

Lake-Geauga



Fast Track 50

Hiring concerns boost Backtrack

By Dave Truman
News-Herald Business Writer

As manager of a large recruiting operation, Robert Gandee had a number of negative experiences with employees who misrepresented themselves to get hired.

So in 1994, Gandee started Backtrack Inc., a company that conducts pre-employment background checks.

From humble beginnings around his dining-room table, Backtrack has

grown into a national service company with 67 employees and offices in Mentor and Southern California.

That success has landed the company in the third slot among Emerging Companies in the 2000 Lake-Geauga Fast Track 50.

Gandee, company president, said his research showed in 1994 that less than 10 percent of companies outsourced background checks and about half didn't bother with them at all. Backtrack's success suggests those numbers would be quite different today.

"Now, everybody knows what employment screening is."

SUSAN GURBACH

BACKTRACK'S DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

"Our business has really exploded," Gandee said. "We have been able to assemble a bright, creative, motivated team that enabled us to put together systems and services that have helped our company to grow tremendously."

That growth includes 27 new positions and the opening of the California office in the past year. The Mentor office is no longer in the Gandee's home, either. It is a 15,000-square-foot

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operation on Tyler Boulevard.

Susan Gurbach, director of operations, said high-profile lawsuits against companies that were shown to be negligent in their hiring practices has helped demand for Backtrack's services grow.

"Our clients were not very well educated when we started," Gurbach said. "Now, everybody knows what employment screening is. Employers can be held liable for what their employees do, so they have to be able to stand up and prove they were diligent."

Gandee credits the success of Backtrack to his staff, timely service, and experience.

"My previous experience in the recruiting industry has sensitized me to the needs of companies," Gandee said. "Most of the companies that begin the service with us stick with us because of our outstanding service."

He listed Avery Dennison, Corecomm and Rubbermaid as area companies who utilize Backtrack's services, but said the majority of its business comes from beyond Greater Cleveland.

"We have a sincere interest in filling their needs," he said. "Our people get to know the (client's needs). Customized service makes a big difference."