based firm that focuses on proteomics

Please turn to **AMBIT** on Page 28



Michael S. Domine
Harry Dennis, chief executive officer for Stinson Financial Group Inc., credits solid service and a strong marketing plan for his company's 677 percent revenue growth since 2003.

Mortgage Broker Has Easy Ride Through Real Estate Ups and Downs

Firm Expanded to 30 Branches in Two Dozen States Since '99

BY JESSICA LONG

From a small-time loan officer to a big-time mortgage broker, Harry Dennis has led **Stinson Financial Group Inc.** to an impressive 677 percent revenue growth in the past two years.

So impressive, his homespun company is ranked No. 4 on the *San Diego Business Journal's* Fastest-Growing Private Companies List.

The company reported revenues of \$1.3 million in 2003, followed by \$1.9 million in 2004 and a whopping \$10.3 million in 2005.

Dennis, who serves as Stinson's chief executive officer and is its sole owner, founded the Mission Valley-based business in 1999 but only recently expand-

Please turn to STINSON on Page 25

**Stinson
Financial
Group
Inc.**

4

CEO: Harry Dennis

Location:

3636 Camino del Rio N., Suite 230, San Diego 92108

2005 revenues: \$10.3 million

2003-2005 growth: 677 percent

No. of local full-time employees: 30

Web site: www.stinsonfinancial.com

CEO's secret to success: "Service — that's what is going to make the difference. That and a good marketing plan."



Michael S. Domine

Employees at Eset LLC enjoy working at the firm's plush Coronado office.

Eset LLC

5

CEO: Anton Zajac

Location: 1172 Orange Ave., Coronado 92118

2005 revenues: \$14.52 million

2003-05 growth: 652 percent

No. of local full-time employees: 29

Web site: www.eset.com

CEO's secret to success: "Success is the product of a creative spirit, hard work and the denial of failure. Personal gain is not enough. It is faith in the idea and the desire to make something better that provides the necessary energy and perseverance."

Spyware, Viruses No Threat to Eset's Founder And Chief Executive

Coronado Software Firm Offers Real-Time Protection to Client PCs

BY ANDY KILLION

Anton Zajac, chief executive officer of **Eset LLC**, said spearfishing has helped him grow as a leader.

And apparently it hasn't hurt business, as Eset reached No. 5 on the *San Diego Business Journal's* List of Fastest-Growing Private Companies, with revenue growth of 652 percent from 2003 through 2005.

"The office (where) I spend most of my time is in the plane," said Zajac from his cell phone in Slovakia, though he could have said that his secondary office is underwater. "I prefer the old-fashioned band spear gun and I don't go too far from the coast.

"Sometimes it takes several hours to get a big fish ..." he continued. "I need to be very patient and persistent to catch one because I'm only interested

in big fish.

"In business, it's the same because I'm only interested in big fish there; I only have big goals. It takes months and even years to reach those goals."



Anton Zajac

Coronado-based Eset has offices in the United

Kingdom, Czech Republic and Argentina, and counts 120 employees worldwide, with 29 working locally.

Eset provides anti-threat software for businesses and consumers. The firm's award-winning software system provides real-time protection from known and unknown malware, spyware and viruses, as well as other threats. Its flagship NOD32 virus protection

Continued on the next page

Eset: Chasing After Big Online Fish

Continued from the preceding page

system proactively detects threats in applications before they become a threat by analyzing the code behind an application to determine any malicious intent. Eset claims that this proactive approach to system protection keeps its customers safer than its competitors' reactive products.

Zajac and three associates founded Eset in North America in 1999. But the products originated in Slovakia, founded in 1992 with the breakup of the Soviet-controlled countries in Eastern Europe.

Since then, Eset's software protection system has been adopted and endorsed by some of the largest companies in the world.

"The company's initial goal was to acquire a client in the Fortune 10 ... Dell and Microsoft became clients in 2001," Zajac said.

So his company's goal expanded: "My goal ... is to work until the White House acquires a license to our anti-virus system."

Some of Eset's clients are Burlington Coat Factory, Jockey, Timex Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Education. Eset Chief Operating Officer Larry McJannet couldn't disclose many clients

because of the sensitive nature of the security business.

Now Hiring

Eset's first office in San Diego, a small executive suite with a grand total of zero employees, nearly tripped up Zajac in his early days.

"We had a client from the Netherlands who desperately wanted to see our new office and he called to say he was on his way," recalled Zajac. "We spent 30 minutes discussing products and he was very excited. As he left, he asked, 'How many employees do you have in this office?'"

"If I said, 'none,' he would have been very disappointed, so I just left it by saying that the best companies are the smallest ones," added Zajac.

Eset's first hire was McJannet, who left the company a few years ago but has since returned as vice president of sales.

"Our target is at least 300 percent growth for 2006, 2007 and 2008," said McJannet, who is responsible for North American sales.

Eset's sales channels are primarily direct via computer downloads or through agreements with its partners who offer supported software.

McJannet said he doubled the size of the sales team to 15 last quarter and

expects to double it again by the first quarter of 2007.

Eset's rapid growth is forcing the company to move to larger offices to accommodate the expanding staff.

"We're going to move downtown in about three months," Zajac said.

Zajac said revenues grew 200 percent annually for five straight years from 2000 to 2005 and he was able to achieve such growth without a sales or marketing department.

Credits To Growth

Zajac credits Eset's growth to three things:

- The smartest developers who have

a vision of industry trends and were able to differentiate NOD32 from competing products.

- Partners who support their product, some of which are Canon, Dell, Kerio, Microsoft, Red Hat and IBM.

- The systematic work of the entire staff, focusing on goals, and Eset's flexibility to address security changes, even before they hit the industry.

While he may have had little difficulty getting his employees to buy in on the company vision, it probably isn't because of Zajac's "background" in management, which really doesn't exist.

Please turn to ESET on Page 28

FASTEST-GROWING PRIVATE COMPANIES

Ranked by percent of verified revenue growth from 2003 to 2005

Rank	Company Address Web site	Telephone Fax Toll-free number	Percent growth in revenue from 2003 - 2005	Revenue: • 2005 • 2004 • 2003 \$ Millions	Local full-time employees: • 2006 • 2005 • 2004	Source of information	Business description	• Local CEO • Local CFO	Year established locally
1	Independent Financial Group LLC 12636 High Bluff Drive, #100, San Diego 92130 www.ifgsd.com	(858) 436-3180 (858) 481-9033 (800) 269-1903	3,560.98	\$16.5 \$8.0 \$0.5	18 12 8	Survey	Provides financial planning/investment services	Joe Miller Scott Heising	2003
2	3 Blind Mice Window Coverings Inc. 8969 Kenamar Drive, #106, San Diego 92121 www.3blindmiceusa.com	(858) 831-0011 (858) 831-0012 (800) 828-2003	1,406.64	\$4.6 \$2.8 \$0.3	13 8 4	Survey	Provides window treatments, including blinds, shutters, solar screens, draperies, tinting and motorized shades, to private and commercial customers	Scot Dietz Brian Willoughby	2003
3	Ambit Biosciences 4215 Sorrento Valley Blvd., San Diego 92121 www.ambitbio.com	(858) 334-2100 (858) 334-2199	817.19	\$4.7 \$0.6 \$0.5	74 54 31	Survey	Biopharmaceuticals	Scott Salka Don Myll	2000
4	Stinson Financial Group Inc. 3636 Camino del Rio N., #230, San Diego 92108 www.stinsonfinancial.com	(619) 584-4406 (619) 584-4617 (888) 593-3834	676.62	\$10.3 \$2.0 \$1.3	30 15 10	Survey	Mortgage broker	Harry Dennis Rick Holtz	1999
5	Eset LLC 1172 Orange Ave., Coronado 92118 www.eset.com	(619) 319-3000 (619) 437-7045 (866) 343-3738	651.52	\$14.5 \$6.1 \$1.9	29 12 6	Survey	Proactive anti-virus and anti-spyware software	Anton Zajac Kevin Lam	1999
6	SkillStorm Inc. 10105 Pacific Heights Blvd., #130, San Diego 92121 www.skillstorm.com	(858) 551-9322 (858) 551-4522 (800) 919-3031	620.88	\$26.5 \$11.3 \$3.7	170 112 68	Survey	Provides technical services and solutions to organizations at the federal, state and local levels	Hany Girgis Poorvesh Sheth	2002
7	Advanced Planning Services Inc. 1500 State St., #220, San Diego 92101 www.apshome.com	(619) 220-8116 (619) 220-0836 (800) 551-8116	461.15	\$13.9 \$7.0 \$2.5	31 27 23	Survey	Independent financial services provider	Michael T. Rodman Michael T. Rodman	1999
8	DefenseWeb Technologies Inc. 4150 Mission Blvd., #216, San Diego 92109 www.defensweb.com	(858) 272-8505 (858) 272-8565 (888) 449-2717	368.27	\$8.8 \$4.1 \$1.9	49 33 13	Survey	Provider of customized enterprise software development services	Douglas Burke Cliff McCarthy	1998
9	Five Point Capital Inc. 10525 Vista Sorrento Parkway, San Diego 92121 www.fivepointcapital.com	(888) 576-4685 (888) 576-4685	311.19	\$20.2 \$10.1 \$4.9	120 53 22	Survey	Financing for small-ticket commercial equipment to small and midsize businesses	Dan Feder (1) and David Gilbert James Burke	2001
10	Silicon Space Inc. 4001 El Cajon Blvd., #205, San Diego 92105 www.siliconspace.com/mptoolbox	(619) 326-6600 (619) 326-6606	290.80	\$10.2 \$4.5 \$2.6	30 28 27	Survey	Web software product developer	Curt Nelson Curt Nelson	1996
11	Super Warehouse 739 Design Court, #500, Chula Vista 91911 www.superwarehouse.com	(619) 216-3465 (619) 421-2357 (800) 814-5410	287.59	\$40.1 \$25.5 \$10.3	53 46 23	Survey	Global provider of technology solutions and IT products	Russell Schneider Mary Krebill	1999
12	Tapestry Solutions Inc. 5643 Copley Drive, San Diego 92111 www.tapestry.com	(858) 503-1990 (619) 639-8653 (888) 313-2060	279.11	\$43.0 \$22.5 \$11.3	116 72 40	Survey	Custom software development, support for U.S. military	Galen D. Aswegan Mark A. Young	1993
13	Chassis Plans 8295 Aero Place, #200, San Diego 92123 www.chassis-plans.com	(858) 571-4330 (858) 571-6146	225.46	\$7.4 \$6.4 \$2.3	26 22 11	Survey	Designs, integrates and sells industrial computers to the homeland security and defense industries	Mark Lovett Dennis Whittier	1997
14	Goal Financial 9477 Waples St., #100, San Diego 92121 www.goalfinancial.net	(858) 731-9000 (858) 558-4776	222.34	\$327.5 \$187.1 \$101.6	248 191 175	Survey	Federal student loans, scholarship, grant aid	Ryan Katz Ken Ruggiero	2001
15	I.T. Pros 111 S. Marshall Ave., El Cajon 92020 www.theitpros.net	(619) 749-7831 (619) 749-7832	211.71	\$1.8 \$1.0 \$0.6	13 6 3	Survey	Information technology integration	Douglas Ford George Vahle	2001 (2)
16	Continuous Computing Corp. 9380 Carroll Park Drive, San Diego 92121 www.ccpu.com	(858) 882-8800 (858) 777-3388	210.00	\$62.0 \$40.0 \$20.0	156 142 107	Survey	Network service-ready platform provider	P.J. Go Erez Barnavon	1998
17	Geary Interactive LLC 450 B St., #950, San Diego 92101 www.geary.com	(619) 239-5953 (619) 234-8668	198.46	\$9.4 \$7.9 \$3.1	42 30 13	Survey	Manage online advertising campaigns including Web site design, hosting, analytics and maintenance	Andreas Roell Dennis Zocco	2000
18	Solulink 9853 Pacific Heights Blvd., Suite H, San Diego 92121 www.solulink.com	(858) 625-0670 (858) 625-0770	182.44	\$0.6 \$0.4 \$0.2	5 4 4	Survey	Creator and developer of bioconjugation technology	David Schwartz Steve DeGraw	2000
19	Away With Clutter Inc. 2683 Via de la Valle, Suite G335, Del Mar 92014 www.awaywithclutter.com	(858) 481-9191 (858) 509-0559	180.00	\$1.0 \$0.8 \$0.3	2 2 2	Survey	Professional organizers who work with individuals, small businesses and corporations	Dana H. Korey Adam Rosenberg	2001
20	Good & Roberts Inc. 1330 Park Center Drive, Vista 92081 www.goodandroberts.com	(760) 598-7614 (760) 598-7659 (800) 350-7614	176.41	\$47.0 (3) \$32.6 \$17.0	85 77 70	Survey	General contractor specializing in biotech, pharmaceutical, tenant improvements, manufacturing, financial, institutional	C. Jack Good Elizabeth S. Good	1979
21	Space Micro Inc. 10401 Roselle St., San Diego 92121 www.spacemicro.com	(858) 332-0700 (858) 332-0709	169.61	\$1.8 \$1.7 \$0.7	25 18 7	Survey	Performs research and development in space and military technologies	David J. Strobel David R. Czajkowski (4)	2002
22	Interior Specialists Inc. 1630 Faraday Ave., Carlsbad 92008 www.isidc.com	(760) 804-6310 (760) 268-6099 (800) 959-8333	161.12	\$275.3 \$132.2 \$105.4	982 205 162	Survey	Provider of outsourced interior design and installation services for homebuilders	Ken Treaster Jim Whitney	1983
23	SkinMedica Inc. 5909 Sea Lion Place, Suite H, Carlsbad 92010 www.skinmedica.com	(760) 448-3600 (760) 448-3601 (866) 867-0110	159.35	\$37.0 \$24.2 \$14.3	52 53 34	Survey	Specialty pharmaceutical company focused on dermatologic products	Rex Bright Thomas H. Inslay	1999
24	Innovative Body Science 2724 Loker Ave. W., Carlsbad 92008 www.innovativebodyscience.com	(760) 603-0772 (760) 603-0691 (888) 700-7727	147.06	\$4.2 \$3.8 \$1.7	20 20 20	Survey	Manufacturer of personal care products, lotions, and shampoos	Michelle Bartok Michelle Bartok	1986
25	Business OnLine 610 W. Ash St., #1700, San Diego 92101 www.enterprise.businessol.com	(619) 699-0767 (619) 239-2189 (866) 333-1265	145.45	\$2.7 \$1.6 \$1.1	24 17 13	Survey	Web site services including search engine marketing, Web design and consulting	Aaron Kahlow Thad Kahlow	1997

