

## Growth Strategies

### Taking the reverse approach for growth by ADINA GENN

Common sense would suggest that consolidation is a way to scale back when business is slow. For others, like Sir Speedy Printing of Westbury, however, it's a means for growth.

Up until June, the company had two locations - one at an industrial park in Westbury, which serviced commercial clients, and another on Hempstead Turnpike in East Meadow, serving commercial and retail clients.



Evan Bloom and his brother Brandon, who run the franchise with their father Jack, used to spread the work between the centers. If one location were too busy, they'd shoot the job over to the other site.

Customer satisfaction and client retention remained strong, but the family wanted to grow the commercial, and more profitable, side of the business.

Then an adjacent and more-affordable space in Westbury became available. To the Blooms, it was the opportunity they'd been looking for. In June, they expanded into the new space, doubling their Westbury operation to almost 3,000 square feet. At the same time, they closed up the East Meadow shop, and brought the equipment and accounts to Westbury.

Moving costs were "minimal," Brandon said. "I did it myself with friends." The landlord prepared the new space for the company.

Although the consolidation is still in its brand-new phase, the Blooms already like what they see.

"It's economies of scale." Evan said. "Everyone's together. A lot of time has freed up. We're going to turn that time into revenues."

Consolidations - whether to bring disparate departments under one roof, or to unite newly merged firms - spare companies the duplicity of operating costs. The strategy enables companies to take on new opportunities that help increase profits. And close proximities can foster strong inter-department collaborations that were no where as effective from separate locations.

Although companies can reduce overhead, they still need to consider the expense in consolidating.

"It's a smart, attractive way to grow your company" said Ken Stein, president of Uniondale-based The Kensington Co., which specializes in the sale of businesses for small-to mid-size companies

The move, Stein said, can help companies handle the current economic conditions, where many businesses are unable to raise prices despite increased operating costs. The strategy enables companies to save on "rents, payroll, phone lines and insurance," Stein noted.

And, when acquisitions are involved, companies can pick up other assets, including experienced personnel and broader services and clients.

That was the case for Margolin, Winer & Evans, the accounting firm in Garden City, which in 1997 merged with Cooper, Selvin & Strassberg in Great Neck. Moving out of the Great Neck facility into Garden City enabled the company to integrate the cultures easily, said Terry Strassberg, a partner now at MW&E.

At digital equipment firm Leslie Digital Imaging, consolidation has helped the company become more customer-centric, said Brian Gertler, LDI's director of marketing. The company, with 120 employees, had a 3,000-square-foot office space in Garden City Park and a 3,600-square-foot sales office in Garden City before moving both operations to a 9,800-square-foot space in Woodbury.

"Now both sides are more attuned to the needs of the customer. That's really a primary mission of the company," Gertler said.

Marc Gold, a principal of Gold Pure Food Products in Hempstead, found that consolidation helped the company meet its mission - freshness. Prior to moving to Hempstead in 1993, the company had treat depression, Benicar, for hypertension and Aerobid, a metered dose inhaler for asthma.

In 1998, Ryan joined the Collaborative Group, where he served as vice president, technical management, and general counsel with responsibility for the company's intellectual property portfolio.

Ryan, who lives in West Hills, near Huntington, said he would split his time between Forest's headquarters in Manhattan and its research and development sites on Long Island.

Richard Overton, vice president, operations and facilities at Forest Labs, said Ryan's commercial background at Lab 21 and his academic qualifications as a lawyer-scientist made him an attractive prospect.

"He has the mix of experience Forest looks for," he said.

Nathaniel Benson, Lab 21's president and chief executive officer, said the company is recruiting a chief executive officer to succeed Ryan as well as a chief scientific officer. Ideally, it would like to give both titles to one person.

Lab 21, with research facilities at the Long Island High Tech Incubator at Stony Brook, makes DNA face cream whose formulation is based on the results of an individual's cheek swab sample. About half a dozen genes are analyzed from the swab, and the cream is created based on each customer's profile, according to Benson. Among the celebrities who use the cream, which sells for \$250 for 50 milliliters, are actresses