


Women IN BUSINESS

—  —
*featuring members of the
National Association of Women Business Owners
Columbus Chapter*



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Why women are good at small business

Although men and women may approach business in a slightly different way, the explosive growth of women-owned businesses over the past decade attests to the success of their non-traditional style.

- More than half of women business owners (53 percent) emphasize intuition or “right-brain” instead of “left-brain,” which emphasizes analysis, the processing of information methodically, and developing procedures. Intuitive processes often allow someone to see opportunities that aren’t readily apparent and to know if they are right without the use of reason and analysis.
- The way in which women business owners make decisions is usually more whole-brained than men’s (i.e. it is more evenly distributed between right-brain and left-brain). This allows someone to use creative and analytical processes, a characteristic that is critical for small business management, especially in uncertain situations.
- Women business owners tend to reflect on decisions, and to weigh options and outcomes before taking action. In addition, women don’t hesitate to gather information from business advisors and associates. The advantage here is the shared knowledge that is gathered through interpersonal interactions and liaisons.
- Women entrepreneurs describe their businesses in family terms and see their business relationships as a network. This “personal touch” is often what drives employee motivation and pro-

ductivity. The downside is, however, that they may lack policies and procedures which are clearly stated.

- Women have the ability to balance different tasks and priorities. In business for themselves or for someone else, the ability to be flexible and adaptable is a distinct advantage these days when everyone is expected to perform many duties.
- Women entrepreneurs tend to find satisfaction and success from building relationships with customers and employees, from having control of their own destiny, and from doing something that they consider worthwhile. Americans spend the majority of our lives at work. If our work and our personal values are not in alignment, sooner or later we feel conflict. Women entrepreneurs have used this internal conflict as a motivation in order to create the life that they desire.
- Entrepreneurs in general are more similar to each other than they are to the working population in general. Compared to the general working population, entrepreneurs tend to be more logical and analytical in the way they make decisions, no matter their sex.

Source: American Women's Economic Development Corp., Stamford, Conn.; based on information gathered by the National Foundation for Women Business Owners. Information detailed at www.onlinewboc.gov.

Women own 44.2 percent of Ohio businesses

The Center for Women’s Business Research’s state fact sheet presents the Center’s estimates for privately-held firms owned 50 percent or more by a woman or women and provides the most complete picture of women’s business ownership currently available.

Also included are detailed descriptions of the two segments that comprise this population— privately-held firms that are majority (51 percent or more) owned by women, and firms equally (50-50) owned by a woman or women along with a man or men.

Analyzing data provided by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the Center projected the following statistical portrait of privately-held, women-owned businesses in Ohio for 2004.

As of 2004, there are an estimated 353,130 privately-held, 50 percent or

more women-owned firms in Ohio, accounting for 44.2 percent of all privately-held firms in the state.

This total includes: an estimated 234,585 privately-held, majority (51 percent or more) women-owned firms in Ohio, accounting for 29.3 percent of all privately-held firms in the state, and an estimated 118,545 privately-held, equally (50-50) women- and men-owned firms in Ohio, accounting for 14.8 percent of all privately-held firms in the state.

- The 353,130 privately-held, women-owned firms in Ohio generate more than \$83 billion in sales and employ 663,182 people.
- Between 1997 and 2004, the number of privately-held, women-owned firms in Ohio increased by 10.9 percent, employment grew by 17.3 percent, and sales increased by 41.9 percent, accord-

ing to the Center for Women’s Business Research.

- The Center estimates that 78,991 of women-owned firms in Ohio are employer firms. The number of these firms grew by 27 percent from 1997 to 2004.
- Among the 50 states and Washington, DC, Ohio ranks seventh in the number of privately-held, women-owned firms in 2004, sixth in employment, and sixth in sales.
- Ohio ranked 40th in the growth in the number of privately-held, women-owned firms between 1997 and 2004, 37th in employment growth, and 32nd in sales growth among the states and Washington, DC.
- Ohio ranks 40th among the states and Washington, D.C. for average overall growth of women-owned firms.

NAWBO Member of the Year



Kelly Borth
Greencrest Communications



Visionary named Member of the Year

By JEREMY HOLDEN
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

Awards, those she has created and those she has won, are nothing new to Kelly Borth, co-founder and president of Greencrest, a marketing and public relations firm in Columbus, but being named NAWBO’s most recent Member of the Year came as a surprise to her.

“I felt honored that really what I call my peers felt that my contributions to the organization were worthy of being recognized at that level. It’s, I think, a true honor when your peers select you as a person to be recognized,” said the former president of the Columbus chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners.

While Borth, NAWBO’s president from 1998-2000, has belonged to the organization since 1996, she said she does not see anything unique in being a woman business owner.

“I don’t conceive that there are any differences (between male and female business ownership). I don’t think that I need to market myself any differently. In my opinion, being a woman and being a woman business owner have had little impact,” she said of her 14-year run at the head of Greencrest.

Borth noted that her perspective comes from an industry that is perhaps more woman-friendly than manufacturing or other fields that have been slow to accept women leaders.

Borth entered the marketing industry as a college student in Chicago where she worked as a sales promotions assistant for Culligan International in 1976. Her position involved promoting sales through trade shows and sales contests. When her husband relocated to Ohio, however, Borth said she struggled to translate her skills into a marketing position.

Columbus was not known as a manufacturing hotbed and firms were unfamil-

iar with the skills she could bring, she said. Borth settled on a job in Dayton with an incentive marketing firm.

Borth later became assistant marketing director for a Columbus bank. By 1990, however, she was ready to strike out on her own.

“It was something that I had thought about for a few years. A colleague I had worked with had a small consulting business. We started talking and planning,” she said.