na Not available

Notes: To be considered for The List, companies must be privately held, based in San Diego County and have earned at least \$200,000 in 2003. The Business Journal has chosen not to show rankings from last year's List because they misrepresent the company's growth. The purpose of this List is to highlight those companies that grow quickly each year, and while it is unlikely that a company will rank every year, this does not mean that they are not profitable and still growing. A number of companies returned surveys but did not rank in the top 100 for the 2006 List.

Sources: The companies, CPA attestation letters and San Diego Business Journal List files.

It is not the intent of this List to endorse the participants nor to imply a company's size or numerical rank indicates its quality.

(1) Dan Feder is president of the company.

(2) Ford Technology Group has done business as I.T. Pros since 2001.

(3) Revenue reflects only 11 months out of the 2005 fiscal year.

(4) Individual is the chief operating officer.

Researched by Liz Wiedemann

Please turn to Page 16

FASTEST-GROWING PRIVATE COMPANIES

Ranked by percent of verified revenue growth from 2003 to 2005

Continued from Page 16

Rank	Company Address Web site	Telephone Fax Toll-free number	Percent growth in revenue from 2003 - 2005	Revenue: • 2005 • 2004 • 2003 \$ Millions	Local full-time employees: • 2005 • 2004	Source of information	Business description	• Local CEO • Local CFO	Year established locally
26	Judy Thompson & Assoc., Financial Executive Search Inc. 5080 Shoreham Place, #204, San Diego 92122 www.jtaa.net	(858) 452-1200 (858) 623-5910	141.85	\$0.8 \$0.5 \$0.3	3 3 3	Survey	Search and placement of professionals in accounting and finance	Judy Thompson Judy Thompson	1981
27	Access San Diego LLC 3515 Hancock St., #200, San Diego 92110 www.accessdmc.com	(619) 299-2200 (619) 299-2209	138.44	\$7.2 \$5.7 \$3.0	22 18 13	Survey	Destination management and event production	Christopher Lee na	1970
28	Xnergy 2237 Faraday Ave., #100, San Diego 92008 www.xnergy.net	(760) 438-7676 (760) 438-7679 (800) 496-3749	132.97	\$14.3 \$13.9 \$6.1	80 75 60	Survey	Engineering and construction company	Jeff Gosselin Jason Davis	2001
29	Cornerstone Communities Corp. 4365 Executive Drive, #600, San Diego 92121 www.cornerstonecommunities.com	(858) 458-9700 (858) 410-0266	125.33	\$207.0 \$96.5 \$91.9	55 62 52	Survey	Real estate development, homebuilding, income property, hotel and hospitality, venture capital	Ure Kretowicz Jay Zimmer	1994
30	XL Staffing Inc. 700 N. Johnson, Suite C, El Cajon 92020 www.xlstaffing.com	(619) 276-8677 (619) 276-6729	122.54	\$4.6 \$3.8 \$2.1	13 12 8	Survey	Placement of temporary employees in hospitality, industrial and security	Joe Mackey na	1996
31	Syneract Inc. 5759 Fleet St., #100, Carlsbad 92008 www.syneract.com	(760) 268-8200 (760) 929-1419	116.61	\$21.2 \$13.7 \$9.8	159 130 90	Survey	Contract research organization providing clinical development and consulting services	Ellen Morgan Russell Holmes	1995
32	GMI Building Services Inc./Guard Management Inc. 8001 Vickers St., San Diego 92111 www.gmiweb.com	(858) 244-1850 (858) 272-2721 (866) 803-4464	107.28	\$20.5 \$17.5 \$9.9	648 617 523	Survey	Commercial cleaning specialists and integrated security solutions	Larry Abrams Barry Wilson	1968
33	Computer Modules Inc. 11409 W. Bernardo Court, San Diego 92127 www.computermodules.com	(858) 613-1818 (858) 613-1815	103.05	\$5.1 \$3.8 \$2.5	11 7 6	Survey	Producer and reseller of digital video and broadcast products	Laszlo Zoltan Dean Valerio	2001
34	San Diego Office Interiors 4863 Shawline St., Suite A, San Diego 92126 www.sdoi.com	(858) 495-7364 (858) 495-9101	100.00	\$18.0 \$14.0 \$9.0	36 38 30	Survey	Full-service commercial design and building company offering furniture procurement, project and facility management, and voice and data services	Vincent Mudd Catherine Mudd	1995
35	DR Technologies Inc. 7740 Kenamar Court, San Diego 92121 www.drtechnologies.com	(858) 587-4200 (858) 587-4209	96.86	\$11.2 \$8.6 \$5.7	35 25 20	Survey	Developer and producer of engineered composite structure products	Lyle E. Dunbar James Russell	1994
36	Proffer Financial 3636 Nobel Drive, #410, San Diego 92122 www.profferfinancial.com	(858) 453-5405 (858) 453-5415 (800) 310-2660	94.26	\$7.4 \$4.7 \$3.8	45 38 30	Survey	Mortgage lenders and brokers	Mike Fake Mike Fake	2003
37	abcISP Inc. 12760 High Bluff Drive, #150, San Diego 92130 www.abcisp.com	(858) 259-2224 (858) 259-2207	94.06	\$1.5 \$1.2 \$0.8	16 10 9	Survey	Technology and management solutions to government and commercial clients	Alex Barron Scott Shields	2001
38	Cuso Financial Services LP 10455 Sorrento Valley Road, #210, San Diego 92121 www.cusonet.com	(858) 530-4400 (858) 530-1929	94.01	\$70.8 \$57.4 \$36.5	65 57 49	Survey	Securities broker/dealer for credit unions and their members	Valorie Seyfert Loraine Wiser	1996
39	C Enterprises LP 2445 Cades Way, Vista 92081 www.centerprises.com	(760) 599-5111 (760) 599-5120	93.84	\$7.0 \$5.4 \$3.6	66 70 48	Survey	Custom cable assemblies for the data and telecom markets	Brian Tauber Daisy Mirador	2003
40	Johnson & Jennings General Contracting 6165 Greenwich Drive, #180, San Diego 92122 www.johnsonandjennings.com	(858) 623-1100 (858) 623-1108	92.00	\$48.0 \$25.0 \$25.0	46 39 31	Survey	Commercial tenant improvement construction firm	Jackie Jennings Naomi Lohnes	1981
41	Z57 Inc. 8445 Camino Santa Fe, #215, San Diego 92121 www.z57.com	(800) 899-8148 (858) 869-9944 (800) 899-8148	88.55	\$13.9 \$10.1 \$7.4	218 185 130	Survey	Full-service real estate Internet marketing company	Steve Weber Ryan Whitlock	1998
42	MTC Services Corp. P.O. Box 121060, Chula Vista 91912 www.mtsc.com	(619) 585-2100 (619) 585-2101	88.19	\$34.4 \$22.7 \$18.3	29 25 23	Survey	Provides engineering services to the Department of Defense	David Camarate Marguerite Camarate	1997
43	Rightlook.com Inc. 7616 Miramar Road, #5300, San Diego 92126 www.rightlook.com	(858) 271-4271 (858) 271-4303 (800) 883-3446	87.84	\$3.8 \$2.7 \$2.0	20 20 15	Survey	Auto reconditioning industry, providing training, equipment, supplies, business support and marketing services	Stephen Powers John Teotico	1998
44	Barnhart Inc. 10760 Thornmint Road, San Diego 92127 www.debinc.com	(858) 385-8200 (858) 385-8201	87.51	\$486.4 \$450.0 \$259.4	327 338 188	Survey	General building, engineering, construction and program management for educational, civic and government facilities	Douglas Barnhart Douglas Barnhart	1983
45	Indus Technology Inc. 2243 San Diego Ave., San Diego 92110 www.industechnology.com	(619) 299-2555 (619) 299-2444	82.63	\$16.9 \$13.3 \$9.3	118 97 77	Survey	Provides systems engineering, technical and program management services for government and industry clients	James Lasswell Jen Lasswell	1998
46	James M. Morrison Insurance Services Inc. 5973 Avenida Encinas, #206, Carlsbad 92008 www.jamesmorrisoninsuranceservices.com	(760) 438-9311 (760) 438-9355	75.74	\$0.7 \$0.6 \$0.4	5 3 2	Survey	Brokerage of health, life and disability insurance to individuals and small to medium-sized businesses	Jim Morrison Jim Morrison	2002
47	I.E.-Pacific Inc. 1663 Pacific Rim Court, San Diego 92154 www.iepacific.com	(619) 671-5870 (619) 671-5877	75.23	\$19.1 \$23.9 \$10.9	26 22 22	Survey	General contractor, public works	Diane Koester-Dion Diane Koester-Dion	1993
48	Peartrees Catering Inc. 2243 Verus St., San Diego 92154 www.peartreescatering.com	(619) 575-5500 (619) 575-5502	74.82	\$2.4 \$2.1 \$1.4	22 12 11	Survey	Corporate, social, weddings, theme events and event planning	Jerrold Siegel Luanne Siegel	1990
49	Althea Technologies 11040 Roselle St., San Diego 92121 www.altheatech.com	(858) 882-0123 (858) 882-0133 (888) 425-8432	70.21	\$16.0 \$11.4 \$9.4	87 63 55	Survey	Provides services to the biotech and pharmaceutical industry for the purpose of accelerating drug development	Francois Ferre and Magda Marquet Gary Gilmore	1998
50	Bravura Networks 8825 Aero Drive, #110, San Diego 92123 www.bravuranetworks.com	(858) 565-6368 (858) 565-2696 (877) 333-2533	67.42	\$0.9 \$0.8 \$0.5	8 6 4	Survey	IT service provider, corporate network and computer services, back-office application support	Michael Kaiser Michael Hall	2002

