

Honoring Excellence

Improving Businesses Improve Indiana. Winners of the 2007 BKD Indiana Excellence Awards.

MANUFACTURING AND DISTRIBUTION

Telamon Corp.—Telamon was the overall BKD Indiana Excellence Award winner, as well as the winner in the manufacturing and distribution category.

The Carmel-based company has long served the telecommunications industry with a variety of engineering, installation and materials-management services. But did you know it also makes automotive parts?

"We're always looking to diversify," says Stan Chen, vice president and general manager. "We had a rough patch in 2001 to 2003 when the telecom industry was struggling and we struggled as well."

Beyond hoping to diversify, there was a corporate desire to do more business with Indiana companies, and "the company is very entrepreneurial in nature," Chen says. Thus began a project that won Telamon the 2007 BKD Indiana Excellence Award.

In 2005, Columbus-based Cummins Inc. hired Telamon



Overall award winner

When the telecommunications industry struggled, Albert and Stanley Chen's Telamon Corp. in Carmel diversified into automotive subassembly work.

for a kitting and fulfillment project, assembling kits of gasket parts for aftermarket sales. "We were straightforward with them and said that

we have no experience in this industry, so there might be a learning curve," Chen says, "and they were very gracious with us."

Telamon found that the skill sets matched its telecom work, and achieved 100 percent on-time delivery with zero defects. "From there we moved into light subassembly of tubes and hoses and clamps," he continues. After that Telamon sought and

won a host of other Cummins business, then began pursuing other auto-related contracts. Telamon has grown auto-related revenues from \$7 million in 2006 to \$84 million in 2007, with 2008 auto revenues forecast to hit about \$150 million. Some 40 Telamon jobs can be linked to its decision to venture into automotive work.

The other finalists in the category included:

Cook Pharmica—In Bloomington, massive buildings where RCA color televisions were made sat empty for six years before Cook Pharmica stepped in. The new company, part of the Cook Group, was seeking space for a biopharmaceutical contract manufacturing plant. The TV plant offered a place for the company to get started, with plenty of room to grow. Cook Pharmica called the effort Project Phoenix, and it quickly created office and lab space and a manufacturing line, with shelled-in space for a second line. Cook Pharmica's privately held status allowed for quick decisions, and that

resulted in speedy construction. Project Phoenix not only resurrected the former TV plant but also helped attract four more businesses to the area.

Omni Forge—Omni Forge in Remington, part of the Impact Forge Group, saw its sales drop by half to \$12 million in 2001, thanks to foreign competition and cost pressures from automotive customers. Management developed a plan to reduce the cost of the company's products and gain new work—without sacrificing quality, customer service or on-time delivery. The results have been dramatic: sales are up 150 percent since 2001, revenue per employee has risen 46 percent, exports to Canada and Mexico have grown from zero to 18 percent of revenue, and sales to foreign-owned U.S. auto plants have grown substantially.

SGI—A third-party logistics provider, SGI in 2006 developed an online inventory management tool to help clients get a better handle on their inventory. Data Depot lets marketing managers know ahead of time about inventory issues such as backorders, dead stock and the need to reorder items. The product was developed by the Indianapolis-based company with input from users at three client companies. The clients offered suggestions before any code was written, and also tested the product while it was under construction. The interactive approach created a better product, and the clients became SGI champions. Being able to offer Data Depot was a competitive



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advantage when SGI landed the fulfillment business of Sallie Mae.

Westfield Steel—Steel service center Westfield Steel planned two projects: a quality assurance program and an employee development initiative. The quality program was formalized in mid-2006 after the Westfield company took part in an ISO audit involving a key customer. The program has resulted in 25 percent fewer material returns, tighter inventory control and streamlined production workflow, and the company is seeking its own ISO certification. The employee development program includes vocational skills training, continuing education and free English instruction for Spanish-speaking workers.

HEALTH-CARE PROVIDERS

Deaconess Health System—Small-town residents in the Evansville region were in need of better access to cardiovascular care, and Deaconess Health System was in need of more cardiovascular business. So Deaconess

stepped up its efforts to bring heart care to the people.

Heartcare Health System in Evansville is jointly owned by Deaconess and The Heart Group. One thing was clear: the majority of patients needing Heartcare's heart and vascular services are over age 65, and it's not always easy for rural, elderly patients to travel to a specialist for care.