That talking and planning yielded Greencrest Marketing Inc., with Borth purchasing her co-founder’s share in 1995 to become sole owner and president.

While the advantages of sole ownership outweigh any disadvantages, soon after buying Borth realized she no longer had her chief advisor – a role up to that point served by her now former business partner.

“The difference was you did not have somebody else there as a sounding board. Your No. 1 advisor is no longer there,” she said.

Around that time, on invitation from the organizing members, Borth joined the local NAWBO chapter, two years later ascending to leadership of the group.

As part of her networking trips with NAWBO, Borth said, she came upon a trade publication’s honor that recognized 500 note-worthy women business owners. Some of the honorees were Columbus firms unknown to NAWBO’s leadership.

“As the premier women-owned business organization in Central Ohio, we really should do something to honor the women who were getting the recognized on a national level,” Borth said.

Thus were born the Visionary Awards, which at the time simply echoed the national awards, honoring women business owners recognized by national groups. Over time, the award took on a life of its own, morphing into its current form, she added.

In addition to her active role in NAWBO, Borth is a regular speaker for the Small Business Administration and belongs to several organizations that work with professional women in transition or starting new businesses. She also volunteers time as a board member to the Friends of the Columbus Public Library, among other service and professional organizations.

“I believe you need to give back, and I’m just happy that I’m in a position where I can at varying levels,” she said.

As part of her effort to contribute, Borth has taken on numerous proteges, helping to guide budding female entrepreneurs through the rough waters of business development. Her stewardship always seems needed when new business owners navigate the basic principle of business ownership, the act of getting paid.

“Probably the most surprising thing that I’ve encountered through mentoring is the number of women who start businesses and forget to include themselves in payroll,” Borth said.

“If you are in business, if you have a business that is going to be sustainable, you have to be able to earn an income from it.”

Fourteen years after starting Greencrest, and nearly a decade after buying out her partner, Borth, whose past honors have included an Entrepreneur of the Year award, has moved beyond concerns about her next paycheck. From a business perspective her future plans involve the hope for smart growth – a Goldilocks pace neither too hot nor too cold.

“As a business owner, my goal is to continue to grow our organization, to be able to provide our clients with quality marketing, advertising and public relations services. I want to be able to provide a good working environment and a good future for the employees here.”

THE NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN
BUSINESS OWNERS
COLUMBUS, OHIO CHAPTER

honors

2004 Visionary
Award Recipients

Mindy Hedges
Cookie McIntyre
Tricia Smith



They Join An Elite Roster
Of Visionary Award
Winners

1998

- Nancy Kramer, Ten Worldwide
- Cheryl Krueger, Cheryl & Co.
- Roberta Ruch, Alcocche
- Mary Held, Old Trail Printing

1999

- J. Renee Claxton, Sort & Pack
- Rhonda DeMuth, TDCI Consulting LLC
- Lois Fisher, IHH Management
- Paula Innis, Ohio Full Court Press
- Farah Majidzadeh, Resource International Inc.

2000

- Tara Marling Abraham, Accel Inc.
- Erin Nyrop Glasgow, Sterling Electric
- JoAnn Martin/Vickie Hutchins, Gooseberry Patch
- Elizabeth Rossetti, Americheer

2001

- Linda Bryant, LB Trucking
- Sue Docody, Lindsey's Restaurant
- Wendy Goldstein, Costume Specialists

2002

- Lisa Cini, Mosaic Design
- Jamie Parman, Parman Group
- Sandy Iekete, Iekete & Company

2003

- Lisa Griffin, Griffin Communications
- Sue Reninger, RMD Advertising/ RMD Public Relations

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Quick Facts on nontraditional occupations for women

- A nontraditional occupation for women is one in which women comprise 25 percent or less of total employment.
- Nontraditional occupations span all major occupational groups and provide many employment options for women.
- First, growth in the economy is projected to expand employment in many of these occupations and secondly, there will be strong demand for workers in these fields due to projected retirements or transfers of current workers to other occupations.
- Nontraditional jobs are attractive to women because they generally offer higher entry-level wages and a career ladder with pay between \$20 and \$30 per hour.
- Here are some examples of nontraditional jobs for women: detectives, architects, chefs, barbers, clergy, computer and office machine repairers, construction and building inspectors, railroad conductors, machinists, truck drivers, fire fighters, aircraft pilots, construction occupations, and small engine mechanics.
- Women continue to make inroads into nontraditional occupations. As more women enter jobs that were once dominated by men, many jobs that were nontraditional for women in the 1980s were no longer nontraditional for women in 2002. Some of these occupations are insurance sales, purchasing managers, photographers, physicians, chemists, postal service mail carriers, lawyers, athletes, and protective service administrators.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Quick Facts on an older workforce

- In 2003, there were 21.2 million workers age 55 and older, which was 15.4 percent of total employment.
- Women between the ages of 55 and 64 have steadily increased their labor force participation rates from 42.0 percent in 1985 to 49.2 percent in 1995 and to 56.6 percent in 2003.
- Persons age 55 and over accounted for 15.1 percent of the total labor force in 2003. The General Accounting Office (GAO) projects that this age group will account for 19.2 percent of the labor force in 2015.
- In 2000, the average retirement age for men was 62 compared to 65 thirty years ago. The average retirement age for women in 2000 was just under 63 compared to 65 in 1965.
- According to the GAO, between 2000 and 2008, the percentage of teachers older than 55 will increase from 13 percent to 19 percent.
- According to the same GAO study, people 55 and older in nursing and health-related fields will increase from 12 to 18 percent between 2000 and 2008.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Not enough hours in the day, lack of integrity, reliable employees are among obstacles faced by entrepreneurs

Name: Penny Steward
Company name: Steward & Associates Inc.
Type of business: wellness consulting, coaching, education, speaking, author

What is the biggest obstacle you have encountered as a business owner? Balancing all the “hats” one must wear and not be overwhelmed; knowing when to get help.
How did you overcome that obstacle? I hired my husband as my Executive Assistant and he is very good!
What one thing in your career would you go back and do differently if you could? Absolutely nothing – I am who I am because of every experience, good and not so good, that I have had. I embrace and use them all to make me grander every day!

