



Cornerstone Information Systems

A Culture of Communication

By Charlee Beasor

Hans Christian Andersen wrote: “To travel is to live.”

For the people behind Cornerstone Information Systems, that sentiment is at the heart of what they do. Many travelers won’t ever know of the company’s impact on their journeys, but if you’ve had a smooth transaction with a travel group, or a bumpy journey that was mitigated while you were on the road, you have probably benefited from the Cornerstone expertise.

“We design traditional web-based delivery systems that help automate the entire lifecycle of a travel transaction,” offers company CEO and founder Mat Orrego. “Managing things like automating the payment, the back-end delivery, things around journey and trip management, things that happen to you while you’re on the road.”

Customers, he notes, are travel management companies, travel agencies and online travel groups. Headquartered in Bloomington, Cornerstone’s customers are worldwide, from Australia to Singapore and India, with many in Europe.

“We essentially provide a lot of the automation that these companies use and then help them better manage a customer’s traveler experience,” he says.

Orrego formed Cornerstone after taking an interest in data and information management, and working with a business that had a travel agency. Some forward-thinking prepared his company to be on the ground floor for the digital age.

Strategic acquisitions in the early 2000s helped Cornerstone reach more customers and enter the international market. Other defining moments include events that have impacted travel negatively, such as



Mat Orrego, CEO and founder of Cornerstone Information Systems, ensured his company was ready for the digital age. The information technology firm designs systems to automate travel transactions.

the terrorist attacks on 9/11.

“That brought the real need around security and security management to the forefront. We really learned what our customers were depending on our systems to do; it became very real at that point that people needed to know where a traveler was,” Orrego explains.

“It brought to bear the issue of reliability and consistency and business continuity and network security. ... We always said our systems have to do these things, but now they’ve become a requirement. Security is a big part of what we do. We have close to \$30 billion worth of travel transactions through our business.”

Originally from Bloomington, Orrego employs over 80 people. About half that number are “virtual employees.”

“We really work at finding an expertise and if people want to stay where they’ve lived or where their families are from, we’re accommodating to them. That’s different from a lot of companies that want to have everyone together,” he explains. “It has its challenges, but you get to be able to work with the very best out there.”

A major condition of having so many employees out of the office is communication.

“Our culture is every day you have to wake up at Cornerstone and say, ‘I’m going to be excellent at communicating,’” Orrego adds. “We know the allure of having people be able to live where they want to live. The world wires us up, the internet wires us up and we have to do the rest.”

AT A GLANCE:

Mat Orrego, CEO and founder

Current leadership since 1992

Founded: 1992

Location: Bloomington

Primary business: information technology

Sites in Indiana/elsewhere: 1/0

Full-time equivalent employees: 80 in 2015; 85 expected in 2016

www.ciswired.com





CuroGens, Inc.

Helping People Is in the Name

By Charlee Beasor

You might say that sticky notes inspired the creation of CuroGens, Inc.'s mv360 software.

CuroGens co-founder and CEO Jesper Kehlet witnessed a transportation company keeping track of numerous user names and passwords for manufacturing user systems with sticky notes taped around computer monitors. He thought he could come up with a solution that was more streamlined – and required less paper and tape.

The result: mv360, a customer service solution that enables transportation companies to have real-time information and share data on sales, warranty and claims management. And all with the ease of a single username and password.

CuroGens, a Microsoft Cloud support company with five global locations, has headquarters in Carmel. It started with three employees in 2012 and plans are to be at 50 employees at the end of 2016. CuroGens earned almost \$1.3 million in revenue after its first year. That figure more than doubled by the end of 2015.

"I don't know what's going to happen in 2017, but we could literally double (revenues) again. The word spreads that we do great customer service. Microsoft sends troubled customers to us now. (And) they're coming on their own right now," Kehlet says. "There's a reputation that comes with doing really good work for customers."

The company focuses mainly on the recreational vehicle and boating industries, but the software could be used for other industries, such as aerospace. CuroGens also has interactive learning software that targets students' weak areas and adapts questions to improve those skills.

The name CuroGens – if you left your Latin dictionary at home – comes from the Latin "curo," meaning "to care for" and the word "gens," meaning "people."

"The idea behind the company was simply to create software that nobody really had created before. I have no interest in something that is just going to compete with other software solutions in the same space. I want to create something that literally makes lives better for the people using the

software," Kehlet shares.

Speaking of making lives better for others, employees at CuroGens benefit from 100% of their medical, dental and vision benefits being paid by the company. Unlimited sick time and five weeks of vacation are also standard.

Kehlet, originally from Denmark, worked for a software company there, and is trying to impart some its culture at CuroGens.

"One of our best architects is a guy that has only a high school diploma. That sort of drives the whole employee philosophy about the health insurance. I'm from Denmark. I didn't have to worry about it. I'm going to make sure nobody has to worry about it at my company," he declares.

"When you do stuff like this, you foster a culture where people don't get stressed and they don't get sick. They are happier doing what they do. And it comes back to the product, the solutions and customers."

Kehlet is also in the process of moving several employees to Indiana – and paying for the relocation – in order to foster more in-office collaboration.

AT A GLANCE:

Jesper Kehlet,
co-founder and CEO

Current leadership
since 2012

Founded: 2012

Location: Carmel

Primary business: information
technology

Sites in Indiana/elsewhere: 1/5

Full-time equivalent employees:
30 in 2015; 50 expected in 2016

www.curogens.com



CuroGens, Inc. is a software firm designed to build products that help others, says co-founder and CEO Jesper Kehlet (shown putting together office furniture with his daughter at the company's headquarters in Carmel).