In 2005, Heartcare added four communities to its satellite clinic program for a total of 14, says Becky Malotte, executive director of heart and vascular services for Deaconess. The organization brought more evidence-based heart care to the more rural parts of its market in Indiana, Illinois and Kentucky, "taking the latest and greatest and infusing it into rural communities to develop better patient outcomes."

That also improved the hospital's financial outcomes. By 2006, total patient clinic visits had grown by nearly 55 percent. Cath lab procedures increased by a third, and open heart procedures by nearly 7 percent. The effort was impressive enough to win the trophy in the health-

Small-town heart care
Cardiologist Scott Starrett, Becky Malotte and Penny Robertson work with Evansville's Deaconess Health System to provide rural clinics and outreach.

care providers category of the BKD Indiana Excellence Awards.

The other finalists in the health-care category included:

Clarian West Medical Center—Managers at Clarian West Medical Center in Avon were determined to improve the feedback the hospital's maternity center was getting in the areas of cleanliness and emotional support. To improve cleanliness, the hospital put linen hampers in every room, had caregivers leave contact numbers, created scripted phrases for better communication, and implemented tidy-up visits. To improve emotional support, the maternity center manager began personally gathering feedback from every patient, and promptly acting on the feedback. As a result, patient satisfaction

with cleanliness rose from 60 percent to over 70 percent, and 81 percent of patients were completely satisfied with emotional support. Most important, there was a 46 percent increase in births at the hospital between early 2006 and early 2007.

Clark Memorial Hospital—At the not-for-profit Clark Memorial Hospital in Jeffersonville, the business motto is “no margin, no mission.” So its \$12 million net operating loss in 2005 clearly jeopardized its mission of serving the health care needs of the community. Management responded by improving the hospital’s report card accountability system, setting new goals and preparing a report card for the organization and each department leader. The hospital benchmarked with other organizations, held team members accountable for results, and rewarded success. Clark Memorial achieved a \$14 million turnaround, and also improved its nationally benchmarked measures of excellence.

Columbus Regional Hospital—When patients push the “nurse call” button, they’re hoping to get a quick response. Columbus Regional Hospital wanted to make the nurse call system as prompt and efficient as possible, so the hospital embarked on a wireless communication project. Now, when patients need to reach their nurse and push the button, the call goes directly to the nurse through a portable wireless device, and notifies others on the care team as needed. Also, doctors can return calls about patients directly to the right nurse. By integrating the latest technologies into the wireless system, Colum-



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Rent or buy

Todd Plymate and his sister, Terri Warnecke, started selling embroidered uniforms at Plymate Inc. in Shelbyville, a third-generation industrial uniform rental business.

bus Regional has improved overall communications and reduced the wait time when patients call for their nurse.

St. Mary Medical Center—In heart emergencies, the faster the care, the better the outcome. St. Mary Medical Center in Hobart set out to reduce the so-called “door to balloon time,” the average time it takes from the moment a heart attack patient arrives in the ER to the time a balloon catheter is inflated to open the patient’s blocked artery. St. Mary’s overall goal was to achieve a door to balloon time of 90 minutes or less. The hospital set goals for each step in the process, and set up a system where one team prepares the patient while another prepares the room. Since the beginning of the year, the average door to balloon time has remained consistently under 80 minutes.

SERVICE

Plymate Inc.—Shelbyville-based Plymate Inc., winner in the service category, has done well in its more than 75 years, specializing in apparel and floor mat rental programs for businesses. Maintaining a limited business model helped the company excel, but also limited its ability to grow. So the company decided to also sell—not just rent—uniforms.

President Todd Plymate admits that for a long time he favored limiting efforts to the rental business his company knew so well. “One of my lessons was to listen to your team,” which was arguing in favor of supplementing rentals with sales. It made sense, because many customers were asking for less-industrial uniforms—embroidered polo shirts, for example. Those just wouldn’t do well in Plymate’s industrial laundry, and they couldn’t be reused by another client because of logos and names embroidered into the fabric rather than placed on sew-on patches.