Name: Patricia Shell Holstein
Company name: PoSH Event Services Inc.
Type of business: Trade Show, convention services and special events

What is the biggest obstacle you have encountered as a business owner? Employees in sales
How did you overcome that obstacle? I require everyone to work in the warehouse and install/dismantle shows for at least six months to a year before they are put in to sales. Everyone thinks that this business is fun and exciting until they realize how much hard work and long hours are required. I feel that it is important for all sales staff to learn from the ground up what is involved with setting trade shows or special events. I was very frustrated with training people and then having them say the work is too hard. They also had to learn to respect the warehouse staff that makes this all possible and will always be there to help them when needed.

What one thing in your career would you go back and do differently if you could? I would have loved to have started in this business when I was younger. I began in this business when I was in my mid-40s and started my business in my middle 50s. I also would have taken basic business classes at the beginning so I would have a better handle on the business end. Sorry, you get three things. I would also have fired employees as soon as I saw a problem that could not be fixed.

Name: Elisia “Leah” Lattimer
Company name: Creative Financial Solutions Network
Type of business: Insurance and Investments

What is the biggest obstacle you have encountered as a business owner? Getting in front of qualified business prospects and explaining our process and what makes us different than other advisors.
How did you overcome that obstacle? Joining organizations to network with people who talk with the kind of individuals I would be able to help and conduct business. Always looking for opportunity to introduce my company and what it is we do for people.
What one thing in your career would you go back and do differently if you could? Joined associations and become more involved with community and business functions sooner.

Name: Kelly Borth
Company name: GREENCREST
Type of business: Advertising, marketing, public relations

What is the biggest obstacle you have encountered as a business owner? My biggest obstacle as a business owner has been encountering business owners who lack integrity. Some companies have a reputation, and those are easy to stay away from if you’d rather not deal with the baggage that comes with having them as a client. But the ones that are unknown are the difficult ones. Thankfully, we have had only a few business owners like this as clients. I just assumed all business owners were ethical. It was a learning experience to realize that business owners are no different than all people — some have good values and some do not.

How did you overcome that obstacle? This is a difficult obstacle to overcome, but we have put some company procedures and policies in place to do more thorough credit reference checks on businesses before we extend credit to them. We also have a Letter of Agreement that is pretty straightforward. If a business owner has a problem signing our agreement or wants to make too many changes to it, we now know that those issues are likely to result in bigger issues down the road. When that happens, we politely decline the work.

What one thing in your career would you go back and do differently if you could? As a business owner, I feel that I have complete control over my career. Every obstacle has opened the door for new insights and opportunities that might not have presented themselves had those obstacles not been there. So, I am not sure there is anything I would do differently. Going forward, however, I have a lot of things I still want to do and a couple of things I would not want to repeat!

Name: Tammy Schalk Holtzmeier
Company name: Profound Communications
Type of business: Profit marketing and branding communications firm for the financial services industry

What is the biggest obstacle you have encountered as a business owner? Identifying, reconciling and adapting the growth and profitability needs of the company with the personal and professional needs of our associates.

How did you overcome that obstacle? Flexibility is always key in any situation. So is patience. I am forever an optimist so I have a common refrain. It is this: To any problem, there is a solution. It may not be exactly the solution one was hoping for, but with flexibility, patience and the belief in doing what is right, there is always a solution.

What one thing in your career would you go back and do differently if you could? I would have recognized earlier the importance of owning a niche. At Profound, our business focus is about helping our financial services clients grow profitability.

Great ROI is our calling card and our clients understand that when they work with Profound vs. another firm, they are getting a group that is already head and shoulders above the competition when it comes to understanding and implementing successful profit marketing.

I only wish I had accepted the firm’s strengths for what they are earlier in my career and penetrate this niche sooner.

Name: Sue Schnitz
Company name: Perfect Balance
Type of business: Accounting for small businesses and entrepreneurs

What is the biggest obstacle you have encountered as a business owner? Not enough time in my day.
How did you overcome that obstacle? I am always working on it.
What one thing in your career would you go back and do differently if you could? Maybe an MBA – but I am really happy with my choice and can’t think of anything I would have done differently.

Name: Mary Sheskey
Company name: 4ward Communications Inc.
Type of business: Design communications

What is the biggest obstacle you have encountered as a business owner? Nature of business changing so rapidly. Began my business as a graphic designer/packaging designer but because of the economy and changing technology suddenly everyone from print houses to secretaries are my competition. Had to find how I could compete on a level to include new technology and creative solutions for clients to not only solve their problems for today but in the future. Another challenge is to be a “change leader.”

How did you overcome that obstacle? Set up relationships with complementary businesses that would expand my product offering. These businesses which include marketing and web/interactive design were also looking for ways to expand which made the transition easier for us all. Making the change to the business included innovative uses of data and design to marry print, web and interactive. In other words create solution that no other company could offer. Once we have introduced the client as to how they can improve their processes, save time and dollars, and put more control of their information in their own hands it is a win-win situation.

What one thing in your career would you go back and do differently if you could? Take more business classes!

Name: Anya Cara
Company name: The House of Anya Cara
Type of business: Design, Manufacturing of Chairs

What is the biggest obstacle you have encountered as a business owner? You know when you go to a city and you look up at these beautiful tall buildings, how you wonder who made them and what the people inside do for a living, and how exactly they make their money? Standing there, dwarfed by a solid established structure and culture, knowing that I did not grow up there, that I don’t know anyone on the inside, that what I have to offer may change the way the world views what they do, that they are invested in themselves and will fight for survival, or bring me in to hear and appreciate and invest in my designs. This is the biggest obstacle I encounter as a business owner.