na Not available

Notes: To be considered for The List, companies must be privately held, based in San Diego County and have earned at least \$200,000 in 2003. The Business Journal has chosen not to show rankings from last year's List because they misrepresent the company's growth. The purpose of this List is to highlight those companies that grow quickly each year, and while it is unlikely that a

company will rank every year, this does not mean that they are not profitable and still growing. A number of companies returned surveys but did not rank in the top 100 for the 2006 List.

Sources: The companies, CPA attestation letters and San Diego Business Journal List files. It is not the intent of this List to endorse the participants nor to imply a company's size or numerical rank indicates its quality.

Researched by Liz Wiedemann

Please turn to Page 21

SkillStorm Makes a Rumble in Staffing and a Roar in Defense Services

Employee Training Proves Effective for Booming Business

BY LIZ WIEDEMANN

Egyptian-born Hany Girgis is no stranger to taking risks in life. The 34-year-old founder, president and chief executive officer of San Diego-based **SkillStorm Inc.** put his own skills on the line when he quit a secure job, took out a home-equity loan and his life savings, and decided to start a business in June 2002.

Perhaps such ventures run in the family, as Girgis' father took a job in New Mexico in 1978, moving the family from Cairo, Egypt.

Apparently, Girgis' ambitious vision has paid off. SkillStorm saw revenue growth of 621 percent from \$3.67 million in 2003 to upward of \$26 million

Please turn to SKILLSTORM on Page 36

SkillStorm Inc.

CEO: Hany Girgis

Address:

10105 Pacific Heights Blvd., Suite 130, San Diego 92121

2005 revenue: \$26.5 million

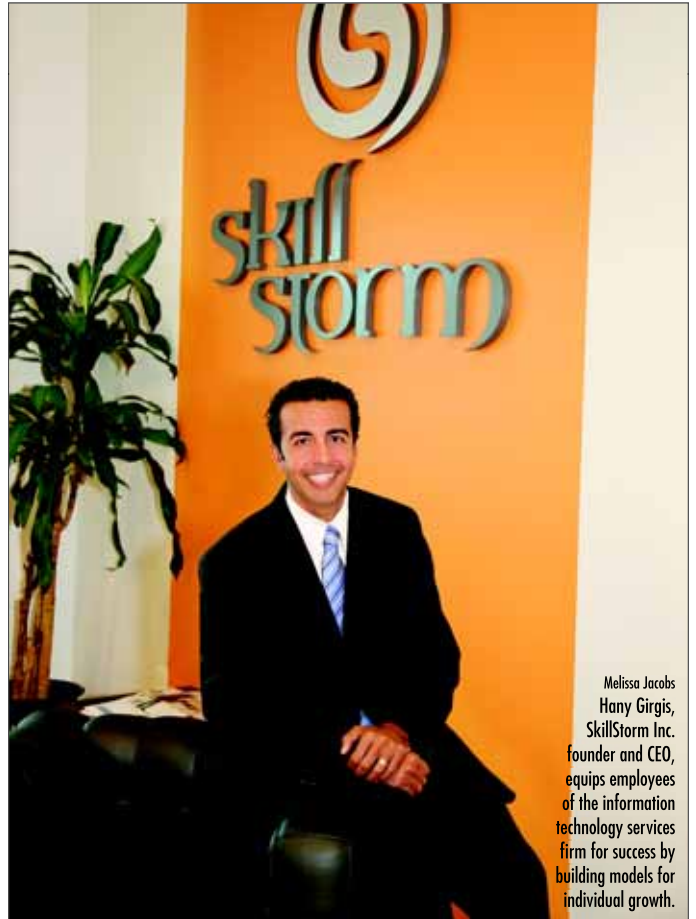
2003-05 growth: 621 percent

No. of local full-time employees: 170

Web site: www.skillstorm.com

CEO's secret to success: "Good business is about good people. Spending the time, effort and money to hire only the best employees and training them to go the extra mile is the most fundamental element."

6



Melissa Jacobs
Hany Girgis,
SkillStorm Inc.
founder and CEO,
equips employees
of the information
technology services
firm for success by
building models for
individual growth.

Consultant Makes Financial Advising A Team Effort

Hard-Driving Exec Expands Staff That Serves Other Advisers

BY STACEY BENGTON

Entrepreneurs prefer to run their businesses on their own terms.

Michael Rodman, founder, chief executive officer and chief financial officer of **Advanced Planning Services Inc.**, is no exception.

In addition to attributing the success of his San Diego-based company to his hard work, financial knowledge and dedication, Rodman gives credit to his team of workers.

"I credit almost all of our success to our employees," Rodman said. "We could never have grown at this rate without them."

Rodman also credits his company's success to his own competitive nature.

"I always want to win," he said. "And this business is an outlet for me to compete and win."

These two factors seem to be working for him and APS. The young company's revenue has grown 461 percent since 2003, ranking it No. 7 on the *San Diego Business Journal's* List of Fastest-Growing Private Companies this year.

Behind-The-Scenes Research

Rodman founded APS in 1999 when he recognized that there was a need for a business that helps financial advisers find and create financial solutions for their clients. He noticed the demand for this type of service after working as a financial adviser himself for 15 years.

"After having clients of my own over

Please turn to ADVANCED on Page 24



Melissa Jacobs

Michael Rodman founded Advanced Planning Services Inc. seven years ago when he recognized that financial advisers need assistance in creating financial solutions for their clients.

Advanced Planning Services Inc.

7

CEO: Michael Rodman
Location: 1500 State St., Suite 220, San Diego 92101
2005 revenues: \$13.87 million
2003-05 growth: 461 percent
No. of local full-time employees: 31
Web site: www.apshome.com
CEO's secret to success: "The secret to our success at APS is very simple. It is our people. Everything we do is relationship-based, and we have the best people in the industry ... as employees and as customers."