As the business model evolved, the company

explored new ways to measure its success and track its performance, and built greater discipline by creating and executing a solid business plan. The results have been impressive. The sales business has grown 400 percent in the past five years, Plymate says. And though the company originally entered sales so it wouldn’t lose existing rental customers, now three-quarters of the sales business involves new customers who had never been renters in the past.

Other finalists in the service category included:

Cripe Architects + Engineers—Indianapolis-based Cripe Architects + Engineers, founded 70 years ago, wanted to improve the way it approaches projects from beginning to end. It launched an initiative called The Cripe Way, offering details about how project schedules should be structured, and how to formulate project plans so that all big-picture issues are considered. The Cripe Way spells out details for how progress meetings should be conducted, what quality-control steps need to

be followed, and how client services directors should be involved. The Cripe Way has had significant impact, increasing revenue, reducing expenses, generating more repeat business and improving employee satisfaction levels.

Design-Aire Engineering—The way energy prices are headed, one would think that every business in the state would be clamoring to find ways to save. The people at Design-Aire Engineering in Indianapolis were surprised to learn about a year ago that no Indiana companies had looked into the federal tax deductions that the Energy Policy Act of 2005 offered to encourage projects designed to save energy—and the benefits were scheduled to expire after 2007. So the engineering firm launched a marketing initiative to generate interest in energy efficiency and explain the benefits and tax breaks. It hosted seminars and partnered with utilities and others to get the word out. In six months, the firm helped 23 Indiana companies collect tax deductions worth \$9 million.

Shiel Sexton Co.—Shiel Sexton, an Indianapolis construction company, had created strategic plans before, but the plans had never looked ahead more than two or three years. The company decided its long-term growth required a longer-term, five-year plan. To develop it, Shiel Sexton spent six months in intensive planning and research, arriving at fundamental pillars of success. Principals of the firm encouraged all employees to rally around the plan, and upon those pillars built operational business plans and created



Run like a business
Ellen Rosenthal is CEO of Conner Prairie Museum in Fishers that's become customer focused with new activities for families and increased attendance.

scorecards for measurement of success. After four years, the company achieved nearly 30 successful outcomes, including a new project-management system, better alignment of expert teams, and an ROI benchmark for overhead expenses.

US Signcrafters Inc.—Based in Osceola, US Signcrafters has learned through the years to plan ahead and be more proactive, and that has led to stability and greater success. The company's management notes that US Signcrafters used to operate at a crazy, reactive pace that seemed to never end. Today, the business approach is more stable and proactive, and managers report feeling a lot more in control of where they're heading. They pay more attention to the kind of work they want in the future and plan sales efforts around that, and as

a result no longer need to rush through backlogged orders. US Signcrafters has earned numerous awards that validate its business approach, including a U.S. Chamber of Commerce Blue Chip Enterprise Award.

NOT-FOR-PROFIT AND GOVERNMENT

Conner Prairie Museum—It's not a great time for outdoor history museums—some institutions have seen attendance drop by 20 percent or more. Conner Prairie Museum in Fishers,

on the other hand, sought to increase its attendance in 2006 by 5 percent. Its efforts made it the winner in the not-for-profit and government category.

One key, says president and CEO Ellen Rosenthal, was to think in business terms. "The business we're in is not always considered a business, but we see it as one and that's part of the reason we're successful," she says. And as a business-minded organization, "our strategy is very customer-focused. We've completely revamped our product and become much more attuned to the interests and needs of families with children."

Among many other efforts, Conner Prairie added new features including baby farm animals, new theatrical vignettes, hands-on activities and revitalized programming. It also expanded its marketing efforts to spotlight the improvements and raise awareness of special Conner Prairie events.

The result: General admission attendance grew by 30 percent in 2006, and added another 24 percent in 2007. Membership grew by 15 percent in 2006 and another 12 percent in 2007 to its highest level ever. And the industry has taken notice, awarding Conner Prairie the prestigious Award of Merit from the American Association for State and Local History and sending benchmarking groups to see the positive changes Conner Prairie has made.

Other finalists in the not-for-profit and government category were:

Girl Scouts of Limberlost Council—The Limberlost Council, based in

Fort Wayne, serves 10,000 Girl Scouts in six counties through both volunteer-led troop activities and innovative staff-led programs. The council needed to reduce its reliance on staff-led programs, which cost a lot more. In 2006, it created the Taste of Girl Scouting program, which targeted girls in areas with low Scout participation rates. The hope was to give girls and adults a preview of Scouting and move them into volunteer-led programs. Of those girls who have experienced the Taste of Girl Scouting, 83 percent have transitioned to volunteer-led programs. The overall percent of girls in staff-led programs has dropped to 37 percent, down from 47 percent the year before.