How did you overcome that obstacle? I gird my loins like a man, walk through the door and ask for the person in charge of new product design.

What one thing in your career would you go back and do differently if you could? Nothing. I am perfectly suited to this work, although a few business classes couldn’t hurt. Looking back, I am awestruck how all things have contributed to the perfection of this moment.

Women business owners are risk takers, study confirms

Daily Reporter Staff

A myth-shattering study shows that women business owners are more willing than the general population to take financial risks.
The study, “Worth the Risk: Women Business Owners and Growth Capital,” was released by the Center for Women’s Business Research with exclusive underwriting by OPEN: The Small Business Network from American Express.

The study compares women who currently are seeking, preparing to seek or have sought growth capital (expanders) with those who never have sought growth capital (non-expanders).
Results revealed that women who want to substantially expand their businesses are willing to take the risks necessary to obtain financing, and two-thirds of capital-seekers have been 100 percent successful in previous efforts to obtain the growth capital they sought.

“This study demonstrates that women are moving into the economic mainstream,” said Harvard Business School professor Myra M. Hart, chair of the Center for Women’s Business Research.
“They have the skills and business savvy to obtain the growth capital they need to expand their businesses aggressively. They know where to get professional advice, can make a strong case to potential investors and are willing to accept the risks that come with the territory. They are role models for all women who want to grow their businesses.”

Women business owners in the study were found to be more risk-tolerant than women and men in general when saving or investing for their households.
More than half the women entrepreneurs (57 percent) indicated they were willing to take above average or substantial financial risks compared to just 14 percent of all women and 26 percent of all men who participated in the 2001 Survey of Consumer Finances conducted by the Federal Reserve.

The willingness of the women entrepreneurs to take financial risks is even stronger when considering business decisions.

“Contrary to commonly held perceptions, most of the women business owners in the survey (66 percent) are willing to take above average or substantial financial risks when saving or investing for their businesses and their risk-taking is worth it,” said Catherine Foucher, vice president of OPEN.

“Two-thirds (67 percent) of the women currently seeking expansion capital were 100 percent successful in previous efforts to obtain capital.”

Almost two-thirds (72 percent) of those who expanded their businesses achieved or exceeded their expansion goals. Most of those currently seeking capital want it to hire staff (82 percent), expand markets (76 percent), add a new product or service (68 percent), and improve the quality of their product or service (58 percent).

The most important reason for wanting to expand was “to increase revenues and profits.” This reason received an average rank of 1.4 on a scale from 1 to 4,

where 1 was the most important and 4 the least important reason.

The survey also revealed that women have a solid base of training and experience that can be called upon when seeking expansion capital.

Sixty two percent of the respondents have some kind of training in business finance and 19 percent have an MBA. Half of all expanders have previous entrepreneurial experience.

In addition, although all respondents (expanders and non-expanders) give themselves ratings that indicate they are confident of their personal competence in business management in such areas as planning and strategy; sales and marketing; personnel and human resources; and finance, expanders rate themselves higher in each of these categories.

The expanders also are more likely to own firms in information industries (15 percent vs. 8 percent of non-expanders) and manufacturing (13 percent vs. 5 percent of non-expanders).

For survey respondents who had been through the process of seeking capital, the experience was positive.

Past expanders indicated that success in expanding their businesses made them set more ambitious goals for growth and profit. Their success affects their view of risk by making them more risk-tolerant or in changing their perspective as to what they consider to be risky.

Expanders use more sources of capital than non-expanders. Forty-seven percent of expanders use commercial loans secured with business assets. Commercial loans secured with personal assets are used by 37 percent of expanders, and 19 percent said they used equity from family or friends.

In addition, 21 percent received funding from individual angel investors and 17 percent obtained help through investment companies.

Current seekers’ most preferred sources of capital to fund expansion, according to the study, are: commercial loans secured with business assets (35 percent), followed by equity investment from investment companies (17 percent) and equity investment from individual angel investors (16 percent).

Seventy-seven percent of respondents report using a variety of advisors including accountants, financial specialists, attorneys and women’s business centers.

Three organizations provided access to the women business owners in their networks: Women President’s Organization, a membership organization for women presidents of companies grossing at least \$2 million; women who participate in the Women’s Leadership Exchange, which produces educational conferences; and clients of Springboard Enterprises, which is dedicated to increasing access for women entrepreneurs to equity markets.

The report, Worth the Risk: Women Business Owners and Growth Capital is available for \$90. (Discounts are available for Center corporate partners and NAWBO members.) For further information, contact: Center for Women’s Business Research, 1411 K Street, NW, Suite 1350, Washington, DC 20005-3407.

Open your mind.

Cover your windows.

It's easier than you think to give your windows a new outlook on life. Imagine beautiful wood shutters or blinds. Sleek new shades. Or custom fabric treatments with decorative hardware. Great ideas are already in your head. We just help you get them out. Inspired? How about this? We come to you by appointment, with samples and laptop in hand, and show you how virtually any treatment will look on your windows – before you buy a thing. Now, do something really **bold**. Tell us to get started. **614.326.2825**



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Mindy Hedges

Media Solutions Inc.



A long way from 72-cents an hour, marketing guru values every day

By BOB PASCHEN
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

For Mindy Hedges, leaving her home in New York City at age 16 to attend an international high school in London was eye-opening – her roommate was Mel Brooks’ daughter and her classmates included ambassadors’ children and the nephew of Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi.

