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NEW BUSINESS MINNESOTA

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Photo by Paula Keller

Special Report

Resource Heroes

New Entrepreneurs Often Need the Resources of Key Business Professionals to Succeed. New Business Minnesota Brings You Three Stories About **Resource Heroes** You Should Know and How They Helped Clients Reach Their Goals: *ADT Security, OffiCenters/VirtualOffiCenters, Kraus Anderson Insurance.*

Resource Heroes

Nobody
Succeeds in Business
Alone, Especially Not New
Businesses. They Often Rely on
Professionals with Specific Skills or
Services They Need to Launch and
Grow Their Enterprises. They Turn
to Their **Resource Heroes:**
Business Professionals Who Have
Made a Significant Difference In
the Success of Their Clients.
Here We Present Three Such
Examples.

RESOURCE HERO



Chad Ruth, ADT Security; Mike and David Trumble, co-owners of Nür Technik of Burnsville.

ADT Security

Setting an Affordable Security Foundation to Help Protect the Assets of a New Business as It Launches Growing Small Business

New Business Minnesota

Being at the right place at the right time was never more true than the day ADT Security's Chad Ruth made a routine sales call at the shop of Nür Technik performance automotive engineering.

The Burnsville shop was still in the buildout phase and not yet opened when Chad happened to be in the area for an appointment and saw construction going on.

"We were in the middle of construction and had just moved in all of our equipment," says David Trumble, who co-owns Nür Technik with his brother, Mike. They came to the shop in the morning and discovered their tools had been stolen.

The brothers re-engineer cars to boost performance, make them faster and handle better. They do custom work for exacting, detail-demanding customers who want suspensions, brakes and engine modifications to increase horsepower. "That takes quite a bit of specialized equipment and it's all pretty spendy," David says.

Less than a week later, Chad stopped by. "He showed up and

said, 'Hey, do you need security?' Perfect timing," says David. "Well, perfect timing for him."

Chad says his goal was just to introduce himself and get an appointment. Instead, Nür Technik signed a contract for a security system that same day and it was installed within the week.

Timing, however, wasn't the whole story. It was Chad's listening that marked the beginning of a business relationship that went beyond the mere transactional.

"We rely on good business relationships to be successful," says David. His clients are demanding and expect reliability, performance, quality and timeliness. He expects the same from his vendors and suppliers.

"A lot of our jobs are time sensitive. We need a quick response from our vendors. If they don't check email often enough, then we won't get our parts when we need them and we find a new vendor," says David.

David and Mike spend weeks talking with clients about their project and devising a plan. "We have to earn their trusts," says David. "A lot of these cars are in the \$50,000 range. If we're going to tear them apart, people have to trust us. Half our customers

take their cars to track and race as amateurs.”

Each car gets a build worksheet for each step: Brakes, engine, drive train, suspension, wheels and tires. The plans often address a specific issue, like too much body roll going into a corner or they just want more power.

“ADT definitely treated us like we try to treat our customers,” says David.

“They are investing money and blood and sweat,” says Chad. “I wanted them to have protection they could afford and yet would enable them to expand. Once they add employees, take more space or add a new location, their security needs will change. Now, they have a foundation they can build on.”

The first thing Chad did was a “walk around,” which entails looking at vulnerabilities such as points of entry. A thorough assessment includes checking the walls shared by tenants next door, looking at delivery schedules and hours of operation. Walk around the space and study it. If the phone box is in the back of the building, they will need a cellular backup. If the neighbor next door has no security system, then there is just sheetrock keeping intruders out.

“The last thing any security-conscious business needs is a one-size-fits-all plan. We interview our clients, see how they operate and then develop a plan and a solution. We don’t just throw a package at you – two doors and a motion detector for \$99,” says Chad.

The walk around assessment identified Nür Technik’s biggest security need: intrusion protection. There were no employees to worry about. One of the brothers would always be there for deliveries. Anticipating future needs, ADT installed a system that could be scaled up as the business grew.