DemandJump

Revolutionizing Digital Marketing

By Katie Coffin



DemandJump earned two TechPoint Mira awards and raised \$1.8 million in equity financing earlier this year.

How do marketers know exactly what they should do every morning when they wake up?

This is the question co-founders Christopher Day and Shawn Schwegman set out to answer with DemandJump.

“What we’ve built is an Artificial Intelligence Marketing (AIM) solution,” Day explains. “Our platform analyzes billions of data points that affect our customers’ web sites to determine the largest revenue opportunities specific to their brand. What we build on our platform is their true ecosystem online.”

How do they do it?

The DemandJump team uses complex math and data science including dynamic graph theory and algebraic topology to build, more simply put, a “marketing platform on steroids.”

“This was impossible to do five years ago,” Day grants. “As a society, we didn’t have the computational power or even the database structures that a platform like ours requires. It’s also difficult to secure a team capable of harnessing the mathematics and

constructing our own proprietary algorithms. We are building this math organically, and we’re applying for provisional patents because the results are solving a myriad of business challenges well beyond marketing.”

Schwegman says many companies believe there are only 300 to 500 web sites impacting their business online, when in reality it’s closer to tens of thousands.

The DemandJump platform shows a marketer which blogs and news, commerce, affiliate and lead generation sites are the most powerful in terms of generating traffic that converts to revenue. Day cites that his team recently met with a well-known retailer and revealed where it was leaving over \$100 million on the table in these channels.

Currently, most content is created based on a keyword, but Day contends that is not as powerful as understanding the contextual topics covered. DemandJump’s platform allows marketers to see what pieces of content consumers are interacting with so they know exactly what they should be writing.

The final step is to pinpoint the most important influencers in order to engage their social media followers.

“Our platform returns these compelling insights in seconds,” Schwegman shares. “DemandJump customers simply push a button and they can see what to do next, across all channels, in one place. It becomes their marketing playbook.”

Growth continues since launching DemandJump in February 2015 and taking the product to market in May 2016.

“It’s very much a mentality of every day when we wake up, we think about discovering what was not previously known, and we run through walls to figure that out,” Day affirms. “It’s a pretty fun environment, because we’re literally going into territory that’s not been solved before – and it’s working. People have taken action based on what the platform shows them, and they experience revenue growth when they do it.”

AT A GLANCE:

Christopher Day,
co-founder and
CEO

**Current leadership
since 2015**

Founded: 2015

Location: Indianapolis

Primary business: information
technology

Sites in Indiana/elsewhere: 1/0

Full-time equivalent employees:
6 in 2015; 20 projected in 2016

www.demandjump.com





Genius Phone Repair

Cultivating Connections

By Symone C. Skrzycki



Genius Phone Repair recently launched its 18th store – in Allendale, Michigan on Grand Valley State University’s campus.

The profession may be a technical one, but Kyle Wainwright, chief operating officer at Genius Phone Repair, says it’s the people who make a difference.

“Culture – that’s what makes us successful every day in what we do,” he asserts. “We don’t say it with arrogance, but I guess we do say it with a little bit of pride. We’re very appreciative of our employees and what they have to offer. Some of the ideas they bring to the table are multi-thousand-dollar ideas.”

Take the customer service representative who proposed launching express repair service that, for an extra \$20, would result in customers receiving their phones back in 20 minutes.

“We launched that three months ago and it brings us an extra \$15,000 a month in revenue,” Wainwright comments. “It’s exciting to see stuff like that and their ideas being used, and it makes them buy in (to the company culture) even more than what they had before.”

Another example involves bundling products in which customers could purchase both a case and a tempered glass phone for a set price.

“We’re going to sell 700 bundles this month,” Wainwright proudly declares. “It’s unreal some of the stuff they bring to the table. We’re really thankful for them.”

Headquartered in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Genius Phone Repair specializes in cell phone and tablet repair. Its Indiana presence includes locations in Angola, Lafayette, Mishawaka, Fort Wayne (two stores)

and Avon. Wainwright is part owner of the company’s Indiana locations and works at its Angola site.

Genius’ growth has “exploded” as it continues to incorporate new products and accessories. Changing up the model to encompass device sales (those sold by the company all are pre-owned) has been especially profitable.

Thoughtfully choosing his words, Wainwright points to something else.

“I don’t want this to sound bad, but (we’ve achieved success by) going in and taking over cities. We don’t look to just put one store in a city and be OK with that,” he emphasizes. “Sure, if it’s a smaller city we would, but if it’s a place like Fort Wayne – we put two stores in Fort Wayne within two months.”

A moment later, he brings the conversation back to Genius’ people.

“When we went from (around) seven stores to 15 to now 17 (about two years ago) – we said, ‘How can we make some of these positions career positions for our employees so they can have a family, so they can purchase a house, so they can go out and get a new car or whatever?’ That’s really been our focus this last year-and-a-half, and our employees are definitely very appreciative of that.

“It’s pretty rewarding for us as owners to hear from our employees that, ‘Hey, I just got approved for my first house,’ or ‘We’re getting ready to have a baby and we can afford to do it,’ he remarks with a chuckle. “That’s very important to us.”

AT A GLANCE:

Garry VonMyhr, CEO

Current leadership since 2011

Founded: 2011

Location: Angola

Primary business: other services (except public administration)

Sites in Indiana/elsewhere: 6/11

Full-time equivalent employees: 136 in 2015; 175 expected in 2016

www.geniushonerepair.com





HOOSIER CRANE
SERVICE COMPANY

Hoosier Crane Service Co.