But the event that changed her life was a head-on car crash in 2002 that left Hedges suffering in a hospital bed for two months with a crushed pelvis, broken leg and lacerated organs.

“I am thrilled for every day,” Hedges, a mother of two, said. “I am so excited to be around. I am so thankful for my friends and employees because they are pretty amazing.”

When Hedges recovered she returned to her role as president of Media Solutions Inc., a media buying company she founded in Delaware in 1991.

Her company’s reach is national and her client list includes DSW, Value City, the Columbus Blue Jackets, Bon Vie (the restaurant conglomerate that runs Bravo, Brio and Lindeys), Polaris Fashion Place, the Ohio State Fair, Dayton Mall and Fiesta Salons.

“We assist companies in developing their media placement opportunities,” Hedges said. “We help decide where and when and how much (of an audience) to target.”

Hedges will buy ad space in newspapers from Los Angeles to Miami, New York City to Columbus, for a product that is rolling out a nationwide sale.

For example, a product distributed through grocery stores across the U.S. would want to announce a pending 50 percent off sale all over America. Hedges would contact many of the 300 newspapers with which she regularly works, negotiate space rates and then mail out ad graphics. Millions of people would see the ad at the same time.

Media Solutions also helps companies with marketing and public relations, and works in all forms of media, from print to broadcast, to radio.

It is all quite different from the days when as a 17-year-old high school senior Hedges would sit in her London apartment pumping coins into a wall heater.

(See Hedges, Page 9A)

2004 NAWBO
VISIONARY AWARD RECIPIENTS

Cookie McIntyre

The McIntyre Company



The secret to success in executive search game is flying below radar

By BOB PASCHEN
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

When Cookie McIntyre said in 1989 that she was quitting her job to start her own business, her husband Doug looked at her and said, “me too.”

“We had a mortgage, three kids and no income, and 1989-1990 was the height of the last recession. It was kind of like Apollo 13: Failure was not an option.”

In 15 years, the McIntyre Company has grown from a one-person start-up “financed on credit cards and cash,” to an executive search firm with Fortune 1,000 clients.

“My first office was like a storage room. There were no windows. It was the size of a jail cell. I literally had an army-issue metal desk. Now, I have a corner office with huge windows.”

Speaking from her company headquarters in Powell, Ohio, McIntyre described her business.

“We uncover, identify and extract executive talent for corporations on a national basis. We are on a mission on their behalf. We are their hired guns.”

When a corporation with a new or vacated position asks the McIntyre Company to find them an executive, McIntyre’s first step is getting into the skin of the company.

“It is a very deep dive into their business strategy, into their vision and long term plans. It is a complete understanding of their leadership, their executives and the company culture in order to best represent them and identify the talent that would fit there. I try to understand them on an innate level.”

Once known, McIntyre and her four-person staff aggressively begin their search.

(See McIntyre, Page 8A)

Tricia Smith

Secure Check Inc.



She knows if you’ve been bad or good, so be good for goodness’ sake

By BOB PASCHEN
Daily Reporter Staff Writer

Tricia Smith is becoming familiar with the witness box. At age 33, she has been summoned six times to serve expert testimony in court cases outside Ohio. As of mid-June, she was scheduled to testify in five more upcoming trials.

The president and founder of Secure Check Inc, a background, drug and fingerprint screening company located on Broad Street across from Franklin Park Conservatory, Smith is a young forerunner in a quickly expanding field.

In eight years, she has taken her business from a one-bedroom apartment to a 3,000-square-foot office with six employees and 370 clients nationwide. To date, Secure Check has performed more than 500,000 background checks.

Smith also is a founding member of the National Association of Professional Background Screeners.

The trial work, to Smith, is both satisfying and raw. “You really see the real life problems when you fail to do good background checking,” Smith said.

In a high profile case in Louisiana, Smith was called to testify on the failure of the Boy Scouts of America to run proper background screenings on two new scoutmasters. The men, one of whom was a pedophile with a rap sheet, molested fives scouts. The scoutmasters were found guilty and sent to prison.

Because of her courtroom work, Smith was profiled in the Spring 2000 *National Crime Victim Bar Association Journal*. Because of that exposure, lawyers throughout the country have been calling her to testify in their cases, she said

Most often at issue is negligent hiring, Smith said. Business owners and organizational leaders, “have to do something reasonable and look at the standard of care” when hiring for new positions, she said. If not, terrible things can happen.

Two carpet cleaners, for example, “snapped” and killed two college students who complained about an incomplete scrub job, Smith said. As it turned out, the men were hard-core felons. In another case, an appliance deliveryman molested a little girl.

“If you can get change to occur and save another little kid from being hurt or an elderly person that’s

defenseless from being raped, I think that is important,” Smith said of her courtroom responsibilities.

In 2001, Smith was a guest speaker on negligent hiring at George Mason University’s “Comprehensive Representation of Crime Victims” conference. Her presentation was titled “Negligent Hiring: What You Don’t Know Can Hurt You.”

Increasingly, companies are being held liable for employee crimes if firms fail to conduct sufficient background checks, she said.

“It’s the awareness that these things can happen and do. Are you taking care to protect fellow employees and customers? Do you have a policy and procedures in place to reasonably make sure you’ve looked into everything adequately?”

These are questions trial attorneys ask companies after a crime has been committed. The are the questions corporations hire Secure Check to answer before executives find themselves sitting on the wrong side of a lawsuit.

When Smith started her company in her apartment living room in 1996, she conducted simple background checks mostly for staffing agencies. Now, Secure Check runs business credit reports, business background searches, civil record searches, credit history reports, criminal records searches, driving record searches, drug and alcohol testing, education verifications, electronic fingerprint checks, honesty and integrity assessments, INS verifications, prior employment verifications, professional license verification, reference checks, social security traces and vendor screenings. Companies across the country hire Secure Check to run these searches.