FASTEST-GROWING PRIVATE COMPANIES

Ranked by percent of verified revenue growth from 2003 to 2005

Continued from Page 16

Rank	Company Address Web site	Telephone Fax Toll-free number	Percent growth in revenue from 2003 - 2005	Revenue: • 2005 • 2004 • 2003 \$ Millions	Local full-time employees: • 2006 • 2005 • 2004	Source of information	Business description	Local CEO • Local CFO	Year established locally
51	One Stop Systems Inc. 2235 Enterprise St., #110, Escondido 92029 www.onestopsystems.com	(760) 745-9883 (760) 745-9824	64.19	\$6.0 \$6.6 \$3.7	31 30 21	Survey	Designer and manufacturer of industrial computers	Steve Cooper Steve Cooper	na
52	TalentFuse Inc. 9555 Chesapeake Drive, #200, San Diego 92123 www.talentfuse.com	(858) 456-0060 (858) 456-9264	63.16	\$6.2 \$5.3 \$3.8	95 87 70	Survey	IT staffing	Brian Margarita Tage Tracy	2001
53	Mr. Copy 6632 Conroy Court, San Diego 92111 www.mrcopy.com	(858) 573-6301 (858) 573-8850 (877) 541-5234	62.50	\$39.0 \$30.0 \$24.0	110 95 85	Survey	Xerox premier plus agency, offering the Xerox line of digital copiers, color copiers and other services	Robert A. Leone (1) Kevin McCarty	1994
54	Michael Crews Development P.O. Box 300429, Escondido 92030 www.michaelcrews.com	(760) 749-1919 (760) 749-3698	62.04	\$70.2 \$54.5 \$43.3	93 78 71	Survey	Real estate development	Michael Crews Kelly Crews (2)	1998
55	La Jolla Spa M.D. 7630 Fay Ave., La Jolla 92037 www.spa-md.com	(858) 459-6868 (858) 459-4894 (800) 886-5318	60.92	\$2.1 \$1.3 \$1.3	25 na na	Survey	Spa	Dianne York-Goldman na	2002
56	Corky McMillin Cos. 2750 Womble Road, San Diego 92186 www.mcmillin.com	(619) 477-4117 (619) 794-1604 (866) 626-4554	60.59	\$880.2 \$746.9 \$548.1	602 638 552	Survey	Residential and commercial real estate development, homebuilding, real estate sales and financing	Mark McMillin and Scott McMillin Gary Beason	1960
57	Hangers Cleaners 2169 Fenton Parkway, #104, San Diego 92108 www.hangersandiego.com	(619) 563-8200	60.27	\$1.1 \$0.9 \$0.7	28 17 17	Survey	All natural liquid carbon dioxide dry cleaning business	Alexander Gordon Shaw na	1983
58	Epsilon Systems Solutions Inc. 1565 Hotel Circle S., #200, San Diego 92108 www.epsilonssystems.com	(619) 702-1700 (619) 702-1711	55.53	\$42.0 \$40.0 \$27.0	148 65 47	Survey	Government contracting, engineering, development and IT-related services	Bryan Min Alan Stewart	1998
59	Grubb & Ellis/BRE Commercial 4350 La Jolla Village Drive, #500, San Diego 92122 www.brecommercial.com	(858) 546-5400 (858) 630-6320	55.29	\$40.0 \$32.0 \$25.7	176 170 126	Survey	Commercial real estate brokerage services	John D. Frager Ned Hall	1986
60	Vantage Associates Inc. 900 Civic Center Drive, National City 91950 www.vantageassociatesinc.com	(619) 477-6940 (619) 477-2225	54.96	\$9.8 \$9.0 \$6.3	35 33 30	Survey	Manufacturer of composite plastic and metal components for military and aerospace applications	Louis Alpinieri Andrea Glover	1984
61	Advanced Protection Systems, dba Advanced Electronic Solutions 1830 John Towers Ave., El Cajon 92020 www.aes2.net	(619) 579-2898 (619) 579-1740	52.73	\$14.1 \$11.7 \$9.3	133 102 107	Survey	Home theater, multi-room audio, access control, residential and commercial security providers	Sean McDermott Tom Wardell	1986
62	Autosplice Inc. 10121 Barnes Canyon Road, San Diego 92121 www.autosplice.com	(858) 535-0077 (858) 535-0933	51.39	\$72.8 \$56.9 \$48.1	179 206 181	Survey	Designs, manufactures and markets innovative electronic, electrical and mechanical products, systems and services for automotive and telecommunication industries	Irwin Zahn Barrett Lamber	1990
63	Science Applications International Corp. 10260 Campus Point Drive, San Diego 92121 www.saic.com	(858) 826-6000	48.71	\$7,187.0 \$5,833.0 \$4,833.0	4,352 4,784 4,667	Survey	Information technology, systems integration and e-solutions to commercial and government customers	Ken Dahlberg Mark Sopp	1969
64	MG Properties 10505 Sorrento Valley Road, #300, San Diego 92121 www.mgproperties.com	(858) 658-0500 (858) 526-0800	48.61	\$5.7 \$6.4 \$3.8	105 94 124	Survey	Syndications and management of apartment communities	Mark Gleiberman Jeffrey Piper	1989
65	Stone Brewing Co. 1999 Citracado Parkway, Escondido 92029 www.stonebrew.com	(760) 471-4999 (760) 471-7690	48.31	\$12.4 \$10.9 \$8.4	83 85 45	Survey	Manufacturer and distributor of draft beer	Greg Koch Steve Wagner	1996
66	Streamload Inc. 525 B St., #1000, San Diego 92101 www.streamload.com	(619) 233-9914 (619) 374-7469	47.13	\$2.7 \$2.5 \$1.9	21 16 9	Survey	Provider of online digital media services	Steve herson Greg Bohdan	1998
67	Elan Organic Coffees 1205 J St., Suite F, San Diego 92101 www.elanorganic.com	(619) 235-0392 (619) 235-0394	47.05	\$8.2 \$6.3 \$5.6	5 1 6	Survey	Importer of certified organic coffees	Karen Cebrenros na	1989
68	TIG - Technology Integration Group (3) 7810 Trade St., San Diego 92121 www.tig.com	(858) 566-1900 (858) 566-8794 (800) 858-0549	46.22	\$284.5 \$221.5 \$194.6	30 25 25	Survey	Technology, consulting, computer equipment, procurement, asset management, supplies and corporate furniture	Bruce Geier Tom Janeczek	1983
69	Abacus America Inc. 10350 Barnes Canyon Road, San Diego 92121 www.aplus.net	(858) 410-6987 (858) 410-6927	42.87	\$16.7 \$12.8 \$11.7	90 86 81	Survey	Internet service provider, software development, Web hosting and Web design	Ivan Vachovsky Lilian Vachovsky	1992
70	Kleinfelder Group Inc. 5015 Shoreham Place, San Diego 92122 www.kleinfelder.com	(858) 320-2000 (858) 320-2001	42.15	\$246.3 \$188.8 \$173.3	112 100 95	Survey	Consulting firm offering project delivery services for municipalities, government agencies, multinational companies	Gerald J. Salontai John M. Pilkington	1985
71	Roel Construction Co. Inc. 3366 Kurtz St., San Diego 92110 www.roel.com	(619) 297-4156 (619) 297-1522 (800) 662-7635	41.59	\$271.8 \$263.1 \$192.0	241 288 329	Survey	Building contractors specializing in offices, hotels, churches, high-rise condos, parking structures	Wayne Hickey Craig Koehler	1959
72	Ninyo & Moore 5710 Ruffin Road, San Diego 92123 www.ninyoandmoore.com	(858) 576-1000 (858) 576-9600	40.69	\$43.0 \$33.8 \$30.5	89 96 96	Survey	Geotechnical, environmental and material testing, inspection services	Avram Ninyo na	1986
73	Center for Health & Wellbeing 3737 Moraga Ave., Suite A305, San Diego 92117 www.chvbonline.com	(858) 454-9771 (858) 454-9785	40.55	\$1.4 \$1.3 \$1.0	15 6 21	Survey	Integrative medical practice including modern medicine and drug therapies, alternative and complementary medicines	Mary Golden na	1998
74	Genica Corp. 1890 Ord Way, Oceanside 92056 www.geeks.com	(760) 726-7700 (760) 639-4599	39.65	\$143.1 \$112.9 \$102.4	228 217 199	Survey	Online resellers, retailers, sellers of computers, components, supplies	Scott Kusel Geoff Hildebrandt	1999
75	Discovery Isle Child Development Center Inc. 1655 S. Rancho Santa Fe Road, #107, San Marcos 92078 www.discoveryisle.com	(760) 752-7590 (760) 752-7595	38.76	\$9.5 \$8.3 \$6.9	185 176 165	Survey	Academically based preschool, child care, and private kindergarten	Cindy W. Bornemann Cindy W. Bornemann	1993

na Not available
Notes: To be considered for The List, companies must be privately held, based in San Diego County and have earned at least \$200,000 in 2003. The Business Journal has chosen not to show rankings from last year's List because they misrepresent the company's growth. The purpose of this List is to highlight those companies that grow quickly each year, and while it is unlikely that a company will rank every year, this does not mean that they are not profitable and still growing. A number of companies returned surveys but did not rank in the top 100 for the 2006 List.

Sources: The companies, CPA attestation letters and San Diego Business Journal List files.
 It is not the intent of this List to endorse the participants nor to imply a company's size or numerical rank indicates its quality.
 (1) Robert A. Leone is the president of the company. There is no active chief executive officer.
 (2) Kelly and Michael Crews share the role of CEO
 (3) Previously known as PC Specialists Inc. Headquarters no longer in San Diego, but 2005 revenues still qualify.