'It Is All About We, Not Me'

By Charlee Beasor

Employees aren't just a number at Elkhart-based Hoosier Crane Service Company. Company founder and President Tom Schmidt ensures that every person feels important and valued.

"Really, the people that I've got are phenomenal (with steady increases in the employee count). We're just bringing in talented people," he notes.

"We're a family-oriented business and as we get bigger, it becomes more of a struggle, but that is always maintained. It is all about we, not me, or I. I think in today's world, people want that tie to a company and they're tired of being a number."

Hoosier Crane Service Company is a multi-faceted manufacturing and service company of overhead cranes; it also sells crane kits, parts and accessories.

Schmidt is adamant about the service aspect of the company's name. Customers can call 24/7 and someone will always answer.

"We're a service company and we pride ourselves on that. We are here all day, every day, 365 days a year for the customer," he declares. "I've gotten calls on July 4th, Christmas, Easter. If you're there every time, not just some of the time, you tend to keep customers. We want to be your service company. We show people how good we are."

Hoosier Crane Service Company isn't just keeping customers, it is continuing to expand. Schmidt says there has been "steady" growth

since he created the business. With locations now in Indianapolis, Fort Wayne and Chicago, customers in those regions don't have to wait as long for company representatives to be on site. Revenues have grown by almost \$7 million since 2012.

One of the strategies for growth has been utilizing technology and the internet to its advantage. The company is 90% paper-free. Schmidt taught himself how to build web sites in 2005 and he's got one for each aspect of the business. Prospective customers can seek quotes online (the company can give 50-page quotes in a matter of minutes, something that used to take one or two days), employees use iPads on-site and work orders are delivered by email instantaneously.

"Technology-wise, we're cutting edge. We have always been ahead of the game, always looking for bigger and better," he explains.

Initially, the digital push was met with hesitation in the industry; many were thrown off by not having paper copies and being able to physically sign things. Schmidt chalks that up to a generational difference, and acknowledges that has changed as the younger generations feed into the industry.

Giving back to the local community is crucial for Schmidt. The company is involved in various philanthropic endeavors, including the local faith mission in Elkhart, Habitat for Humanity, Five Star student mentoring program, the Boys and Girls Club, Project Lead the Way and more.

"We are constantly looking to be a bigger part of the community," he offers. "Everybody needs a pat on the back or a friendly smile from a group of people. That's what I'm here to do."



Elkhart-based Hoosier Crane Service Co. manufactures and services overhead cranes. It recently expanded operations in Indianapolis, Fort Wayne and Chicago.

AT A GLANCE:

Tom Schmidt, president

Current leadership since 2002

Founded: 2002

Location: Elkhart

Primary business: manufacturing

Sites in Indiana/elsewhere: 3/1

Full-time equivalent employees: 43 in 2015; 49 expected in 2016

www.hoosiercrane.com





Lesson.ly

Taking Training to a Whole New Level

By Katie Coffin

When Lesson.ly launched in 2012, CEO Max Yoder was the only employee for more than a year.

That number grew to 17 by the beginning of 2016. In a recent conversation with Yoder, he proudly reported the learning automation software company had hired its 42nd employee that day.

“If you told me that was going to happen a year ago, I would’ve been really anxious about it because hiring wonderful people ... it’s hard,” he admits in describing the company’s explosive growth.

“The best part of building this business is the people we get to build it with. I’m really proud that our group of people exemplifies what Lesson.ly is – helpful, humble, hardworking people who believe work is a virtue. They want to be a part of the best team they’ve ever been a part of in their lives. Everyone knows if they work together, we’re going to accomplish great things.”

It takes people who value great work to revolutionize workplace training from a potentially uninspiring process to one that empowers employees to learn and grow.

“Traditional learning management systems were built for compliance. Not a very exciting business to build and it also leaves a lot of value on the table when it comes to actually helping employees do better work,” Yoder indicates. “Lesson.ly helps people do better

work by making sure they have access to team knowledge and best practices, usually around products and processes. Every employee wants to do great work, and this centralized information helps them do just that.”

The result is a learning process that enables anyone, regardless of role or title, to become a teacher for a company.

“Give the best people in your company the reins to create helpful lessons, and watch everybody get better at their jobs,” Yoder contends. “That’s the recipe that keeps working.”

He looks to the future with an unfailingly upbeat attitude. The pieces are all there – a growing employee base, new layers of management learning to dial in their teams, significant capital to continue growth. Now, he says, the exciting challenge is putting them all together.

“People ask a lot, ‘What does the next five years look like?’ It’s hard for me to look ahead to when this company is a decade old. That just blows my mind. I can’t even believe it’s been four years,” Yoder marvels.

“We have a plan for next year. We have kind of a rough estimate for the year after that. But those plans are largely dependent on what we do today, so I don’t get too married to them. It’s good to have a plan, but it’s also good to stay flexible and know that the world is going to define a lot of things for you, whether you like it or not.

“And we’ve just got to make sure we stay nimble enough, we stay open-minded and we come with enough energy to get the work done that needs to get done when it presents itself to us.”



Energetic leadership and strong guidance from veterans of tech success help Lesson.ly move forward on its business journey.

AT A GLANCE:

Max Yoder, CEO

Current leadership since 2012

Founded: 2012

Location: Indianapolis

Primary business: educational services

Sites in Indiana/elsewhere: 1/0

Full-time equivalent employees: 17 in 2015; 52 projected in 2016

www.lesson.ly





Marion Manufacturing

Building for the Future

By Matt Ottinger

While growing up on family farms, Tammy Marion and her husband, Tim, learned the importance of autonomy and a can-do spirit. The company they ultimately founded, Marion Manufacturing, has demonstrated those attributes throughout its now 20 years of business.