Smith said she can run criminal records searches in every county in the United States. Secure Check also will make onsite visits to any business to conduct drug tests, with results ready in 24 hours.

By joining the FBI’s Bureau of Criminal Investigations division, Smith also is able to offer electronic fingerprint screening.

Anyone in Ohio working with children, the elderly or in a profession requiring licensure, such as insurance agents, security guards and mortgage brokers, by law must have their fingerprints on file with the state, Smith said.

(See Smith, Page 8A)

McIntyre

(Continued from Page 6A)

Most executives balk at leaving their current positions. “but once they start to explore their options (and) become more entrenched in the process, the idea becomes more compelling.”

Changing jobs, though, is complex, McIntyre said. She knows from experience.

“You are not only dealing with individuals, but families, special needs children, aging parents. They are entrenched in their lifestyles and places they live.”

McIntyre said, “nearly 100 percent of the time, relocation is part of the job.”

After conducting “in depth, behavioral” phone interviews with hundreds of executives, McIntyre begins matching the skills and motivations of candidates with her clients’ needs.

The pool is then narrowed and, often in less than 100 days, McIntyre returns to her client corporation with a list of possible new-hires.

McIntyre compares the advantage of her small “boutique” company to those of her large “multi-national” headhunting competitors almost in terms of guerilla warfare.

The big guys “have hundreds of clients in a particular industry. When they have a search, there are very few backyards they can look into,” because those “back yards” are their clients, too. Robbing Peter to pay Paul doesn’t work when both are your clients, McIntyre said. “They can’t extract talent” from one client for another.

Smith

(Continued from Page 7A)

Similarly, all truck drivers, airplane pilots and commercial captains of sea-going vessels by law must be drug tested throughout the year.

As background screening increases in the public sector, private companies are following suit, running more checks on employees both before and after hiring, Smith said.

“If you have a workforce that is abusing drugs, health-care costs are higher, absenteeism is higher, lack of productivity is higher, and there is an increased chance of accidents and sloppy work. Ten percent of working Americans have a drug problem,” Smith said, citing Bureau of Workers Compensation statistics.

Also, “it is a national statistic that 33 percent of people falsify their resumes,” often claiming college degrees where none were earned.

For all these reasons, and to prevent future litigation, companies hire Secure Check to investigate and test their employees.

Also, businesses more frequently are peaking into the backgrounds of their vendors and subcontractors, Smith said. Prior to inking contracts, businesses want to gauge performance history.

“Our advantage is that we are under the radar screen. We are more stealthy. We offer the opportunity to infiltrate companies (because) we have a finite number of clients in a given industry. We are more flexible and can bring more of the universe to our clients.”

McIntyre came to settle in Columbus via a circuitous route. She came from Flatbush in Brooklyn, N.Y., through New Orleans, north to the Buckeye State’s capital.

After graduating from high school in New York, McIntyre moved with her family to the Big Easy. She began taking classes at the University of New Orleans.

“At that point in my life, being a young woman with not a lot of responsibility, New Orleans was a blast.”

To pay her bills, McIntyre took a job at a “search business” start-up.

McIntyre graduated from UNO with a degree in sociology, but stayed on at the search company for eight years. “It was exciting and lucrative,” McIntyre said.

The man she was dating at the time wanted a new job and asked McIntyre, with her expertise in employment placement, to help him.

“New Orleans isn’t really one of the stellar places in terms of commerce,” she said, unless it is in the “indigenous types of businesses like maritime tourism, oil and gas.”

After making some calls, she landed him a job as marketing director for the Columbus Symphony. But the success was bittersweet.

“I placed myself out of a boyfriend,” she said.

He had accepted the job up north, so now the question was, “Was I going to be his concubine? Were we going to have a long-term relationship?”

According to the Fair Credit Reporting Act, background check results must be disclosed to individuals at their request. This is especially true if the potential employee is not hired or a current employee is fired.

Often “You have to sign-off up front that you know (the check) is happening,” but regardless, “You should have access to anything in your file.”

The screening process, to Smith, is like “a puzzle. I’m looking for a repeated track record of not paying bills or delinquencies or credit running up to where your salary can’t cover it.”

Before running background checks, Smith listens to the companies’ needs.

“You won’t do a credit check for your janitor, but for your chief financial officer, of course.”

Smith also informs her clients of the legal requirements and potential liabilities they have as employers.

There is “increased litigation in the area of negligent hiring.” Despite this, only 35 percent of companies nationwide conduct background screenings on employees, she said.

But each day, more businesses are using search firms. And this has made businesses like Secure Check grow rapidly.

After graduating from the Ohio State University with a degree in national security policy and a minor in criminology, Smith interviewed with the Secret

In the end, “he proposed.” The man was Doug McIntyre.

When the newlywed couple first arrive in Columbus in 1985, “I cried,” McIntyre said. Landlocked Columbus was a far cry from the “24/7” jazz atmosphere of the Big Easy where McIntyre had spent the last 13 years. “It was certainly culture shock.”

But, “what I realized in the short term was how much the city had to offer. The change in lifestyle was a lot easier to adapt to when the people were so supportive and so much was happening here. The city was very accepting for new businesses and new people becoming a part of it.”

McIntyre got involved. She became a member of the Columbus Museum of Art and the Columbus Symphony. She joined NAWBO, Young Entrepreneurs Organization and eventually the Women Presidents Organization.

McIntyre worked for five years at a boutique executive search firm until 1989 when everything changed. One night, she told Doug she was quitting the business to pursue her dream of starting her own company. He told her to go for it, and by the way, he was quitting his job, too – to start an advertising company.