Common Mistakes

Thinking insurance will cover your losses. Owners don’t realize that after the deductible and depreciated value, the coverage is often less than expected.

Not understanding the difference between commercial and home security systems. ADT’s commercial systems, for example, have a computer in a metal lock box that is hidden on the premises, separate from the keypad, horns and detectors. Residential systems often are self-contained, with the keypad, computer and horn all in one unit. “A burglar has about 30 seconds to reach the all-in-one unit and smash the thing and render it useless,” Chad says.

Turning to the internet for inexpensive, do-it-yourself systems. If you don’t know what you need, you won’t get the right equipment. A grainy camera that can’t produce a recognizable

face is useless.

Chad says that a good security system has benefits new business owners don’t often consider.

“It can give an owner a level of confidence they’ll appreciate when they’re off site, at another location or running errands,” he says. “And one of the most precious things to a business owner is that first vacation after spending years getting it started.”

With the right setup, an owner could be on vacation in the Grand Caymans and have smartphone access to their business, get interactive notifications when doors were opened, confirmation that the alarm was on and even video access. If an employee forgot to turn the alarm on, the owner could do it remotely.

Chad has a client who lives in Iowa and has a cabin in Tower, Minn. He checks in on his cabin by video, can remotely open doors for deliveries, pre-heat the cabin or turn on the hot tube. He even put a camera outside to view the perimeter. “Never underestimate peace of mind.”

David says you have to go above and beyond your competition to stand out, especially in the performance car business. He feels ADT has done that, too.

“We’re new enough that we are on a tight budget and reinvest what we can back into the company,” David says. “Chad came up with something we could afford and still got the job done. And when we had a small issue with a sensor loose on a door, they fixed it in a couple hours to fix it with and no lapse in security.”

“Even for the price we pay, they go above and beyond,” says David.

Since the initial install, Chad has stayed in touch, stopping by numerous times to see how they were doing. He also wants to be available for a walk through when Nür Technik decides to expand their space.

Timing and a good business relationship are a good combination.

Chad Ruth is in small business sales for ADT Security, which provides security solutions from alarms, intrusion protection, camera systems and remote systems for small and medium size businesses. He can be reached at (651) 600-0764 or cjruth@adt.com. www.adt.com

Mike and David Trumble are co-owners of Nür Technik, a performance automotive engineering shop in Burnsville. They specialize in Volkswagen and Audi performance enhancement, service and repair. They can be reached at (952) 322-7495 or service@nurtechnik.com www.nurtechnik.com

RESOURCE HERO



Glenn Starfield, owner of Express Employment Professionals; and Justin Voerster, Kraus Anderson Insurance.

Kraus Anderson Insurance

Providing Right-Sized Insurance for a Fast Growing Company

New Business Minnesota

When Glenn Starfield bought an Express Employment Professionals franchise back in 2005, he had no idea he was going to get to know his business insurance agent so well.

“When I first started, I had a check list and was focused on the big things, hiring employees, getting signage, etc.,” Glenn says. “I just had to get insurance and worry later.”

Then, at a Burnsville Chamber of Commerce event, he met the president of Kraus Anderson Insurance who suggested he meet with Justin Voerster, Kraus Anderson’s director of new business development for premier lines.

Express Employment Professionals started growing right away and its needs were evolving. Fully addressing its business

insurance situation finally became a priority when they were planning a second office. “That’s when I had to look at the coverage and find gaps and overlaps,” recalls Glenn.

Justin was familiar with the challenges facing Glenn. Fast growing companies need to make a lot of adjustments to keep everything going in the right direction. That is when they need to be with an agent they know and trust.

“I understand that as a new business, when you first go out in the world, you don’t want to be insurance poor. What you want and need is the right amount to protect you and your business,” says Justin. “As your business grows and you have more assets, you need insurance to cover you.”