“When we started, we essentially just built tools and dies for companies that did stampings and machining fixtures,” explains Tammy, president and owner. “After 9/11, we saw a major drop in the amount of tooling sourced in the U.S. A lot of it started going overseas to China and whatnot. We evolved as our needs and technology evolved and started getting into more CNC (computer numerical control) machining, doing rapid prototyping and one-off type work. We still do tool and die work and prototyping. We developed our customer relationships from those starting points.”

The company now manufactures parts for heavy equipment, fluid systems, the energy and agriculture sectors, as well as aerospace and defense industries. Marion Manufacturing supplies some of the country’s most prominent names, including Rolls-Royce Aerospace, Allison Transmissions and Caterpillar.



The technology involved in the tool and die industry has evolved over the past 20 years, but Marion Manufacturing has kept pace by branching out into aerospace, defense and other sectors.

Joining forces

In 2015, a merger/acquisition with Illinois-based Morton Machining was completed, establishing the framework for future stability in the combined company.

“I met one of the owners and we started discussing that both companies were at a point where we needed to grow,” Marion recalls. “So bringing them together to build a stronger Midwest company

allowed us to show our customer base that we’re still in the growing phase and we haven’t become stagnant. It strengthened both companies with customer relationships, as well as with the balance sheet.”

While Marion anticipates \$11 million in revenue this year, she’s eyeing a nearly threefold increase in the near future.

“With the acquisition, our goal is to become a \$30 million combined company within three to five years,” Marion estimates. “The heavy duty equipment industry has been a little slower, but we’re trying to expand our aerospace customer base to give us more diversity. That way we don’t have all our eggs in one basket.”

West is best

Marion adds that being located on Indiana’s western edge has proven to be beneficial for the company.

“We’re right off Interstate 70 and were able to invest in a property that kept our overhead low,” she notes. “When we moved here, we had 15,000 square feet, and in 2008 we added another 25,000 and purchased an office building next door. In 2012, we added another 12,000 square feet. It’s a good location for us.”

Marion is grateful to have earned the Companies to Watch recognition and believes it will prove to be a fruitful honor.

“This will be a great opportunity to showcase our company and show other Indiana businesses what we can do and that we are growing.”

AT A GLANCE:

Tamara Marion, president

Current leadership since 2008

Founded: 1996

Location: West Terre Haute

Primary business: manufacturing

Sites in Indiana/elsewhere: 1/1

Full-time equivalent employees: 105 in 2015; 115 expected in 2016

www.mariontool.com



Recent Companies to Watch Honorees

2015

- Annex Student Living, LLC, Indianapolis
- Blue Pillar, Indianapolis
- Creative Solutions Consulting, Inc. (CSCI), Indianapolis
- Creek Run LLC Environmental Engineering, Montpelier
- Design Collaborative, Fort Wayne
- DK Pierce & Associates, Inc., Zionsville
- Finline Printing Group, Indianapolis
- Gibson, South Bend
- Guidon Design, Inc., Indianapolis
- Hudec Woodworking, Griffith
- M&M Holdings I, Inc., Indianapolis
- Mesh Systems LLC, Carmel
- MS Inspection & Logistics, Inc. (MS-IL), Indianapolis
- Perceivant, Indianapolis
- Pioneer Packaging LLC, Portland
- Renaissance Administration LLC, Indianapolis
- Richey Athletics, Frankfort
- Spear Corporation, Roachdale
- Tech Castings LLC, Shirley
- Titus Bakery LLC, Lebanon

2014

- Allied Payment Network, Fort Wayne
- API Appliance, Inc., Fort Wayne
- Bassemiers Fireplace, Patio, and Spas, Inc., Evansville

- BlueBridge Digital, Fishers
- CloudOne, Indianapolis
- DoubleMap, Indianapolis
- DuraMark Technologies, Westfield
- Element Three, Indianapolis
- Flat12 Bierwerks, Indianapolis
- Genesis Plastics Welding, Inc., Fortville
- Haiku Learning, Goshen
- Impact CNC, LLC, Columbia City
- inTech Trailers, Nappanee
- KA+A, Indianapolis
- Milhaus, Indianapolis
- Nextremity Solutions, Inc., Warsaw
- Pearl Pathways, Indianapolis
- Peepers, Michigan City
- PERQ, Indianapolis
- PolicyStat, Inc., Carmel
- Red Star Contract Manufacturing, Larwill
- Rook Security, Indianapolis
- RS2 Technologies, Munster
- Salesvue, Indianapolis
- South Bend Modern Molding, Mishawaka
- Tempus Technologies, Auburn
- TLS by Design, Indianapolis

2013

- AIT Bioscience, Indianapolis
- American Ultraviolet, Lebanon
- AndyMark, Inc., Kokomo
- ATC Trailers, Nappanee

- Bastian Automation Engineering, Greenfield
- Clinical Architecture, Carmel
- Complexus Medical, Mishawaka
- Construct Solutions, Indianapolis
- DECA Financial Services, Inc., Fishers
- Diverse Staffing, Inc., Indianapolis
- Emerging Threats, Lafayette
- EmNet, LLC, South Bend
- Envisage Technologies, Bloomington
- Fanimation, Inc., Zionsville
- FRATCO, Inc., Francesville
- IBC Coatings Technologies, Inc., Lebanon
- Integrative Flavors, Michigan City
- Kessler Crane, Inc., Plymouth
- Kinetech, Indianapolis
- Milestone Advisors, Indianapolis
- Net Irrigate, Bloomington
- netlogx, LLC, Indianapolis
- Next Spine, LLC, Noblesville
- Novia CareClinics, Indianapolis
- Phoenix Data Corporation, Indianapolis
- Protective Coatings, Inc., Fort Wayne
- Royal Excursion, Mishawaka
- Sportula Products, Warsaw
- StrataShops, Elkhart
- Summers Plumbing Heating & Cooling, Noblesville
- TinderBox, Indianapolis
- Tyson Onsite, Indianapolis
- Union Station Technology Center, South Bend

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www.mariontool.com





Nanovis, LLC

Leading the Way With Life-Changing Technology

By Symone C. Skrzycki

A passion for helping others is the cultural backbone at Nanovis, which produces spinal implants.