Researched by Liz Wiedemann
 Please turn to Page 22

FASTEST-GROWING PRIVATE COMPANIES

Ranked by percent of verified revenue growth from 2003 to 2005

Continued from Page 21

Rank	Company Address Web site	Telephone Fax Toll-free number	Percent growth in revenue from 2003 - 2005	Revenue: • 2005 • 2004 • 2003 \$ Millions	Local full-time employees: • 2006 • 2005 • 2004	Source of information	Business description	• Local CEO • Local CFO	Year established locally
76	Destination Concepts Inc. 4241 Jutland Drive, #200, San Diego 92101 www.destinationconcepts.com	(858) 274-7979 (858) 274-1440 (800) 272-7775	38.36	\$10.1 \$8.3 \$7.3	na na na	Survey	Destination management company providing services in event production and marketing	Bryme Frost na	1998
77	Scribe Communications 5090 Shoreham Place, #108, San Diego 92122 www.scribecommunications.com	(858) 452-8958 (858) 452-6797	37.50	\$0.4 \$0.4 \$0.3	4 3 2	Survey	Boutique media relations and publicity firm	Jan Percival Lipscomb na	1986
78	E Factor Media Inc. 14282 Danielson St., Poway 92064 www.efactormedia.com	(858) 413-1600 (858) 413-1605	36.75	\$0.8 \$0.6 \$0.6	12 14 9	Survey	Integrative marketing solutions	Joseph Piercey Charles Tassos	1985
79	Logo Expressions Inc. 1090 Joshua Way, Suite A, Vista 92081 www.logoexpressions.com	(760) 598-9011 (760) 598-4911	31.83	\$1.9 \$1.8 \$1.5	8 6 4	Survey	Promotional products	Sandra Moffitt Sandra Moffitt	1999
80	Walter Anderson Plumbing 1150 N. Marshall Ave., El Cajon 92020 www.walterandersonplumbing.com	(619) 449-7646 (619) 449-0312 (800) 530-1102	30.38	\$5.3 \$4.7 \$4.1	53 40 38	Survey	Plumbing, heating, air conditioning, residential and light commercial service repair and replacement	Mary Jean Anderson na	1978
81	EOS International 2292 Faraday Ave., Carlsbad 92008 www.eosintl.com	(760) 431-8400 (760) 431-8448 (800) 876-5484	29.41	\$6.6 \$5.7 \$5.1	73 68 64	Survey	Library automation, content and knowledge management software provider	Tony Saadat Tina Noquera	1981
82	Waters Catering Inc. 1105 W. Morena Blvd., San Diego 92110 www.waterscatering.com	(619) 276-8803 (619) 276-8810	29.08	\$3.0 \$2.7 \$2.3	15 15 15	Survey	Catering company	Mary Kay Waters Mary Kay Waters	1988
83	Prometheus Laboratories Inc. 5739 Pacific Center Blvd., San Diego 92121 www.prometheuslabs.com	(888) 423-5227 (858) 535-2193 (888) 423-5227	28.77	\$89.6 \$69.6 \$69.6	na 121 na	Survey	Specialty pharmaceutical company focusing on treating disease and disorders by integrating therapeutics and diagnostic services	Joseph M. Limber Michael V. Swanson	1996
84	Architectural Concepts Inc. 3015 St. Charles St., Suite B, San Diego 92110 www.4desigins.com	(619) 531-0110 (619) 531-0113	28.29	\$0.9 \$0.8 \$0.7	10 10 9	Survey	Full-service architectural and interior design firm specializing in hospitality projects	Margit Whitlock na	1992
85	Ken Blanchard Cos. 125 State Place, Escondido 92027 www.kenblanchard.com	(760) 489-5005 (760) 489-1332 (800) 728-6000	26.13	\$45.2 \$43.7 \$35.8	177 179 171	Survey	Workplace learning, productivity, performance, and leadership effectiveness solutions	Thomas J. McKee Allison Pico	1977
86	Preferred Healthcare Registry P.O. Box 17860, San Diego 92177 www.preferredregistry.com	(858) 505-0939 (858) 505-0949 (800) 787-6787	25.33	\$4.7 \$4.2 \$3.8	na na na	Survey	Temporary and full-time staffing of medical professionals	Melanie Reiten na	1994
87	Gafcon Inc. 701 B St., #1200, San Diego 92101 www.gafcon.com	(619) 231-6100 (619) 231-7099 (800) 731-6110	24.66	\$13.1 \$12.7 \$10.5	77 76 62	Survey	Construction management	Pamela Gaffen na	1987
88	Barney & Barney LLC 9171 Towne Center Drive, #500, San Diego 92186 www.barneyandbarney.com	(858) 457-3414 (858) 452-7530 (800) 321-4696	24.19	\$43.9 \$39.2 \$35.4	213 212 197	Survey	Full-service risk management consulting and insurance brokerage firm	Paul Hering Hal Dunning	1909
89	Oceanside Photo & Telescope 918 Mission Ave., Oceanside 92054 www.optcorp.com	(760) 722-3348 (760) 722-8133 (800) 483-6287	24.15	\$11.0 \$10.1 \$8.9	17 17 16	Survey	Retail seller of cameras, telescopes, binoculars, microscopes and all related accessories	J. Craig Weatherwax II na	1947
90	Coffman Specialties Inc. 4375 Jutland Drive, #260, San Diego 92117 www.coffmanspecialties.com	(858) 272-9080 (858) 272-3655	23.96	\$88.3 \$76.4 \$71.2	167 150 120	Survey	General contracting, concrete subcontractor	Colleen Coffman na	1991
91	Sullivan International Group Inc. 409 Camino del Rio S., #100, San Diego 92108 www.onesullivan.com	(619) 260-1432 (619) 398-2912 (888) 744-1432	23.60	\$19.9 \$15.8 \$16.1	40 46 46	Survey	A science, engineering and advanced technology firm that serves commercial and government sectors	Steven E. Sullivan Grant E. Brisacher	1998
92	Evans Tire and Service Center 510 N. Broadway, Escondido 92025 www.evanstire.com	(760) 746-0594 (760) 480-1089 (866) 738-2678	23.53	\$21.0 \$19.0 \$17.0	140 130 125	Survey	Automotive service and tire sales	John Andonian na	2001
93	TLC Staffing 8788 Balboa Ave., San Diego 92123 www.tlcstaffing.com	(858) 569-6260 (858) 569-8026	21.85	\$11.5 \$11.3 \$9.4	28 19 23	Survey	Full-service staffing firm	Judith R. Lawton Robert L. DeWinter	1985
94	Equity 1 Lenders Group 9444 Waples St., #300, San Diego 92121 www.eq1direct.com	(858) 558-5455 (858) 457-5455 (800) 736-3646	20.95	\$33.8 \$30.1 \$28.0	102 157 128	Survey	Mortgage lender	Camron Barton Brian Daniels	1989
95	D & D Tool & Supply 1028 Buenos Ave., San Diego 92110 www.ddtool.com	(619) 276-9100 (619) 276-9199 (800) 876-5553	20.75	\$38.4 \$37.5 \$31.8	146 138 115	Survey	Full-service staffing firm providing temporary and direct-hire solutions	Georgia Distro Robert L. DeWinter	1947
96	Lyon 1010 S. Coast Highway, Encinitas 92024 www.lyonassoc.com	(760) 634-1886 (760) 634-0896	20.00	\$2.4 \$2.4 \$2.0	12 12 12	Survey	Full-service advertising agency	Susan Lyon Susan Lyon	1991
97	Oster and Associates 6225 Lusk Blvd., #A, San Diego 92121 www.osterads.com	(858) 535-8101 (858) 535-1925	17.80	\$0.4 \$0.5 \$0.3	10 8 8	Survey	Full-service advertising and public relations firm	Bev Oster Ornelas Bev Oster Ornelas	1986
98	Evans Hotels 998 W. Mission Bay Drive, San Diego 92109 www.evanshotels.com	(858) 539-7600 (858) 488-2524 (800) 576-4229	17.77	\$79.4 \$72.5 \$67.4	na 1,167 na	Survey	Resort and commercial property ownership, development and management	Anne Evans Robert Gleason	1945
99	Creative Benefits Inc. 981 Vale Terrace Drive, Vista 92084 www.creativebenefits.com	(760) 599-4700 (760) 643-0996	16.25	\$4.8 \$4.3 \$4.1	na na na	Survey	Provides benefit administration for COBRA, eligibility and flexible benefit plans	Jody L. Diemel Rock J. Hall	1989
100	American Specialty Health 777 Front St., San Diego 92101 www.ashcompanies.com	(619) 578-2000 (619) 237-3832 (800) 848-3555	15.64	\$124.4 \$104.1 \$107.6	537 514 475	Survey	Health care benefits organization providing benefit programs, health education programs and related products	George DeVries Lorin Chevalier	1994

na Not available

Notes: To be considered for The List, companies must be privately held, based in San Diego County and have earned at least \$200,000 in 2003. The Business Journal has chosen not to show rankings from last year's List because they misrepresent the company's growth. The purpose of this List is to highlight those companies that grow quickly each year, and while it is unlikely that a

company will rank every year, this does not mean that they are not profitable and still growing. A number of companies returned surveys but did not rank in the top 100 for the 2006 List.

Sources: The companies, CPA attestation letters and San Diego Business Journal List files. It is not the intent of this List to endorse the participants nor to imply a company's size or numerical rank indicates its quality.

Researched by Liz Wiedemann

Advanced: Firm's Hiring Accelerates

Continued from Page 19

the years, I developed a clear knowledge of my limitations with what I can do for one client," Rodman said. "Not one adviser has the time to research solutions for their clients. Because of that, I decided to start a business to help other financial advisers, making it easy for them to do business."

The company mainly focuses its attention on creating financial solutions and planning techniques for insurance agents, investment advisers, certified public accountants, attorneys, and property and casualty agencies.

Although Rodman incorporated the company in 1999, it wasn't until July 2002 that he truly hit the ground running. That was when he hired his first three employees to help build APS.

By October of that year, Rodman said they got hit with such a high demand for their services that he hired six more people so he could keep up with the growth. Since then, the company has grown by about six people every year.

"The growth in the number of employees to manage the business coming in has been significant over the past couple years," said Deb Fitzpatrick, chief operating officer for APS. "Instead of six people doing everything, we now have specialized departments

handling the needs of the company."

Handling Complex Concepts

In addition to the rapid growth of employees and annual revenues each year, APS has grown in expertise as well. Fitzpatrick said the employees' general knowledge is continuously expanding and growing, and that the company's concepts and ideas have become more advanced.

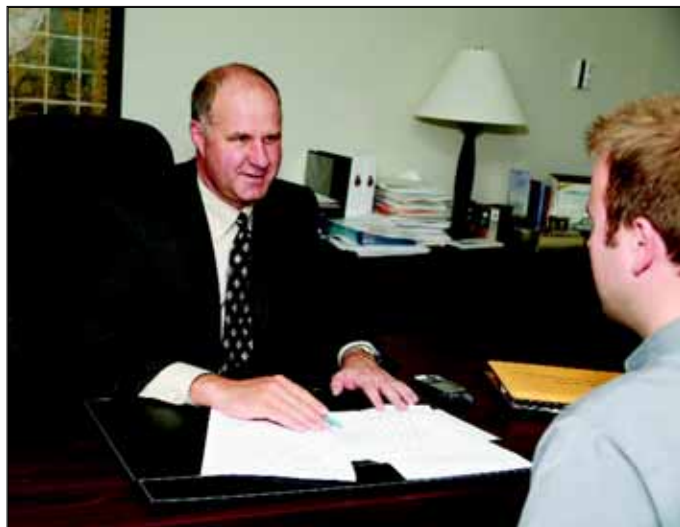
Currently, APS serves about 1,000 clients across the country, 200 of which are complex clients that the company works with on a weekly or daily basis.

The volume of clients and growth cause Rodman to put in a 70-hour workweek.

"The speed at which we have grown has made it difficult to completely build a team to handle the high volume of customers, so that's why I put in so many hours," Rodman said.

However, Rodman said it is a great problem to have and that he's been blessed with seasoned people working for the company and is continually looking to hire more staff to help with the growing business.

"He's been able to make good decisions on the people we do hire," Fitzpatrick said. "He's constantly out meeting new people. I joined the company four years ago and I couldn't think of a



Melissa Jacobs

Advanced Planning Services CEO Michael Rodman often works long hours to help serve the company's 1,000 clients nationwide.

better guy to work for."

Due to its fast growth, the company has been honored in more ways than one. APS has also been placed No. 31 on *Inc.* magazine's 2006 Inc. 500 list. The list highlights the nation's fastest-growing private companies.

Niche Service In Demand

With so many successes that the company has had, one would think its marketing strategy would be top-notch. But according to Rodman, the company doesn't really need to market itself.

"The only marketing we have done is gone to industry trade shows," Rodman said. "I think what helps is we've created a service that everybody seems to want to use; there was a void that needed to be filled and we filled it ... we are on a cutting edge of an idea and we've distrib-

uted it throughout the country."

To also soften the impact of growth, APS made a new business plan starting in 2006.

"Because of the overwhelming demand, we organized the company along five different channels," Rodman said.

The company created an individual brokerage channel and a "best practices" channel, which serves high-end financial advisers. It has also purchased a broker-dealer called USA Advanced Planners to help recruit and serve investment advisers; it formed a subsidiary called Underwriting Services of America, an organization that serves the needs of insurance agencies across the country; and formed an independent career agency that focuses on training life insurance agents to be independent.

Stinson:

Continued from Page 10

ed the company's capabilities.

The company's most measurable turning point came in 2004, when Dennis transformed his small home loan office into a licensed California mortgage brokerage firm able to function as a branch organization with upward of 30 branches in roughly two dozen states. The branches work with a list of more than 100 lenders.

Although the rapid growth of Stinson Financial is impressive, what's more impressive is the fact that it's occurring at a time when the real estate market is slowing.

"So many (other firms) are laying off people with the slowing of the market, we're cherry-picking the talent out there," Dennis said.

Overseeing so many branches can be a challenge, which is why Dennis credits much of his success to the way he's appointed key people to look out for specific branches.

"It is (competitive), but when you have good people in place and the account executive holds people accountable, it makes all the difference," Dennis said.

Door Is Open To Promotions

In addition to attracting qualified help, Dennis is a firm believer in re-



Michael S. Domine
From left, Chief Executive Officer Harry Dennis checks in with fellow Stinson Financial Group Inc. team members Shelley Leach, Donna Gigliotti and Sam Jarman. Dennis is a firm believer in promoting from within.

taining staff by promoting within the company, encouraging his employees to vie for more responsibility.