“It never occurred to us” to have one spouse put a dream on hold, McIntyre said. “It was a matter of both of us feeling that the time was right. We both had ideas, energy and passion. We just did it. The worst that could happen wasn’t pretty, but we took the risk.”

Doug’s company started with two fellow classmates from the Executive MBA program at the Fisher College of Business. The company took off right away, and eventually was purchased by Ten United.

Service. “They said, ‘get a couple years of work experience.’”

So, Smith took a job at the Limited conducting internal security.

The job showed Smith that “there was a need for a company to do background checks at a good price point.” And rather than remain a Limited employee, “I left there after a year to start my company.”

At the Limited, Smith learned how to conduct background screening. From her living room office in her small apartment, she began cold-calling potential clients. Her first clients were staffing agencies.

“I was operating off my computer and physically going down to the (Franklin County) court house” each day. She worked an average 12 hours a day.

Through pounding the pavement, hitting the phones and networking, Smith began amassing files full of clients around Ohio. “I was doing all the work. It’s hard to develop a company.”

After she could no longer hide the growing number of filing cabinets in her apartment, Smith moved Secure Check out of her living room and into her first office on East Poplar Street in the Short North.

But at that time, the 2001 recession was in full bloom, and hit right when Short North road construction ramped up. Smith’s office was adjacent to the Interstate 670 retail cap construction site.

Meanwhile, McIntyre had expanded her company from the jail cell-like office in Victorian Village to an office in Dublin, Ohio. She was adding clients and staff and broadening her reach from Central Ohio as far as both coasts of the United states. In 1999, she and Doug built her new office in Powell.

When the recession of 2001 hit, McIntyre said 40 percent of the recruiting businesses in the country folded. The McIntyre Company reduced its staff from 17 to four.

“We were lucky to survive.”

But as the economy has warmed, McIntyre’s business has become hot. Even though it has one quarter of the employees it once had, the company’s revenues now exceed pre-recession levels. Technology and the targeting of higher-level, higher-paid executives are the drivers, she said.

McIntyre hopes by the third quarter of this year to “add a complementary division to our business.” So as not to divulge information to competitors, McIntyre would say only that, “it is different than executive recruiting.”

In business, McIntyre said, any company can provide a commodity, but it is the relationships with employees and clients, “the faith in people,” that breaks success from the status quo.

“Service separates you from the rest of the pack.”

Of winning the NAWBO Visionary Award, “I think it’s awesome,” McIntyre said.

“Anytime you are recognized for your contribution, it is really very exciting. I know there are many great women in businesses in Columbus. Columbus stands very tall among cities throughout the U.S. and is very conducive to women-owned business. I am very honored and excited to be recognized as someone worthy of this award.”

As a result, Smith’s business volume dropped.

This was a “low point,” both personally and professionally, Smith said.

But work began picking up at her new office on Broad Street. She hired a former Department of Transportation executive to help with drug testing. And through joining the BCI, Secure Check could now conduct FBI-grade finger print verifications. These services, in high demand, made Smith’s company expand fast, increased referrals and gave Secure Check greater exposure.

Reflecting on her experiences as an entrepreneur, Smith said, “I’ve had to learn to turn obstacles quickly. There are inevitably going to be challenges. That’s been one of my things when faced with a challenge—what can I do, and how can I turn that around. Being optimistic is important. Anything can happen. Things are within our control.”

On winning the NAWBO Visionary Award, Smith said, “I think it’s a great honor. I’m in great company of women who have won this award before that I have looked up to and that have great businesses. I think it is wonderful that NAWBO recognizes the efforts of women business owners and provides organizations where we can network and learn from each other.”

Smith has been a NAWBO member since 1997.

Reports demonstrate progress in best practices, policy development for women’s entrepreneurship

The historic growth of women-owned businesses in the United States has generated increased demand for the creation of innovative programs and policies to foster their growth.

Two recently-released reports from the National Women’s Business Council document this progress by examining current best practices in support of women’s entrepreneurship and by recording the history of policies that have resulted in today’s unprecedented 10.6 million U.S. businesses in which women are equal or majority owners.

“We are extremely pleased to announce the publication of these two reports, which have both documented and addressed some very timely and important questions about how to further the growth of women’s entrepreneurship,” said Marilyn Carlson Nelson, chairwoman and CEO of Carlson Cos. and chair of the National Women’s Business Council.

“It is our hope that these reports will not only provide women business owners with comprehensive information about policies and programs for women’s enterprise development, but that this information will be used to enlighten and inform future policy and programmatic action in the United States and in other countries,” she said.

The first report, “Best Practices in Supporting Women’s Entrepreneurship: A Compendium of Public and Private Sector Organizations and Initiatives,” profiles 24 selected organizations or initiatives that provide outstanding support for women-owned businesses and that have widespread impact throughout the United States. The report answers such questions as:

- Who helps women-owned businesses as they start up or as they become more established and seasoned?
- What associations can women entrepreneurs join to network and to grow their businesses?

Hedges

(Continued from Page 6A)

“There were a lot of glass ceilings I broke” in that office, Hedges said. “They weren’t used to having women in management positions.”

While there, Hedges gave birth to her first child, a daughter, Blair.

After working at the engineering firm for two years, Hedges was ready for a change. When a job opened at a Marion ad agency, she pounced.

“I loved it,” she said of her new position. “I was doing marketing research and media planning and buying.” Her experiences were setting in place the foundations for her future business.

She joined Ron Foth Retail, a Columbus ad agency with regional clients, two years later as the director of marketing.

“I found out I loved retail. I loved the pace. They have to get ads out there quickly. Things are always changing and I thrive on that.”

- How can women-owned businesses obtain access to mentoring, education, capital, and markets to take their businesses to the next level?
- And what types of support are available from which kinds of organizations?