“There are few things that are more rewarding for me or frankly for the people at Nanovis than creating things and creating a company (where we’re) solving very complex issues and challenges,” reflects chief executive officer Matt Hedrick. “You don’t get that everywhere. That’s a lot of fun and gives a lot of intrinsic awards.”

Nanovis uses nano surface technologies to mimic the nanoscale surface of tissues.

“The reason why that’s important is your tissues – like your bone, muscle, the inside of an artery or anything like that – have a very specific pattern down at that scale, which is about the size of a protein,” Hedrick explains. “When you mimic that pattern, you can influence biological responses to help things heal faster. In some cases, you can reduce bacteria attachment, reduce inflammation and help tissues heal around either graphs or implants.”



Nanovis transforms lives one spinal implant at a time.

Nanovis targets two clinical problems: poorly-healed implants and infections (associated with implants, or other surgery- and non-surgery related issues).

“We’ve got some extremely early technologies that are very, very innovative and have the potential to resolve some of these infections, regardless of whether the patient has any antibiotics in their system or whether that bacteria is resistant to antibiotics,” Hedrick conveys.

“Resistant strains are popping up around the world. There’s getting to be a great deal of concern – and almost fear – (about what could happen) if those strains start mobilizing more than they are now and we don’t have antibiotics to treat them. It’s kind of a terrifying thing when you think about it.”

Nanovis has labs at Purdue University’s Birck Nanotechnology Center and administrative offices in Carmel. Most of its devices are produced at MicroPulse, a medical device manufacturer based in Columbia City.

Hedrick’s voice is full of emotion as he reveals what makes Nanovis so special.

“There’s a lot of emphasis on ‘doing the right thing,’ on integrity, on building things right and making the right decisions.

“It’s a pretty forgiving culture also. We would rather move through topics and ideas, execute things, try things and fix what we’ve figured out how to do better than hang people out to dry for making mistakes. We all make them; the point is to fix them fast and get better.”

In many ways, Nanovis is proving that small can indeed be mighty.

“(The mantra) really is, ‘Innovate. Innovate. Innovate.’” Hedrick affirms. “That’s how we compete against the large, very established implant companies that have quite a bit less innovation for the most part, but have other strengths that are stronger than ours in different areas.

“We’ve got multiple technology platforms that are all kind of layering in over the coming years. It’s a pretty cool place!”

AT A GLANCE:

Matt Hedrick, CEO

Current leadership since 2006

Founded: 2006

Location: Columbia City

Primary business: health care and social assistance

Sites in Indiana/elsewhere: 3/0

Full-time equivalent employees: 8 in 2015; 19 expected in 2016

www.nanovisinc.com





Nix Companies, Inc.

Uncompromising Quality for Over 100 Years

By Charlee Beasor

Matthew Nix likens his company’s recent rapid growth to how canyons are formed: a steady, continuous erosion of water over rocks and then a sudden release of mile-long sections of stone.

“There was a foundation that was laid of a reputation that was strong. There were a lot of values and standards that were instilled – and customers knew us. There were years and years that went by that felt like we weren’t going anywhere. But when it goes, it just goes,” he explains.

Nix Companies was formed in 1902 by Nix’s great-great-grandfather, a German immigrant who started a blacksmithing shop. The business was passed from one son to another and transitioned through the years to become a metal services company.

“If it’s made out of metal, we can do anything you need with it,” Nix offers, including on-site maintenance, refurbishing, machining and more.

In the time since Nix took over the Poseyville-based company as president in 2012,

revenues have more than tripled. Nix was also the first owner to hire a full-time employee that was not related to the family. He calls it a watershed moment in the company’s history.

“My dad and grandpa were quite happy being small and making a good living, and I was young and just trying to forge my own path. And finally, I think I wore them down enough and had some opportunities come along to expand our staff and facility – and it worked out for us,” he recalls.

That first non-family employee was a salesperson, who has now been named director of business development.

“Fortunately we hit a home run on the hire and he’s now managing a team. That’s what you hope for. As you add sales staff, that should equate to growth,” he mentions.

Acquisition also added to the growth. On Jan. 1, 2015, Nix Companies acquired a local firm that had been in business 35 years. The owner had sold it to a larger company that eventually decided to shutter the facility. Nix stepped in and bought the business, the

real estate and some inventory. But the most important acquisition, he notes, was the handful of employees that now work for Nix Companies.

In January, the company strategically purchased a piece of real estate near Interstate 64, which will eventually be used to expand operations. Until then, Nix plans to lease out the property.

He recalls a salient piece of advice from his brother – a partner in the company – in getting through a particularly rough patch early on. The business had landed a large contract and needed to staff up quickly to fulfill the order. Unfortunately, some of those hires were not working out. Nix was stressed out and frustrated.