Kyla Hammer is proof of that. Hammer started with the company a year and a half ago as a receptionist.

"Harry's really great about encouraging us to move up in the company," Hammer said.

Fresh out of college, Hammer moved up quickly to the account manager position she holds today.

"It hasn't necessarily been just easy moving up," Hammer said. "It's been

about, if you want to really work hard and you can accept what it is Harry is trying to do here and help achieve that, then you can move up."

Hammer also gives her co-workers much credit.

"I think (the growth) can be attributed to qualified and experienced and educated people coming on board," Hammer said.

Another thing Dennis believes in is community support. During last year's company Christmas party, guests were encouraged to bring donations for the

Marine Toys for Tots Foundation, and at a Padres baseball game this season, Stinson Financial is sponsoring a youth giveaway promotion.

Dennis also believes in the old adage "Let the revenue lead the growth," and said he couldn't have been as successful without the support of his wife, Courtney, and their baby daughter, Hope.

This year, Dennis said he expects to hit \$16 million, maybe even \$17 million, in revenues. His plans for the future include expanding with branches in Las Vegas and the Bay Area.

Highest Revenue Generators

Ranked by 2005 revenue (in millions)
(*ranking from % of revenue growth list)

No.	Revenue	Company	Rank*
1	\$7,187.00	Science Applications International Corp.	63
2	\$880.20	Corky McMillin Cos.	56
3	\$486.40	Barnhart Inc.	44
4	\$327.50	Goal Financial	14
5	\$284.50	TIG - Technology Integration Group	68
6	\$275.32	Interior Specialists Inc.	22
7	\$271.85	Roel Construction Co. Inc.	71
8	\$246.28	Kleinfelder Group Inc.	70
9	\$207.04	Cornerstone Communities Corp.	29
10	\$143.05	Genica Corp.	74
11	\$124.40	American Specialty Health	100
12	\$89.60	Prometheus Laboratories Inc.	83
13	\$88.25	Coffman Specialties Inc.	90
14	\$79.40	Evans Hotels	98
15	\$72.80	Autosplice Inc.	62
16	\$70.81	Cuso Financial Services LP	38
17	\$70.16	Michael Crews Development	54
18	\$62.00	Continuous Computing Corp.	16
19	\$48.00	Johnson & Jennings General Contracting	40
20	\$47.02	Good & Roberts Inc.	20
21	\$45.18	Ken Blanchard Cos.	85
22	\$43.90	Barney & Barney LLC	88
23	\$42.99	Tapestry Solutions Inc.	12
24	\$42.95	Ninyo & Moore	72
25	\$42.00	Epsilon Systems Solutions Inc.	58
26	\$40.06	Super Warehouse	11
27	\$39.97	Grubb & Ellis/BRE Commercial	59
28	\$39.00	Mr. Copy	53
29	\$38.40	D & D Tool & Supply	95
30	\$36.98	SkinMedica Inc.	23
31	\$34.36	MTC Services Corp.	42
32	\$33.82	Equity 1 Lenders Group	94
33	\$26.45	SkillStorm Inc.	6
34	\$221.18	Syneract Inc.	31
35	\$21.00	Evans Tire and Service Center	92
36	\$20.50	GMI Building Services Inc./Guard Management Inc.	32
37	\$20.18	Five Point Capital Inc.	9
38	\$19.90	Sullivan International Group Inc.	91
39	\$19.10	I.E.-Pacific Inc.	47
40	\$18.00	San Diego Office Interiors	34
41	\$16.90	Indus Technology Inc.	45
42	\$16.68	Abacus America Inc.	69
43	\$16.53	Independent Financial Group LLC	1
44	\$16.00	Althea Technologies	49
45	\$14.52	Eset LLC	5
46	\$14.30	Xnergy	28
47	\$14.14	Advanced Protection Systems	61
48	\$13.90	Z57 Inc.	41
49	\$13.87	Advanced Planning Services Inc.	7
50	\$13.10	Gafcon Inc.	87

Blind Mice: CEO Has Fun at Work

Continued from Page 6

ny in 2003, his goal "was not just to become self-employed," he emphasized.

"Unlike a plumber who opens his own business, does all the billing and collecting and has created a job for himself, I tried to create a business that would be working when I was not at work," he said.

Judging from revenues that climbed 1,407 percent from \$303,000 in the firm's first year to reach \$4.5 million in 2005, the concept for 3 Blind Mice is indeed working. Its growth rate qualified it for second place on the *San Diego Business Journal's* Fastest-Growing Private Companies List, published annually.

While meteoric, the chief executive officer's path to success wasn't exactly an easy one. He carved out his first territory by going door to door selling window coverings, including blinds, curtains and shutters, in his own neighborhood.

If people weren't home to hear his pitch, he'd drop off a flier. Through "the power of leverage that is the sales process," he said he soon built enough business to hire other salespeople.

"By 2004, I wasn't doing any selling, except for one or two clients," he said.

Now the firm has a staff of 60, including 25 salespeople. Roughly half are company employees and half are subcontractors. While its primary territory is San Diego County, 3 Blind Mice has branched out into Los Angeles, Orange County, Riverside, Temecula, Palm Springs, Las Vegas, as well as Phoenix and Scottsdale, Ariz.

Keeping Products Visible

The company's headquarters is on Kenamar Drive near the Miramar area of San Diego. It does its marketing in different ways. Knocking on doors and distributing fliers is still one of the most effective methods, while referrals from existing customers and repeat business continues to build. Additionally, 3 Blind Mice sets up booths at home shows and has displays on showroom floors of companies that specialize in other types of home furnishings, such as San Marcos-based **West Coast Flooring Center**.

Aggressive pricing that "falls below competing retailers like Costco, Home Depot, Budget Blinds and J.C. Penney" is what lures customers, Dietz said.

"Typically, unless they're running a good sale, we can set our pricing 5 percent to 20 percent below them," he added.

But he relies on the expertise of his staffers once they're in a customer's home to analyze his or her specific needs and clinch the sale.

"That's what sets us above and beyond," he said. "We get on the custom-



Melissa Jacobs

Scot Dietz, founder of 3 Blind Mice Window Coverings, says his business attracts customers with aggressive pricing that falls below what large retail competitors charge.

ers' level. We don't just take orders and quote prices."

Steve Bursten, chairman and chief executive officer of Bethesda, Md.-based Window Coverings University, which provides training services for Dietz's salespeople, said he has "achieved the type of marvelous success not seen in our industry by more than one or two people in the last 10 years."

"He (Dietz) is very big on training and having people provide the highest level of professional services," Bursten said. "A lot of companies sell window products. If people buy off the Internet, they make all the decisions themselves. If they buy from a designer, the designer makes most of the decisions. But Dietz's salespeople are trained to guide customers to come to good decisions by suggesting and coordinating products based on the appearance of their rooms, and most people in the industry aren't trained to do that."

Among the brands 3 Blind Mice sells are: Hunter Douglas, Century Blinds Inc., Quality Shutter and Skandia Window Fashions. The latest trend is motorized window treatments that open and close, or go up and down with the push of a button, Dietz said.

Expansion Plans

Starting with homeowners, the company eventually cultivated business from new homebuilders and interior design firms. It has now ventured into providing window treatments for commercial businesses.

"A good portion of our business is residential, about 80 percent, and 20 percent is commercial, but to start with, it was 100 percent residential," Dietz said.

Averaging 150 to 250 customers a month, he projects that revenue for 2006 will be slightly more than \$6 million.

DefenseWeb Responds To Computer-Based 'Call for Duty'

Beachfront Location Plus Stock Options Attract Employees

BY AMY YARNALL

Meeting the software needs of the U.S. Department of Defense has turned into a profitable venture for San Diego-based software solution company **DefenseWeb Technologies Inc.**

DefenseWeb creates custom software applications for DOD health care and family programs. Its products include communication software to help DOD managers maintain customer-service information, and software that tracks a network of people and issues associated with the Defense Department's administration.

The company saw revenue grow 368 percent since 2003 — placing it at No. 8 on the *San Diego Business*

Journal's List of Fastest-Growing Private Companies.

"There is no outside capital, no investors and no debt," said Douglas Burke, DefenseWeb's chief executive officer.

In 2005, DefenseWeb produced \$12 million in sales and \$8 million in revenue. Burke said he expects these figures to double by the end of 2006.

What started off as a love affair with software solutions eventually inspired Paul Cavanaugh to create DefenseWeb in 1998.

He is known as a "risk taker," according to Burke. "That's why he is the early entrepreneur," Burke said.

He further describes Cavanaugh as a captain at the helm of a company always on the lookout for other entrepreneurial ventures.

But racking up \$20,000 of debt on five credit cards was an incentive for Cavanaugh to find a way to make a profit.

Please turn to DEFENSEWEB on Page 33



Michael S. Domine

Douglas Burke, CEO of DefenseWeb Technologies Inc., led the firm through three years of 368 percent revenue growth.

	DefenseWeb Technologies Inc.
	<p>CEO: Douglas Burke Location: 4150 Mission Blvd., Suite 216, San Diego 92109 2005 revenues: \$8.7 million 2003-05 growth: 368 percent No. of local full-time employees: 49 Web site: www.defenseweb.com CEO's secret to success: "Extremely hard work, perseverance and surrounding myself with great people who are a lot smarter than I am."</p>

Largest Employers

Ranked by number of local full-time employees 2005
(*ranking from % of revenue growth list)

No.	Employees	Company	Rank*
1	4352	Science Applications International Corp.	63
2	982	Interior Specialists Inc.	22
3	648	GMI Building Services Inc./Guard Management Inc.	32
4	602	Corky McMillin Cos.	33
5	537	American Specialty Health	34
6	327	Barnhart Inc.	44
7	248	Goal Financial	14
8	241	Roel Construction Co. Inc.	15
9	228	Genica Corp.	16
10	218	Z57 Inc.	41
11	213	Barney & Barney LLC	42
12	185	Discovery Isle Child Development Center Inc.	43
13	179	Autosplice Inc.	44
14	177	Ken Blanchard Cos.	45
15	176	Grubb & Ellis/BRE Commercial	46
16	170	SkillStorm Inc.	6
17	167	Coffman Specialties Inc.	7
18	159	Syneract Inc.	31
19	156	Continuous Computing Corp.	16
20	148	Epsilon Systems Solutions Inc.	17
21	146	D & D Tool & Supply	18
22	140	Evans Tire and Service Center	19
23	133	Advanced Protection Systems	20
24	120	Five Point Capital Inc.	9
25	118	Indus Technology Inc.	45
26	116	Tapestry Solutions Inc.	12
27	112	Kleinfelder Group Inc.	13
28	110	Mr. Copy	14
29	105	MG Properties	15
30	102	Equity 1 Lenders Group	16
31	95	TalentFuse Inc.	17
32	93	Michael Crews Development	18
33	90	Abacus America Inc.	19
34	89	Ninyo & Moore	20
35	87	Althea Technologies	21
36	85	Good & Roberts Inc.	20
37	83	Stone Brewing Co.	21
38	80	Xnergy	28
39	77	Gafcon Inc.	29
40	74	Ambit Biosciences	3
41	73	EOS International	4
42	66	C Enterprises LP	39
43	65	Cuso Financial Services LP	38
44	55	Cornerstone Communities Corp.	29
45	53	Super Warehouse	11
46	53	Walter Anderson Plumbing	12
47	52	SkinMedica Inc.	23
48	49	DefenseWeb Technologies Inc.	8
49	46	Johnson & Jennings General Contracting	40
50	45	Proffer Financial	36



Melissa Jacobs

Scott Salka has no regrets about becoming CEO of the mercurial Ambit Biosciences, whose lab work has led to two promising cancer drugs.

