

SERVING WESTERN MICHIGAN BUSINESS SINCE 1988

ACG Western Michigan

HONORING OUTSTANDING GROWTH & NEXT-GENERATION TALENT

2011 ACG-Western Michigan Outstanding Growth Award Winner: Service Express, Inc.

Interview with Ron Alvesteffer, President of Service Express, Inc.

Tell us a little about Service Express, Inc.

Since 1986, Service Express, Inc. (SEI) has been delivering on-site data center maintenance for mission critical servers. We started as a division of a local IT hardware reseller, then split off and incorporated in 1993. Our customers depend on us to reduce or prevent server downtime.

From one office, one account executive and two engineers, SEI offered customers an alternative to Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC) service. Over the next two decades, our expertise grew and we expanded our supported products to include IBM, HP, Sun, Dell, and ProLiant servers, along with EMC and STK storage equipment. Today, SEI supports mid to high end servers and mainframes in data center rooms for hospitals, manufacturing plants, universities, banks and other mid to large companies from 20 offices in nine states with 160 employees.

In 2009, SEI opened a 24,000 sq. ft. central warehouse and training facility in Grand Rapids to provide exceptional support to our service teams. Our engineers have access



to over 45,000 parts and an 8,000 sq. ft. professional training and lab area in our Broadmoor Technical Center.

We continue to bring our SEI brand of service to new regions and our plans to grow include expanding into seven new states, opening 14 new offices and creating 150 new positions in the next five years.

What makes SEI successful?

What makes SEI successful is our Corporate Vision: *"to work with our employees to help them achieve their personal, professional and financial goals."* Employees write and share their goals with us and we work with them to provide the training and opportunity to achieve these goals. Matching strategic initiatives with employees' goals creates a powerful business dynamic that has generated great results!

What strategic moves has SEI made in the last five years to

nearly double its annual revenue and achieve 20 percent growth over the past 10 years?

One of our core strategic moves has been geographic expansion. In 2005, we had offices in nine cities and five states; today, we have offices in 20 cities and nine states throughout the Midwest and Southeast.

Since implementing our customized Performance Measurement System (SRS) in 2000, we found it to be critical to our success. The SRS provides clear, measurable goals that are broken down for the company, the department and the individual. The information on how SEI is doing is available to everyone via our intranet and this system shows employees how they impact the numbers and fit into the overall success of the company. It also helps us not only learn from our recent trends, but it also helps us predict upcoming trends so that we can put in place the proper initiatives before having to react to an unexpected downturn.

What is SEI's strategy to sustain growth for years to come?

We will maintain our organic growth strategy through continued geographic expansion, adding new offices in the Midwest and Southeast. We plan to open 14 additional offices within the next five years. The key to sustaining our growth is proactive recruiting — surround-

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ing ourselves with talented people who want to be part of something bigger than themselves. We spend a lot of time and energy finding people who will thrive in our culture. Our focus is on finding and developing individuals who share our commitment to service and who will maximize the opportunities offered at SEI.

How do mergers and acquisitions factor into SEI's growth strategy?

Our focus is on organic growth and continued geographic expansion, so there are currently no plans for acquisitions. If we were to look to that direction, it probably would not be a company in our field of data center maintenance. It could be a company that offered a service to

our customers that we do not currently provide and a service that we could roll out in all of our locations.

Assess SEI's impact on the West Michigan economy?

Our corporate headquarters is here in West Michigan and will continue to remain here. Our highest concentration of employees is also here — with executive leadership and internal operations based in our two local offices. As we continue to grow, we are confident that we will be able to fill our positions with top local talent.

What can other service oriented organizations learn from SEI?

We have a unique commitment to growing and developing our em-

ployees. If we surround ourselves with the right people who share our purpose and values, and we help them achieve their goals, our company goals will be blown out of the water!

At SEI, our service is data center maintenance, but as is frequently heard around our offices — "It's not what we do; it's how we do it!"

What does winning this award mean to SEI?

We are honored to be in the company of other prestigious winners like Perrigo and Herman Miller. This award validates the things we have done well and shows you can not only grow your business in Michigan, you can do it from within by empowering your employees!

About the Outstanding Growth Awards

The annual Outstanding Growth Award honors a local company that demonstrates sustained growth in sales, profitability, employment and community involvement. Past winners include Wolverine World Wide, Inc., National Heritage Academies, Rockford Construction Co., Herman Miller, Elan Nutrition, Butterball Farms Inc. and Perrigo.

The 2011 winner is Service Express, Inc. (SEI).

Eligibility requirements include:

- \$10 million minimum in annual sales
- Demonstrated growth in sales, profitability and employment as well as continuing community involvement.

Each year, the Outstanding Growth Award winner is asked to provide a 45-minute presentation on the challenges faced — and strategies used — to build a track record of growth. The presentation is delivered to a sell-out crowd of approximately 400 of the area's top executives, business owners and financiers.

The award itself is actually two awards: a large perpetual trophy the winner gets temporarily and a smaller replica that the winner gets to keep. ACG decided to take the "Stanley Cup approach" — the winning company gets its name imprinted on the large trophy and they get to keep it for a year before turning it over to the next winner.

The winner of the Western Michigan chapter's Outstanding Growth Award may also be submitted for nomination for the ACG's National Outstanding Growth Award, given annually by ACG Global at its prestigious Intergrowth Conference.

Past winners:

2004: Wolverine World Wide Inc.

2005: National Heritage Academies, Inc.

2006: Rockford Construction Company

2007: Herman Miller Inc.

2008: Elan Nutrition, Inc.

2009: Butterball Farms, Inc.

2010: Perrigo