The only way to stay on top of everything is to have a good business relationship that involves a lot of communication.

Glenn credits Justin for listening well and understanding his

needs. When he wanted to add a third location in Minneapolis, he just called Justin and they moved forward.

“Like a lot of entrepreneurs, my philosophy is you have to be good at your one thing and surround yourself with people who are good at their one thing,” says Glenn. “I’m very confident that Justin knows what I need.

“That’s where a relationship is key. I would rather rely on the expert to help manage my business so I can recruit and work with my clients,” Glenn says. “I’ve seen owners spend hours becoming expert in something that won’t make them money. I’ve got a good banker, a good accounting guy, a good guy in finance, a good attorney and a good insurance guy in Justin. That’s my board of advisors. I focus on my team and my clients.”

Justin says the majority of insurance buyers see it as a commodity where they shop for the cheapest price: Go online and click, click; order the basic package of property, general liability, professional liability or errors and omissions coverage. Done.

“Most people don’t know how to put an insurance plan together to cover all the bases. I ask a lot of questions to make sure it’s done right,” says Justin.

The reality, he says, is that most insurance policies should be within 5 percent to 10 percent of each other. The variability is the content of the coverage. “If you are strictly shopping price, you may find yourself in a situation you’ll come to regret,” Justin says. “It could cost \$10 a year more for something that could save you \$10,000.”

Getting business insurance online doesn’t take into account all the variables that are in play. Your agent needs to know what you are doing and they have to be able to explain in detail how it’s going to impact you.

Express Employment Professionals now has three locations and they’ve added a new business, Specialized Recruiting Group, which focuses on recruiting high level executives.

Every time Glenn opened a new facility, he’d call Justin and ask about options and ask key questions: Does he have to buy a separate policy? Did it make sense to keep them under the same policy?

When Glenn bought a building for one of his offices, he made sure to consult with Justin. The purchase required additional liability and property coverage.

“You always have to look at the wider picture,” says Justin. “The bigger your business becomes, the more likely you, personally, become a target. You need to address that with liability

protection so there is no blowback. And it’s a good idea to get your lawyer involved to help limit liability where possible.”

Glenn and Justin talk about every six weeks or so. And it’s not always about insurance. “He and I are both the same age. He’s got four kids, I have three kids,” says Glenn. “With young families and very busy personal schedules, we rarely have a chance to get together socially. But we do share our personal stories.”

“Most of the time when Glenn calls me, it’s to run a claim scenario past me,” says Justin. “He wants to know if he is covered or how to anticipate potential liability. He hears things that have happened to others and wants to discuss it.”

Glenn says frequently touching base with Justin helps keep his company nimble. “He is there when we need him. He is already on the journey with us and is up to speed.”

The bottom line is that Kraus Anderson Insurance is saving Glenn money. “We own a building in Savage, which has a whole set of liabilities. We have staff, employee liability, professional liability and we have a lot of potential exposure because we vouch for their background of the people we recruit. It can be tricky.

“Justin saves me money by making sure we don’t have more insurance than we need,” says Glenn. “And clients value that we are properly insured. They know we do things right.” says Glenn.

Justin Voerster is director of new business development for premier lines for Kraus Anderson Insurance, which provides business insurance, personal lines, risk management and HR benefit services for companies of all sizes. He can be reached at (952) 707-8244 or jvoerster@kainsurance.com. www.kainsurance.com

Glenn Starfield is a franchise owner of Express Employment Professionals with locations in Lakeville, Savage and downtown Minneapolis offering recruiting services in commercial, administrative and mid to senior level executive positions. He can be reached at (952) 469-5112 glenn.starfield@expresspros.com www.expressHRcenter.com. [Facebook.com/expressHRcenter.com](https://www.facebook.com/expressHRcenter.com)

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Look for the Startup-Friendly Seal of Approval

These are the businesses that want to work with new businesses.