‘My brother, he put me in my place and he said, ‘You keep doing what you’re doing. Don’t sacrifice your standards or your values.’ And I didn’t know how important that was at the time, but it got me through the next day and week, and we realized what’s different as far as our company in our marketplace: It’s our people,” he concludes.

AT A GLANCE:

Matthew Nix,
president

Current leadership
since 2012

Founded: 1902

Location: Poseyville

Primary business: manufacturing

Sites in Indiana/elsewhere: 1/0

Full-time equivalent employees:
33 in 2015; 38 expected in 2016

www.nixcompanies.com



President Matthew Nix was the first in the fifth-generation family-owned company to hire a non-family member; revenues for Nix Companies have also tripled under his leadership.



PROSOLIA

Prosolia

Combatting Disease With Innovation

By Katie Coffin

Justin Wiseman's involvement with Prosolia began before its incorporation in 2003 when he was a graduate student at Purdue University.

Today, he is chairman, president and CEO of the scientific instrument company.

"I was studying under professor R. Graham Cooks, a world-renowned analytical chemist and mass spectrometry expert," Wiseman explains via email. "I was working on a research project that aimed to use mass spectrometers as analytical preparative tools for molecular biology – coined Ion Soft Landing. We created a device that demonstrated the power of this approach and Prosolia was born."

A mass spectrometer is a device for separating isotopes, molecules and molecular fragments according to mass. In order to measure the characteristics of individual molecules, a mass spectrometer converts them to ions so that they can be moved about and manipulated by external electric and magnetic fields.

Prosolia focuses on tools that enhance and simplify the use of mass spectrometers to cure diseases and health conditions.

Not long after Prosolia began, the research team at Purdue, led by Cooks, invented a novel sample introduction and ionization approach for mass spectrometry. This invention, termed Desorption Electrospray Ionization (DESI), was licensed to Prosolia in 2005. The Purdue team published a scientific article demonstrating how DESI could be used to create molecular images of tissue biopsies, allowing insights on disease pathology in minutes instead of hours.

One area DESI imaging is used in is clinical research for breast tissue analysis. Distinguishing tumor from normal breast tissue is an important step in breast-conserving surgery. Because this distinction can be challenging during an operation with traditional approaches, up to 40% of patients require an additional operation. A mass spectrometry approach can allow the surgeon to detect residual cancer tissue in real time to make accurate decisions during surgery, decreasing the need for multiple operations.

Wiseman points to factors that have contributed to Prosolia's success.

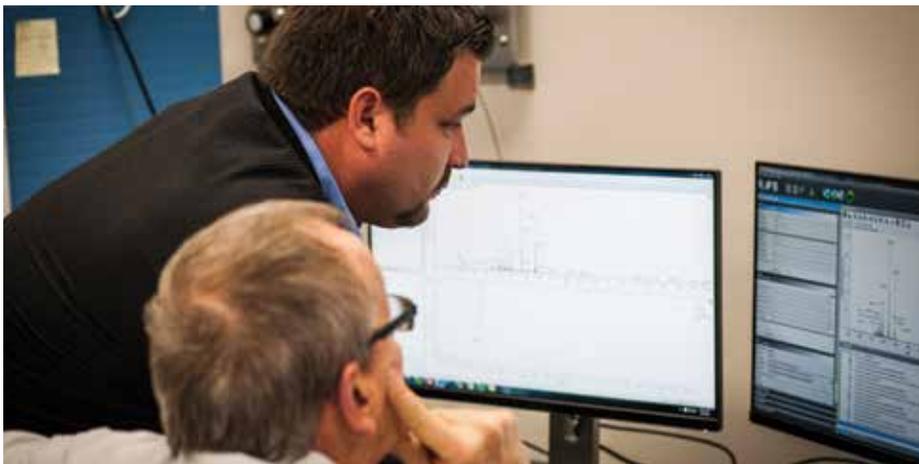
"The DESI technology is disruptive and

took several years to achieve market acceptance," he indicates. "Our team has stuck by our mission and vision, and it's because of our dedicated people that we are achieving success."

In 2014, Prosolia launched a new product called flowprobe™ – a continuous, real-time micro extraction technique for rapid spot sampling in tissue sections, polymeric materials, bacterial colonies and more – and began developing a third product based on the PaperSpray® technology invented at Purdue under Cooks. PaperSpray is a technique for introducing unprocessed samples of fluids to the mass spectrometer.

Prosolia also established two global partnerships, fueling the expansion of the company with 65% revenue growth in 2015.

"We help our customers solve some of the most important problems in health and disease," Wiseman concludes. "Keeping this as our focus and building global partnerships with other mass spectrometer manufacturers, we will achieve significant growth over the short term."



Prosolia is one of a growing number of companies to benefit from Purdue University research efforts.

AT A GLANCE:

Justin Wiseman,
chairman,
president and CEO

**Current leadership
since 2011**

Founded: 2003

Location: Indianapolis

Primary business: manufacturing

Sites in Indiana/elsewhere: 1/0

Full-time equivalent employees:
18 in 2015; 30 projected in 2016

www.prosolia.com





Sharpen

Making the Right Calls

By Matt Ottinger



Sharpen is using its intellectual capital to revolutionize call centers throughout the country.

A new idea. A new name. An old industry.

When Purdue University-trained engineers Cameron Weeks and Bracken Fields launched Indianapolis-based Fathom Voice in 2011, it began with a request.

“Our background was in cloud computing and large-scale data processing,” Weeks recalls. “A guy we had done work with in the past reached out to us to ask if we could help him buy a new phone system for one of the floors in his building. So rather than buy something, we just built it.

