



Chamber of Commerce honors woman for launching business

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Lance Frazier |

If you hate filling out forms, you just might love Dynamic Screening Solutions.

For four years Adrienne Akers' Logan-based company has been simplifying paperwork for people faced with filling out forms for government programs. DSS basically minimizes the time, effort and paperwork required to fill out forms through online systems like Utah Clicks, which allows residents to electronically submit repetitious paperwork for multiple state-run programs.

For her efforts in launching a successful spin-off business — the program originated at Utah State University, where Akers had been a senior researcher with the Center for Persons with Disabilities for 25 years — Akers last month received the 2011 Woman in Business Award from the Cache Chamber of Commerce.

Chamber president Sandy Emile said the award is designed to honor a local woman "who has generated an idea on her own and has brought it forward to at least two years of being a successful business." Last year's Cache Valley winner, Jan Lee Miller, was also honored with a state award.

"We want to show this element of a woman in business pursuing a career and adding to the economic vitality of the valley," Emile said. "We're very proud of Adrienne. It's very difficult to do what she's done, especially in the last two years of this economy."

Recently Akers' company rolled out a new service, which applies the concept of slashing repetitious paperwork to human resources. This web-based system, 321Forms, allows employees to electronically complete and submit all of their employer's paperwork online, and enables HR staff to manage that "paperwork" without paper. So far 321Forms is being used by several Utah clients, and Akers said the system "is still in the early growth cycle," but her plan for 2011 is to expand this service to fit as many different types of companies as possible.

New employees can now fill out a single form online with 321Forms, "instead of taking all these forms home and spreading them out all over the table and getting grape jelly on them," Akers said. Once the forms are complete, she added, companies "can collect all that information electronically and have it at their fingertips."

The online forms eliminate the need for printing, scanning, filing, shredding or storage, Akers said, saving businesses precious time and money.

The original concept grew out of a desire to simplify paperwork for those registering with the Center for Persons with Disabilities, where Akers said many people had difficulty completing multiple, complex forms while also caring for their disabled family member. At about the time the CPD procured a grant to study how to streamline filings, Akers caught a presentation by "two young men from the Provo area" who had written a program to do exactly that. She used the grant money to purchase their prototype, and USU has relied on it to process some 100,000 applications in the past six years.

Eventually Akers, who had never run her own business, took the concept into the private sector (USU collects royalties for work done using the original code). Success was not instantaneous; soon after she started DSS in 2007, the economy took a tumble.

"If I've learned anything, it's how to be patient and trust your gut that you're on the right track," Akers said.

Although new to the business world, Akers is active locally, co-chairing the Cache Entrepreneurial Council and participating in other civic

and philanthropic organizations. She credited Ray DeVito, director of the Technology Commercialization Office at USU, and the Entrepreneurial Council with helping her launch and direct her business.

“It’s a great networking opportunity for local entrepreneurs to get to know one another and bounce ideas off each other,” she said of the council.

As for the niche she found for her business, Akers likes to quote singer Pearl Bailey, who said, “What the world needs is more love and less paperwork.”

“My company may not be able to help you with the love part,” Akers said, “but we can certainly help you get rid of your repetitious paperwork.”

For information on Dynamic Screening Solutions or 321Forms, go to www.go-dss.com or www.321Forms.com.

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