The report contains a functional matrix that shows at a glance how the profiled organizations compare with each other in terms of the kind of support and assistance they offer to women entrepreneurs. It also contains short descriptions of 10 additional organizations or initiatives that did not fully meet the inclusion criteria for profiles but nevertheless offer important support to women-owned businesses.

While the NWBC noted that it is extremely pleased to have been able to identify so many organizations that share a strong focus on and commitment to women’s entrepreneurship, the report also includes several recommendations, including:

- Society must increase its recognition of the fact that maximizing opportunity and advancement for women is a *business* issue, just as fundamental as productivity, quality, or product development.
- Well-supported, timely, accurate and reliable research is a driving force behind the expansion of public and private sector programs that advance women’s entrepreneurship.
- Sustainable support for women’s business development can best be achieved if there is active involvement not only from women business owners and their organizations but also from government and non-government organizations supporting enterprise development.
- Strong partnerships across organizations, working toward the same goal, will strengthen each group’s efforts and avoid duplication.
- As the impetus for action and

In her part time, Hedges returned to her college roots. She was the director of the first children’s production of the Delaware Theater Association.

“At one point I thought about making a career out of children’s theater, but you had to be in New York, and I didn’t want to do that. I’m from there, and I don’t think New York is a good place to raise a family.”

While at Ron Foth, Hedges had another daughter, Sarah, and her life once again changed. Hameroff, Milenthal, Spence, a marketing, media research, and media planning and buying firm in Columbus, offered Hedges the job of media director.

From her part-time post-college start at a Marion ad agency, every job Hedges took was a promotion. Now, she was running a department.

“HMS started as a regional company, but when I left it was a national firm. My department grew exponentially.” Hedges was one of 20 employees when she was hired. Six years later, there were 160 people.

Though she had made many friends

implementation of programs for women entrepreneurs has historically come from the women business owner community, it is very important for women entrepreneurs to continue to have a voice in public policy matters because having an official voice in government is important for advancing policy.

“Best Practices in Supporting Women’s Entrepreneurship in the United States” represents a major updating and expansion of the 2000 report titled “United States Case Study: Successful Public and Private Initiatives Fostering the Growth of Women’s Business Ownership,” published by the National Women’s Business Council and the Interagency Committee on Women’s Business Enterprise in 2000.

“Policy and Progress: Supporting the Growth of Women’s Business Enterprise” is the second report recently published by the NWBC.

The report documents the legal and policy changes that have had an impact on the growth of women’s business enterprises over the past several decades and serves to benchmark the progress that has been made from a policy standpoint, including key programs, legislation and necessary precursors to entry. The report addresses such questions as:

- What impact have changing federal policies and programs had on women’s business enterprises?
- What has been the impact of broad societal changes on women’s business ownership?
- What impact has the growing contribution of women’s businesses to the economy as a whole had on federal policies and programs?
- What policy barriers still remain, and what should the policy focus of the NWBC and women’s business organizations be in the 21st Century?

This report also includes policy recommendations for direction in areas that

and developed files full of contacts, “I was putting in an awful lot of hours. I was away from family a lot.” So, she quit.

“I started a business out of my house. It was the first time I could be there when my kids got home from school.”

But the intense, fast-paced environment Hedges left at HMS began to be duplicated at home.

“At one point I had four people working out of my house.”

The high-energy dynamism that drove Hedges to pursue a triple major at OWU remained unsuppressible.

“I’m pretty aggressive when it comes to business,” she said.

Hedges began working with former HMS clients and became the off-site media, PR and marketing departments for numerous Central Ohio companies. After two years, Media Solutions Inc. had outgrown the old farmhouse. Hedges leased an office in Delaware.

Hedges was now buying media slots in markets nationally. Business ramped up so much, Don quit farming and

still need to be addressed by the federal government and private sector, such as:

- ensuring that the tools women entrepreneurs need are available and accessible from government, private sector and public-private partnerships;
- providing increased visibility to not only comparative research on women’s entrepreneurship, but also highlighting individual women business owners of achievement;
- sharing best practices across borders (something already under way through such vehicles as the OECD and other international women’s conferences and trade missions); and
- continuing the development of gender disaggregated business data and analysis, especially concerning the impact of government programs on women-owned businesses.

“Perhaps most importantly, this report underscores that one of the most important obligations for the women’s business community and its organizations is maintaining continued vigilance and visibility because, much like changing a business culture, leading societal change requires long-term effort,” said Carlson Nelson.

“It is critical that women entrepreneurs continue to have a voice in public policy matters. One size does not fit all for small business owners and women business owners in particular – whether the issue is access to capital, access to markets, or access to training and technical assistance. Only through active advocacy can we ensure that progress continues.”

Both reports, “Best Practices in Supporting Women’s Entrepreneurship in the United States” and “Policy and Progress: Supporting the Growth of Women’s Business Enterprise” may be obtained at the Council’s Web site, www.nwbc.gov.

“eventually came to work for me. He’s my CFO.” Media Solutions now has 12 employees.

Reflectively, Hedges said, “I actually always thought I would be the head of a company. Owning my own business doesn’t surprise me. But, it’s not an easy thing to do. In fact, it can be terribly difficult and not always thankful.”

A year and a half ago, Hedges hit a semi tractor trailer. It was a horrible accident that has left her permanently without full use of one leg and one arm.

“There may not always be a tomorrow, so enjoy it while you’ve got it today. I spend lots of time with my family. It’s important.”

Blair, her oldest daughter, is a 23-year-old graduate of the Washington University of St. Louis. She is pursuing a master’s degree in university administration. Sarah, 19, “wants to be a sex therapist.”

Hedges said she was surprised at winning the NAWBO Visionary Award. “I didn’t expect it. I didn’t even know I was being nominated. I am honored.”

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