Ambit:

Continued from Page 8

and identifying novel drug targets.

Salka was sucked into biotech by way of recruitment from his job at manufacturing firm BFGoodrich Corp., where he was a senior financial analyst. He was recruited to San Diego's **Avalon Ventures** by a managing partner there, Kevin Kinsella.

Salka then helped start the former Sequana Therapeutics Inc., one of the first commercial genomics companies, which focused on commercializing the Human Genome Project. Salka began by focusing on business development and operations, and eventually became the chief financial officer of the firm, which had grown to more than 200 employees by 1997.

"You know, at the end of the day, one of the great things in the life sciences sector is that it's filled with very bright, very passionate, very committed people," Salka said. "They are working very hard to bring new drugs to the market."

Eset: Software Provides Online Protection

Continued from Page 13

"I have no management training per se," Zajac said. "I learn on the fly, have good advisers and listen to my colleagues."

McJannet's management approach toward his sales team is more conventional and includes weekly meetings with his sales team.

"(The sales team and I) talk about where we are and where we need to get to," he said. "I also set the example and every one of my team sees me in the office or talks to me every day, seeing that I'm engaged in the process and that I believe in the product."

While McJannet has management experience from his time with the Canadian air force, Zajac's formal training was in mathematical physics, which explains his highly scientific approach to business.

"I see the company as a system and I

Sequana eventually merged with other firms that were later acquired by what is today Alameda-based Celera Genomics.

Stan Fleming, co-founder and managing member of San Diego's Forward Ventures, said the venture capital firm first invested in Ambit in 2001. Kinsella sparked Fleming's interest in Ambit and its managers, including Salka.

"Other companies can do other, similar things, but nobody can do this on the scale or with the level of efficiency that Ambit does," Fleming said. "It's not the product, it's the management team that makes you money. A 'B' product and an 'A' management team is much better than an 'A' product and a 'B' management team."

Salka believes biotechnology draws in idealists, of whom he considers himself one.

"I could have been helping create the next-generation cell phone or computer," he said. "But then are you really able to go home and say, 'I am going to deeply affect the lives of the next generation?'"

try to understand moving the company in mathematical terms," Zajac said. "I actually presented a distribution model of our product based on a differential equation that is used to calculate the spread of a computer virus."

Instead of using the equation to calculate the transmission of a virus, though, the equation represented the dissemination of the product through various resellers and partners — a great model for a company familiar with the theoretical spread of viruses.

"The parameters have different meanings, but the format of the question is the same," Zajac said.

Virus programmers are becoming more prolific and skilled, and new reports of their data breaches hit almost daily. It's a safe bet that Eset's technology will always have its spear trained on a lot of dangerous fish in the sea.

The Fastest Route to Success Is Hard Work, Says Five Point Capital Co-Founder

Opportunity, Dumb Luck Key to Success, No. 9 Ranking

BY AMY YARNALL

Good fortune and hard work are two factors that Dan Feder attributes to the success of his equipment-leasing firm **Five Point Capital Inc.**

The firm has enjoyed revenue growth of 311 percent since 2003 — good enough to earn the No. 9 position on the *San Diego Business Journal's* List of Fastest-Growing Private Companies.

"It was a lot of dumb luck," said Feder, the firm's president. "We started something, not knowing what we were doing. We saw an opportunity in the market for this type of business."

FPC provides financing for equipment leasing to businesses in more than 30 industries, including automotive repair,

Please turn to FIVE POINT on Page 36

Five Point Capital Inc.

9

CEO: David Gilbert

Location: 10525 Vista Sorrento Parkway, San Diego 92121

2005 revenues: \$20.2 million

2003-05 growth: 311 percent

No. of local full-time employees: 120

Web site: www.fivepointcapital.com

CEO's secret to success: "Our success has come from our attitude that the quickest shortcut to success is hard work."



Michael S. Domine
Five Point Capital Inc. CEO David Gilbert, left, and Dan Feder, president, started up the financing firm that specializes in equipment leasing when they were in their early to mid-20s.

Silicon Space Taking Big Bite Out of Market for Industrial Strength Web Software

Clients Often Resell Apps Built By Local Software Company

BY ANDY KILLION

In 1996, **Silicon Space Inc.** was two guys, two contracts, \$2,000 out-of-pocket and a house in the South Park neighborhood of San Diego. Curt Nelson and Dema Zlotin had recently left a defunct Web site shop and were working out of Nelson's home.

"Dema had a contract with the Los Angeles County District Attorney's office doing IT support, and I had a contract with Enova doing Internet strategy," Nelson said.

Enova was the parent of San Diego Gas & Electric Co. prior to the merger that created **Sempra Energy**.

Within the first year, Silicon Space hired its first employee. By the end of 1997, they had eight employees and from 2003 to 2005, company revenues

Continued on the next page

10

Silicon Space Inc.

Location: 4001 El Cajon Blvd., Suite 205, San Diego 92105

CEO: Curt Nelson

2005 revenue: \$10.23 million

2003-05 revenue growth:

291 percent

No. of local full-time employees: 30

Web site: www.siliconspace.com

CEO's secret to success: "We get more business when clients value the work we've done for them and our teams are able to create value by taking on new challenges and learning from them. It's a virtuous circle."



Michael S. Domine
Curt Nelson, chief executive officer of Silicon Space Inc., started the firm 10 years ago on a shoestring budget with a partner in a South Park home.

Introduction:

Continued from Page 2

his own business, does all the billing and collecting and has created a job for himself, I tried to create a business that would be working when I was not at work," he said.

Dietz's company revenues grew from \$303,000 in 2003 to more than \$4.5 million in 2005, or 1,407 percent growth.

Putting The Customer First

Customer service has not been thrown to the side in the process.

Dietz emphasizes his desire to "get on the customers' level," to analyze their needs and close the sale.

The list's No. 1 ranked company gives No. 1 priority to its customers.

Representatives of the firm, **Independent Financial Group LLC**, are contract workers, not direct employees of the company, and could be pressured to sell products that are part of a particular parent organization.

But Joe Miller, CEO of IFG, trusts in his independent reps to serve their clients in the best way possible.

Miller said a big wave of consolidations started in the late 1990s and into 2005 where large insurance companies and banks were purchasing independent brokerages.

"Representatives were expected to sell products belonging to the parent

company rather than sell what was most suitable for a client," Miller said.

Contracting out by the fully independent firm bypasses these issues entirely, through the company's "client first" philosophy. Five Point Capital Inc. CEO David Gilbert and President Dan Feder believe that meeting customers' needs is paramount, given the competition.

Despite their inexperience and young ages — Gilbert was 23 and Feder 25 — when they started the company in 1999, they were not intimidated.

"We found that people only take you as seriously as you take yourself," said the president of the ninth-ranked company on the list.

With revenue growing from \$4.9 million in 2003 to \$20.1 million last year, there is no question that the pair's approach is paying off.

Other executives were also quick to credit employees, dumb luck, and in Zajac's case, even spearfishing for their remarkable success. While these factors gave the companies an edge against the rest, old-fashioned hard work and sacrifice must not be overlooked.

Coming straight from the top, IFG CEO Miller said, "We have fun, but we also work tremendously hard."

Five Point Capital's Feder shares a similar conclusion.

"Our success has come from our attitude that the quickest shortcut to success is hard work," Feder said.

Silicon Space: Firm Builds Software for Notable Clients Such as Disney



Michael S. Domine

From left, Silicon Space Chief Operating Officer Kevin Harris, CEO Curt Nelson and Client Services Senior Vice President Leslie Holden strategize on developing the firm's business software and search-engine marketing products.

Continued from the preceding page

grew 291 percent, from \$2.6 million to \$10.2 million, landing Silicon Space at No. 10 on the *San Diego Business Journal's* List of Fastest-Growing Private Companies.

Chief Executive Officer Nelson now manages 30 employees at Silicon Space. Zlotin is vice president of business development at Silicon's spin-off — SEMDirector, which employs 30 staff.

Silicon Space provides software to automate and improve business processes on the Web. The team often

builds software for clients who will resell the applications.

"We basically become an R&D firm for other companies; we build their product and they turn around and sell it," Harris said.

Nelson and Harris found it difficult to discuss Silicon Space exclusively without mentioning SEMDirector.

SEMDirector — whose name includes the acronym for search-engine marketing — creates products to manage Internet search marketing efforts

and then licenses those products for use.

"SEMDirector really sprung out of Silicon Space's work with Intel as a client doing strategic business analysis, trying to figure out how to make their company more profitable," Nelson said. "There are lots of Web development shops, but (Silicon Space) builds software that gives information to executives to take action."

Nelson summarizes Silicon Space's methods: "Anybody can build anything, but what's the right thing to build?"

"What's the right way to build it?" added Harris.

"What's the right way to support it?" volleyed Nelson.

Premium Clientele

Clients who have walked through Silicon Space's door include the Walt Disney Co., Hewlett-Packard Co. and the U.S. Navy, as well as local micro-caps like San Diego's **Overland Storage**. Nelson isn't shy about playing favorites with his clients and fondly recalls an East County financial service

Please turn to SILICON SPACE on Page 32

Silicon Space:

Continued from Page 31

es company called **PenChecks**.

"They're a 15-year-old company that distributes 401(k) funds — a nasty, nasty job," Nelson said. "It gets even more complicated when someone dies, or gets divorced, or moves, and these guys were doing all of it by hand — writing on the backs of their hands, receipts, lots of paper, etc. ... Then the execs realized they couldn't get any bigger going on sheer manpower so we automated the system."

Nelson boasts that, with the software created for PenChecks, the company is now processing four times as much work at "a fraction of systems capacity."

On the sheer-massive-client side, Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command — also known as SPAWAR — darkened Silicon Space's doorway, asking for help on a multibillion-dollar program.

"They're launching a next-generation satellite system; a seven-year, \$7 billion program," Nelson said. "The way they'd been doing business and keeping track of compliances and reviewing specifications (with contractors) was with e-mail and faxes, so they hired us to automate the entire process."

Silicon Space constructed applica-



Michael S. Domine
Silicon Space
CEO Curt Nelson
attributes some of
the firm's rapid
growth to a contract
for streamlining
business processes
at the Space and
Naval Warfare
Systems Command.

tions allowing a contractor to log onto a secure Web site, upload documents and check their progress against the

contract, among other functions.

