

AboutBusiness

Official Publication of the City of Edina, Minnesota
4801 West 50th Street
Edina, Minnesota 55424
952-927-8861

Circulation 3,420

Editor: Jennifer Bennerotte

Assistant to the Editor: Laura Fulton

Publisher: City of Edina

AboutBusiness is produced by the City of Edina.

To advertise in AboutBusiness, contact Richard Barbeau at Barbeau Marketing Group, 612-965-2041.

Copyright 2005 City of Edina, 4801 West 50th Street, Edina, MN 55424. AboutBusiness is published quarterly by the City of Edina.

AboutBusiness is printed on recycled paper to conform to City conservation guidelines.

Cover photos by Laura Fulton

Table of Contents

Editor's Notes 1.

The Business Of Edina 2.

All Roads Lead To Edina 3.

Barr Engineering Co.: Edina-Based Engineer To The World 4.

Business Notes 6.

Staff Notes 8.

Local Chapter Names Rotarian Of The Year 9.

VEAP Celebrates Sixth-Annual Holiday Benefit 10.

Business Association To Host Pumpkin Festival 11.

Two Local Businesses Presented Awards For Landscape Excellence 11.

Business Association To Mark Start Of Holiday Season 12.

Edina Community Foundation— Investing In Our Community 13.

Indian Hills Neighborhood To Be Featured In Second-Annual Holiday Home Tour 14.

ARDEL Group Begins Managing 50th & France Business & Professional Association 16.

5000 France Company Begins Major Downtown Redevelopment 17.

Photo Gallery 18.

Editor's Notes



Pablo Picasso, the first living artist to be featured in the Louvre, influenced the artistic world in a uniquely original way. Yet he is known for saying "Good artists copy, great artists steal."

Some might question the difference between copying and stealing. After all, if you copy something, isn't it stealing? Business leaders who truly understand the difference between Picasso's "copying" and "stealing" might be a step ahead in the marketing world.

When Robert Stephens founded the Geek Squad and developed the company's image, he thought a lot about Picasso's comment. Born in the "dot.com" boom, the Geek Squad brand could have easily been patterned after (copied from) other technology companies. But Stephens wanted to set Geek Squad apart from the competition. So, he turned to oil companies to glean ideas for the Geek Squad logo, or "family crest."

He stole ideas from a 1960s television show for much of the company's image. With their black slacks, starched white shirts and flashy metal badges, members of the Geek Squad look as if they walked off the set of the 1960s cop show "Dragnet." Patterned after law enforcement, all Geek Squad staffers refer to themselves as "agents" or, in the case of computer troubleshooters who make house calls, "double agents." Best Buy stores that employ agents are known as "precincts." Certainly everyone in the metro area has seen the company's black-and-white "Geekmobiles," painted in such a way to look like old squad cars.

It would have been easy for Stephens to copy what others in the industry were doing and order polo shirts for his technicians and send them out the door in their own vehicles. But "stealing" another idea has set Geek Squad apart from the competition. As much a marketing genius as a technology "geek," Stephens regularly makes contact with owners of major hotels and others in the hospitality business to ask questions about their customer service philosophies.

We do that sort of thing at the City of Edina, too. The Edina Aquatic Center competes with several other outdoor water parks and other entertainment venues in the metro area. While we strive to have the latest and greatest water park amenities, what sets us apart is our attention to the customer. Assistant Park and Recreation Director Ed MacHolda, who oversees operations of the Aquatic Center, looks to Disney for his inspiration. He has adopted the "Disney Approach" of providing the best customer service possible — the "Disney Difference" that sets the Edina Aquatic Center apart from other area swimming pools.

What ideas are you "stealing" to set your business apart from the rest?

Jennifer Bennerotte

Jennifer Bennerotte
Editor

The Business Of Edina

Interview with Rick Carlson

Q: Why did you open your business in Edina?

A: I grew up in Edina, and it felt natural to start my company, SideKick, here. I wanted to share and contribute to the community's reputation of quality and excellence. We also enjoy the convenient central location, making it easy to visit our customers.

Q: What is the best part of having a business in Edina?

A: In document imaging, we pick-up documents from customers located all over the state. Being centrally located is a must, and we feel very fortunate that our offices are convenient for our customers to stop in. Although there are many advantages to having a business in Edina, one of the most important is the reputation of quality that comes with an Edina address.

Q: What changes have you seen in the Edina business community since you opened your business?

A: Although there have been many changes, I would say the new restaurants at Southdale are welcome additions.

Q: What is one challenge of doing business in Edina?

A: The infrastructure, particularly the freeway system, is becoming more stressed every day. Crosstown, Minnesota Highway 100, and Interstate Highway 494 are all infamous for their congestion. Hopefully the new 494 expansion will alleviate some of the traffic congestion.

Q: What one piece of advice would you give to someone opening a new business in Edina?

A: People like to do business with people they know and trust. Be prepared to offer the latest technology and exceptional customer service. Become involved in the Edina community. Make yourself and your business known.

Q: You have given a lot back to the community. Why is it so important to you to give of your time?

A: Edina is a wonderful place to live and work because people give back to the community. It's important to



Photo by Polly Norman

Rick Carlson owns SideKick, a document imaging company located at 7201 Ohms Lane in Edina.

me that this community continues to be desirable and vibrant. Crime is not a problem and the City streets and parks are well maintained and clean.

Q: In what ways have your volunteer efforts strengthened your business?

A: By being involved, I have met some wonderful people to network with, not only to add to my customer base, but also to share ideas. I have a network that I can tap into if I have a question about human resources, marketing and advertising, to name a few areas.

SideKick offers solutions that enable customers to view, print or e-mail their paper documents (almost any size) from their desktop. The company prepares, scans and indexes documents and transfers the images to the media of customer's choice (CD ROM, FTP, image server, or web retrieval solution) providing them with convenient, secure, and fast document access. SideKick can also scan in color, so all documents can look just like the original.

The Business of Edina is a regular column of AboutBusiness. It is compiled from interviews with local business owners and managers to explain why they choose to do business in Edina. If you would like to be interviewed for a future column, please contact Communications Director Jennifer Bennerotte, 952-833-9520.