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Small Business Makes Headway with Personal Banking Relationship

By **LYNNE GOULDING**

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Of all the businesses in San Diego, 90 percent are classified as small businesses, making it crucial for small companies to place themselves on the map and in the public eye. Advecor Inc., a direct marketing company that has achieved phenomenal growth since it started three years ago, has recently earned recognition from the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce by winning the 2006 Emerging Business of the Year award. Part of the key to Advecor's success lies in the formation of a rewarding relationship with Torrey Pines Bank. Advecor's three principals came together in February 2003, each bringing their own area of expertise to the fledgling company. Principal and CFO Greg May owned a direct mail house, Ryan McAweeney owned a print and graphic design facility and Greg Dowd had a technology company that specialized in Web development.

"When you bring all of these elements together, you have a dynamic team with various areas of expertise to produce and deliver some cutting-edge direct marketing solutions," May said.

Since February 2003, the company has experienced close to 1,000 percent growth. Its starting base of \$500,000 in sales is now on target to reach \$8.5 million this year.

But for a company to grow to the extent that Advecor has, its banking relationship is of paramount importance. Torrey Pines Bank provided exactly the kind of service the company was looking for.

"I can't say enough good things about Steve Black and the team at Torrey Pines. I wish I had found them three years ago," May said.

Before approaching Torrey Pines Bank, Advecor had begun dealing with another bank.

"They were just totally unprofessional," May said. "It took three months to do what Steve Black at Torrey Pines did in 30 days. They've just been amazing. They've offered us a very generous credit line."

Steve Black, Senior Vice President in the real estate department at Torrey Pines Bank, is excited about the prospects of this new relationship.

"When Advecor came to us, they were in a time of trouble with their previous bank and we were quickly able to get them back on track and restore their confidence. We helped them secure an SBA 504 loan to acquire a new corporate headquarters facility," Black said.

After the successful experience with the building loan, Advecor was eager to move all their accounts over to Torrey Pines Bank.

"They like the fact that with us they have direct contact with the bank, the ability to make quick decisions and flexible and creative credit solutions," Black added.

Torrey Pines Bank continues to gain market share in the industry and its expansion effort includes plans to open two new branches in addition to the five currently in operation "not bad for a bank that came into the market in 2003. This is an indication that it is meeting an urgent need in the San Diego market.

"We have local knowledge, expertise and a local focus. In addition to our fast turnaround and decision-making, this is what sets us apart from the competition," Black said. "I'm sure a lot of banks make similar claims, but with our creative and highly talented team at Torrey Pines, we can do things differently than our competitors. Some smaller banks may be criticized as companies can soon outgrow them. But the way we're structured, we have a little more girth to compete for bigger business too. We can fit into a startup company or a company that's doing \$100 million in revenue."

Being a small business, having a relationship with a bank that can cater to your needs is important. "We're not just a number like we are with the larger banks," May explained. "We have received a considerable amount of personal attention from Torrey Pines. We have dealt with a host of banks over the years and are delighted to be working with them now."

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