“From that, we found a big opportunity to come into an old market with an entirely new way of thinking about not just the technology, but the business application itself,” he adds.

Fathom Voice became Sharpen in 2016, because the “Voice” label had become limiting as the mechanisms within call centers and methods for touching customers expanded. Weeks, Sharpen’s CEO, explains.

“Over the years as technology has pushed forward, we’ve embraced more channels of communication,” he notes. “In the early days it was the telephone, and that’s a major portion of what we do today. But customers want to also be able to text message you, chat online, email or engage on social media. As we expanded to all these channels, the ‘Fathom Voice’ name was holding us back and not giving the whole picture of what we offered.”

Sharpen is the only provider to offer a global omni-channel communication platform designed for sales and support teams, according to Weeks, and its client resume includes the likes of Illinois-based companies onPeak and Vibrant Credit Union.

“The industry is old and not evolving. That’s why we’re seeing

opportunity,” he says. “We’re bringing new life to it. Our competitors are still talking about moving to the cloud and trying to figure out what it means. Over the next six to 18 months, you’ll start hearing us talk about artificial intelligence out of the contact center, and how we’re able to leverage machine learning to empower and increase efficiencies in the call center by allowing agents to automatically answer questions.”

Sharpen has grown from 20 employees in April to 45 at the time of this writing, and plans to clear 100 staffers by the end of 2016. Furthermore, the company has opened another office in San Francisco, although Weeks offers reassurance that Indiana will always house its headquarters.

He emphasizes that Indiana has provided skilled employees, but having access to the San Francisco area’s diversified talent pool will be beneficial.

“I think we’ll be opening these field offices throughout the country and Europe in the coming years,” he offers.

At the moment, Sharpen’s staff is encouraged and honored to earn the designation as a Company to Watch.

“We’re in a mission-critical market, because the contact center can’t go offline; there is no second chance. So when we went to market, we had to make sure the product would work and our customers could really trust it,” he stresses. “To ensure we did that, we had to work quietly for several years to build a platform that would be successful.

“Coming into 2016, we were able to push sales and marketing and become more of an engaged part of the community in Indiana. This award is a great step toward that – to be able to come out of the shadows and announce what we’ve been doing and be recognized.”

AT A GLANCE:

Cameron Weeks, CEO

Current leadership since 2011

Founded: 2011

Location: Indianapolis

Primary business: telecommunications

Sites in Indiana/elsewhere: 1/0

Full-time equivalent employees: 26 in 2015; 100 expected in 2016

www.sharpencx.com





SMART Temps

Keeping Its Cool in Growth Phase

By Matt Ottinger

SMART Temps may succeed at keeping rooms, food and equipment cool, but make no mistake, this Mishawaka company and its temperature management system are red hot when it comes to innovation. The company is a spin-off of a school food safety training service COO Michael McKay and President John Miller started in 2004.

SMART Temps offers a temperature monitoring system featuring an end device – called the SMART Guard® – a wireless thermometer used for automatic temperature monitoring of hot and cold equipment. It collects information, which is passed to the cloud via a smart link through Wi-Fi, cellular or Ethernet connections.

“From there, what we have in the cloud is what we consider our secret sauce,” Miller reveals. “Our 10-plus years in the business have allowed us to develop a functional algorithm to prevent false alerts from happening. So when customers get an alert via email, text message or phone call, it’s typically a real alert. We also have the ability

to predict failure of equipment based on algorithms, so that gives our customers a real-time return on investment.”

The SMART Temps system goes beyond the safekeeping of food and beverage, however. With over 14,000 locations monitored, the system protects inventory such as vaccines, medications, blood, labs, research and other critical items for its customers in the health care industry.

SMART Temps tripled in size last year, and currently has over 30 employees. Furthermore, the company hopes to continue to increase its staff count this year.

“We have a lot of huge new customers coming on board that we have in our pipeline, and there are lots of new opportunities out there,” Miller notes, planning to capitalize on the fact that many potential clients still use paper and pencil to monitor storage temperatures. “We’re not replacing competitors in the field with better technology; it’s that most (customers) don’t have any technology.”

Miller is encouraged by the tech climate in northern Indiana, citing South Bend’s Innovation Park and Ignition Park as helpful developments for the region.

“There are a lot more tech start-ups popping up in the area, and we’re networking with some of those folks,” he says. “I think it will continue to be a good area, and in the long term I think there are a lot of prospects for technology in this part of the state.”

Miller adds that while the company’s customer base extends well beyond Indiana’s borders, the in-state accolade of being a Company to Watch is quite meaningful for SMART Temps.

“It’s another tool to help promote our business and make it stand out nationally,” he explains. “We do business in 48 states and a couple of other countries, so that homegrown recognition goes a long way to show people around the country and the world there are a lot of great things happening in Indiana, and we’re one of them.”

AT A GLANCE:

John Miller, president

Current leadership since 2013

Founded: 2009

Location: Mishawaka

Primary business: information technology

Sites in Indiana/elsewhere: 1/0

Full-time equivalent employees: 25 in 2015; 32 expected in 2016

www.smart-temps.com



Keeping food and products cold has been a hot business for Mishawaka-based SMART Temps. The company is helping its high-profile customers upgrade from pencil and paper temperature management to high-tech climate control.



Spot Freight

Driven to Succeed

By Symone C. Skrzycki



Spot Freight moves approximately 250 to 300 loads every day (pictured are employees Chris O’Neal, left, and Kreg Hunter).

What happens when a talented trio gathers to talk about Spot Freight, the thriving brokerage company it runs?

Its story comes to life.