RESOURCE HEROES



Sandra Rulff, OffiCenters, and Teresa Thomas Carroll, director Women In Networking; Lisa Olsonoski, OffiCenters and Folu Gisanri of Try Laser Today; Ana Genz-Wall, OffiCenters, and Kurt Rose of Rose-Fleischaker Associates, Inc.; Jill Countryman, OffiCenters, and Chris Tymchuck of Unique Estate Law.

OffiCenters/ VirtualOffiCenters

Offering Professional Services and Support to Businesses as Their Needs Change

New Business Minnesota

OffiCenters employees have a unique customer service challenge. They just don't take care of their clients; they live with them every day from 8 to 5. They answer the phones for hundreds of their tenants and virtual tenants at five Twin Cities locations, provide administrative support when needed, listen to problems and make sure everything runs as smoothly as possible.

Being a Resource Hero is almost part of the job description at OffiCenters. Clients range from full-time tenants with a single office to virtual office clients who work at home but come into the office for meetings. Most tenants have no employees. When they need help, they turn to the support staff at each location.

Here are some examples of what good business relationships look like.

Sandra Rulff – Resource Hero

Teresa Thomas Carroll, director Women In Networking (WIN), has come to heavily rely on OffiCenters staff and facilities. As a growing membership organization that primarily serves female small business owners, Teresa says that growing smart is critical to her success.

"I need the professional perception and credibility that I get at the Union Plaza location," says Teresa. "It doesn't require investing

in brick and mortar or hiring hire full-time staff."

Sandra Rulff, OffiCenters general manager, remembers first meeting Teresa. "I thought we could really help her with our networking groups. I saw the opportunity for her to really take advantage of us."

Sandra began offering suggestions on how the two could work together. That helpfulness earned her a new client. That's when the business relationship started.

"Our members work in all different parts of the Twin Cities and having access to the various OffiCenters for our small-group and one-on-one meetings means that we can meet where it's most convenient for them," says Teresa.

Sandra was impressed with Teresa's energy and the way she organized her networking group. "Since we do networking for our OffiCenters and VirtualOffiCenters clients, we asked her to facilitate one for us. It was great."

Then Teresa's group started using OffiCenters facilities and soon outgrew her space. "Now she uses our Virtual Annex in Edina, a larger co-working space with meeting rooms and drop in space. Tenants just show up and tap into the wireless," says Sandra. "It's like meeting at a coffee shop, without having to pay for the coffee... and with peace and quiet."

Collaboration has been a key part of the relationship. "We're always trying to figure out how we can help each other," says Sandra.

“Teresa is always looking at how our services can help her members. And I’m trying to figure out how we can get our clients to benefit from membership in her group.”

Ana Genz-Wall – Resource Hero

In 1993, Kurt Rose and Pat Fleischaker started Rose-Fleischaker Associates, Inc., a manufacturer’s representative in the commercial construction industry. They knew right away that they needed more than just office space.

“For the money we could afford to spend and for the services we needed, there were few choices,” recalls Kurt. They selected OffiCenters Union Plaza location in the warehouse district as it was ideal for keeping them close to the architects they worked with.

“We utilize most of the secretarial services OffiCenters has to offer,” Kurt says. “For nearly 10 years we have worked closely with Ana, who has been a reliable constant, making sure our business continues without a hitch even during periods of change.”

Ana says the key to making everything work is to treat each client as if they were her employer.

“I take the extra time to help with whatever problems they have,” says Ana. “They use all of our services. We do their copying and help type up bids and mail them in a timely fashion. We’re very detail oriented.”

In the ensuing years, Rose-Fleischaker Associates doubled in size. They recently expanded from a single interior office (no windows) by adding three exterior offices (with windows).

“Ana continually goes above and beyond when we have problems with phones, computers or other issues,” says Kurt. “A lot of what we ask her to do is really not her job; but she is always happy to help.”