"It's now the standard at SPAWAR," Nelson said.

Four Management Approaches

Nelson said that the other two members of the management team — Senior Vice President Leslie Holden and Director of Engineering Paul Iter — complement him and Harris in their management styles.

The company that automates business processes for its clients also automates its own interior management processes to make executive-level decisions easier.

"We're a small enough firm that we can take a personalized approach to communicating goals and reflecting performance feedback," Nelson said.

"At the executive level, we have a Web tool called GoalTracker and we take metrics for the success of the business, turn them into company objectives and then assign those to managers," he said. "And it's all on the Web."

Silicon Space has been profitable since its inception, but when asked about plans to go public in the future, Nelson is firm.

"No plans to go public. No," said Nelson definitively, saying that his company isn't interested in the red tape involved.

"We're in this to make our customers successful and have a cool place for employees to work, not to have a zillion government forms to fill out."

DefenseWeb:

Continued from Page 27

The money only sustained Cavanaugh for approximately three months, until he was able to sell his first product.

As Cavanaugh sought out someone who could take DefenseWeb to the next level, he came across Burke.

"I met Paul in 2002, and he was looking for someone to take over for him," Burke said. "At its establishment, DefenseWeb was almost immediately profitable and the company has grown organically based on profits ever since."

Cavanaugh made the company profitable and Burke took DefenseWeb Technologies from 10 full-time employees in 2003 to 49 by June 2006.

Demand For Software

DefenseWeb's foundation was built on a demand for software applications such as the one made for the U.S. Army Reserve Family Program, or ARFP.

The company makes members of the armed forces and their families' lives easier through automation and software.

"We saw the opportunity in helping the DOD increase the well-being of its service members," Burke said.

In June 2004, DefenseWeb built a Web-based application for ARFP, whose staff throughout the United States and internationally provides support for Army Reserve families and its members.

"It is a one-stop knowledge center for all things related to the Army Reserve Family Program," said Michael Evans, regional ARFP manager.

Evans, retired from the Army after 22 years of service, has worked with the ARFP for almost two years as a civilian.

The Web application is similar to an automated data warehouse, Evans said, and it allows the ARFP to operate all its applications from one system.

ARFP programs include mobilization and deployment information, child and youth services, outreach, and volunteer management and crisis response.

"The only problems we had were internal," Evans said. "Our biggest challenge was in training staff to operate the application, but DefenseWeb walked us through it."

The initial software application installation cost the DOD \$600,000, with additional charges tacked on annually by DefenseWeb for ongoing hosting, maintenance, support and enhancements.

Fishing In A Big Pond

Competition has been "intense" for DefenseWeb, ever since the DOD started outsourcing its infrastructure, according to Burke. The DOD has roughly a \$450 billion budget, he said.

It's been a difficult ride but a success-



Michael S. Domine
DefenseWeb Technologies
CEO Douglas Burke says the company offers employees stock options and an ocean-front office in Pacific Beach.

ful one from the start as DefenseWeb competes against large contractors such as San Diego-based **Science Applications International Corp.**, Los Angeles-based Northrop Grumman Corp., and Maryland-based Lockheed Martin Corp.

"We've been successful in building a brand in niche space, but we become more of a target as we become more successful," Burke said. "What gives the company a competitive advantage is its ability to deliver on time and on budget."

This is something Evans said he could relate to.

"There hasn't been any additional costs, they've been on budget and timely," Evans said. "They've anticipated our expectations and accounted for all costs, so by the end of the project they don't say 'Well, we didn't expect or anticipate that you would want this.'"

One of the things Evans likes about Burke and DefenseWeb is that they are still considered a small business.

"You can still get a live person and they try to deliver and meet all of your expectations," Evans said.

Along with a "great" staff, a motivating factor is DefenseWeb's location in the heart of Pacific Beach with an ocean-front view, located directly behind the **Lahaina Beach House** bar.

"Corporate culture is very important to us," Burke said. "It's one of the things we use to motivate our employees, plus we offer stock options to employees. We want them to be a part of the company."

Finding people who specialize in

sales and defense-related contracts is the next goal for Burke, who said such a specialization is difficult to find.

"They really have great employees who want to be there and serve their customers well," Evans said.

Five Point:

Continued from Page 29

construction and business services.

There have been a lot of growing pains for the company, Feder said.

FPC's sales hit \$56 million in 2005, Feder said, and revenue for 2005 was reported at \$20.2 million.

Each day's set of challenges is what Feder enjoys the most.

"For instance, we just integrated 30 new people in July," Feder said. Now the firm counts 120-plus employees at all its locations, including San Diego.

Feder started the business with his college buddy, David Gilbert, who carries the title chief executive officer.

Building Relationships

Teaming up with other banks has helped Feder and Gilbert meet their customer needs more efficiently.

For example, FPC sells leases to U.S. Bancorp Manifest Funding Services, a division of Minneapolis-based U.S. Bancorp's equipment financing division.

"They have been a longtime, very good customer of ours," said Cindy Fleck, director of sales for Manifest Funding Services. "It's extremely impressive to see what they've done with their company in such a short time."

All FPC customers are business professionals who don't have the time to go in and out of a bank, Feder said.

"We understand our clients' business and (we) are able to meet their needs," he said.

One thing that has met the needs of Feder and Gilbert has been San Diego itself.

In 1999, FPC was located off Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles. In 2001, Feder and Gilbert moved to San Diego.

"We opened the office here because we thought we could grow fast, and we knew we would have more opportunities to also grow," Feder said.

Deciding Future Together

The two fraternity brothers at the University of Southern California took different paths out of college. Feder went to work for an auction company in Studio City and Gilbert went into leasing.

"We always knew we wanted to start something," Feder said. They just didn't know what direction to take.

Feder and Gilbert contributed \$30,000 in capital to get FPC off the ground. Feder used savings set aside while working in the auction business and Gilbert borrowed money from relatives.

Both decided to leave Los Angeles when they realized much of the area work force is based in, or around, Hollywood, which can be a distraction given the intense interest in the film business. Feder said they wanted to focus on bringing in motivated people who could focus on the business.

When they first launched the company,



Michael S. Domine
Five Point Capital
CEO David Gilbert, left, and the firm's president, Dan Feder, value team building and hard work in the finance business.

Feder said it was difficult to get people in their industry to take them seriously.

"Our competitors were older than us and had more experience," Feder said. "But we found that people only take you as seriously as you take yourself."

Current competitors include Direct Capital Corp. in New Hampshire and Balboa Capital Corp. in Orange County.

Good Reputation

"Dan and David were, and they are, very sharp businessmen," said Manifest Funding Services' Fleck. "It's easy to say 'We're going to do this or we're going to do that,' but when they actually do what they say, that is impressive. They are very aggressive in how they go about their business."

Always trying to figure out ways of improving operations, Feder said he and Gilbert are "considered more aggressive than most."

Fleck said she admires Feder and Gilbert's ability to push past the fear of taking chances and pursue what they think is the right course.

"They are not afraid to bring in people who have strengths in certain areas and invest in them right away," Fleck said.

The right course for Feder and Gilbert would include expanding their business.

"We would like to expand into other avenues of financing like commercial loans and building loans," Feder said. "As the needs of our clientele grow, we see an opportunity to grow."

Feder and Gilbert have established a name for themselves that they enjoy.

"I love the growing part," Feder said.

"I would have brought more experienced executives in from the start had I known because I think we would have been able to grow more quickly."

SkillStorm: Publications Give High Praise to Company and Its Leader

Continued from Page 18

in 2005, securing the No. 6 position on the *San Diego Business Journal's* List of Fastest-Growing Private Companies.

The firm provides information technology services to government agencies and commercial customers. The services include network and systems administration, as well as applications, engineering and software development.

Founded in 2002 as a commercial staffing company operated out of the Girgis family's guest bedroom, SkillStorm expanded into a formal Sorrento Valley office in June 2003.

"After the 9/11 tragedy we saw a need for intelligence services, and there was talk of booming defense spending," Girgis said. "We attained necessary certifications and turned our focus to government contracting."

Map For Growth

Eve Howser, director of operations for SkillStorm, said that Girgis anticipated a need for expansion in his models for growth and spending.

Also built into the growth models was a plan for excellent employee relations.

Girgis said he learned the importance of good staff and customer relationships

while working for a large East Coast commercial company for nine years. Rather than concentrating on simply the bottom line when starting his own company, Girgis hoped to get back to the basics and provide excellent treatment for his staff and customers.

"Taking care of our customers is No. 1, and they always keep coming back if the job is done well," Girgis said. "Our employees are the ones servicing customers on a daily basis, so in effect they are No. 1."

"Naturally we invest a lot of energy, time and money to provide our people with all the training and tools that they need to do well."

Howser said Girgis dedicates a minimum of 100 hours on training for each employee.

"This way our people are equipped to go out independently, go the extra mile to find their own business," Howser said.

All the long hours do not go unrewarded at SkillStorm, though. Girgis said the company provides a growth path for all employees so they can constantly see the opportunities that lie ahead, making their careers anything but dead-end jobs.

Wide Spectrum Of Services

While 70 percent of company re-

sources focus on government services — the "bread and butter" of the business — according to Howser, SkillStorm also provides commercial staffing, administrative and security services and executive recruiting.

Customers include the U.S. Department of Defense, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and government contractors such as intelligence agencies that need help managing data driven by the Global War on Terrorism.

SkillStorm's classification as a minority-owned, small disadvantaged business, or SDB, by the U.S. Small Business Administration enables it to compete for federal contracts.

"But not for long," Girgis said. While the SDB designation has opened some doors and allowed SkillStorm specific recognition, it has never served as a crutch, Girgis said.

Given SkillStorm's national headline attention in 2006 coupled with its growth in size and revenue, the company will most likely outgrow its SDB classification before long.

National, Local Credit

Entrepreneur magazine ranked the business 13th on its Hot 100 list of America's fastest-growing entrepreneurial companies published in June.

Ernst & Young nominated Girgis as one of three finalists for its 2006 Entrepreneur of the Year Award in the high-tech category.

While Girgis refuses to take credit for his awards without acknowledging his hardworking group of employees and management, he alone was nominated for *San Diego Metropolitan* magazine's "40 under 40" list, which is spotlighting 40 noteworthy San Diegans under the age of 40 this month.

Having been in business with Girgis since the beginning, Howser said witnessing the company's tremendous growth in both size and customer base has been an exciting phenomenon.

"You never know which direction a small, startup company will follow," Howser said. "Now we are focusing on developing the infrastructure to support our growth, with sophisticated software systems from the inside out."

Regardless of what changes occur in the presidential leadership and the Global War on Terrorism in the months and years to come, Girgis predicts there will always be a demand for homeland security and intelligence services such as those provided by SkillStorm. Consequently, he said he continues to aim high, expecting even more growth for the firm.