“It’s a laid-back, fun environment,” reveals CFO Andy Kropp.

“Our typical employees are either recent college grads or have some level of experience. I’d say the typical age range is mid-20s to early 30s. So you’ve got an environment that’s very focused on sort of the ‘work hard, play hard,’ attitude.

“Our people are driven and motivated and want to be successful, but they also like to have fun while they’re doing it.”

Spot is a non-asset based transportation company headquartered in Indianapolis. Renovation is underway on Spot’s new 18,000 square-foot downtown location, which will more than double its current space. It also has an office in Charlotte, North Carolina (launched in 2015).

“We match shippers with carriers,” co-president Andy Schenck explains. “A typical customer could be, let’s say, someone that’s shipping bricks. They’ve got a truckload of bricks they’ve got to move from point A to point B. Our people facilitate that transaction and find the trucking company that’s going to haul it for them – make sure it picks up on time, make sure it delivers on time, all that stuff.”

Adds co-president Andrew Elsener, “We work across multiple industries (with the primary one being food and beverage). We’re in industrial products, consumer goods – a wide range of different types.”

Comparing Spot to other freight brokers in the industry, Schenck

notes, “The biggest thing (that differentiates us), our core value, is that, ‘We get it done.’ If we say we’re going to do something, we do it. A lot of our competitors don’t really operate in that same fashion. Honestly, that’s probably one of the biggest ways we’ve grown – and it’s pretty simple, right? Doing what you say you’re going to do.”

Kropp points to another strength.

“We preach strong communication with our customers and with our carriers throughout the entire process of moving a shipment from point A to point B,” he relates. “If any issues are encountered, we handle those quickly and make sure they don’t become a bigger problem for the customers.”

He admires the entrepreneurial spirit that people like Schenck and Elsener possess.

“One thing I’ve always said (about entrepreneurs) – and I wasn’t involved in the founding of this company – is that it takes a certain type of person to want to start their own business and grow it. Not everybody has the ideas, the drive and the willingness to put in the blood, sweat and tears to really make it come together.”

That drive at Spot is evidenced in an approximately \$2 million investment toward developing new technology to further enhance operations.

“We’ve used a lot of different software over the years, and there really hasn’t been anything off the shelf that’s fit our model,” Schenck relates. “We really think this is going to be a game changer for us, to basically be more efficient, bring on customers faster and provide better service.”

AT A GLANCE:

Andy Schenck and Andrew Elsener, co-presidents

Current leadership since 2009

Founded: 2009

Location: Indianapolis

Primary business: transportation and warehousing

Sites in Indiana/elsewhere: 1/1

Full-time equivalent employees: 62 in 2015; 85 expected in 2016

www.spotmyfreight.com





Torchlite Marketing

Lightening the Load of Digital Dilemmas

By Charlee Beasor

Susan Marshall didn't start Torchlite Marketing to become an overnight success story for the Hoosier entrepreneurial and technology scene, but that's where she's found herself less than a year after launching the company.

Revenues hit over \$1 million following just a month in business – the company was founded in 2014, but officially launched in November 2015. Torchlite bypassed the \$2 million mark earlier this year; and in June, Marshall announced plans to hire 140 employees in the next three years. The company is also in the process of expanding its downtown Indianapolis headquarters.

By connecting a network of freelance digital marketers (known as "Torchliters") to businesses seeking marketing assistance, companies no longer have to hire in-house marketing teams. The Torchlite dashboard also allows business owners to view and analyze digital marketing campaigns.

"Digital marketing has gotten complex and the average business owner doesn't have



Torchlite Marketing's network of freelancers offers businesses marketing expertise. The firm also designed an easy-to-use dashboard system for companies to check progress and approve campaigns.

the tools to bring that team together or can't find the specialists to help them, and that's where we come in," explains Marshall, CEO and founder.

With a background in software, she has worked for major technology companies, including Apple, Inc., Adobe Systems, Inc., and Salesforce (formerly ExactTarget). When Marshall would speak with customers, they often lamented the struggles with building an in-house marketing team.

"I just don't have anybody to write an email, or manage social media, or they are terrible at it," (they said). The technology was getting better, but figuring out how to match people to the technology was non-existent," she recalls.

With 16 employees currently, Marshall is still building her own team.

"We want to grow really quickly and contribute to the local economy of scale," she offers. "Our development team is pretty much intact. Most of the expansion will be in sales and more marketing. We even have a lot of administrative people yet to hire – we just hired an office manager."

Marshall didn't anticipate such quick

growth after launching – but she was aware businesses were struggling.

"I didn't realize just how frustrated so many businesses are. It takes entire teams to do it (marketing) well. And that is not feasible for most mid-size businesses, or if it is, you can't find the people," Marshall adds.

The Torchlitter network, about 500 strong, is a measure of "quality over quantity," she explains.

"We are always looking for more freelancers to come in, but we are focusing on quality. They sign 12-month contracts, so freelancers have predictable income and know they don't have to spend their time looking for more business," Marshall asserts. Torchliters are onboarded and certified by the company; and only about 10% of applicants make it through the rigorous screening.

In regards to future growth, Marshall explains that even though the company is still in the seed stage, it is attracting investors from the coasts.

"Once you get the first guy or gal to jump into the water with you, they come more easily."

AT A GLANCE:

Susan Marshall,
CEO and founder

Current leadership
since 2014

Founded: 2014

Location: Indianapolis

Primary business: advertising,
public relations and related services

Sites in Indiana/elsewhere: 1/0

Full-time equivalent employees:
12 in 2015; 25 expected in 2016

www.torchlite.com