“An important aspect of our relationships with OffiCenters is that they become us,” says Kurt. “The receptionist always answers the phones politely as if she is Rose-Fleischaker Associates and directs our customers to the proper person. OffiCenters is our front-line point of contact. This has been a very good relationship.”

Jill Countryman – Resource Hero

In 2010, when attorney Chris Tymchuck started Unique Estate Law, a law firm focused on estate planning, probate and adoptions, she was watching every penny. She turned to France OffiCenters for a virtual office package.

“I originally chose OffiCenters because of its ability to be flexible and grow with my business,” says Chris. “I first met with Jill Countryman and was immediately impressed with her professional attitude and friendly manner. She closely worked with me to set up a plan that fit my business’ needs at that time.”

But like many new businesses, things can change quickly. After working out of her home and using a virtual office for seven months, Chris had the opportunity to share office space and camaraderie with a few other people in her industry and she left.

It wasn’t long, however, before she returned. “My business was rapidly growing and I was having a difficult time keeping up with it. I was handling all the office tasks on top of practicing law,” Chris says. “I felt that I appeared unprofessional by offering clients bottled water instead of coffee and I was the one answering their calls and greeting them at the door.”

At about that time, she happened to attend a networking event at the new Bloomington OffiCenter location and again ran into Jill Countryman, the manager. “Jill immediately came out and gave me a hug and said, ‘we still have an office here for you.’”

Chris ended up taking the hint and became a tenant. “I couldn’t be happier,” she says. “Jill provides me with all the support I need, including meeting with clients to sign and notarize documents when I am out of the office. When I struggled to manage my calendar – and

missed an appointment – Jill took that over for me as well.”

Jill says she enjoys working with Chris. “I’m like her personal assistant,” she says. “I keep her posted on what’s going on. We do that with all our clients. As her needs changed, we have services that can help her manage her business.

“Clients become like family,” Jill says. She sees them every day and enjoys watching them grow; getting to know what’s going on in their lives and helping them relax enough so they can even take vacations.

Says Chris, “I believe that Jill and OffiCenters help explain why my business is now on track to double my revenue over last year. She’s my resource hero.”

Lisa Olsonoski – Resource Hero

During his 15 years in the health care field, Folu Gisanri became all too familiar with people who suffer from chronic pain. That led him to start his business, Try Laser Today, which is a distributor for the LaserTouchOne alternative pain relief system.

Being able to demonstrate the device’s capabilities is a key part of the strategy to grow his business. As a virtual office tenant, he has access to all the OffiCenters locations and has conference rooms he can use for product demos. He also has OffiCenters staff answering his phone and providing support, which contributes to his all-important professional image.

“Since I became a virtual client in January, Lisa Olsonoski has been my superstar service person,” Folu says. “She took the time to learn what my business was all about and she is such an exciting person who is full of life.” And he credits Lisa with some key business referrals and for being a friend and mentor.

Lisa says that Folu takes full advantage of the services and opportunities at OffiCenters. There are regular networking opportunities and lunch-and-learn events where home-based virtual tenants come in and mingle with other tenants and enjoy the sense of community.

“Now his conference-room time is going up, and he is using more of our services, such as administrative support for preparing mailers and possibly social media support that includes help with setup and blogging,” she says.

“I’ve seen it before. A business starts small and expands to a full-time office. He is one of those people whose positive energy is contagious. It’s just a joy and pleasure to have him around,” says Lisa.

As far as Folu is concerned, the relationship has played a significant role in the growth of his business. “So far 30 percent of our business is coming from contacts and referrals through OffiCenters.”

VirtualOffiCenters as well as OffiCenters in the Minneapolis area has provided office solutions to thousands of small businesses for more than 30 years. Locations include Bloomington, Eden Prairie, Edina, St. Louis Park, and the Minneapolis Warehouse District. Clients also have access to more than 600 affiliate locations across the country through the Alliance Business Centers Network. For more information call (612) 373-7070 or visit www.virtualofficenters.com.

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