The Honeywell Foundation—Exposing children to the arts is the mission of The Honeywell Foundation's Educational Outreach Program, or EOP. Getting the word out was deemed to be an essential part of the expansion efforts, so the foundation created a communications and publicity position in its marketing department in January 2007. The intent was to develop sound relations with media outlets in the area and explore cost-effective ways for the non-profit to gain further publicity.

Porter-Starke Services and Hilltop Community Health Center—Funding is nearly always a challenge for not-for-profit organizations, including Porter-Starke Services and Hilltop Community Mental Health

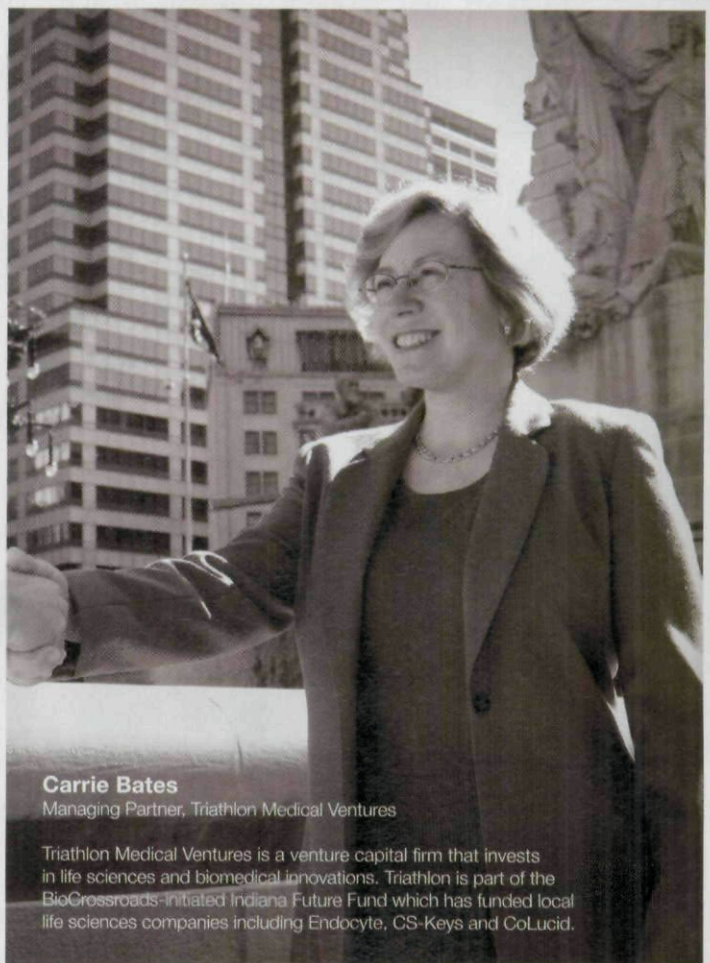
Center in Valparaiso. But the organizations found a creative solution designed to save money and improve the care they provide. Research indicates that clients enjoy better outcomes if mental and physical health care services are offered in the same location. So mental health provider Porter-Starke teamed up with community health care provider Hilltop on a joint location offering holistic care. Porter County Family Counseling Center also participates in the venture. Together, the agencies hope to achieve new efficiencies in service delivery along with better treatment and outcomes for clients.

University of Evansville—The new name that the University of Evansville's business school adopted in

2006 reflects a new push to be attuned to the needs of students and the community. The Schroeder Family School of Business Administration and the Institute for Global Enterprise in Indiana executed a number of innovative programs in 2006, with impressive results. Business student enrollments that year were up 40 percent compared to 2003. Participation in experiential learning was up 800 percent over 2004. Participation in the institute's community guest speaker series doubled the goal. The school broke ground on a new building, and helped in the development of 45 new entrepreneurial student businesses. And benefactors noticed the success, committing more than \$11 million to the school in 2006. ■

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RESOURCES.

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Carrie Bates
Managing Partner, Triathlon Medical Ventures

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